



PIONEER JUNIOR COLLEGE  
JC2 PRELIMINARY EXAMINATION

**LITERATURE IN ENGLISH**

**8811/01**

**Higher 1**

Paper 1 Reading Literature

13 Sept 2016

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

**3 Hours**

**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.

Begin each section on a fresh page.

At the end of the examination, fasten all answer scripts securely together.

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 8 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.

## THE WILD SWANS AT COOLE

The trees are in their autumn beauty, The woodland paths are dry, Under the October twilight the water Mirrors a still sky; Upon the brimming water among the stones Are nine-and-fifty swans.	5
 The nineteenth autumn has come upon me Since I first made my count; I saw, before I had well finished, All suddenly mount And scatter wheeling in great broken rings Upon their clamorous wings.	10
 I have looked upon those brilliant creatures, And now my heart is sore. All's changed since I, hearing at twilight, The first time on this shore, The bell-beat of their wings above my head, Trod with a lighter tread.	15
 Unwearied still, lover by lover, They paddle in the cold Companionable streams or climb the air; Their hearts have not grown old; Passion or conquest, wander where they will, Attend upon them still.	20
 But now they drift on the still water, Mysterious, beautiful; Among what rushes will they build, By what lake's edge or pool Delight men's eyes when I awake some day To find they have flown away?	25     30

W. B. Yeats (Published 1919)

- Or (b) 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.

### PRAYER BEFORE BIRTH

I am not yet born; O hear me. Let not the bloodsucking bat or the rat or the stoat or the club-footed ghoul come near me.	
I am not yet born, console me. I fear that the human race may with tall walls wall me, with strong drugs dope me, with wise lies lure me, on black racks rack me, in blood-baths roll me.	5
I am not yet born; provide me With water to dandle me, grass to grow for me, trees to talk to me, sky to sing to me, birds and a white light in the back of my mind to guide me.	10
I am not yet born; forgive me For the sins that in me the world shall commit, my words when they speak me, my thoughts when they think me, my treason engendered by traitors beyond me, my life when they murder by means of my hands, my death when they live me.	15
I am not yet born; rehearse me In the parts I must play and the cues I must take when old men lecture me, bureaucrats hector me, mountains frown at me, lovers laugh at me, the white waves call me to folly and the desert calls me to doom and the beggar refuses my gift and my children curse me.	20
I am not yet born; O hear me, Let not the man who is beast or who thinks he is God come near me.	25
I am not yet born; O fill me With strength against those who would freeze my humanity, would dragoon me into a lethal automaton, would make me a cog in a machine, a thing with one face, a thing, and against all those who would dissipate my entirety, would blow me like thistledown hither and thither or hither and thither like water held in the hands would spill me.	30 35
Let them not make me a stone and let them not spill me. Otherwise kill me.	40

Louis MacNeice (Published 1950)

## Section B

EDITH WHARTON: *The Age of Innocence*

2

**Either (a)** 'The poet of interior decoration.'

Consider Wharton's use of inner spaces in her novel.

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

"No. You ought not to have come today," she said in an altered voice; and suddenly she turned, flung her arms about him and pressed her lips to his. At the same moment the carriage began to move, and a gas-lamp at the head of the slip flashed its light into the window. She drew away, and they sat silent and motionless while the brougham struggled through the congestion of carriages about the ferry-landing. As they gained the street Archer began to speak hurriedly. 5

"Don't be afraid of me: you needn't squeeze yourself back into your corner like that. A stolen kiss isn't what I want. Look: I'm not even trying to touch the sleeve of your jacket. Don't suppose that I don't understand your reasons for not wanting to let this feeling between us dwindle into an ordinary hole-and-corner love-affair. I couldn't have spoken like this yesterday, because when we've been apart, and I'm looking forward to seeing you, every thought is burnt up in a great flame. But then you come; and you're so much more than I remembered, and what I want of you is so much more than an hour or two every now and then, with wastes of thirsty waiting between, that I can sit perfectly still beside you, like this, with that other vision in my mind, just quietly trusting to it to come true." 10 15

For a moment she made no reply; then she asked, hardly above a whisper: "What do you mean by trusting to it to come true?" 20

"Why—you know it will, don't you?"

"Your vision of you and me together?" She burst into a sudden hard laugh. "You choose your place well to put it to me!"

"Do you mean because we're in my wife's brougham? Shall we get out and walk, then? I don't suppose you mind a little snow?" 25

She laughed again, more gently. "No; I shan't get out and walk, because my business is to get to Granny's as quickly as I can. And you'll sit beside me, and we'll look, not at visions, but at realities."

"I don't know what you mean by realities. The only reality to me is this."

She met the words with a long silence, during which the carriage rolled down an obscure side-street and then turned into the searching illumination of Fifth Avenue. 30

"Is it your idea, then, that I should live with you as your mistress—since I can't be your wife?" she asked.

The crudeness of the question startled him: the word was one that women of his class fought shy of, even when their talk flitted closest about the topic. He noticed that Madame Olenska pronounced it as if it had a recognised place in her vocabulary, and he wondered if it had been used familiarly in her presence in the horrible life she had fled from. Her question pulled him up with a jerk, and he floundered. 35 40

"I want—I want somehow to get away with you into a world where words like that—categories like that—won't exist. 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."

