



MERIDIAN JUNIOR COLLEGE  
JC2 Preliminary Examination  
Higher 2

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**H2 LITERATURE IN ENGLISH**

**9748/01**

Paper 1: Reading Literature

15 September 2015

**3 Hours**

Additional Materials: Answer 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.

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**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.

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This document consists of 8 printed pages and 1 blank page.

<b><i>Candidates must fill in this section</i></b>		<b><i>Examiner's Use only</i></b>	
<b><i>Name</i></b>		<b><i>Question No.</i></b>	<b><i>Total Score</i></b>
		<b>1 ( )</b>	<b>25</b>
		<b>2 ( )</b>	<b>25</b>
<b><i>Registration No.</i></b>	<b><i>Class</i></b>	<b>3 ( )</b>	<b>25</b>
		<b>TOTAL:</b>	<b>75</b>

## SECTION A

## UNSEEN POETRY

Answer one question in this section.

1

- EITHER** (a) Write a critical comparison of the following poems, considering in detail ways in which language, style and form contributed to each poet's portrayal of protectiveness.

**A Morning Song**

Love set you going like a fat gold watch.  
The midwife slapped your footsoles, and your bald cry  
Took its place among the elements.

Our voices echo, magnifying your arrival. New statue.  
In a drafty museum, your nakedness  
Shadows our safety. We stand round blankly as walls.

5

I'm no more your mother  
Than the cloud that distills a mirror to reflect its own slow  
Effacement at the wind's hand.

All night your moth-breath  
Flickers among the flat pink roses. I wake to listen:  
A far sea moves in my ear.

10

One cry, and I stumble from bed, cow-heavy and floral  
In my Victorian nightgown.  
Your mouth opens clean as a cat's. The window square

15

Whitens and swallows its dull stars. And now you try  
Your handful of notes;  
The clear vowels rise like balloons.

Sylvia Plath (1932 – 1963)

[Turn over

**B Nurture**

From a documentary on marsupials I learn  
that a pillowcase makes a fine  
substitute pouch for an orphaned kangaroo.

I am drawn to such dramas of animal rescue.  
They are warm in the throat. I suffer, the critic proclaims,  
from an overabundance of maternal genes.

5

Bring me your fallen fledgling, your bummer lamb,  
  
lead the abused, the starvelings, into my barn.  
Advise the hunted deer to leap into my corn.

And had there been a wild child—  
*filthy and fierce as a ferret*, he is called  
in one nineteenth-century account—

10

a wild child to love, it is safe to assume,  
given my fireside inked with paw prints,  
there would have been room.

15

Think of the language we two, same and not-same,  
might have constructed from sign,  
scratch, grimace, grunt, vowel:

Laughter our first noun, and our long verb, howl.

Maxine W. Kumin (1925 – 2014)

[Turn over

OR

- (b) Write a critical comparison of the following poems, considering in detail ways in which language, style and form contributed to each poet's portrayal of birds and their significance.

**A Evening Hawk**

From plane of light to plane, wings dipping through  
Geometries and orchids that the sunset builds,  
Out of the peak's black angularity of shadow, riding  
The last tumultuous avalanche of  
Light above pines and the guttural gorge, 5  
The hawk comes.

His wing  
Scythes down another day, his motion  
Is that of the honed steel-edge, we hear  
The crashless fall of stalks of Time. 10

The head of each stalk is heavy with the gold of our error.

Look! Look! he is climbing the last light  
Who knows neither Time nor error, and under  
Whose eye, unforgiving, the world, unforgiven, swings  
Into shadow. 15

Long now,  
The last thrush is still, the last bat  
Now cruises in his sharp hieroglyphics. His wisdom  
Is ancient, too, and immense. The star  
Is steady, like Plato, over the mountain. 20

If there were no wind we might, we think, hear  
The earth grind on its axis, or history  
Drip in darkness like a leaking pipe in the cellar.

Robert Penn Warren (1905 – 1989)

[Turn over

**B                      The Dalliance of the Eagles**

Skirting the river road, (my forenoon walk, my rest,)  
 Skyward in air a sudden muffled sound, the dalliance of the eagles,  
 The rushing amorous contact high in space together,  
 The clinching interlocking claws, a living, fierce, gyrating wheel,  
 Four beating wings, two beaks, a swirling mass tight grappling,                      5  
 In tumbling turning clustering loops, straight downward falling,  
 Till o'er the river pois'd, the twain yet one, a moment's lull,  
 A motionless still balance in the air, then parting, talons loosing,  
 Upward again on slow-firm pinions slanting, their separate diverse flight,  
 She hers, he his, pursuing.                      10

Walt Whitman (1819 – 1892)

**[Turn over**

## Section B

EDITH WHARTON: *The Age of Innocence*

2

**EITHER (a)** "Where we shall be simply two human beings who love each other, who are the whole of life to each other; and nothing else on earth will matter." In the light of this statement, examine Wharton's presentation of the relationship between Newland Archer and Ellen Olenska in this novel.

**Or (b)** Write a critical commentary on the following passage, paying particular attention to Wharton's presentation of class and breeding here and elsewhere in the novel.

