



LITERATURE IN ENGLISH

8811/01

Paper 1 Reading Literature

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 name, class and question number on all the work you hand in.
Write in dark blue or black pen on both sides of the paper.
Write your answer to each question on a fresh sheet of paper.
Do not use paper clips, highlighters, glue or correction fluid on your work.

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 each of your answers **separately**.
Attach the **cover sheet** to Section A.
All questions in this paper carry equal marks.

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 poet's use of language, style and form.

WOMAN'S WORK

Who says a woman's work isn't high art?
 She'd challenge as she scrubbed the bathroom tiles.
 Keep house as if the address were your heart.

We cleaned the whole upstairs before we started
 downstairs. I sighed, hearing my friends outside. 5
 Doing her woman's work was a hard art

to practice when the summer sun would bar
 the floor I swept till she was satisfied.
 She kept me prisoner in her housebound heart.

She shined the tines of forks, the wheels of carts, 10
 cut lacy lattices for all her pies.
 Her woman's work was nothing less than art.

And I, her masterpiece since I was smart,
 was primed, praised, polished, scolded and advised 15
 to keep a house much better than my heart.

I did not want to be her counterpart!
 I struck out...but became my mother's child:
 a woman working at home on her art,
 housekeeping paper as if it were her heart.

Julia Alvarez (born 1950)

- Or (b) Write a critical commentary on the following poem, considering in detail ways in which your response is shaped by the poet's use of language, style and form.

FAMILY REUNION

Outside in the street I hear
 A car door slam; voices coming near;
 Incoherent scraps of talk
 And high heels clicking up the walk;
 The doorbell rends the noonday heat 5
 With copper claws;
 A second's pause.
 The dull drums of my pulses beat
 Against a silence wearing thin.
 The door now opens from within. 10
 Oh, hear the clash of people meeting ---
 The laughter and the screams of greeting :
 Fat always, and out of breath,
 A greasy smack on every cheek
 From Aunt Elizabeth; 15
 There, that's the pink, pleased squeak
 Of Cousin Jane, our spinster with
 The faded eyes
 And hands like nervous butterflies;
 While rough as splintered wood 20
 Across them all
 Rasps the jarring baritone of Uncle Paul;
 The youngest nephew gives a fretful whine
 And drools at the reception line.
 Like a diver on a lofty spar of land 25
 Atop the flight of stairs I stand.
 A whirlpool leers at me,
 I cast off my identity
 And make the fatal plunge.

Sylvia Plath (1932-1963)

Section B

EDITH WHARTON: *The Age of Innocence*

2

Either (a) 'There was no use in trying to emancipate a wife who had not the dimmest notion that she was not free.' (Chapter 20)

Discuss Wharton's portrayal of women in Old New York society in light of this comment.

Or (b) Write a critical commentary on the following passage, relating it to the portrayal of Archer's state of awareness here and elsewhere in the novel.

It was a sombre snowy afternoon, and the gas-lamps were lit in the big reverberating station. As he paced the platform, waiting for the Washington express, he remembered that there were people who thought there would one day be a tunnel under the Hudson through which the trains of the Pennsylvania railway would run straight into New York. They were of the brotherhood of visionaries who likewise predicted the building of ships that would cross the Atlantic in five days, the invention of a flying machine, lighting by electricity, telephonic communication without wires, and other Arabian Night marvels. 5

"I don't care which of their visions comes true," Archer mused, "as long as the tunnel isn't built yet." In his senseless school-boy happiness he pictured Madame Olenska's descent from the train, his discovery of her a long way off, among the throngs of meaningless faces, her clinging to his arm as he guided her to the carriage, their slow approach to the wharf among slipping horses, laden carts, vociferating teamsters, and then the startling quiet of the ferry-boat, where they would sit side by side under the snow, in the motionless carriage, while the earth seemed to glide away under them, rolling to the other side of the sun. It was incredible, the number of things he had to say to her, and in what eloquent order they were forming themselves on his lips . . . 10 15

The clanging and groaning of the train came nearer, and it staggered slowly into the station like a prey-laden monster into its lair. Archer pushed forward, elbowing through the crowd, and staring blindly into window after window of the high-hung carriages. And then, suddenly, he saw Madame Olenska's pale and surprised face close at hand, and had again the mortified sensation of having forgotten what she looked like. 20

They reached each other, their hands met, and he drew her arm through his. "This way—I have the carriage," he said. 25

After that it all happened as he had dreamed. He helped her into the brougham with her bags, and had afterward the vague recollection of having properly reassured her about her grandmother and given her a summary of the Beaufort situation (he was struck by the softness of her: "Poor Regina!"). Meanwhile the carriage had worked its way out of the coil about the station, and they were crawling down the slippery incline to the wharf, menaced by swaying coal-carts, bewildered horses, dishevelled express-wagons, and an empty hearse—ah, that hearse! She shut her eyes as it passed, and clutched at Archer's hand. 30 35

"If only it doesn't mean—poor Granny!"

