

English Literature Admissions Test

4501/11

Wednesday 2 November 2011

Morning

1 hour 30 minutes

Instructions to Candidates

Please read this page carefully, but do not open the question paper until told to do so.

A separate 8 page answer booklet is provided. Please check you have one.

Write your name, date of birth and centre number in the spaces provided on the answer booklet. Please write very clearly.

You should allow at least 30 minutes for reading this question paper, making notes and preparing your answer.

At the end of the examination, you must hand in both your answer booklet and this question paper. Any rough notes or plans that you make should only be written in your answer booklet.

No texts, dictionaries or sources of reference may be brought into the examination.



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This paper consists of 8 printed pages and 4 blank pages.



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Time allowed: 1 hour 30 minutes.

You should spend at least 30 minutes reading and annotating the passages and in preparing your answer.

The following extracts from longer texts offer different perspectives on the theme of poverty and destitution. They are arranged in reverse chronological order by date of composition or publication. Read all the material carefully, and then complete the task below.

- (a) An extract from *How the Poor Die* (1946), an essay by George Orwell *page 4*
- (b) An extract from *Widowers' Houses* (1892), a play by George Bernard Shaw *page 5*
- (c) An extract from *The Last Chronicle of Barset* (1867), a novel by Anthony Trollope *page 6*
- (d) An extract from *London Labour and the London Poor* (1851), a report by Henry Mayhew *page 7*
- (e) An extract from *The Prelude* (1805), by William Wordsworth *page 8*
- (f) An extract from *Of Walking the Streets by Day*, a poem by John Gay (1685-1752) *page 9*

Task:

Select two or three of the passages (a) to (f) and compare and contrast them in any ways that seem interesting to you, paying particular attention to distinctive features of structure, language and style. In your introduction, indicate *briefly* what you intend to explore or illustrate through close reading of your chosen passages.

This task is designed to assess your responsiveness to unfamiliar literary material and your skills in close reading. Marks are not awarded for references to other texts or authors you have studied.

- (a) An extract from *How the Poor Die* (1946), an essay by George Orwell

Taken from: *Shooting an Elephant: and Other Essays* London: Penguin 2003, pp.277

Starting: "About a dozen beds away from me was Numéro 57 - I think that was his number"

Finishing: " There you are, then, I thought, that's what is waiting for you, twenty, thirty, forty years hence: that is how the lucky ones die, those who live to be old."

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(b) An extract from *Widowers' Houses* (1892), a play by George Bernard Shaw

Trench Yes: that's all very fine; but the point is, what sort of homes do you give them for their money? People must live somewhere, or else go to jail. Advantage is taken of that to make them pay for houses that are not fit for dogs. Why don't you build proper dwellings, and give fair value for the money you take?

5 **Sartorius** [*pitying his innocence*] My young friend: these poor people do not know how to live in proper dwellings: they would wreck them in a week. You doubt me: try it for yourself. You are welcome to replace all the missing banisters, handrails, cistern lids and dusthole tops at your own expense; and you will find them missing again in less than three days:
 10 burnt, sir, every stick of them. I do not blame the poor creatures: they need fires, and often have no other way of getting them. But I really cannot spend pound after pound in repairs for them to pull down, when I can barely get them to pay me four and sixpence a week for a room, which is the recognized fair London rent. No, gentlemen: when people are very poor, you cannot help them, no matter how much you may sympathize with them. It does them more harm than good in the long run. I prefer to save my money in order to provide
 15 additional houses for the homeless, and to lay by a little for Blanche. [*He looks at them. They are silent: Trench unconvinced, but talked down; Cokane humanely perplexed. Sartorius bends his brows; comes forward in his chair as if gathering himself for a spring; and addresses himself, with impressive significance, to Trench*]. And now, Dr Trench, may I ask what your income is derived from?

20 **Trench** [*defiantly*] From interest: not from houses. My hands are clean as far as that goes. Interest on a mortgage.

Sartorius [*forcibly*] Yes: a mortgage on my property. When I, to use your own words, screw, and bully, and drive these people to pay what they have freely undertaken to pay me, I cannot touch one penny of the money they give me until I have first paid you your
 25 seven hundred a year out of it. What Lickcheese did for me, I do for you. He and I are alike intermediaries: you are the principal. It is because of the risks I run through the poverty of my tenants that you exact interest from me at the monstrous and exorbitant rate of seven per cent, forcing me to exact the uttermost farthing in my turn from the tenants. And yet, Dr
 30 Trench, you, who have never done a hand's turn of work in connection with the place, you have not hesitated to speak contemptuously of me because I have applied my industry and forethought to the management of our property, and am maintaining it by the same honorable means.