The Lovell Mingotts had sent out cards for what was known as "a formal dinner" (that is, three extra footmen, two dishes for each course, and a Roman punch in the middle), and had headed their invitations with the words "To meet the Countess Olenska," in accordance with the hospitable American fashion, which treats strangers as if they were royalties, or at least as their ambassadors. 5

The guests had been selected with a boldness and discrimination in which the initiated recognised the firm hand of Catherine the Great. Associated with such immemorial standbys as the Selfridge Merrys, who were asked everywhere because they always had been, the Beauforts, on whom there was a claim of relationship, and Mr. Sillerton Jackson and his sister Sophy (who went wherever her brother told her to), were some of the most fashionable and yet most irreproachable of the dominant "young married" set; the Lawrence Leffertses, Mrs. Lefferts Rushworth (the lovely widow), the Harry Thorleys, the Reggie Chiverses and young Morris Dagonet and his wife (who was a van der Luyden). The company indeed was perfectly assorted, since all the members belonged to the little inner group of people who, during the long New York season, disported themselves together daily and nightly with apparently undiminished zest. 10 15

Forty-eight hours later the unbelievable had happened; every one had refused the Mingotts' invitation except the Beauforts and old Mr. Jackson and his sister. The intended slight was emphasised by the fact that even the Reggie Chiverses, who were of the Mingott clan, were among those inflicting it; and by the uniform wording of the notes, in all of which the writers "regretted that they were unable to accept," without the mitigating plea of a "previous engagement" that ordinary courtesy prescribed. 20

New York society was, in those days, far too small, and too scant in its resources, for every one in it (including livery-stable-keepers, butlers and cooks) not to know exactly on which evenings people were free; and it was thus possible for the recipients of Mrs. Lovell Mingott's invitations to make cruelly clear their determination not to meet the Countess Olenska. 25

The blow was unexpected; but the Mingotts, as their way was, met it gallantly. Mrs. Lovell Mingott confided the case to Mrs. Welland, who confided it to Newland Archer; who, aflame at the outrage, appealed passionately and 30

authoritatively to his mother; who, after a painful period of inward resistance and outward temporising, succumbed to his instances (as she always did), and immediately embracing his cause with an energy redoubled by her previous hesitations, put on her grey velvet bonnet and said: "I'll go and see Louisa van der Luyden."

35

The New York of Newland Archer's day was a small and slippery pyramid, in which, as yet, hardly a fissure had been made or a foothold gained. At its base was a firm foundation of what Mrs. Archer called "plain people"; an honourable but obscure majority of respectable families who (as in the case of the Spicers or the Leffertses or the Jacksons) had been raised above their level by marriage with one of the ruling clans. People, Mrs. Archer always said, were not as particular as they used to be; and with old Catherine Spicer ruling one end of Fifth Avenue, and Julius Beaufort the other, you couldn't expect the old traditions to last much longer.

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45

Firmly narrowing upward from this wealthy but inconspicuous substratum was the compact and dominant group which the Mingotts, Newlands, Chiverses and Mansons so actively represented. Most people imagined them to be the very apex of the pyramid; but they themselves (at least those of Mrs. Archer's generation) were aware that, in the eyes of the professional genealogist, only a still smaller number of families could lay claim to that eminence.

50

"Don't tell me," Mrs. Archer would say to her children, "all this modern newspaper rubbish about a New York aristocracy. If there is one, neither the Mingotts nor the Mansons belong to it; no, nor the Newlands or the Chiverses either. Our grandfathers and great-grandfathers were just respectable English or Dutch merchants, who came to the colonies to make their fortune, and stayed here because they did so well. One of your great-grandfathers signed the Declaration, and another was a general on Washington's staff, and received General Burgoyne's sword after the battle of Saratoga. These are things to be proud of, but they have nothing to do with rank or class. New York has always been a commercial community, and there are not more than three families in it who can claim an aristocratic origin in the real sense of the word."

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Mrs. Archer and her son and daughter, like every one else in New York, knew who these privileged beings were: the Dagonets of Washington Square, who came of an old English county family allied with the Pitts and Foxes.

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## **Chapter 6**

[Turn over

## Section C

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE: *Twelfth Night*

3

**EITHER (a)** “*Twelfth Night* is a play which is concerned with performance”.  
Discuss.

**Or (b)** Write a critical commentary on the following passage relating it to the presentation of decay here and elsewhere in the play.

**DUKE ORSINO**

Too old by heaven: let still the woman take  
An elder than herself: so wears she to him,  
So sways she level in her husband's heart:  
For, boy, however we do praise ourselves,  
Our fancies are more giddy and unfirm,  
More longing, wavering, sooner lost and worn,  
Than women's are.

5

**VIOLA**

I think it well, my lord.

**DUKE ORSINO**

Then let thy love be younger than thyself,  
Or thy affection cannot hold the bent;  
For women are as roses, whose fair flower  
Being once display'd, doth fall that very hour.

10

**VIOLA**

And so they are: alas, that they are so;  
To die, even when they to perfection grow!

*Re-enter CURIO and Clown*

**DUKE ORSINO**

O, fellow, come, the song we had last night.  
Mark it, Cesario, it is old and plain;  
The spinsters and the knitters in the sun  
And the free maids that weave their thread with bones  
Do use to chant it: it is silly sooth,  
And dallies with the innocence of love,  
Like the old age.

15

20

**Clown**

Are you ready, sir?

**DUKE ORSINO**

Ay; prithee, sing.



*Music*  
SONG.

**Clown**

Come away, come away, death,	
And in sad cypress let me be laid;	25
Fly away, fly away breath;	
I am slain by a fair cruel maid.	
My shroud of white, stuck all with yew,	
O, prepare it!	
My part of death, no one so true	30
Did share it.	
Not a flower, not a flower sweet	
On my black coffin let there be strown;	
Not a friend, not a friend greet	
My poor corpse, where my bones shall be thrown:	35
A thousand thousand sighs to save,	
Lay me, O, where	
Sad true lover never find my grave,	
To weep there!	

**DUKE ORSINO**

There's for thy pains.	40
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**Clown**

No pains, sir: I take pleasure in singing, sir.

**DUKE ORSINO**

I'll pay thy pleasure then.

**Clown**

Truly, sir, and pleasure will be paid, one time or another.

**Act 2 Sc 4**

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