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## 2014 Promotional Examination II

### Pre-University 2

**Literature in English**  
**Higher 1**

**8811/01**

Paper 1: Reading Literature

3 September 2014

3 hours

Additional Materials: Foolscape Paper

Set texts may be taken into the examination room.

They may bear underlining or highlighting.

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

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### READ THESE INSTRUCTIONS FIRST

Write your name, class and index number on all the work you hand in.

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 each from **Sections A, B and C**.

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

All questions in this paper carry equal marks.

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

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**This question paper consists of 6 printed pages.**

**[Turn over]**

## Section A

1

**Either (a)** Write a critical commentary on the following poem, paying close attention to ways in which your response is shaped by the poet's language, style and form.

### I Found A Few Old Letters

I found a few old letters of mine carefully hidden in thy box  
 a few small toys for thy memory to play with.  
 With a timorous heart thou didst try  
 to steal these trifles from the turbulent stream of time which  
 washes away planets and stars, and didst say, 5  
 "These are only mine!"  
 Alas, there is no one now who can claim them,  
 who is able to pay their price; yet they are still here.  
 Is there no love in this world to rescue thee from utter loss,  
 even like this love of thine that saved these letters with such 10  
 fond care?  
 O woman, thou camest for a moment to my side and touched  
 me with the great mystery of the woman that there is in the  
 heart of creation—  
 she who ever gives back to God his own outflow of sweetness; 15  
 who is the eternal love and beauty and youth;  
 who dances in bubbling streams and sings in the morning light;  
 who with heaving waves suckles the thirsty earth and whose  
 mercy melts in rain;  
 In whom the eternal one breaks in two in joy that can contain 20  
 itself no more and overflows in the pain of love.

Rabindranath Tagore (1861 - 1941)

1

**Or (b)** Write a critical commentary on the following poem, paying close attention to ways in which your response is shaped by the poet's language, style and form.

### **Loud Music**

My stepdaughter and I circle round and round.  
 You see, I like the music loud, the speakers  
 throbbing, jam-packing the room with sound whether  
 Bach or rock and roll, the volume cranked up so  
 each bass notes is like a hand smacking the gut. 5  
 But my stepdaughter disagrees. She is four  
 and likes the music decorous, pitched below  
 her own voice-that tenuous projection of self.  
 With music blasting, she feels she disappears,  
 is lost within the blare, which in fact I like. 10  
 But at four what she wants is self-location  
 and uses her voice as a porpoise uses  
 its sonar: to find herself in all this space.  
 If she had a sort of box with a peephole  
 and looked inside, what she'd like to see would be 15  
 herself standing there in her red pants, jacket,  
 yellow plastic lunch box: a proper subject  
 for serious study. But me, if I raised  
 the same box to my eye, I would wish to find  
 the ocean on one of those days when wind 20  
 and thick cloud make the water gray and restless  
 as if some creature brooded underneath,  
 a rocky coast with a road along the shore  
 where someone like me was walking and has gone.  
 Loud music does this, it wipes out the ego, 25  
 leaving turbulent water and winding road,  
 a landscape stripped of people and language-  
 how clear the air becomes, how sharp the colours.

Stephen Dobyns (1941 - )

**[Turn over]**

## Section B

Edith Wharton: *Age of Innocence*

2.

**Either (a)** How far do you find the title of this novel an appropriate one for the issues it explores.

**Or (b)** Write a critical commentary on the following passage, relating it to Wharton's treatment of love, here and elsewhere in the novel.

The day was perfect. A breeze from the north drove little puffs of white cloud across an ultramarine sky, with a bright sea running under it. Bellevue Avenue was empty at that hour, and after dropping the stable-lad at the corner of Mill Street Archer turned down the Old Beach Road and drove across Eastman's Beach.

He had the feeling of unexplained excitement with which, on half-holidays at school, he used to start off into the unknown. Taking his pair at an easy gait, he counted on reaching the stud-farm, which was not far beyond Paradise Rocks, before three o'clock; so that, after looking over the horse (and trying him if he seemed promising) he would still have four golden hours to dispose of. 5

As soon as he heard of the Sillerton's party he had said to himself that the Marchioness Manson would certainly come to Newport with the Blenkers, and that Madame Olenska might again take the opportunity of spending the day with her grandmother. At any rate, the Blenker habitation would probably be deserted, and he would be able, without indiscretion, to satisfy a vague curiosity concerning it. He was not sure that he wanted to see the Countess Olenska again; but ever since he had looked at her from the path above the bay he had wanted, irrationally and indescribably, to see the place she was living in, and to follow the movements of her imagined figure as he had watched the real one in the summer-house. The longing was with him day and night, an incessant undefinable craving, like the sudden whim of a sick man for food or drink once tasted and long since forgotten. He could not see beyond the craving, or picture what it might lead to, for he was not conscious of any wish to speak to Madame Olenska or to hear her voice. He simply felt that if he could carry away the vision of the spot of earth she walked on, and the way the sky and sea enclosed it, the rest of the world might seem less empty. 10 15 20