Cokane [*greatly relieved*] Admirable, my dear sir, excellent! I felt instinctively that Trench was talking unpractical nonsense. Let us drop the subject, my dear boy: you only make an
 35 ass of yourself when you meddle in business matters. I told you it was inevitable.

Trench [*dazed*] Do you mean to say that I am just as bad as you are?

Cokane Shame, Harry, shame! Grossly bad taste! Be a gentleman. Apologize.

Sartorius Allow me, Mr Cokane. [*To Trench*] If, when you say you are just as bad as I am, you mean that you are just as powerless to alter the state of society, then you are
 40 unfortunately quite right.

(c) An extract from *The Last Chronicle of Barset* (1867), a novel by Anthony Trollope

It was a wretched, poverty-stricken room. By degrees the carpet had disappeared, which had been laid down some nine or ten years since, when they had first come to Hoglestock, and which even then had not been new. Now nothing but a poor fragment of it remained in front of the fire-place. In the middle of the room there was a table which had

5 once been large; but one flap of it was gone altogether, and the other flap sloped grievously towards the floor, the weakness of old age having fallen into its legs. There were two or three smaller tables about, but they stood propped against walls, thence obtaining a security which their own strength would not give them. At the further end of the room there

10 was an ancient piece of furniture, which was always called 'papa's secretary', at which Mr. Crawley customarily sat and wrote his sermons, and did all work that was done by him within his house. The man who made it, some time in the last century, had intended it to be a locked guardian for domestic documents, and the receptacle for all that was most private in the house of some pater-familias. But beneath the hands of Mr. Crawley it always stood open; and with the exception of the small space at which he wrote, was covered with dog's-

15 eared books, from nearly all of which the covers had disappeared. There were there two odd volumes of Euripides, a Greek Testament, an *Odyssey*, a duodecimo Pindar, and a miniature Anacreon. There was half a Horace, - the two first books of the *Odes* at the beginning, and the *De Arte Poetica* at the end having disappeared. There was a little bit of a volume of Cicero, and there were Caesar's *Commentaries*, in two volumes, so stoutly

20 bound that they had defied the combined ill-usage of time and the Crawley family. All these were piled upon the secretary, with many others, - odd volumes of sermons and the like; but the Greek and Latin lay at the top, and showed signs of most frequent use. There was one armchair in the room, - a Windsor-chair, as such used to be called, made soft by an old cushion in the back, in which Mr. Crawley sat when both he and his wife were in the room,

25 and Mrs. Crawley when he was absent. And there was an old horsehair sofa, - now almost denuded of its horsehair, - but that, like the tables, required the assistance of a friendly wall. Then there was half a dozen of other chairs, - all of different sorts, - and they completed the furniture of the room. It was not such a room as one would wish to see inhabited by a beneficed clergyman of the Church of England; but they who know what

30 money will do and what it will not, will understand how easily a man with a family, and with a hundred and thirty pounds a year, may be brought to the need of inhabiting such a chamber.

(d) **An extract from *London Labour and the London Poor* (1851), a report by Henry Mayhew**

There is a class who may be termed river-finders, although their occupation is connected only with the shore; they are commonly known by the name of 'mud-larks', from being compelled, in order to obtain the articles they seek, to wade sometimes up to their middle through the mud left on the shore by the retiring tide. These poor creatures are certainly
 5 about the most deplorable in their appearance of any I have met with in the course of my inquiries. They may be seen of all ages, from mere childhood to positive decrepitude, crawling among the barges at the various wharfs along the river; it cannot be said that they are clad in rags, for they are scarcely half covered by the tattered indescribable things that serve them for clothing; their bodies are grimed with the foul soil of the river, and their torn
 10 garments stiffened up like boards with dirt of every possible description.

Among the mud-larks may be seen many old women, and it is indeed pitiable to behold them, especially during the winter, bent nearly double with age and infirmity, paddling and groping among the wet mud for small pieces of coal, chips of wood, or any sort of refuse washed up by the tide. These women always have with them an old basket or an old tin
 15 kettle, in which they put whatever they chance to find. It usually takes them a whole tide to fill this receptacle, but when filled, it is as much as the feeble old creatures are able to carry home.

The mud-larks generally live in some court or alley in the neighbourhood of the river, and, as the tide recedes, crowds of boys and little girls, some old men, and many old women,
 20 may be observed loitering about the various stairs, watching eagerly for the opportunity to commence their labours. When the tide is sufficiently low they scatter themselves along the shore, separating from each other, and soon disappear among the craft lying about in every direction. This is the case on both sides of the river, as high up as there is anything to be found, extending as far as Vauxhall-bridge, and as low down as Woolwich. The mud-
 25 larks themselves, however, know only those who reside near them, and whom they are accustomed to meet in their daily pursuits; indeed, with but few exceptions, these people are dull, and apparently stupid; this is observable particularly among the boys and girls, who, when engaged in searching the mud, hold but little converse one with another. The men and women may be passed and repassed, but they notice no one; they never speak,
 30 but with a stolid look of wretchedness they splash their way through the mire, their bodies bent down while they peer anxiously about, and occasionally stoop to pick up some paltry treasure that falls in their way.

