



VICTORIA JUNIOR COLLEGE, SINGAPORE

Higher 2

LITERATURE IN ENGLISH PRELIMINARY EXAMINATION

9748/03

Paper 3 The Individual and Society in Literature

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

READ THESE INSTRUCTIONS FIRST

Write your class and name 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.

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 the essays separately and label them accurately.

All questions in this paper carry equal marks.

This document consists of **6** printed pages.

Section A

Answer one question in this section

1

Either (a) The following extract is from *Gone Too Far!* by British playwright Bola Agbaje. Yemi is a brusque south London teenager at odds with his elder brother, Ikudayisi, newly arrived from Nigeria. In this extract, Yemi and Ikudayisi are sent by their mother to buy milk from the estate grocer, a Bangladeshi immigrant.

Write a critical commentary of the following passage, relating it to the theme of the individual and society in literature.

[Yemi and Ikudayisi walk out onto the estate. It is run-down, with graffiti all over the walls. It is the scene of a typical south London estate with rows of flats. The shop is at the far end of the stage and the Shopkeeper is outside putting up a newspaper stand. There is Islamic music playing loudly from inside the shop and he is singing along to it. He is wearing an England shirt and a headscarf. There are also England flags hanging all around the shop. He immediately notices the boys and hovers around the door watching them closely. Yemi has his hood over his head.] 5

Ikudayisi How much did she give you?

Yemi Don't talk to me.

Ikudayisi If there is money left I want to buy chocolate. 10

[Yemi ignores him and bops ahead towards the shop. As soon as they get to the door, the Shopkeeper stands in the way. Yemi tries to walk past him, but he refuses to move away from the door.]

Yemi Scuse, boss.

[The Shopkeeper clears his throat and points to the hood.] 15

Shopkeeper No hoods.

Yemi Uhhh.

[He attempts to get past again but fails.]

Can you move out of the way?

Shopkeeper Sorry, no hoods. 20

Yemi I wanna buy something dough.

Shopkeeper I said no hoods allowed.

Yemi And who are you?

Shopkeeper My shop, my rule.

Yemi Come out the way, I need to buy somink. 25

Shopkeeper Take off hood and you can enter.

Yemi This ain't Tesco¹, you nah.

Ikudayisi Yo bro, why don't you just take off the hood, man, it will save a lotta trouble.

Shopkeeper Yes, listen to friend.

[Yemi, stunned by the accent, turns and looks at Ikudayisi, puzzled.] 30

Yemi [to Shopkeeper] Be quiet. *[To Ikudayisi]* What's with the accent?

Ikudayisi What accent, man?

Yemi That one! You need to lauw dat, man, cost it don't sound good. We're not in America, we're in England!

[He looks down and sees his trainers on Ikudayisi.] 35

Yemi What are you doing with my trainers on?

Ikudayisi I'm borrowing them. Don't you think it looks nice on me?