When he reached the stud-farm a glance showed him that the horse was not what he wanted; nevertheless he took a turn behind it in order to prove to himself that he was not in a hurry. But at three o'clock he shook out the reins over the trotters and turned into the by-roads leading to Portsmouth. The wind had dropped and a faint haze on the horizon showed that a fog was waiting to steal up the Saconnet on the turn of the tide; but all about him fields and woods were steeped in golden light. 25

He drove past grey-shingled farm-houses in orchards, past hay-fields and groves of oak, past villages with white steeples rising sharply into the fading sky; and at last, after stopping to ask the way of some men at work in a field, he turned down a lane between high banks of goldenrod and brambles. At the end of the lane was the blue glimmer of the river; to the left, standing in front of a clump of oaks and maples, he saw a long tumble-down house with white paint peeling from its clapboards. 30 35

On the road-side facing the gateway stood one of the open sheds in which the New Englander shelters his farming implements and visitors "hitch" their "teams." Archer, jumping down, led his pair into the shed, and after tying them to a post turned toward the house. The patch of lawn before it had relapsed into a hay-field; but to the left an overgrown box-garden full of dahlias and rusty rose-bushes encircled a ghostly summer-house of trellis-work that had once been white, surmounted by a wooden Cupid who had lost his bow and arrow but continued to take ineffectual aim. 40

## Section C

Arthur Miller: *All My Sons*

3

- Either** (a) In what ways, and with what effects, does Miller present social problems in *All My Sons*?
- Or** (b) Write a detailed commentary on the following passage paying particular attention to Miller's dramatisation of the father-son relationship, here and elsewhere in the play.

|         |   |    |
|---------|---|----|
| Keller: | Then... Why am I bad?   |    |
| Chris : | I know you're no worse than most men but I thought you were better. I never saw you as a man. I saw you as my father. ( <i>Almost breaking</i> ) I can't look at you this way, I can't look at myself!  | 5  |
|         | [ <i>He turns away, unable to face Keller. Ann goes quickly to Mother, takes letter from her and starts for Chris. Mother instantly rushes to intercept her.</i> ]  |    |
| Mother: | Give me that!   |    |
| Ann:    | He's going to read it! ( <i>She thrusts letter into Chris's hand</i> )<br>He wrote it to me the day he died.  | 10 |
| Keller: | Larry!  |    |
| Mother: | Chris, it's not for you. ( <i>he starts to read</i> ) Joe... go away...   |    |
| Keller: | ( <i>mystified, frightened</i> ) Why'd she say, Larry, what...?   |    |
| Mother: | ( <i>desperately pushes him toward alley, glancing at Chris</i> )<br>Go to the street, Joe, go to the street! ( <i>she comes down beside Keller</i> ) Don't, Chris... ( <i>pleading with her whole soul</i> )<br>Don't tell him.  | 15 |
| Chris:  | ( <i>quietly</i> ) Three and one half years... talking, talking. Now you tell me what you must do... This is how he died, now tell me where you belong.   | 20 |
| Keller: | ( <i>pleading</i> ) Chris, a man can't be a Jesus in this world!  |    |
| Chris:  | I know all about the world. I know the whole crap story. Now listen to this, and tell me what a man's got to be!<br>( <i>Reads:</i> ) "My dear Ann: ...", you listening? He wrote this the day he died. Listen, don't cry.... Listen! "My Dear<br>It is impossible to put down the things I feel. But I've got to tell you something. Yesterday they flew in a load of papers from the States and I read about Dad and your father being convicted. I can't express myself. I can't tell you how I feel... I can't bear to live any more. Last night I circled the base for twenty minutes before I could bring myself in. How could he have done that? Every day three or four men never come back and he sits back there doing 'business'.... I don't know how to tell you what I feel.... I can't face anybody... I'm going out on a mission in a few minutes. They'll probably report me as missing. If they do, I want you to know that you mustn't wait for me. I tell you, Ann, if I had him there now I could kill him..." ( <i>Keller grabs the letter from Chris's hand and reads it. After a</i> | 25 |
|         |   | 30 |
|         |   | 35 |
|         |   | 40 |

[Turn over]

*long pause*) Now blame the world. Do you understand that letter?

Keller: *(speaking almost inaudibly)* I think I do. Get the car. I'll put on my jacket. *(he turns and starts slowly for the house. Mother rushes to intercept him)*

45

Mother: Why are you going? You'll sleep, why are you going?

Keller: I can't sleep here. I'll feel better if I go.

Mother: You're so foolish. Larry was your son too, wasn't he? You know he'd never tell you to do this.

Keller: *(looking at letter in his hand)* Then what is this if it isn't telling me? Sure, he was my son. But I think to him they were all my sons. And I guess they were, I guess they were. I'll be right down. *(exits into house)*

50

Act Three

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**[Turn over]**