



RIVER VALLEY HIGH SCHOOL  
ADVANCED LEVEL  
YEAR 6 PRELIMINARY EXAMINATIONS 2  
HIGHER 2

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**LITERATURE IN ENGLISH**

**9748/2**

23 September  
Drama Studio 1  
3 hours

**Paper 2 Victorian Literature (1830 – 1899)**

Set texts may be taken into the examination room. Only underlining, highlighting or the use of vertical lines in the margins is permitted. Nothing else should be written in the texts. Any kind of folding or flagging of pages in texts (e.g. use of post-its, tape flags or paper clips) is also not permitted.

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**READ THESE INSTRUCTIONS FIRST**

Write your name, index no. and class on all the work you hand in.

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

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

Answer **THREE** questions, **one** from **each** section.

Start each answer on a fresh piece of paper.

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 carry equal marks.

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This document consists of **7** printed pages.

**[Turn over**

**SECTION A**  
**Answer one question from this section.**

**1 Either**

- (a) Write a critical appreciation of the following poem by Elizabeth Barrett Browning (published 1877), relating its style and concerns to features of the period.

The Cry of the Children

DO ye hear the children weeping, O my brothers,  
Ere the sorrow comes with years?  
They are leaning their young heads against their mothers,  
And that cannot stop their tears.  
The young lambs are bleating in the meadows, 5  
The young birds are chirping in the nest,  
The young fawns are playing with the shadows,  
The young flowers are blowing toward the west:  
But the young, young children, O my brothers,  
They are weeping bitterly! 10  
They are weeping in the playtime of the others,  
In the country of the free.

Do you question the young children in the sorrow  
Why their tears are falling so?  
The old man may weep for his to-morrow 15  
Which is lost in Long Ago;  
The old tree is leafless in the forest,  
The old year is ending in the frost,  
The old wound, if stricken, is the sorest,  
The old hope is hardest to be lost: 20  
But the young, young children, O my brothers,  
Do you ask them why they stand  
Weeping sore before the bosoms of their mothers,  
In our happy Fatherland?

They look up with their pale and sunken faces, 25  
And their looks are sad to see,  
For the man's hoary anguish draws and presses  
Down the cheeks of infancy;  
"Your old earth," they say, "is very dreary,  
Our young feet," they say, "are very weak; 30  
Few paces have we taken, yet are weary—  
Our grave-rest is very far to seek:  
Ask the aged why they weep, and not the children,  
For the outside earth is cold,  
And we young ones stand without, in our bewildering, 35  
And the graves are for the old."

"True," say the children, "it may happen  
 That we die before our time:  
 Little Alice died last year, her grave is shapen  
 Like a snowball, in the rime<sup>1</sup>. 40  
 We looked into the pit prepared to take her:  
 Was no room for any work in the close clay!  
 From the sleep wherein she lieth none will wake her,  
 Crying, 'Get up, little Alice! it is day.'  
 If you listen by that grave, in sun and shower, 45  
 With your ear down, little Alice never cries:  
 Could we see her face, be sure we should not know her,  
 For the smile has time for growing in her eyes:  
 And merry go her moments, lull'd and still'd in  
 The shroud by the kirk-chime<sup>2</sup>. 50  
 It is good when it happens," say the children,  
 "That we die before our time."

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<sup>1</sup> Frost

<sup>2</sup> Church bells chiming

Or

- (b) The following extract, from the tragicomical novel, *The Egoist* (1879) by George Meredith, tells the story of self-absorbed Sir Willoughby Patterne and his attempts to be married. Write a critical commentary of the extract, relating it themes and style to features of the period.

Meanwhile there was a fear that he would lose his chance of marrying the beautiful Miss Durham.

