



RIVER VALLEY HIGH SCHOOL  
ADVANCED LEVEL  
YEAR 6 PRELIMINARY EXAMINATION I 8811  
HIGHER 1

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LITERATURE IN ENGLISH

September 14  
Band Room  
3 hours

Paper 1 Reading Literature

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 your name and class and group 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 each from Sections A, B, and C.

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

**[Turn over]**

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

## Section A

1.

**Either  
(A)**

Write a critical commentary on the following poem, considering in detail ways in which your response is shaped by the writer's form, style and language.

Writing

The invisible egg of a poem  
hard and white and round, slipped beneath my skin  
while I was unaware. Microscopic  
spore, genetic code cryptic, potential  
unmapped; bud to be unfolded, unwrapped; 5  
something for untangling; a string whose length  
lies waiting patiently to be unloosed.

A slow and stealthy swelling of the skin,  
gentle bulging and a faint translucence  
of letters, consonant, vowel, coherence 10  
intertwined; wormy DNA that holds  
in code its own perfect consummation.

All this unseen: then, faintly, I feel a  
wriggling in my flesh as the chrysalis  
awakes. Intention finds its form beneath 15  
smoothing coruscations ; and damp wings, furred  
of shimmering colour and intricate  
pattern for escape. Then pain: mandibles  
chew. A grim head, blind-eyed, appears:  
the pulsing body smoothly slithers out. 20  
My parasite surveys its realm, discards  
Of ecstasy and it's afloat in the air.

I am left with trembling flesh and a dark  
and bloody hole. It's done. The poem's gone.

Martin Alexander

[Turn over]

**OR**  
**(B)**

Write a critical commentary on the following poem, considering in detail ways in which your response is shaped by the writer's form, style and language.

Hotel Room, 12th floor

This morning I watched from here a helicopter skirting like a damaged insect the Empire State building, that jumbo size dentist's drill, and landing on the roof of the PanAm skyscraper.	5
But now Midnight has come in from foreign places. Its uncivilised darkness is shot at by a million lit windows, all ups and acrosses.	
But midnight is not so easily defeated. I lie in bed, between a radio and a television set, and hear the wildest of warwhoops continually ululating through the glittering canyons and gulches – police cars and ambulances racing to broken bones, the harsh screaming from coldwater flats, the blood glazed on the sidewalks.	10
The frontier is never somewhere else. And no stockades can keep the midnight out.	15
	20

Norman MacCaig (1910 – 1996)

**[Turn over]**

**Section B**  
Edith Wharton: *Age of Innocence*

2.

**Either (A)** Discuss the presentation and significance of wealth in the novel.

**Or (B)** Write a critical commentary on the following passage, relating it in detail to the presentation of passion here and elsewhere in the novel.

It was impossible to make the confession more dispassionately, or in a tone less encouraging to the vanity of the person addressed. Archer reddened to the temples, but dared not move or speak: it was as if her words had been some rare butterfly that the least motion might drive off on startled wings, but that might gather a flock about it if it were left undisturbed. 5

"At least," she continued, "it was you who made me understand that under the dullness there are things so fine and sensitive and delicate that even those I most cared for in my other life look cheap in comparison. I don't know how to explain myself"--she drew together her troubled brows-- "but it seems as if I'd never before understood with how much that is hard and shabby and base the most exquisite pleasures may be paid." 10

"Exquisite pleasures--it's something to have had them!" he felt like retorting; but the appeal in her eyes kept him silent.

"I want," she went on, "to be perfectly honest with you--and with myself. For a long time I've hoped this chance would come: that I might tell you how you've helped me, what you've made of me--" 15

Archer sat staring beneath frowning brows. He interrupted her with a laugh. "And what do you make out that you've made of me?"

She paled a little. "Of you?"

"Yes: for I'm of your making much more than you ever were of mine. I'm the man who married one woman because another one told him to." 20

Her paleness turned to a fugitive flush. "I thought-- you promised--you were not to say such things today."

"Ah--how like a woman! None of you will ever see a bad business through!"

She lowered her voice. "IS it a bad business--for May?" 25

He stood in the window, drumming against the raised sash, and feeling in every fibre the wistful tenderness with which she had spoken her cousin's name.

"For that's the thing we've always got to think of-- haven't we--by your own showing?" she insisted.

"My own showing?" he echoed, his blank eyes still on the sea. 30

"Or if not," she continued, pursuing her own thought with a painful application, "if it's not worth while to have given up, to have missed things, so that others may be saved from disillusionment and misery--then everything I came home for, everything that made my other life seem by contrast so bare and so poor because no one there took account of them--all these things are a sham or a dream--" 35

He turned around without moving from his place. "And in that case there's no reason on earth why you shouldn't go back?" he concluded for her.

Her eyes were clinging to him desperately. "Oh, IS there no reason?"

"Not if you staked your all on the success of my marriage. My marriage," he said savagely, "isn't going to be a sight to keep you here." She made no answer, and he went on: "What's the use? You gave me my first glimpse of a real life, and at the same moment you asked me to go on with a sham one. It's beyond human enduring--that's all." 40

"Oh, don't say that; when I'm enduring it!" she burst out, her eyes filling.

Her arms had dropped along the table, and she sat with her face abandoned to his gaze as if in the recklessness of a desperate peril. The face exposed her as much as if it had been her whole person, with the soul behind it: Archer stood dumb, overwhelmed by what it suddenly told him. 45

"You too--oh, all this time, you too?"

