



MERIDIAN JUNIOR COLLEGE
JC2 Preliminary Examination
Higher 1

H1 LITERATURE IN ENGLISH

8811/01

Paper 1 Reading Literature

16 September 2014

3 Hours

Additional Materials: Writing Paper

Set texts may be taken into the examination room. They may bear underlining or highlighting.

Any kind of folding or flagging of papers in texts (e.g. use of post-its, tape flags or paper clips) is not permitted.

READ THESE INSTRUCTIONS FIRST

Write in dark blue or black pen on both sides of the paper.

Do not use staples, paper clips, highlighters, glue or correction fluid.

Answer three questions, one from each of Sections A, B and C.

You are reminded of the need for good English and clear presentation in your answers.

At the end of the examination, fasten all your work securely together.

All questions in this paper carry equal marks.

This document consists of **7** printed pages and **2** blank pages.

Candidates must fill in this section		Examiner's Use Only	
Name		Question No.	Total Score
		1 ()	25
Registration No.	Class	2 ()	25
		3 ()	25
		TOTAL:	75

Section A: Poetry

1

- EITHER (a)** Write a critical commentary on the following poem, considering in detail ways in which your response is shaped by the writer's language, form and style.

ORIGINALLY

We came from our own country in a red room
 which fell through the fields, our mother singing
 our father's name to the turn of the wheels.
 My brothers cried, one of them bawling *Home*,
Home, as the miles rushed back to the city, 5
 the street, the house, the vacant rooms
 where we didn't live any more. I stared
 at the eyes of a blind toy, holding its paw.

All childhood is an emigration. Some are slow,
 leaving you standing, resigned, up an avenue 10
 where no one you know stays. Others are sudden.
 Your accent wrong. Corners, which seem familiar,
 leading to unimagined, pebble--dashed estates, big boys
 eating worms and shouting words you don't understand.
 My parents' anxiety stirred like a loose tooth 15
 in my head. *I want our own country*, I said.

But then you forget, or don't recall, or change,
 and, seeing your brother swallow a slug, feel only
 a skelf¹ of shame. I remember my tongue
 shedding its skin like a snake, my voice 20
 in the classroom sounding just like the rest. Do I only think
 I lost a river, culture, speech, sense of first space
 and the right place? Now, *Where do you come from?*
 strangers ask. *Originally?* And I hesitate

Carol Ann Duffy

[Turn over

¹ Splinter or sliver

OR (b) Write a critical commentary on the following poem, considering in detail ways in which your response is shaped by the writer's language, form and style.

NEIGHBOUR, TENTH FLOOR

Beyond a span of wall
I can imagine you:

Gaping	
your sleep-soured dawnbreaths,	
waking	5
your habitual body,	
and in a web of bedclothes	
sitting up	
dishevelled	
to grope for clock and eyeglasses	10
as I reach out for mine.	

I know you pace your cage,	
halfway to the sky	
in this communal ivory tower,	
for I hear your footsteps	15
echoing mine	
in the adjacent cell.	

When you flush your waste	
my cistern gurgles too,	
and the mutter of my saucepans	20
answers the descant of yours.	

Boxed in our hired cubicles	
we act the self-same-ings	
feeding cursing waiting	
and watching television	25
(that disingenuous window).	

We nod civilly on thresholds,	
grin cosily in liftcars,	
and disappear like land-crabs	
into separate occasions.	30

Daily I want to rush to you	
weeping with recognition	
and embrace you calling,	
calling,	
I am your neighbour,	35
Love me,	

then live with you,
together away
 from these lonely dens;
but what would be the use?

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It is better to tap out an endless message
against that imperceptible wall
that must always divide us.

A. L. Hendricks

Section B
EDITH WHARTON: *The Age of Innocence*

2.

Either (a) Discuss Wharton's presentation of men in *The Age of Innocence*.

