



A LEVEL ENGLISH LITERATURE

COMPONENT 3

Unseen Texts

SPECIMEN PAPER

2 hours



ADDITIONAL MATERIALS

In addition to this examination paper, you will need a 12 page answer book.

INSTRUCTIONS TO CANDIDATES

Answer **one** question in Section A and **one** question in Section B.
Write your answers in the separate answer book provided.

INFORMATION FOR CANDIDATES

Section A carries 50 marks and Section B carries 30 marks.

The number of marks is given in brackets at the end of each question or part-question.

You are advised to spend one hour and fifteen minutes on Section A and forty-five minutes on Section B.

You are reminded that assessment will take into account the quality of written communication used in your answers.

No certificate will be awarded to a candidate detected in any unfair practice during the examination.

Section A: Unseen Prose

Answer **one** question.

Read the passage and the supporting extracts which follow.

In your response you are required to:

- discuss in detail how meanings are shaped
- show consideration of any relevant contexts and different interpretations which have informed your reading of the unseen passage.

Either,

Period: 1880-1910

1. Analyse the following passage from Henry James' *The Portrait of a Lady*, published in 1891. You must use the supporting extracts which follow the passage to help you consider contexts and different interpretations. [50]

Isabel Archer is a woman in her early twenties who comes from a genteel family in Albany, New York. In this extract she is living in Europe, unhappy in her marriage to Gilbert Osmond, a man of no social standing or wealth.

She could live it over again, the incredulous terror with which she had taken the measure of her dwelling. Between those four walls she had lived ever since; they were to surround her for the rest of her life. It was the house of darkness, the house of dumbness, the house of suffocation. Osmond's beautiful mind gave it neither light nor air; Osmond's beautiful mind indeed seemed to peep down from a small high window and mock at her. Of course it had not been physical suffering; for physical suffering there might have been a remedy. She could come and go; she had her liberty; her husband was perfectly polite. He took himself so seriously; it was something appalling. Under all his culture, his cleverness, his amenity, under his good-nature, his facility, his knowledge of life, his egotism lay hidden like a serpent in a bank of flowers. She had taken him seriously, but she had not taken him so seriously as that. How could she—especially when she had known him better? She was to think of him as he thought of himself—as the first gentleman in Europe. So it was that she had thought of him at first, and that indeed was the reason she had married him. But when she began to see what it implied she drew back; there was more in the bond than she had meant to put her name to. It implied a sovereign contempt for everyone but some three or four very exalted people whom he envied, and for everything in the world but half a dozen ideas of his own. That was very well; she would have gone with him even there a long distance; for he pointed out to her so much of the baseness and shabbiness of life, opened her eyes so wide to the stupidity, the depravity, the ignorance of mankind, that she had been properly impressed with the infinite vulgarity of things and of the virtue of keeping one's self unspotted by it. But this base, if noble world, it appeared, was after all what one was to live for; one was to keep it forever in one's eye, in order not to enlighten or convert or redeem it, but to extract from it some recognition of one's own superiority. On the one hand it was despicable, but on the other it afforded a standard. Osmond had talked to Isabel about his renunciation, his indifference, the ease with which he dispensed with the usual aids to success; and all this had seemed to her admirable. She had thought it a grand indifference, an exquisite independence. But indifference was really the last of his qualities; she had never seen anyone who thought so much of others. For herself, avowedly, the world had always interested her and the study of her fellow creatures been her constant passion. She would have been willing, however, to renounce all her curiosities and sympathies for the sake of a personal life, if the person concerned had only been able to make her believe it was a gain!

