



PIONEER JUNIOR COLLEGE
JC2 PRELIMINARY EXAMINATION

LITERATURE IN ENGLISH
Higher 1

8811/01
3 Hours

Paper 1 Reading Literature

15 September 2015

Only the set texts *The Duchess of Malfi* and *The Age of Innocence* may be taken into the examination room.

It may bear underlining or highlighting.

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

Additional materials: Writing Paper

Candidate's Name: _____ **CT Group:** _____

READ THESE INSTRUCTIONS FIRST

Write your statutory name and CT group at the top of every sheet of answer paper used.

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

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

INFORMATION FOR CANDIDATES

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

At the end of the examination, fasten each answer script securely together.

Submit each answer script to the 3 sections separately.

Submit question paper separately.

All questions in this paper carry equal marks.

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

This question paper consists of **7** printed pages.

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.

IT IS DANGEROUS TO READ NEWSPAPERS

While I was building neat
castles in the sandbox,
the hasty pits were
filling with bulldozed corpses

and as I walked to the school
washed and combed, my feet
stepping on the cracks in the cement
detonated red bombs.

5

Now I am grownup
and literate, and I sit in my chair
as quietly as a fuse

10

and the jungles are flaming, the under-
brush is charged with soldiers,
the names on the difficult
maps go up in smoke.

15

I am the cause, I am a stockpile of chemical
toys, my body
is a deadly gadget,
I reach out in love, my hands are guns,
my good intentions are completely lethal.

20

Even my
passive eyes transmute
everything I look at to the pocked
black and white of a war photo,
how
can I stop myself

25

It is dangerous to read newspapers.

Each time I hit a key
on my electric typewriter,
speaking of peaceful trees

30

another village explodes

Margaret Atwood (1939-)

- Or (b) Write a critical commentary of the following poem, paying close attention to ways in which language, style and form contribute to meaning.

A VICTORIAN HANGMAN TELLS HIS LOVE

Dear one, forgive my appearing before you like this,
 in a two-piece track-suit, welder's goggles
 and a green cloth cap like some gross bee—this is the State's idea
 I would have come
 arrayed like a bridegroom for these nuptials 5
 knowing how often you have dreamed about this
 moment of consummation in your cell.
 If I must bind your arms now to your sides
 with a leather strap and ask if you have anything to say
 —these too are formalities I would dispense with: 10
 I know your heart is too full at this moment
 to say much and that the tranquilizer which I trust
 you did not reject out of a stubborn pride
 should by this time have eased your ache for speech, breath
 and the other incidentals which distract us from our end. 15
 Let us now walk a step. This noose
 with which we're wed is something of an heirloom, the last three
 members of our holy family were wed with it, the softwood beam
 it hangs from like a lover's tree notched with their weight.
 See now I slip it over your neck, the knot 20
 under the left jaw, with a slip ring
 to hold the knot in place . . . There. Perfect.
 Allow me to adjust the canvas hood
 which will enable you to anticipate the officially prescribed darkness
 by some seconds. 25
 The journalists are ready with the flash-bulbs of their eyes
 raised to the simple altar, the doctor twitches like a stethoscope
 —you have been given a clean bill of health, like any
 modern bride.
 With this spring of mine 30
 from the trap, hitting the door lever, you will go forth
 into a new life which I, alas, am not yet fit to share.
 Be assured, you will sink into the generous pool of public feeling
 as gently as a leaf—accept your role, feel chosen.
 You are this evening's headlines. Come, my love. 35

Bruce Dawe (1930-)

Section B

EDITH WHARTON: *The Age of Innocence*

2

- Either (a)** To what extent, would you agree that Wharton's novel is more of a social critique than that of humanistic portrayal?
- Or (b)** Write a critical commentary on the following passage , paying attention to Wharton's use of motifs, in particular imprisonment, here and elsewhere in the novel

Seeing that he had chosen history she fetched her workbasket, drew up an armchair to the green-shaded student lamp, and uncovered a cushion she was embroidering for his sofa. She was not a clever needle-woman; her large capable hands were made for riding, rowing and open-air activities; but since other wives embroidered cushions for their husbands she did not wish to omit this last link in her devotion. 5

She was so placed that Archer, by merely raising his eyes, could see her bent above her work-frame, her ruffled elbow-sleeves slipping back from her firm round arms, the betrothal sapphire shining on her left hand above her broad gold wedding-ring, and the right hand slowly and laboriously stabbing the canvas. As she sat thus, the lamplight full on her clear brow, he said to himself with a secret dismay that he would always know the thoughts behind it, that never, in all the years to come, would she surprise him by an unexpected mood, by a new idea, a weakness, a cruelty or an emotion. She had spent her poetry and romance on their short courting: the function was exhausted because the need was past. Now she was simply ripening into a copy of her mother, and mysteriously, by the very process, trying to turn him into a Mr. Welland. He laid down his book and stood up impatiently; and at once she raised her head. 10 15 20

"What's the matter?"