She drew a deep sigh that ended in another laugh. "Oh, my dear—where is that country? Have you ever been there?" she asked; and as he remained sullenly dumb she went on: "I know so many who've tried to find it; and, believe me, they all got out by mistake at wayside stations: at places like Boulogne, or Pisa, or Monte Carlo—and it wasn't at all different from the old world they'd left, but only rather smaller and dingier and more promiscuous." 45 50

He had never heard her speak in such a tone, and he remembered the phrase she had used a little while before.

"Yes, the Gorgon HAS dried your tears," he said.

"Well, she opened my eyes too; it's a delusion to say that she blinds people. What she does is just the contrary—she fastens their eyelids open, so that they're never again in the blessed darkness. Isn't there a Chinese torture like that? There ought to be. Ah, believe me, it's a miserable little country!" 55

The carriage had crossed Forty-second Street: May's sturdy brougham-horse was carrying them northward as if he had been a Kentucky trotter. Archer choked with the sense of wasted minutes and vain words. 60

"Then what, exactly, is your plan for us?" he asked.

"For US? But there's no US in that sense! We're near each other only if we stay far from each other. Then we can be ourselves. Otherwise we're only Newland Archer, the husband of Ellen Olenska's cousin, and Ellen Olenska, the cousin of Newland Archer's wife, trying to be happy behind the backs of the people who trust them." 65

"Ah, I'm beyond that," he groaned.

"No, you're not! You've never been beyond. And I have," she said, in a strange voice, "and I know what it looks like there."

Book 2, Chapter 29

## Section C

JOHN WEBSTER: *The Duchess of Malfi*

3

**Either (a)** “It is Bosola, above all, who becomes Webster’s vehicle for exposing the hollowness of the ideology which dominates the Court of Malfi.”

How far is this an accurate reflection of the play?

**Or (b)** Write a critical commentary on the following extract, relating it to Webster’s use of the secrecy in driving the play’s central concerns.

[Enter BOSOLA, with a dark lantern]

BOSOLA.	Sure I did hear a woman shriek: list, ha! And the sound came, if I receiv’d it right, ]From the duchess’ lodgings. There ’s some stratagem In the confining all our courtiers To their several wards: I must have part of it; My intelligence will freeze else. List, again! It may be ’twas the melancholy bird, Best friend of silence and of solitariness, The owl, that screamed so.—Ha! Antonio!	5
---------	---	---

[Enter ANTONIO with a candle, his sword drawn]

ANTONIO.	I heard some noise.—Who ’s there? What art thou? Speak.	10
----------	---	----

BOSOLA.	Antonio, put not your face nor body To such a forc’d expression of fear; I am Bosola, your friend.
---------	--

ANTONIO.	Bosola!—	
	[Aside.] This mole does undermine me.—Heard you not A noise even now?	15

BOSOLA.	From whence?
---------	--------------

ANTONIO.	From the duchess’ lodging.
----------	----------------------------

BOSOLA.	Not I: did you?
---------	-----------------

ANTONIO.	I did, or else I dream’d.	20
----------	---------------------------	----

BOSOLA.	Let ’s walk towards it.
---------	-------------------------

ANTONIO.	No: it may be ’twas But the rising of the wind.
----------	--

BOSOLA.	Very likely. Methinks ’tis very cold, and yet you sweat: You look wildly.	25
---------	---	----

- ANTONIO. I have been setting a figure  
For the duchess' jewels.
- BOSOLA. Ah, and how falls your question?  
Do you find it radical? 30
- ANTONIO. What 's that to you?  
'Tis rather to be question'd what design,  
When all men were commanded to their lodgings,  
Makes you a night-walker.
- BOSOLA. In sooth, I 'll tell you: 35  
Now all the court 's asleep, I thought the devil  
Had least to do here; I came to say my prayers;  
And if it do offend you I do so,  
You are a fine courtier.
- ANTONIO. [Aside.] This fellow will undo me.— 40  
You gave the duchess apricocks to-day:  
Pray heaven they were not poison'd!
- BOSOLA. Poison'd! a Spanish fig  
For the imputation!
- ANTONIO. Traitors are ever confident 45  
Till they are discover'd. There were jewels stol'n too:  
In my conceit, none are to be suspected  
More than yourself.
- BOSOLA. You are a false steward.
- ANTONIO. Saucy slave, I 'll pull thee up by the roots. 50
- BOSOLA. May be the ruin will crush you to pieces.
- ANTONIO. You are an impudent snake indeed, sir:  
Are you scarce warm, and do you show your sting?  
You libel well, sir?
- BOSOLA. No, sir: copy it out, 55  
And I will set my hand to 't.
- ANTONIO. [Aside.] My nose bleeds.  
One that were superstitious would count  
This ominous, when it merely comes by chance.  
Two letters, that are wrought here for my name,  
Are drown'd in blood! 60  
Mere accident.—For you, sir, I 'll take order  
I 'l the morn you shall be safe.—[Aside.] 'Tis that must colour  
Her lying-in.—Sir, this door you pass not:  
I do not hold it fit that you come near  
The duchess' lodgings, till you have quit yourself.— 65  
[Aside.] The great are like the base, nay, they are the same,  
When they seek shameful ways to avoid shame.

Act 2 Scene 3

**END OF PAPER**

**BLANK PAGE**