



Cambridge IGCSE™ (9–1)

LITERATURE IN ENGLISH

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Paper 4 Unseen

October/November 2020

1 hour 15 minutes



You must answer on the enclosed answer booklet.

You will need: Answer booklet (enclosed)

INSTRUCTIONS

- Answer **one** question: **either** Question 1 **or** Question 2.
- Follow the instructions on the front cover of the answer booklet. If you need additional answer paper, ask the invigilator for a continuation booklet.

INFORMATION

- The total mark for this paper is 25.
- All questions are worth equal marks.

This document has **8** pages. Blank pages are indicated.

2

You are advised to spend about 20 minutes reading the question paper and planning your answer.

Answer **either** Question 1 **or** Question 2.

EITHER

- 1 Read carefully the poem opposite, written by a poet who was a teacher. She gives advice to another teacher about the phrases to use in school reports.

How does the poet memorably convey thoughts about the language of school reports?

To help you answer this question, you might consider:

- what the poet thinks about the choice of words in school reports
- how different readers will read those words in different ways
- how she develops the significance of these words in the final two stanzas.

3

Reports

Has made a sound beginning

Strikes the right note:

Encouraging, but dull.

Don't give them anything

To take hold of. Even

Pronouns are dangerous.

The good have no history,

So don't bother. *Satisfactory*

Should satisfy them.

Fair and Quite good,

Multi-purpose terms,

By meaning nothing,

Apply to all.

Feel free to deploy them.

Be on your guard;

*Unmanageable oaf*¹ cuts both ways.

Finds the subject difficult,

Acquitting you, converts

Oaf into idiot, usher² to master.

Parent, child, head,

Unholy trinity, will read

Your scripture backwards,

Set them no riddles, just

Echo the common-room³ cliché:

Must make more effort.

Remember your high calling:

School is the world.

Born at *Sound beginning,*

We move from *Satisfactory*

To *Fair*, then *Find*

The subject difficult,

Learning at last we

Could have done better.

Stone⁴ only, final instructor,

Modulates from the indicative⁵

With *Rest in peace.*

¹ *oaf*: rough or unintelligent person

² *usher*: assistant teacher

³ *common-room*: staff room

⁴ *Stone*: grave stone

⁵ *modulates from the indicative*:
makes a grammatical change

OR

- 2 Read carefully the following extract from a novel. George, a teenage girl, is describing a trip with her mother and brother, Henry, to a European city.

How does the writer strikingly convey the impression which this city makes on George?

To help you answer this question, you might consider:

- how George presents her mother's enthusiasm for the city
- George's observations about the way people behave on the streets
- how the evening ceremonials make a lasting impression.

It's the first modern city in Europe, her mother says as they walk back through it after seeing the palace. Because of the town planning and the walls. Though both of you are used to historic towns, growing up where you've grown up. You see stuff like this every day. It's probably no big deal to you. Anyway, the palace we just saw, with the pictures, pre-dates even the walls. It's from before this city was walled. It's that early. It's outstanding, for something that early.

Then she stops saying things like that and they simply wander in a daze looking a bit like the reprobate¹ kids at school, because this is nothing like home. For instance now that it's the time of day when people here come out and wander about, the streets are full of pedestrians. At the same time the streets are full of people on bikes but the cyclists all mingle in with the crowds and weave round and past her and her mother and Henry and all the other people in a way that seems effortless. It is miraculous that no one ever hits anyone and that people can cycle so slowly and not topple. Nobody topples. Nobody hurries, even in the rain. Nobody rings a bike bell (except, George notices, the tourists, who are easy to spot). Nobody shouts at anybody to get out of the way. Even very old ladies cycle here wearing black with their bicycle baskets full of things wrapped up in paper and tied with ribbons or string, as if being old, going to a shop and buying things and bringing them home are all completely different acts here.

A boy the same age as George passes them at a crossroads with his bare arms on either side of a pretty girl lightly perched holding on to nothing on his handlebars.

George's mother winks at George.

George blushes. Then she is annoyed at herself for blushing.

That night the noise of the summer birds swooping round the roofs near their hotel gives way to a noise of drums and trumpets. They follow this new noise to a square where a crowd of quite young people, older than George but still young, some of whom wear historical costumes tabard²-like slung over their jeans and T-shirts, or have leggings like the people in the pictures they saw earlier, one leg one colour, the other a different colour, are taking turns to do marching dances or dancing marches where they throw huge flags on sticks up in the air, flags which unfurl to be bigger than bedspreads as they go up then fold themselves round their sticks again as they come down. The flag throwers walk with them held at their backs against their shoulders like folded wings, then they wave them about in the air like outsize butterfly wings while other members of their teams (it seems to be a rehearsal for a flag-throwing contest) blow long medieval-looking horns and thump their drums.

She and her mother and Henry stand on an old historic staircase with the other people, above two tall sign boards which say on them TALKING WALLS (you can download a walking tour from each board and one will tell you about where a film director her mother likes grew up, and the other about Giorgio someone, her mother says a novelist who lived here in the past). It is so loud, the rehearsal, that it literally shakes these boards.

But George watches a dog cross the square through the noise and stop to sniff at something then amble off again as if nothing unusual is happening, so maybe something like this just happens here every week. Then, above the heads of everyone in the city, above the highest-tossed of the flags, church bells here and there announce midnight and as if they've been enchanted the next team after that to do a routine does it without drums and bugles but with its musicians humming instead, in tuneful voices and with a gentleness that seems sweet and absurd after the great din of the teams that have gone before.

If only all ceremonials and pomp got hummed like that, her mother says.

¹ *reprobate*: bad

² *tabard*: a coat worn in medieval times

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