Or (b) Write a critical commentary on the following passage, relating it in detail to Wharton's presentation of customs and culture, here and elsewhere in the novel.

OLD-FASHIONED New York dined at seven, and the habit of after-dinner calls, though derided in Archer's set, still generally prevailed. As the young man strolled up Fifth Avenue from Waverley Place, the long thoroughfare was deserted but for a group of carriages standing before the Reggie Chiverses' (where there was a dinner for the Duke), and the occasional figure of an elderly gentleman in heavy overcoat and muffler ascending a brownstone doorstep and disappearing into a gas-lit hall. Thus, as Archer crossed Washington Square, he remarked that old Mr. du Lac was calling on his cousins the Dagonets, and turning down the corner of West Tenth Street he saw Mr. Skipworth, of his own firm, obviously bound on a visit to the Miss Lannings. A little farther up Fifth Avenue, Beaufort appeared on his doorstep, darkly projected against a blaze of light, descended to his private brougham, and rolled away to a mysterious and probably unmentionable destination. It was not an Opera night, and no one was giving a party, so that Beaufort's outing was undoubtedly of a clandestine nature. Archer connected it in his mind with a little house beyond Lexington Avenue in which beribboned window curtains and flower-boxes had recently appeared, and before whose newly painted door the canary-coloured brougham of Miss Fanny Ring was frequently seen to wait. 5 10 15

Beyond the small and slippery pyramid which composed Mrs. Archer's world lay the almost unmapped quarter inhabited by artists, musicians and "people who wrote". These scattered fragments of humanity had never shown any desire to be amalgamated with the social structure. In spite of odd ways they were said to be, for the most part, quite respectable; but they preferred to keep to themselves. Medora Manson, in her prosperous days, had inaugurated a "literary salon"; but it had soon died out owing to the reluctance of the literary to frequent it. 20

Others had made the same attempt, and there was a household of Blenkers -- an intense and voluble mother, and three blowsy daughters who imitated her -- where one met Edwin Booth and Patti and William Winter, and the new Shakespearian actor George Rignold, and some of the magazine editors and musical and literary critics. 25

Mrs. Archer and her group felt a certain timidity concerning these persons. They were odd, they were uncertain, they had things one didn't know about in the background of their lives and minds. Literature and art were deeply respected in the Archer set, and Mrs. Archer was always at pains to tell her children how much more agreeable and cultivated society had been when it included such figures as Washington Irving, Fitz-Greene Halleck and the poet of "The Culprit Fay". The most celebrated authors of that generation had been "gentlemen"; perhaps the unknown persons who succeeded them had gentlemanly sentiments, but their origin, their appearance, their hair, their intimacy with the stage and the Opera, made any old New York criterion inapplicable to them. 30 35

"When I was a girl," Mrs. Archer used to say, "we knew everybody between the Battery and Canal Street; and only the people one knew had carriages. It was perfectly easy to place any one then; now one can't tell, and I prefer not to try."

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Only old Catherine Mingott, with her absence of moral prejudices and almost parvenu indifference to the subtler distinctions, might have bridged the abyss; but she had never opened a book or looked at a picture, and cared for music only because it reminded her of gala nights at the Italiens, in the days of her triumph at the Tuileries. Possibly Beaufort, who was her match in daring, would have succeeded in bringing about a fusion; but his grand house and silk-stockinged footmen were an obstacle to informal sociability. Moreover, he was as illiterate as old Mrs. Mingott, and considered "fellows who wrote" as the mere paid purveyors of rich men's pleasures; and no one rich enough to influence his opinion had ever questioned it.

