



HWA CHONG INSTITUTION
JC2 Preliminary Examination
Higher 1

**CANDIDATE
NAME**

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CT GROUP

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**CENTRE
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LITERATURE IN ENGLISH

Paper 1 Reading Literature
Additional Materials: Answer Paper

8811/01

14 September 2015

3 hours

READ THESE INSTRUCTIONS FIRST

Set texts may be taken into the examination room. They may bear underlining or highlighting. Any kind of folding or flagging in texts (e.g. use of post-its, tape flags or paper clips) is not permitted.

Write your name and class 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.

DO NOT WRITE IN ANY BARCODES.

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 and submit your answer to each question **SEPARATELY.**

All questions in this paper carry equal marks.

Section A

1

Either (a) Write a critical commentary of the following poem, considering in detail ways in which the poet uses language, style and form to present feelings about a childhood memory.

A

BLACKBERRY-PICKING

Late August, given heavy rain and sun
 For a full week, the blackberries would ripen.
 At first, just one, a glossy purple clot
 Among others, red, green, hard as a knot.
 You ate that first one and its flesh was sweet 5
 Like thickened wine: summer's blood was in it
 Leaving stains upon the tongue and lust for
 Picking. Then red ones inked up and that hunger
 Sent us out with milk cans, pea tins, jam-pots
 Where briars scratched and wet grass bleached our boots. 10
 Round hayfields, cornfields and potato-drills
 We trekked and picked until the cans were full,
 Until the tinkling bottom had been covered
 With green ones, and on top big dark blobs burned
 Like a plate of eyes. Our hands were peppered 15
 With thorn pricks, our palms sticky as Bluebeard's.

We hoarded the fresh berries in the byre.*
 But when the bath was filled we found a fur,
 A rat-grey fungus, glutting on our cache.
 The juice was stinking too. Once off the bush 20
 The fruit fermented, the sweet flesh would turn sour.
 I always felt like crying. It wasn't fair
 That all the lovely canfuls smelt of rot.
 Each year I hoped they'd keep, knew they would not.

Seamus Heaney

*byre: a shed or a barn

- Or (b) Write a critical commentary of the following poem, considering how the poet uses language, structure and form to present death.

B

THE FIELD-MOUSE

Summer, and the long grass is a snare drum.
 The air hums with jets.
 Down at the end of the meadow,
 far from the radio's terrible news,
 we cut the hay. All afternoon 5
 its wave breaks before the tractor blade.
 Over the hedge our neighbour travels his field
 in a cloud of lime, drifting our land
 with a chance gift of sweetness.

The child comes running through the killed flowers, 10
 his hands a nest of quivering mouse,
 its black eyes two sparks burning.
 We know it will die and ought to finish it off.
 It curls in agony big as itself
 and the star goes out in its eye. 15
 Summer in Europe, the field's hurt,
 and the children kneel in long grass,
 staring at what we have crushed.

Before day's done the field lies bleeding,
 the dusk garden inhabited by the saved, voles, 20
 frogs, a nest of mice. The wrong that woke
 from a rumour of pain won't heal,
 and we can't face the newspapers.
 All night I dream the children dance in grass
 their bones brittle as mouse-ribs, the air 25
 stammering with gunfire, my neighbour turned
 stranger, wounding my land with stones.

Gillian Clarke

Section B

Edith Wharton: *The Age of Innocence*

2

Either (a) Consider the role and significance of the author's personal voice in the novel.

Or (b) Write a critical commentary on the following passage, considering Wharton's presentation of family loyalty here and elsewhere in the novel.

"Our family," she corrected herself; and Archer coloured. "For you'll be my cousin soon," she continued gently.

"I hope so."

"And you take their view?"

He stood up at this, wandered across the room, stared with void eyes at one of the pictures against the old red damask, and came back irresolutely to her side. How could he say: "Yes, if what your husband hints is true, or if you've no way of disproving it?"

"Sincerely—" she interjected, as he was about to speak.

He looked down into the fire. "Sincerely, then—what should you gain that would compensate for the possibility—the certainty—of a lot of beastly talk?"

"But my freedom—is that nothing?"

It flashed across him at that instant that the charge in the letter was true, and that she hoped to marry the partner of her guilt. How was he to tell her that, if she really cherished such a plan, the laws of the State were inexorably opposed to it? The mere suspicion that the thought was in her mind made him feel harshly and impatiently toward her. "But aren't you as free as air as it is?" he returned. "Who can touch you? Mr. Letterblair tells me the financial question has been settled—"

"Oh, yes," she said indifferently.

"Well, then: is it worth while to risk what may be infinitely disagreeable and painful? Think of the newspapers—their vileness! It's all stupid and narrow and unjust—but one can't make over society."

"No," she acquiesced; and her tone was so faint and desolate that he felt a sudden remorse for his own hard thoughts.

"The individual, in such cases, is nearly always sacrificed to what is supposed to be the collective interest: people cling to any convention that keeps the family together—protects the children, if there are any," he rambled on, pouring out all the stock phrases that rose to his lips in his intense desire to cover over the ugly reality which her silence seemed to have laid bare. Since she would not or could not say the one word that would have cleared the air, his wish was not to let her feel that he was trying to probe into her secret. Better keep on the surface, in the prudent old New York way, than risk uncovering a wound he could not heal.