[Turn over]

For answer, she let the tears on her lids overflow and run slowly downward. 50  
 Half the width of the room was still between them, and neither made any show of  
 moving. Archer was conscious of a curious indifference to her bodily presence: he  
 would hardly have been aware of it if one of the hands she had flung out on the  
 table had not drawn his gaze as on the occasion when, in the little Twenty- third  
 Street house, he had kept his eye on it in order not to look at her face. Now his 55  
 imagination spun about the hand as about the edge of a vortex; but still he made no  
 effort to draw nearer. He had known the love that is fed on caresses and feeds  
 them; but this passion that was closer than his bones was not to be superficially  
 satisfied. His one terror was to do anything which might efface the sound and  
 impression of her words; his one thought, that he should never again feel quite 60  
 alone.  
 But after a moment the sense of waste and ruin overcame him. There they were,  
 close together and safe and shut in; yet so chained to their separate destinies that  
 they might as well have been half the world apart.

## Chapter 24

**[Turn over]**

**Section C**  
Arthur Miller: *All My Sons*

3.

**Either (A)** In the world of the play, the present interrogates the past and the past infiltrates the present. Discuss.

**Or (B)** Write a critical commentary on the following passage, paying close attention to the presentation of conflict in this scene and elsewhere in the play.

	<i>A long pause, as George looks at Ann, Chris, Keller, then back to her.</i>	
George:	All right.	
Mother:	Now you're talking.	
Chris:	I've got a shirt that'll go right with that suit.	
Mother:	Size fifteen and a half, right, George?	
George:	Is Lydia...? I mean, Frank and Lydia coming?	5
Mother:	I'll get you a date that'll make her look like a... (she starts upstage)	
George:	No, I don't want a date.	
(laughing)		
Chris:	I know somebody just for you! Charlotte Tanner! (he starts for the house)	
Keller:	Call Charlotte, that's right.	
Mother:	Sure, call her up. (Chris goes into house)	10
Ann:	You go up and pick out a shirt and tie.	
George:	I never felt at home anywhere but here. I feel so... (he nearly laughs, and turns away from them) Kate, you look so young, you know? You didn't change at all. It ... rings an old bell. (turns to Keller) You too, Joe, you're amazingly the same. The whole atmosphere is.	15
(stops, looks around at them and the place)		
Keller:	Say, I ain't got time to get sick.	
Mother:	He hasn't been laid up in fifteen years.	
Keller:	Except my flu during the war.	
Mother:	Huhh?	
Keller:	My flu, when I was sick during ... the war.	20
Mother:	Well, sure... (To George) I mean except for that flu. (George stands perfectly still) Well, it slipped my mind, don't look at me that way. He wanted to go to the shop but he couldn't lift himself off the bed. I thought he had pneumonia.	
George:	Why did you say he's never....?	25
Keller:	I know how you feel, kid, I'll never forgive myself. If I could've gone in that day I'd never allow Dad to touch those heads.	
George:	She said you've never been sick.	
Mother:	I said he was sick, George.	
George:	Ann, didn't you hear her say...?	30
(going to Ann)		
George:	I'd remember pneumonia. Especially if I got it just the day my partner was going to patch up cylinder heads... What happened that day, Joe? <i>Frank enters briskly from driveway, holding Larry's horoscope in his hand. He comes to Kate.</i>	
Frank:	Kate! Kate!	35
Mother:	Frank, did you see George?	
Frank:	Lydia told me, I'm glad to... you'll have to pardon me. (pulling mother over) I've got something amazing for you, Kate, I finished Larry's horoscope.	
(extending his hand)		

**[Turn over]**

Mother:	You'd be interested in this, George. It's wonderful the way he can understand the...	40
Chris:	George, the girl's on the phone...	
(entering from house)		
Mother:	He finished Larry's horoscope!	
(desperately)		
Chris:	Frank, can't you pick a better time than this?	
Frank:	The greatest men who ever lived believed in the stars!	45
Chris:	Stop filling her head with that junk!	
Frank:	Is it junk to feel that there's a greater power than ourselves? I've studied the stars of his life! I won't argue with you, I'm telling you. Somewhere in this world your brother is alive!	
Mother:	Why isn't it possible?	50
(instantly to Chris)		
Chris:	Because it's insane.	
Frank:	Just a minute now. I'll tell you something and you can do as you please. Just let me say it. He was supposed to have died on November twenty fifth. But November twenty fifth was his favorable day.	55
Chris:	Mother!	
Mother:	Listen to him!	
Frank:	It was a day when everything good was shining on him, the kind of day he should've married on. You can laugh at a lot of it, I can understand you laughing. But the odds are a million to one that a man won't die on his favourable day. That's known, that's known, Chris!	60
Mother:	Why isn't it possible, why isn't it possible, Chris!	
George: (to Ann)	Don't you understand what she's saying? She just told you to go. What are you waiting for now?	
Chris:	Nobody can tell her to go. (A car horn is heard)	65
Mother: (to Frank)	Thank you, darling, for your trouble. Will you tell him to wait, Frank?	
Frank: (as he goes)	Sure thing.	
Mother:	They'll be right out, driver!	
(calling out)		
Chris:	She's not leaving, Mother.	
George:	You heard her say it, he's never been sick!	70
Mother:	He misunderstood me, Chris! (Chris, looks at her, struck)	

Act 3

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END OF PAPER