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Newland Archer had been aware of these things ever since he could remember, and had accepted them as part of the structure of his universe. He knew that there were societies where painters and poets and novelists and men of science, and even great actors, were as sought after as Dukes; he had often pictured to himself what it would have been to live in the intimacy of drawing-rooms dominated by the talk of Mérimée (whose "Lettres à une Inconnue" was one of his inseparables), of Thackeray, Browning or William Morris. But such things were inconceivable in New York, and unsettling to think of. Archer knew most of the "fellows who wrote," the musicians and the painters: he met them at the Century, or at the little musical and theatrical clubs that were beginning to come into existence. He enjoyed them there, and was bored with them at the Blenkers', where they were mingled with fervid and dowdy women who passed them about like captured curiosities; and even after his most exciting talks with Ned Winsett he always came away with the feeling that if his world was small, so was theirs, and that the only way to enlarge either was to reach a stage of manners where they would naturally merge.

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Chapter 12

Section C
WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE: *Twelfth Night*

3.

Either (a) *'Shakespeare's portrayal of Viola is ultimately defeating – he does not portray her as anything more than a passive, helpless woman.'*
 Do you agree?

Or (b) Write a critical commentary on the following passage, relating it in detail to Shakespeare's presentation of comedy, here and elsewhere in the play.

<i>Sir Toby</i>	Which way is he, in the name of sanctity? If all the devils of hell be drawn in little, and Legion himself possessed him, yet I'll speak to him.	
<i>Fabian</i>	Here he is, here he is. How is't with you, sir? how is't with you, man?	
<i>Malvolio</i>	Go off; I discard you: let me enjoy my private: go off.	
<i>Maria</i>	Lo, how hollow the fiend speaks within him! did not I tell you? Sir Toby, my lady prays you to have a care of him.	5
<i>Malvolio</i>	Ah, ha! does she so?	
<i>Sir Toby</i>	Go to, go to; peace, peace; we must deal gently with him: let me alone. How do you, Malvolio? How is't with you? What, man! defy the devil: consider, he's an enemy to mankind.	10
<i>Malvolio</i>	Do you know what you say?	
<i>Maria</i>	La you, an you speak ill of the devil, how he takes it at heart! Pray God, he be not bewitched!	
<i>Fabian</i>	Carry his water to the wise woman.	
<i>Maria</i>	Marry, and it shall be done to-morrow morning, if I live. My lady would not lose him for more than I'll say.	15
<i>Malvolio</i>	How now, mistress!	
<i>Maria</i>	O Lord!	
<i>Sir Toby</i>	Prithee, hold thy peace; this is not the way: do you not see you move him? let me alone with him.	20
<i>Fabian</i>	No way but gentleness; gently, gently: the fiend is rough, and will not be roughly used.	
<i>Sir Toby</i>	Why, how now, my bawcock! how dost thou, chuck?	
<i>Malvolio</i>	Sir!	
<i>Sir Toby</i>	Ay, Biddy, come with me. What, man! 'tis not for gravity to play at cherry-pit with Satan: hang him, foul collier!	25
<i>Maria</i>	Get him to say his prayers, good Sir Toby, get him to pray.	
<i>Malvolio</i>	My prayers, minx?	
<i>Maria</i>	No, I warrant you, he will not hear of godliness.	
<i>Malvolio</i>	Go, hang yourselves all! you are idle shallow things: I am not of your element: you shall know more hereafter.	30
	<i>[Exit]</i>	
<i>Sir Toby</i>	Is't possible?	
<i>Fabian</i>	If this were played upon a stage now, I could condemn it as an improbable fiction.	
<i>Sir Toby</i>	His very genius hath taken the infection of the device, man.	35
<i>Maria</i>	Nay, pursue him now, lest the device take air and taint.	
<i>Fabian</i>	Why, we shall make him mad indeed.	
<i>Maria</i>	The house will be the quieter.	
<i>Sir Toby</i>	Come, we'll have him in a dark room and bound. My niece is already in the belief that he's mad: we may carry it thus, for our pleasure and his penance, till our very pastime, tired out of breath, prompt us to have mercy on him: at which time we will bring the device to the bar and crown thee for a finder of madmen. But see, but see.	40

Act 3 Scene iv

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