The dilemmas of little princes are often grave. They should be dwelt on now and then for an example to poor struggling commoners, of the slings and arrows assailing fortune's most favoured men, that we may preach contentment to the wretch who cannot muster wherewithal to marry a wife, or has done it and trots the streets, pack-laden, to maintain the dame and troops of children painfully reared to fill subordinate stations. According to our reading, a moral is always welcome in a moral country, and especially so when silly envy is to be chastised by it, the restless craving for change rebuked. Young Sir Willoughby, then, stood in this dilemma:—a lady was at either hand of him; the only two that had ever, apart from metropolitan conquests, not to be recited, touched his emotions. Susceptible to beauty, he had never seen so beautiful a girl as Constantia Durham. Equally susceptible to admiration of himself, he considered Laetitia Dale a paragon of cleverness. He stood between the queenly rose and the modest violet. One he bowed to; the other bowed to him. He could not have both; it is the law governing princes and pedestrians alike. But which could he forfeit? His growing acquaintance with the world taught him to put an increasing price on the sentiments of Miss Dale. Still Constantia's beauty was of a kind to send away beholders aching. She had the glory of the racing cutter full sail on a whining breeze; and she did not court to win him, she flew. In his more reflective hour the attractiveness of that lady which held the mirror to his features was paramount. But he had passionate snatches when the magnetism of the flyer drew him in her wake. Further to add to the complexity, he loved his liberty; he was princelier free; he had more subjects, more slaves; he ruled arrogantly in the world of women; he was more himself. His metropolitan experiences did not answer to his liking the particular question, Do we bind the woman down to us idolatrously by making a wife of her?

In the midst of his deliberations, a report of the hot pursuit of Miss Durham, casually mentioned to him by Lady Busshe, drew an immediate proposal from Sir Willoughby. She accepted him, and they were engaged. She had been nibbled at, all but eaten up, while he hung dubitative; and though that was the cause of his winning her, it offended his niceness. She had not come to him out of cloistral purity, out of perfect radiancy. Spiritually, likewise, was he a little prince, a despotic prince. He wished for her to have come to him out of an egg-shell, somewhat more astonished at things than a chicken, but as completely enclosed before he tapped the shell, and seeing him with her sex's eyes first of all men. She talked frankly of her cousins and friends, young males. She could have replied to his bitter wish: "Had you asked me on the night of your twenty-first birthday, Willoughby!" Since

then she had been in the dust of the world, and he conceived his peculiar antipathy, destined to be so fatal to him, from the earlier hours of his engagement. He was quaintly incapable of a jealousy of individuals. 40

A young Captain Oxford had been foremost in the swarm pursuing Constantia. Willoughby thought as little of Captain Oxford as he did of Vernon Whitford. His enemy was the world, the mass, which confounds us in a lump, which has breathed on her whom we have selected, whom we cannot, can never, rub quite clear of her contact with the abominated crowd. The pleasure of the world is to bowl down our soldierly letter I; to encroach on our identity, soil our niceness. To begin to think is the beginning of disgust of the world. 45

### **SECTION B**

**Answer one question in this section, using two texts that you have studied.**

**2**

- Either**    **a)** Compare the ways in which two writers of the Victorian period present class and the relationship between classes.
- Or**        **b)** Compare the treatment of authority and figures of authority in the work of two writers of the period that you have studied.

### SECTION C

Answer one question from this section, using one text that you have studied.  
The text used in this section cannot be used in Section B.

#### CHARLES DICKENS: *Great Expectations*

3

- Either** (a) Examine Dickens' use of symbolism and show how it contributes to the themes of the novel.
- Or** (b) Discuss the theme of ambition in *Great Expectations*.

#### CHARLOTTE BRONTE: *Jane Eyre*

4

- Either** (a) '*Jane Eyre* is a novel about conformity.' To what extent do you agree with the statement?
- Or** (b) Consider Bronte's use of setting in the novel and its effects on our understanding of the novel.

#### G.B. SHAW: *Mrs Warren's Profession*

5

- Either** (a) Discuss Shaw's presentation of the mother-daughter conflict in the play.
- Or** (b) 'I was not thinking of money, sir. I was speaking of higher things. Social position, for instance.' (Rev S, Act 1 L665-666)

Comment on Shaw's exploration of social attitudes in the light of Rev. Samuel Gardner's words above.

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