¹ Tesco: British supermarket chain

Yemi No, it don't suit you.
Ikudayisi You know I look fine, fine.
Yemi Look, yeah, what have I told you bout taking my stuff? 40
Ikudayisi What's your problem? You can have it back when we get home.
Yemi Just don't touch my stuff. Gross, man, do I need to start putting a padlock on my shit?
[Bored by the conversation, the Shopkeeper starts to go inside, and Yemi tries to follow. The Shopkeeper puts his hand in Yemi's face to stop him.] 45
Shopkeeper Still have hood.
Yemi I ain't ere to teef nothing. I just need to buy somink. So move, man!
Shopkeeper I don't want trouble.
Yemi And no one ain't looking for trouble, boss. Just let me in.
Shopkeeper Please, I don't want to call police. 50
Yemi What! You're making me mad now. Why are you talking bout police for? We only here to buy something, you get me?
Ikudayisi He doesn't get you, he not moving.
Yemi Shut up! I'm not talking to you! Just stand over there, man.
[Ikudayisi moves to the side and watches Yemi.] 55
Yemi Boss, stop the long ting and let me in.
Shopkeeper Take off hood.
Yemi Just move!
Shopkeeper Please, no trouble.
Yemi Don't you know nothing about human rights? You of all people should understand 60 where I'm coming from – being a Muslim and dat.
Shopkeeper Are you Muslim?
Ikudayisi No, he is not-oh.
Yemi *[to Ikudayisi]* You eediate, I said no one ain't talking to you. Just be quiet. *[To Shopkeeper.]*
No I'm not a Muslim. But you're Muslim, innit? 65
Shopkeeper Yes.
Yemi See, that's what I'm saying, we're the same peoples.
Shopkeeper I no black, I Bangladeshi.
Yemi I know you're Indian –
Shopkeeper Bangladeshi. 70
Yemi Don't get it twisted, blud. Man, oh man, don't care where you're from. What I'm saying is I know you feel oppressed an dat when mans tell you, you can't wear your head ting in certain places. It the same like me! Bare people going around thinking you're gonna do dem something when all we wanna do is get on with our life. I understand you, blud! 75
Shopkeeper Then no hood.
Yemi You're not getting what – Hold up. *[To Ikudayisi.]* Listen to the music this guy is tryna play.
Ikudayisi It nice.
[He mimics the song and tries to sing along.] 80
Yemi Shut up, man. It's not nice. *[To Shopkeeper.]* How do we know it isn't some Islamic chant that you're playing?
Shopkeeper It's prayer music.
Yemi You only saying that cos we don't understand it. Furthermore, how do I know it ain't a bomb factory you got back there? That why you ain't tryna let me in. 85
Shopkeeper I NO BOMBER, I NO SUPPORT TERRORIST!
[He moves towards Yemi, waving his hands in his face.]
Shopkeeper I LOVE THIS COUNTRY. I NO TERRORIST. NO BOMB IN MY SHOP, NO BOMB IN MY SHOP.

- Or (b) Write a critical appreciation of the following poem, *Ethics* by Linda Pastan, relating it to the theme of the individual and society in literature.

Ethics

In ethics class so many years ago
our teacher asked this question every fall:
if there were a fire in a museum
which would you save, a Rembrandt² painting
or an old woman who hadn't many
years left anyhow? Restless on hard chairs
caring little for pictures or old age
we'd opt one year for life, the next for art
and always half-heartedly. Sometimes
the woman borrowed my grandmother's face
leaving her usual kitchen to wander
some drafty, half-imagined museum.
One year, feeling clever, I replied
why not let the woman decide herself?
Linda, the teacher would report, eschews
the burdens of responsibility.
This fall in a real museum I stand
before a real Rembrandt – old woman,
or nearly so, myself. The colors
within this frame are darker than autumn,
darker even than winter — the browns of earth,
though earth's most radiant elements burn
through the canvas. I know now that woman
and painting and season are almost one
and all beyond saving by children.

² Rembrandt Harmenszoon van Rijn was a famous 17th century Dutch painter generally considered one of Europe's greatest artists. In spite of early success, his later years were marked by personal tragedy. Rembrandt's self-portraits were among his greatest creative triumphs. In them, the artist surveyed himself without vanity and with the utmost sincerity.

Section B

**Answer one question in this section, using two texts that you have studied.
The texts used in this section cannot be used in Section C.**

2

- Either (a)** Compare or contrast the ways in which two texts you have studied present the individual's responsibility to do what is right.
- Or (b)** With reference to two texts, compare or contrast the ways in which the writers explore the individual's response to disillusionment, in relation to the theme of the individual and society.

Section C

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

PHILIP LARKIN: *Collected Poems*

3

Either (a) How, and with what effects, does Larkin's poetry make use of the language of ordinary people to illuminate the relationship between the individual and society? You should refer to at least **two** poems from your selection.

Or (b) Explore pity in relation to both the speaker and those he considers, in relation to the theme of the individual and society. You should refer to at least **two** poems from your selection.

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE: *Othello*

4

Either (a) Explore the effectiveness of punishment as a means of maintaining social order in *Othello*.

Or (b) Consider the dramatic significance of Iago in relation to ideas about the individual and society.

WOLE SOYINKA: *Death and the King's Horseman*

5

Either (a) How, and with what effects, does Soyinka use setting to explore ideas about the individual and society in the play?

Or (b) In what ways are individual and cultural pride central to the tragedy in *Death and the King's Horseman*?

End of Paper