Section A: Shakespeare

Romeo and Juliet

Read the following extract from Act 1 Scene 1 of *Romeo and Juliet* and then answer the question that follows.

At this point in the play two Capulet boys are joking with each other.

SAMPSON Gregory, on my word we'll not carry coals.
GREGORY No, for then we should be colliers.
SAMPSON I mean, an we be in choler, we'll draw.
GREGORY Ay, while you live, draw your neck out of collar.
SAMPSON I strike quickly, being moved.
GREGORY But thou art not quickly moved to strike.
SAMPSON A dog of the house of Montague moves me.
GREGORY To move is to stir, and to be valiant is to stand. Therefore if thou art moved thou runn'st away.
SAMPSON A dog of that house shall move me to stand. I will take the wall of any man or maid of Montague's.
GREGORY That shows thee a weak slave, for the weakest goes to the wall.
SAMPSON 'Tis true, and therefore women, being the weaker vessels, are ever thrust to the wall. Therefore I will push Montague's men from the wall and thrust his maids to the wall.
GREGORY The quarrel is between our masters and us their men.
SAMPSON 'Tis all one. I will show myself a tyrant. When I have fought with the men, I will be civil with the maids; I will cut off their heads.

Starting with this extract, explain how far you think Shakespeare presents comedy as a key theme in the play.

Write about:
• how Shakespeare presents comedy in this extract.
• how Shakespeare presents comedy in the play as a whole.

[30 marks]
AO4 [4 marks]