



MERIDIAN JUNIOR COLLEGE
JC2 Preliminary Examination
Higher 2

H2 LITERATURE IN ENGLISH

9748/01

Paper 1: Reading Literature

15 September 2016

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

READ THESE INSTRUCTIONS FIRST

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 all your work securely together.

All questions in this paper carry equal marks.

This document consists of 5 printed pages and 1 blank page.

<i>Candidates must fill in this section</i>		<i>Examiner's Use only</i>	
<i>Name</i>		<i>Question No.</i>	<i>Total Score</i>
		1 ()	25
		2 ()	25
<i>Registration No.</i>	<i>Class</i>	3 ()	25
		TOTAL:	75

SECTION A

Answer one question in this section.

1

EITHER (a) Write a critical comparison of the following poems, considering in detail ways in which language, style and form contributed to each poet's portrayal of resolve.

A I, being born a woman and distressed

I, being born a woman and distressed
 By all the needs and notions of my kind,
 Am urged by your propinquity to find
 Your person fair, and feel a certain zest
 To bear your body's weight upon my breast: **5**

So subtly is the fume of life designed,
 To clarify the pulse and cloud the mind,
 And leave me once again undone, possessed.
 Think not for this, however, the poor treason
 Of my stout blood against my staggering brain, **10**
 I shall remember you with love, or season
 My scorn with pity,—let me make it plain:
 I find this frenzy insufficient reason
 For conversation when we meet again.

Edna St. Vincent Millay (1892 - 1950)

[Turn over

B Sometimes Mysteriously

Sometimes in the evening when love tunes its harp and the crickets celebrate life, I am like a troubadour ¹ in search of friends, loved ones, anyone who will share with me	5
a bit of conversation. My loneliness arrives ghostlike and pretentious, it seeks my soul, it is ravenous and hurting. I admire my father who always has advice in these matters,	10
but a game of chess won't do, or the frivolity of religion. I want to find a solution, so I write letters, poems, and sometimes I touch solitude on the shoulder	15
and surrender to a great tranquility. I understand I need courage and sometimes, mysteriously, I feel whole.	

Luis Omar Salinas (1937-2008)

[Turn over

¹ A wandering singer or minstrel.

OR

- (b) Write a critical comparison of the following poems, considering in detail each poet's portrayal of trees.

A Vertical

Perhaps the purpose of leaves is to conceal
 the verticality of trees which we notice in December
 as if for the first time: row after row of dark forms
 yearning upwards. And since we will be horizontal
 ourselves for so long, let us now honor **5**
 the gods of the vertical: stalks of wheat which
 to the ant must seem as high as these trees do to us,
 silos and telephone poles, stalagmites and skyscrapers.
 but most of all these winter oaks, these soft-fleshed poplars,
 this birch whose bark is like roughened skin against **10**
 which I lean my chilled head, not ready to lie down.

Linda Pastan (1932 -)

B Birch

Bone-spur, stirrup of veins—white colt
 a tree, sapling bone again, worn to a splinter,
 a steeple, the birch aground

in its ravine of leaves. Abide with me, arrive
 at its skinned branches, its arms pulled **5**
 from the sapling, your wrist taut,

each ganglion² a gash in the tree's rent
 trunk, a child's hackwork, love plus love,
 my palms in your fist, that

trio a trident splitting the birch, its bark **10**
 papyrus, its scars calligraphy,
 a ghost story written on

winding sheets, the trunk bowing, dead is
 my father, the birch reading the news
 of the day aloud as if we hadn't **15**

heard it, the root moss lit gas,
 like the veins on your ink-stained hand—
 the birch all elbows, taking us in.

Cynthia Zarin (1959 -)

[Turn over

² a nerve cell cluster or a group of nerve cell bodies located in the body's nervous system.

Section B

EDITH WHARTON: *The Age of Innocence*

2

EITHER (a) Discuss the presentation of loss in *The Age of Innocence*.

OR (b) Write a critical commentary on the following passage, paying particular attention to the presentation of family life here and elsewhere in the novel.

No one in the Mingott set could understand why Amy Sillerton had submitted so tamely to the eccentricities of a husband who filled the house with long-haired men and short-haired women, and, when he travelled, took her to explore tombs in Yucatan instead of going to Paris or Italy. But there they were, set in their ways, and apparently unaware that they were different from other people; and when they gave one of their dreary annual garden-parties every family on the Cliffs, because of the Sillerton-Pennilow-Dagonet connection, had to draw lots and send an unwilling representative. 5

"It's a wonder," Mrs. Welland remarked, "that they didn't choose the Cup Race day! Do you remember, two years ago, their giving a party for a black man on the day of Julia Mingott's thé dansant? Luckily this time there's nothing else going on that I know of—for of course some of us will have to go." 10

Mr. Welland sighed nervously. "'Some of us,' my dear—more than one? Three o'clock is such a very awkward hour. I have to be here at half-past three to take my drops: it's really no use trying to follow Bencomb's new treatment if I don't do it systematically; and if I join you later, of course I shall miss my drive." At the thought he laid down his knife and fork again, and a flush of anxiety rose to his finely-wrinkled cheek. 15