This at least was her present conviction; and the thing certainly would have been easier than to care for society as Osmond cared for it. He was unable to live without it, and she saw that he had never really done so; he had looked at it out of his window even when he appeared to be most detached from it. He had his ideal, just as she had tried to have hers; only it was strange that people should seek for justice in such different quarters. His ideal was a conception of high prosperity and propriety, of the aristocratic life, which she now saw that he deemed himself always, in essence at least, to have led. He had never lapsed from it for an hour; he would never have recovered from the shame of doing so. That again was very well; here too she would have agreed; but they attached such different ideas, such different associations and desires, to the same formulas. Her notion of the aristocratic life was simply the union of great knowledge with great liberty; the knowledge would give one a sense of duty and the liberty a sense of enjoyment. But for Osmond it was altogether a thing of forms, a conscious, calculated attitude. He was fond of the old, the consecrated, the transmitted; so was she, but she pretended to do what she chose with it. He had an immense esteem for tradition; he had told her once that the best thing in the world was to have it, but that if one was so unfortunate as not to have it one must immediately proceed to make it. She knew that he meant by this that she hadn't it, but that he was better off; though from what source he had derived his traditions she never learned.

Supporting Extracts:

“James looked beyond the Woman Question, as it was framed in his time, the question of the vote and education in the nineteenth century, the question of professional advance in the twentieth century...James wished to promote the power of innocence, a conscious innocence without ignorance or naivety.”

Lyndall Gordon, *A Private Life of Henry James*, 1998

“... the ‘real life’ of London in the Eighties and Nineties gave James the means to mature that reality of the tears and the ball-dress, to perfect his whole unique understanding of the jungle within the drawing-room...”

Barbara Everett, *London Review of Books*, 1981

Or,

Period 1918-1939

2. Analyse the following passage from Evelyn Waugh's *A Handful of Dust*, published in 1934. You **must use** the supporting extracts which follow the passage to help you consider contexts and different interpretations. [50]

Brenda is married to Tony Last, a member of the landed gentry. They live at Hetton Abbey, Tony's ancestral home. Brenda has started an affair with John Beaver and has taken a flat in London to stay in when she visits him. While she waits for the flat to be furnished, she stays with her sister, Marjorie.

Brenda's stay at Hetton lasted only for three nights. Then she returned to London saying that she had to see about the flat. It did not, however, require very great attention. There was only the colour of the paint to choose and some few articles of furniture. Mrs. Beaver had them ready for her inspection, a bed, a carpet, a dressing table and chair - there was not room for more. Mrs. Beaver tried to sell her a set of needlework pictures for the walls, but these she refused, also an electric bed warmer, a miniature weighing machine for the bathroom, a frigidaire, an antique grandfather clock, a backgammon set of looking-glass and synthetic ivory, a set of prettily bound French eighteenth century poets, a massage apparatus, and a wireless set fitted in a case of Regency lacquer, all of which had been grouped in the shop for her as a suggestion. Mrs. Beaver bore Brenda no ill will for the modesty of her requirements; she was doing very well on the floor above with a Canadian lady who was having her walls covered with chromium plating at immense expense.

Meanwhile Brenda stayed with Marjorie, on terms which gradually became acrimonious. "I'm sorry to be pompous," she said one morning, "but I just don't want your Mr. Beaver hanging about the house all day and calling me Marjorie."

"Oh well, the flat won't be long now."

"And I shall go on saying that I think you're making a ridiculous mistake."

"It's just that you don't like Mr. Beaver."

"It isn't only that. I think it's hard cheese on Tony."

"Oh, Tony's all right."

"And if there's a row -"

"There won't be a row."

"You never know. If there is, I don't want Allan to think I've been helping to arrange things."

"I wasn't so disagreeable to you about Robin Beaseley."

"There was never much in that," said Marjorie.