"Oh, no, no—she's much better—she's all right, really. There—we've passed it!" he exclaimed, as if that made all the difference. Her hand remained in his, and as the carriage lurched across the gang-plank onto the ferry he bent over, unbuttoned her tight brown glove, and kissed her palm as if he had kissed 40

a relic. She disengaged herself with a faint smile, and he said: "You didn't expect me today?"

"Oh, no."

"I meant to go to Washington to see you. I'd made all my arrangements—I very nearly crossed you in the train." 45

"Oh—" she exclaimed, as if terrified by the narrowness of their escape.

"Do you know—I hardly remembered you?"

"Hardly remembered me?"

"I mean: how shall I explain? I—it's always so. *Each time you happen to me all over again.*" 50

"Oh, yes: I know! I know!"

"Does it—do I too: to you?" he insisted.

She nodded, looking out of the window.

"Ellen—Ellen—Ellen!"

She made no answer, and he sat in silence, watching her profile grow indistinct against the snow-streaked dusk beyond the window. What had she been doing in all those four long months, he wondered? How little they knew of each other, after all! The precious moments were slipping away, but he had forgotten everything that he had meant to say to her and could only helplessly brood on the mystery of their remoteness and their proximity, which seemed to be symbolised by the fact of their sitting so close to each other, and yet being unable to see each other's faces. 55 60

Chapter 29

Section C

ARTHUR MILLER: *All My Sons*

3

Either (a) “You’re a boy, what could I do! I’m in business, a man is in business ...” (Act Two)

How far do you agree that the tragedy is driven by an obsessive preoccupation with material success?

Or (b) Write a critical commentary on the following passage, relating it to the significance of the past here and elsewhere in the play.

Mother enters on porch. She is dressed almost formally; her hair is fixed. They are all turned toward her. On seeing **George** she raises both hands, comes down towards him.

Mother: Georgie, Georgie.
George: (he has always liked her) Hello, Kate. 5
Mother: (cups his face in her hands) They made an old man out of you.
 (Touches his hair.) Look, you’re gray.
George: (her pity, open and unabashed, reaches into him, and he smiles sadly)
 I know, I—
Mother: I told you when you went away, don’t try for medals. 10
George: (laughs, tiredly) I didn’t try, Kate. They made it very easy for me.
Mother: (actually angry) Go on. You’re all alike. (To **Ann**.) Look at him, why did you say he’s fine? He looks like a ghost.
George: (relishing her solicitude) I feel all right.
Mother: I’m sick to look at you. What’s the matter with your mother, why don’t 15
 she feed you?
Ann: He just hasn’t any appetite.
Mother: If he ate in my house he’d have an appetite. (To **Ann**.) I pity your husband! (To **George**.) Sit down. I’ll make you a sandwich.
George: (sits with an embarrassed laugh) I’m really not hungry. 20
Mother: Honest to God, it breaks my heart to see what happened to all the children. How we worked and planned for you, and you end up no better than us.
George: (with deep feeling for her) You ... you haven’t changed at all, you know that, Kate? 25
Mother: None of us changed, Georgie. We all love you. Joe was just talking about the day you were born and the water got shut off. People were carrying basins from a block away – a stranger would have thought the whole neighbourhood was on fire! (They laugh. She sees the juice. To **Ann**.) Why didn’t you give him some juice! 30
Ann: (defensively) I offered it to him.
Mother: (scoffingly) You offered it to him! (Thrusting glass into **George**’s hand.) Give it to him! (To **George**, who is laughing.) And now you’re going to sit here and drink some juice ... and look like something! 35
George: (sitting) Kate, I feel hungry already.
Chris: (proudly) She could turn Mahatma Gandhi into a heavyweight!
Mother: (to **Chris**, with great energy) Listen, to hell with the restaurant! I got a ham in the icebox, and frozen strawberries, and avocados, and –
Ann: Swell, I’ll help you!
George: The train leaves at eight-thirty, Ann. 40
Mother: (to **Ann**) You’re leaving?
Chris: No, Mother, she’s not –

- Ann:* (*breaking through it, going to **George***) You hardly got here; give yourself a chance to get acquainted again.
- Chris:* Sure, you don't even know us any more. 45
- Mother:* Well, Chris, if they can't stay, don't –
- Chris:* No, it's just a question of George, Mother, he planned on –
- George:* (*gets up politely, nicely, for **Kate's** sake*) Now wait a minute, Chris ...
- Chris:* (*smiling and full of command, cutting him off*) If you want to go, I'll drive you to the station now, but if you're staying, no arguments while you're here. 50

Act Two

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Question 1b © Sylvia Plath, *The Collected Poems*, 1960, 1992, Harper Perennial, New York.
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