"It's my business, you know," he went on, "to help you to see these things as the people who are fondest of you see them. The Mingotts, the Wellands, the van der Luydens, all your friends and relations: if I didn't show you honestly how they judge such questions, it wouldn't be fair of me, would it?" He spoke insistently, almost pleading with her in his eagerness to cover up that yawning silence.

She said slowly: "No; it wouldn't be fair."

The fire had crumbled down to greyness, and one of the lamps made a gurgling appeal for attention. Madame Olenska rose, wound it up and returned to the fire, but without resuming her seat.

Her remaining on her feet seemed to signify that there was nothing more for either of them to say, and Archer stood up also.

"Very well; I will do what you wish," she said abruptly. The blood rushed to his forehead; and, taken aback by the suddenness of her surrender, he caught her two hands awkwardly in his.

"I—I do want to help you," he said.

"You do help me. Good night, my cousin."

He bent and laid his lips on her hands, which were cold and lifeless. She drew them away, and he turned to the door, found his coat and hat under the faint gas-light of the hall, and plunged out into the winter night bursting with the belated eloquence of the inarticulate.

50

Chapter XII

Section C

Arthur Miller: *All My Sons*

3

Either (a) 'Idealism is a strong moral force in the play.'

To what extent is this an accurate assessment of Arthur Miller's *All My Sons*?

Or (b) Write a critical commentary on the following passage, considering the ways in which Miller presents the idea of faith here and elsewhere in the play.

Mother:	She's been in New York three and a half years, why all of a sudden...?	
Keller:	Well, maybe... maybe he just wanted to see her...	
Mother:	Nobody comes seven hundred miles "just to see."	
Keller:	What do you mean? He lived next door to the girl all his life, why shouldn't he want to see her again? [<i>Mother looks at him critically.</i>] Don't look at me like that, he didn't tell me any more than he told you.	5
Mother:	[<i>a warning and a question</i>] He's not going to marry her.	
Keller:	How do you know he's even thinking of it?	
Mother:	It's got that about it.	
Keller:	[<i>sharply watching her reaction</i>] Well? So what?	10
Mother:	[<i>alarmed</i>] What's going on here, Joe?	
Keller:	Now listen, kid...	
Mother:	[<i>avoiding contact with him</i>] She's not his girl, Joe; she knows she's not.	
Keller:	You can't read her mind.	
Mother:	Then why is she still single? New York is full of men, why isn't she married? [<i>Pause</i>] Probably a hundred people told her she's foolish, but she's waited.	15
Keller:	How do you know why she waited?	
Mother:	She knows what I know, that's why. She's faithful as a rock. In my worst moments, I think of her waiting, and I know again that I'm right.	
Keller:	Look, it's a nice day. What are we arguing for?	20
Mother:	[<i>warningly</i>] Nobody in this house dast take her faith away, Joe. Strangers might. But not his father, not his brother.	
Keller:	[<i>exasperated</i>] What do you want me to do? What do you want?	
Mother:	I want you to act like he's coming back. Both of you. Don't think I haven't noticed you since Chris invited her. I won't stand for any nonsense.	25
Keller:	But, Kate...	
Mother:	Because if he's not coming back, then I'll kill myself! Laugh. Laugh at me. [<i>She points to tree</i>] But why did that happen the very night she came back? Laugh, but there are meanings in such things. She goes to sleep in his room and his memorial breaks in pieces. Look at it; look. [<i>She sits on bench at his L.</i>] Joe...	30
Keller:	Calm yourself.	
Mother:	Believe with me, Joe. I can't stand all alone.	
Keller:	Calm yourself.	
Mother:	Only last week a man turned up in Detroit, missing longer than Larry. You read it yourself.	35
Keller:	All right, all right, calm yourself.	
Mother:	You above all have got to believe, you...	
Keller:	[<i>rises</i>] Why me above all?	
Mother:	... Just don't stop believing...	
Keller:	What does that mean, me above all? [<i>Bert comes rushing on from L.</i>]	40
Bert:	Mr. Keller! Say, Mr. Keller... [<i>Pointing up the driveway</i>] Tommy just said it again!	
Keller:	[<i>not remembering any of it</i>] Said what? ...Who?...	
Bert:	The dirty word.	
Keller:	Oh. Well...	45
Bert:	Gee, aren't you going to arrest him? I warned him.	

Mother: *[with suddenness]* Stop that, Bert. Go home. *[Bert backs up, as she advances.]* There's no jail here.

Keller: *[As though to say, "Oh-what-the-hell-let-him-believe-there-is"]* Kate...

Mother: *[turning on Keller furiously]* There's no jail here! I want you to stop that jail business! *[He turns, shamed, but peeved.]* 50

Bert: *[past her to Keller]* He's right across the street...

Mother: Go home, Bert. *[Bert turns around and goes up driveway. She is shaken. Her speech is bitten off, extremely urgent.]* I want you to stop that, Joe. That whole jail business! 55

Keller: *[alarmed, therefore angered]* Look at you, look at you shaking.

Mother: *[trying to control herself, moving about clasping her hands]* I can't help it.

Act One