But with the exception of her sister's, opinion was greatly in favour of Brenda's adventure. The morning telephone buzzed with news of her; even people with whom she had the barest acquaintance were delighted to relate that they had seen her and Beaver the evening before at restaurant or cinema. It had been an autumn of very sparse and meagre romance; only the most obvious people had parted or come together, and Brenda was filling a want long felt by those whose simple, vicarious pleasure it was to discuss the subject in bed over the telephone. For them her circumstances shed peculiar glamour; for five years she had been a legendary, almost ghostly name, the imprisoned princess of fairy story, and now that she had emerged there was more enchantment in the occurrence, than in the mere change of habit of any other circumspiced wife. Her very choice of partner gave the affair an appropriate touch of fantasy; Beaver, the joke figure they had all known and despised, suddenly caught up to her among the luminous clouds of deity. If, after seven years looking neither to right nor left, she had at last broken away with Jock Grant-Menzies or Robin Beaseley or any other young buck with whom nearly everyone had had a crack one time or another, it would have been thrilling no doubt, but straightforward, drawing-room comedy. The choice of Beaver raised the whole escapade into a realm of poetry for Polly and Daisy and Angela and all the gang of gossips.

Mrs. Beaver made no bones about her delight. "Of course the subject has not been mentioned between John and myself, but if what I hear is true, I think it will do the boy a world of good. Of course he's always been very much in demand and had a great number of friends, *but that isn't the same thing*. I've felt for a long time a lack of something in him, and I think that a charming and experienced woman like Brenda Last is just the person to help him. He's got a very affectionate nature, but he's so sensitive that he hardly ever lets it appear ... to tell you the truth I felt something of the kind was in the air last week, so I made an excuse to go away for a few days. If I had been there things might never have come to anything. He's very shy and reserved even to me. I'll have the chess-men done up and sent round to you this afternoon. Thank you so much."

And Beaver, for the first time in his life, found himself a person of interest and, almost of consequence. Women studied him with a new scrutiny, wondering what they had missed in him; men treated him as an equal, even as a successful fellow competitor. "How on earth has he got away with it?" they may have asked themselves, but now, when he came into Brat's, they made room for him at the bar and said, "Well, old boy, how about one?"

Supporting Extracts:

"...the novel is...a deep(er) indictment of contemporary civilisation because it chronicles social and moral disintegration so pervasive that the characters are unaware of it and the omniscient authorial voice reveals it primarily through implication."

Robert Murray Davis, *Introduction to the Penguin edition of 'A Handful of Dust', 1997*

"All fictional characters are flat. A writer can only give an illusion of depth by giving an apparently stereoscopic view of a character – seeing him from two vantage points [...] I regard writing not as investigation of character, but as an exercise in the use of language, and with this I am obsessed. I have no technical psychological interest. It is drama, speech and events that interest me."

Evelyn Waugh, *Paris Review*, 1963

Section B: Unseen Poetry

Answer **one** question.

Either,

3. Analyse the following poem. Your response must include detailed discussion of how meanings are shaped in the poem. [30]

To My Daughter in a Red Coat

Late October. It is afternoon.
My daughter and I walk through the leaf-strewn
Corridors of the park
In the light and the dark
Of the elms' thin arches.

Around us brown leaves fall and spread.
Small winds stir the minor dead.
Dust powders the air.
Those shrivelled women stare.
At us from their cold benches.

Child, your mittens tug your sleeves.
They lick your drumming feet, the leaves.
You come so fast, so fast.
You violate the past,
My daughter, as your coat dances.

Anne Stevenson

Or,

4. Analyse the following poem. Your response must include detailed discussion of how meanings are shaped in the poem. [30]

Immortality

Foil'd by our fellow-men, depress'd, outworn,
We leave the brutal world to take its way,
And, *Patience! in another life*, we say
The world shall be thrust down, and we up-borne.

And will not, then, the immortal armies scorn
The world's poor, routed leavings? or will they,
Who fail'd under the heat of this life's day,
Support the fervours of the heavenly morn?

No, no! the energy of life may be
Kept on after the grave, but not begun;
And he who flagg'd not in the earthly strife,

From strength to strength advancing—only he,
His soul well-knit, and all his battles won,
Mounts, and that hardly, to eternal life.

Matthew Arnold