The mud-larks collect whatever they happen to find, such as coals, bits of old-iron, rope, bones, and copper nails that drop from ships while lying or repairing along shore. Copper
 35 nails are the most valuable of all the articles they find, but these they seldom obtain, as they are always driven from the neighbourhood of a ship while being new-sheathed. Sometimes the younger and bolder mud-larks venture on sweeping some empty coal-barge, and one little fellow with whom I spoke, having been lately caught in the act of so doing, had to undergo for the offence seven days' imprisonment in the House of
 40 Correction: this, he says, he liked much better than mud-larking, for while he staid there he wore a coat and shoes and stockings, and though he had not over much to eat, he certainly was never afraid of going to bed without anything at all - as he often had to do when at liberty. He thought he would try it on again in winter, he told me, saying, it would be so comfortable to have clothes and shoes and stockings then, and not be obliged to go
 45 into the cold wet mud of a morning.

(e) An extract from *The Prelude Bk. IX* (1805), by William Wordsworth

And when we chanced
 One day to meet a hunger-bitten girl,
 Who crept along fitting her languid gait
 Unto a heifer's motion, by a cord

5 Tied to her arm, and picking thus from the lane
 Its sustenance, while the girl with pallid hands
 Was busy knitting in a heartless mood
 Of solitude, and at the sight my friend
 In agitation said, "Tis against 'that'

10 That we are fighting," I with him believed
 That a benignant spirit was abroad
 Which might not be withstood, that poverty
 Abject as this would in a little time
 Be found no more, that we should see the earth

15 Unthwarted in her wish to recompense
 The meek, the lowly, patient child of toil,
 All institutes for ever blotted out
 That legalised exclusion, empty pomp
 Abolished, sensual state and cruel power

20 Whether by edict of the one or few;
 And finally, as sum and crown of all,
 Should see the people having a strong hand
 In framing their own laws; whence better days
 To all mankind. But, these things set apart,

25 Was not this single confidence enough
 To animate the mind that ever turned
 A thought to human welfare? That henceforth
 Captivity by mandate without law
 Should cease; and open accusation lead

30 To sentence in the hearing of the world,
 And open punishment, if not the air
 Be free to breathe in, and the heart of man
 Dread nothing.

(f) **An extract from *Of Walking the Streets by Day*, a poem by John Gay (1685-1732)**

- When rosemary, and bays, the poet's crown,
 Are bawl'd in frequent cries through all the town;
 Then judge the festival of Christmas near,
 Christmas, the joyous period of the year.
- 5 Now with bright holly all your temples strow,
 With laurel green and sacred mistletoe.
 Now, heav'n-born Charity, thy blessings shed;
 Bid meagre Want uprear her sickly head:
 Bid shiv'ring limbs be warm; let plenty's bowl
- 10 In humble roofs make glad the needy soul.
 See, see, the heav'n-born maid her blessings shed;
 Lo! meagre Want uprears her sickly head;
 Cloth'd are the naked, and the needy glad,
 While selfish Avarice alone is sad.
- 15 Proud coaches pass, regardless of the moan
 Of infant orphans, and the widow's groan;
 While Charity still moves the walker's mind,
 His lib'ral purse relieves the lame and blind.
 Judiciously thy half-pence are bestow'd,
- 20 Where the laborious beggar sweeps the road.
 Whate'er you give, give ever at demand,
 Nor let old age long stretch his palsy'd hand.
 Those who give late are importun'd each day,
 And still are teas'd because they still delay.
- 25 If e'er the miser durst his farthings spare,
 He thinly spreads them through the public square,
 Where, all beside the rail, rang'd beggars lie,
 And from each other catch the doleful cry;
 With heav'n, for two-pence, cheaply wipes his score,
- 30 Lifts up his eyes, and hastes to beggar more.
 Where the brass knocker, wrapt in flannel band,
 Forbids the thunder of the footman's hand;
 Th' upholder, rueful harbinger of death,
 Waits with impatience for the dying breath;
- 35 As vultures, o'er a camp, with hov'ring flight,
 Snuff up the future carnage of the fight.
 Here canst thou pass, unmindful of a pray'r,
 That heav'n in mercy may thy brother spare?

[bays: bay leaves

[teas'd: pestered

[wipes his score: pays his debts

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