



MERIDIAN JUNIOR COLLEGE  
JC2 Preliminary Examination  
Higher 2

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**H2 LITERATURE IN ENGLISH**

**9748/01**

Paper 1: Reading Literature

13 September 2017

**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.

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**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.

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This document consists of 9 printed pages and 1 blank page.

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

## SECTION A

## UNSEEN POETRY

Answer one question in this section

1

**EITHER (a) Write a critical comparison of the following poems paying close attention to ways in which language, style and form contribute to each poet's portrayal of journeying.**

A

Uphill

Does the road wind up-hill all the way?

Yes, to the very end.

Will the day's journey take the whole long day?

From morn to night, my friend.

But is there for the night a resting-place?

5

A roof for when the slow dark hours begin.

May not the darkness hide it from my face?

You cannot miss that inn.

Shall I meet other wayfarers at night?

Those who have gone before.

10

Then must I knock, or call when just in sight?

They will not keep you standing at that door.

Shall I find comfort, travel-sore and weak?

Of labour you shall find the sum.

Will there be beds for me and all who seek?

15

Yea, beds for all who come.

Christina Rossetti (1830 - 1894)

B

## Landlock

Rain came rarely to the white wood valley.  
 In between times, he did what he could,  
 cut rhubarb and gooseberries, brought flowers  
 from the hill: camel-thorn in winter, rest-harrow  
 in summer, rock-rose, barberry, mimosa. 5  
 He ground wormwood to settle her fever.  
 When the trouble was done he would take back the farm,  
 plant olive and cedar, build her a home.  
 But she thought mostly of the sea -  
 the uncommissioned sea - 10  
 wild at her, salt strong -  
 not the starving river, brackish and torn -  
 a river is never enough.  
 One of her wishes was to find her own path,  
 but the lowlands were locked down, the plains undone; 15  
 so they climbed, and climbed as one.  
 And when she could not walk he carried her  
 and when he could not carry her she walked.  
 Such as this the days went by, till his strength too was sapped.  
 He laid his back against the longer rock 20  
 and set her head that gently in his lap.  
 Sleep overtook them on the slope.  
 He woke to take the sunlight in his eyes  
 and could not see at first the greater distance,  
 the strange blue, stain blue light in the distance, 25  
 that seemed every bit to move, impossible, surely,  
 a thin drawn band of sea, somewhere meeting sky.  
 He raised her head that she might see it done.  
 But where she was she had already gone.

Matthew Hollis (1971 - )

OR

- (b) Write a critical comparison of the following poems paying close attention to ways in which language, style and form contribute to each poet's portrayal of guilt.

A

## Dead Horse in Field

In the last, far field, half-buried  
 In barberry bushes red-fruited, the thoroughbred  
 Lies dead, left foreleg shattered below knee,  
 A .30-30 in heart. In distance,  
 I now see gorged crows rise ragged in wind. The day 5  
 After death I had gone for farewell, and the eyes  
 Were already gone—that  
 The beneficent work of crows. Eyes gone,  
 The two-year-old could, of course, more readily see  
 Down the track of pure and eternal darkness. 10

A week later I couldn't get close. The sweet stink  
 Had begun. That damned wagon mudhole  
 Hidden by leaves as we galloped—I found it.  
 Spat on it. As a child would. Next day  
 The buzzards. How beautiful in air!—carving 15  
 The slow, concentric, downward pattern of vortex, wing-glint  
 On wing-glint. From the house,  
 Now with glasses, I see  
 The squabble and pushing, the waggle of wattle-red heads.

At evening I watch the buzzards, the crows, 20  
 Arise. They swing black in nature's flow and perfection,  
 High in sad carmine of sunset. Forgiveness  
 Is not indicated. It is superfluous. They are  
 What they are.

How long before I go back to see 25  
 That intricate piece of  
 Modern sculpture, white now,  
 Assuming in stasis  
 New beauty! Then,  
 A year later, I'll see 30  
 The green twine of vine, each leaf  
 Heart-shaped, soft as velvet, beginning  
 Its benediction.

It thinks it is God.  
 Can you think of some ground on which that may be gainsaid? 35

Robert Penn Warren (1905 - 1989)

B

## Traveling through the Dark

Traveling through the dark I found a deer  
 dead on the edge of the Wilson River road.  
 It is usually best to roll them into the canyon:  
 that road is narrow; to swerve might make more dead.

By glow of the tail-light I stumbled back of the car 5  
 and stood by the heap, a doe, a recent killing;  
 she had stiffened already, almost cold.  
 I dragged her off; she was large in the belly.

My fingers touching her side brought me the reason— 10  
 her side was warm; her fawn lay there waiting,  
 alive, still, never to be born.  
 Beside that mountain road I hesitated.

The car aimed ahead its lowered parking lights;  
 under the hood purred the steady engine. 15  
 I stood in the glare of the warm exhaust turning red;  
 around our group I could hear the wilderness listen.

I thought hard for us all—my only swerving—,  
 then pushed her over the edge into the river.

William E. Stafford (1914 - 1993)

## Section B

EDITH WHARTON: *The Age of Innocence*

2

- EITHER (a)** 'Countess Olenska is the disturbing element in this otherwise happy state of things.' To what extent is this an accurate portrayal of circumstances in the novel?
- Or (b)** Write a critical commentary on the following passage, paying particular attention to the presentation of the Beauforts here and elsewhere in the novel.