"The room is stifling: I want a little air."

He had insisted that the library curtains should draw backward and forward on a rod, so that they might be closed in the evening, instead of remaining nailed to a gilt cornice, and immovably looped up over layers of lace, as in the drawing-room; and he pulled them back and pushed up the sash, leaning out into the icy night. The mere fact of not looking at May, seated beside his table, under his lamp, the fact of seeing other houses, roofs, chimneys, of getting the sense of other lives outside his own, other cities beyond New York, and a whole world beyond his world, cleared his brain and made it easier to breathe. 25 30

After he had leaned out into the darkness for a few minutes he heard her say: "Newland! Do shut the window. You'll catch your death." He pulled the sash down and turned back. "Catch my death!" he echoed; and he felt like adding: "But I've caught it already. I am dead--I've been dead for months and months." 35

And suddenly the play of the word flashed up a wild suggestion.

What if it were she who was dead! If she were going to die--to die soon--
and leave him free! The sensation of standing there, in that warm familiar
room, and looking at her, and wishing her dead, was so strange, so 40
fascinating and overmastering, that its enormity did not immediately strike
him. He simply felt that chance had given him a new possibility to which
his sick soul might cling. Yes, May might die-- people did: young people,
healthy people like herself: she might die, and set him suddenly free.

She glanced up, and he saw by her widening eyes that there must 45
be something strange in his own.

"Newland! Are you ill?"

He shook his head and turned toward his arm-chair. She bent over her
work-frame, and as he passed he laid his hand on her hair. "Poor May!"
he said. 50

"Poor? Why poor?" she echoed with a strained laugh.

"Because I shall never be able to open a window without worrying
you," he rejoined, laughing also.

For a moment she was silent; then she said very low, her head
bowed over her work: "I shall never worry if you're happy." 55

"Ah, my dear; and I shall never be happy unless I can open the
windows!"

"In this weather?" she remonstrated; and with a sigh he buried his
head in his book.

Book 2, Chapter 30

Section C

JOHN WEBSTER: *The Duchess of Malfi*

3

- Either** (a) How far would you agree that the macabre is a critical tool employed by Webster to drive home the play's central concerns?
- Or** (b) Write a critical commentary on the following extract, relating it to Webster's treatment of minor characters in driving the play's central concerns

<i>Pescara:</i>	How now, my lord?	
<i>Malatesta:</i>	Oh sad disaster.	
<i>Roderigo:</i>	How comes this?	
<i>Bosola:</i>	Revenge for the Duchess of Malfi, murdered By th' Aragonian brethren; for Antonio Slain by this hand; for lustful Julia Poisoned by this man; and lastly, for myself, That was an actor in the main of all, Much 'gainst mine own good nature, yet i' th' end Neglected.	5 10
<i>Pescara:</i>	How now, my lord?	
<i>Cardinal:</i>	Look to my brother. He gave us these large wounds as we were struggling Here i' th' rushes. And now, I pray, let me Be laid by, and never thought of.	15
<i>Pescara:</i>	How fatally, it seems, he did withstand His own rescue!	
<i>Malatesta:</i>	Thou wretched thing of blood, How came Antonio by his death?	
<i>Bosola:</i>	In a mist: I know not how; Such a mistake as I have often seen In a play. Oh I am gone. We are only like dead walls, or vaulted graves, That, ruined, yields no echo. Fare you well. It may be pain but no harm to me, to die In so good a quarrel. Oh this gloomy world! In what a shadow, or deep pit of darkness, Doth womanish and fearful mankind live! Let worthy minds ne'er stagger in distrust To suffer death or shame for what is just. Mine is another voyage. [Dies]	20 25 30
<i>Pescara:</i>	The noble Delio, as I came to th' palace, Told me of Antonio's being here, and showed me A pretty gentleman, his son and heir. [Enter DELIO WITH ANTONIO'S SON]	35

Malateste: Oh sir, you come too late.
Delio: I heard so, and
 Was armed for't ere I came. Let us make noble use
 Of this great ruin; and join all our force 40
 To establish this young hopeful gentleman
 In's mother's right. These wretched eminent things
 Leave no more fame behind 'em, than should one
 Fall in a frost and leave his print in snow:
 As soon as the sun shines, it ever melts, 45
 Both form, and matter. I have ever thought
 Nature doth nothing so great, for great men,
 As when she's pleased to make them lords of truth:
 'Integrity of life is fame's best friend,
 Which nobly, beyond death, shall crown the end'. 50
Exeunt.
 Act V Sc V

END OF PAPER