

Writing About Context

GCSE English · Follows the national curriculum

Name _____ Class _____ Date _____

1. Worked example

Build a context chain for *Jekyll and Hyde*: respectability.

Step 1 · Context

Victorian middle-class men were expected to show self-control and protect their reputations.

Step 2 · Choice

Stevenson has Enfield and Utterson agree never to speak of the door again.

Step 3 · Effect

The reader sees how gentlemen's silence lets Hyde's crimes stay hidden.

Answer: Context → choice → effect in one sentence.

Check: Context explains a specific choice.

2. Now try one with the steps

Turn a sweeping statement into a precise one.

Step 1 · Sweeping

Step 2 · Problem

Step 3 · Precise and linked

Answer:

3. Practice

Show your working. The marks tell you how much is expected.

1. Which assessment objective covers context in GCSE Literature? Write the number after AO. [1]

2. What are the three links in the context chain? [1]

3. Name three kinds of context. [1]

4. What is 'bolt-on' context? [1]

5. In which year was the Poor Law Amendment Act passed? Write the year. [1]

6. Make this precise and linked: 'Victorians were very strict.' [2]

7. Why is one sentence of linked context better than a paragraph of facts? [2]

8. Give an example of literary context for Macbeth. [2]

9. Is context usually rewarded on unseen poetry questions? Answer yes or no. [1]

10. Write a context chain for Romeo and Juliet's Prologue ('star-cross'd lovers'). [2]

11. Explain how Dickens's biography could be used without bolting it on. [2]

12. How can reception context (then and now) help an argument? [2]

13. Rewrite context: 'James I wrote Daemonologie in 1597.' [2]

14. Why should you avoid 'everyone in the 1800s believed...'? [1]

4. Before you hand it in

A separate 'context paragraph' at the start or end.

Attach a sentence of context to analytical points throughout.

Sweeping generalisations.

Be specific and hedge: 'many', 'some', 'would likely'.

Biography for its own sake.

Use biography only to explain a choice in the text.

Adding context to unseen poetry answers.

Spend the time on language, form and structure instead.