It invariably happened in the same way.

Mrs. Julius Beaufort, on the night of her annual ball, never failed to appear at the Opera; indeed, she always gave her ball on an Opera night in order to emphasise her complete superiority to household cares, and her possession of a staff of servants competent to organise every detail of the entertainment in her absence.

5

The Beauforts' house was one of the few in New York that possessed a ball-room (it antedated even Mrs. Manson Mingott's and the Headly Chiverses'); and at a time when it was beginning to be thought "provincial" to put a "crash" over the drawing-room floor and move the furniture upstairs, the possession of a ball-room that was used for no other purpose, and left for three-hundred-and-sixty-four days of the year to shuttered darkness, with its gilt chairs stacked in a corner and its chandelier in a bag; this undoubted superiority was felt to compensate for whatever was regrettable in the Beaufort past.

10

Mrs. Archer, who was fond of coining her social philosophy into axioms, had once said: "We all have our pet common people—" and though the phrase was a daring one, its truth was secretly admitted in many an exclusive bosom. But the Beauforts were not exactly common; some people said they were even worse. Mrs. Beaufort belonged indeed to one of America's most honoured families; she had been the lovely Regina Dallas (of the South Carolina branch), a penniless beauty introduced to New York society by her cousin, the imprudent Medora Manson, who was always doing the wrong thing from the right motive. When one was related to the Mansons and the Rushworths one had a "droit de cite" (as Mr. Sillerton Jackson, who had frequented the Tuileries, called it) in New York society; but did one not forfeit it in marrying Julius Beaufort?

15

20

The question was: who was Beaufort? He passed for an Englishman, was agreeable, handsome, ill-tempered, hospitable and witty. He had come to America with letters of recommendation from old Mrs. Manson Mingott's English son-in-law, the banker, and had speedily made himself an important position in the world of affairs; but his habits were dissipated, his tongue was bitter, his antecedents were mysterious; and when Medora Manson announced her cousin's engagement to him it was felt to be one more act of folly in poor Medora's long record of imprudences.

25

30

But folly is as often justified of her children as wisdom, and two years after young Mrs. Beaufort's marriage it was admitted that she had the most distinguished house in New York. No one knew exactly how the miracle was accomplished. She was indolent, passive, the caustic even called her dull; but dressed like an idol, hung with pearls, growing younger and blonder and more beautiful each year, she throned in Mr. Beaufort's heavy brown-stone palace, and drew all the world there without lifting her jewelled little finger. The knowing people said it was Beaufort himself who trained the servants, taught the chef new dishes, told the gardeners what hot-house flowers to grow for the dinner-table and the drawing-rooms, selected the guests, brewed the after-dinner punch and dictated the little notes his wife wrote to her friends. If he did, these domestic activities were privately performed, and he presented to the world the appearance of a careless and hospitable millionaire strolling into his own drawing-room with the detachment of an invited guest, and saying: "My wife's gloxinias are a marvel, aren't they? I believe she gets them out from Kew."

### Chapter 3

## Section C

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE: *Hamlet*

3

**EITHER (a)** Discuss the significance of disguise in *Hamlet*.

**Or (b)** Write a critical commentary on the following passage relating it to the dramatic presentation of madness here and elsewhere in the play.

**QUEEN GERTRUDE**

I will not speak with her.

**Gentleman**

She is importunate, indeed distract:  
Her mood will needs be pitied.

**QUEEN GERTRUDE**

What would she have?

**Gentleman**

She speaks much of her father; says she hears 5

There's tricks i' the world; and hems, and beats her heart;

Spurns enviously at straws; speaks things in doubt,

That carry but half sense: her speech is nothing,

Yet the unshaped use of it doth move

The hearers to collection; they aim at it, 10

And botch the words up fit to their own thoughts;

Which, as her winks, and nods, and gestures

yield them,

Indeed would make one think there might be thought,

Though nothing sure, yet much unhappily. 15

**HORATIO**

'Twere good she were spoken with; for she may strew

Dangerous conjectures in ill-breeding minds.

**QUEEN GERTRUDE**

Let her come in. *[Exit Gentleman]*

*Enter Ophelia*

*[aside]* To my sick soul, as sin's true nature is,

Each toy seems prologue to some great amiss: 20

So full of artless jealousy is guilt,

It spills itself in fearing to be spilt.

**OPHELIA**

Where is the beauteous majesty of Denmark?

**QUEEN GERTRUDE**

How now, Ophelia!

**OPHELIA***Sings*

How should I your true love know 25  
 From another one?  
 By his cockle hat and staff,  
 And his sandal shoon.

**QUEEN GERTRUDE**

Alas, sweet lady, what imports this song?

**OPHELIA**

Say you? nay, pray you, mark. 30

*Sings*

He is dead and gone, lady,  
 He is dead and gone;  
 At his head a grass-green turf,  
 At his heels a stone.

**QUEEN GERTRUDE**

Nay, but, Ophelia,-- 35

**OPHELIA**

Pray you, mark.

*Sings***Act 4 Scene 5****End of Paper**

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