"There's no reason why you should go at all, my dear," his wife answered with a cheerfulness that had become automatic. "I have some cards to leave at the other end of Bellevue Avenue, and I'll drop in at about half-past three and stay long enough to make poor Amy feel that she hasn't been slighted." She glanced hesitatingly at her daughter. "And if Newland's afternoon is provided for perhaps May can drive you out with the ponies, and try their new russet harness." 20

It was a principle in the Welland family that people's days and hours should be what Mrs. Welland called "provided for." The melancholy possibility of having to "kill time" (especially for those who did not care for whist or solitaire) was a vision that haunted her as the spectre of the unemployed haunts the philanthropist. Another of her principles was that parents should never (at least visibly) interfere with the plans of their married children; and the difficulty of adjusting this respect for May's independence with the exigency of Mr. Welland's claims could be overcome only by the exercise of an ingenuity which left not a second of Mrs. Welland's own time unprovided for. 25

"Of course I'll drive with Papa—I'm sure Newland will find something to do," May said, in a tone that gently reminded her husband of his lack of response. It was a cause of constant distress to Mrs. Welland that her son-in-law showed so little foresight in planning his days. Often already, during the fortnight that he had passed under her roof, when she enquired how he meant to spend his afternoon, he had answered paradoxically: "Oh, I think for a change I'll just save it instead of 30

spending it—" and once, when she and May had had to go on a long-postponed 35
round of afternoon calls, he had confessed to having lain all the afternoon under
a rock on the beach below the house.

"Newland never seems to look ahead," Mrs. Welland once ventured to
complain to her daughter; and May answered serenely: "No; but you see it 40
doesn't matter, because when there's nothing particular to do he reads a book."

"Ah, yes—like his father!" Mrs. Welland agreed, as if allowing for an inherited
oddity; and after that the question of Newland's unemployment was tacitly
dropped.

Nevertheless, as the day for the Sillerton reception approached, May began
to show a natural solicitude for his welfare, and to suggest a tennis match at the 45
Chiverses', or a sail on Julius Beaufort's cutter, as a means of atoning for her
temporary desertion. "I shall be back by six, you know, dear: Papa never drives
later than that—" and she was not reassured till Archer said that he thought of
hiring a run-about and driving up the island to a stud-farm to look at a second
horse for her brougham. They had been looking for this horse for some time, and
the suggestion was so acceptable that May glanced at her mother as if to say:
"You see he knows how to plan out his time as well as any of us."

50

55

Chapter 22

[Turn over

Section C

William Shakespeare: *Hamlet*

3

EITHER (a) Consider the role and significance of royalty in *Hamlet*.

OR (b) Write a critical commentary on the following passage, paying particular attention to the use of dialogue here and elsewhere in the play.

HAMLET	Up from my cabin, My sea-gown scarfed about me, in the dark Groped I to find out them; had my desire. Fingered their packet, and in fine withdrew To mine own room again; making so bold, My fears forgetting manners, to unseal Their grand commission; where I found, Horatio— O royal knavery!—an exact command, Larded with many several sorts of reasons Importing Denmark's health and England's too, With, ho! such bugs and goblins in my life, That, on the supervise, no leisure bated, No, not to stay the grinding of the axe, My head should be struck off.	5
HORATIO	Is't possible?	
HAMLET	(<i>giving him a paper</i>) Here's the commission: read it at more leisure. But wilt thou hear me how I did proceed?	15
HORATIO	I beseech you.	
HAMLET	Being thus benetted round with villains,-- Ere I could make a prologue to my brains, They had begun the play—I sat me down, Devised a new commission, wrote it fair: I once did hold it, as our statists do, A baseness to write fair, and labour'd much How to forget that learning; but, sir, now It did me yeoman's service: wilt thou know Th' effect of what I wrote?	20
HORATIO	Ay, good my lord.	
HAMLET	An earnest conjuration from the King, As England was his faithful tributary, As love between them like the palm should flourish, As peace should still her wheaten garland wear And stand a comma 'tween their amities, And many such-like 'as'es of great charge, That, on the view and know of these contents, Without debatement further more or less, He should the bearers put to sudden death, Not shriving-time allowed.	25
HORATIO	How was this sealed?	30
		35

HAMLET	Why, even in that was heaven ordinant. I had my father's signet in my purse, Which was the model of that Danish seal; Folded the writ up in form of th' other, Subscribed it, gave't th' impression, placed it safely, The changeling never known. Now, the next day Was our sea-fight; and what to this was sequent Thou know'st already.	40 45
HORATIO	So Guildenstern and Rosencrantz go to't.	
HAMLET	Why, man, they did make love to this employment. They are not near my conscience. Their defeat Does by their own insinuation grow. 'Tis dangerous when the baser nature comes Between the pass and fell incensèd points Of mighty opposites.	50
HORATIO	Why, what a king is this!	

Act 5, Scene 2

End of Paper