



VICTORIA JUNIOR COLLEGE
JC2 PRELIMINARY EXAMINATION 2017
HIGHER 2

LITERATURE IN ENGLISH

9748/01

Paper 1

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 **8** printed pages

[Turn over

Section A

1

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

A *Adlestrop*

Yes, I remember Adlestrop -
The name, because one afternoon
Of heat the express-train drew up there
Unwontedly¹. It was late June.

The steam hissed. Someone cleared his throat. 5
No one left and no one came
On the bare platform. What I saw
Was Adlestrop - only the name

And willows, willow-herb, and grass,
And meadowsweet, and haycocks² dry, 10
No whit³ less still and lonely fair
Than the high cloudlets in the sky.

And for that minute a blackbird sang
Close by, and round him, mistier,
Farther and farther, all the birds 15
Of Oxfordshire and Gloucestershire⁴.

Edward Thomas (1878-1917)

¹ Unwonted: Unaccustomed.

² Haycock: A conical heap of hay in a field.

³ Whit: A very small part or amount.

⁴ Oxfordshire and Gloucestershire: Counties in England.

B *The Village*

Scarcely a street, too few houses
 To merit the title; just a way between
 The one tavern and the one shop
 That leads nowhere and fails at the top
 Of the short hill, eaten away 5
 By long erosion of the green tide
 Of grass creeping perpetually nearer
 This last outpost of time past.

So little happens; the black dog
 Cracking his fleas in the hot sun 10
 Is history. Yet the girl who crosses
 From door to door moves to a scale
 Beyond the bland day's two dimensions.

Stay, then, village, for round you spins
 On a slow axis a world as vast 15
 And meaningful as any poised
 By great Plato's⁵ solitary mind.

R. S. Thomas (1913-2000)

⁵ Plato: Philosopher, famously known for theorising the abstract Ideal.

- Or (b) Write a critical comparison of the following poems, considering in detail ways in which language, style and form contribute to each poet's portrayal of work.

A *Loving Working*

*"We clean to give space for Art."
Micaela Miranda, Freedom Theatre, Palestine*

Work was a shining refuge when wind sank its tooth
into my mind. Everything we love is going away,
drifting – but you could sweep this stretch of floor,
this patio or porch, gather white stones in a bucket,
rake the patch for future planting, mop the counter 5
with a rag. Lovely wet grey rag, squeeze it hard
it does so much. Clear the yard of blowing bits of plastic.
The glory in the doing. The breath of the doing.
Sometimes the simplest move kept fear from 10
fragmenting into no energy at all, or sorrow from
multiplying, or sorrow from being the only person
living in the house.

Naomi Shihab Nye (b. 1952)

B *Find Work*

*I tie my Hat — I crease my Shawl —
Life's little duties do — precisely
As the very least
Were infinite — to me —
Emily Dickinson, #443*

My mother's mother, widowed very young
of her first love, and of that love's first fruit,
moved through her father's farm, her country tongue
and country heart anaesthetized and mute
with labor. So her kind was taught to do — 5
"Find work," she would reply to every grief —
and her one dictum, whether false or true,
tolled heavy with her passionate belief.
Widowed again, with children, in her prime,
she spoke so little it was hard to bear 10
so much composure, such a truce with time
spent in the lifelong practice of despair.
But I recall her floors, scrubbed white as bone,
her dishes, and how painfully they shone.

Rhina Espaillat (b. 1932)

Section B

KAZUO ISHIGURO: *The Remains of the Day*

2

Either (a) 'The novel is equally concerned with the past and the future.'How far would you agree with this comment on *The Remains of the Day*?**Or (b)** Write a critical commentary on the following passage, relating it to the presentation of dishonesty, here and elsewhere in the novel.

It was at a certain stage during this tour of the premises – I was crossing the hall under the impression that the party had gone out to explore the grounds – when I saw that Mrs Wakefield had remained behind and was closely examining the stone arch that frames the doorway into the dining room. As I went past, muttering a quiet 'excuse me, madam,' she turned and said:

'Oh, Stevens, perhaps you're the one to tell me. This arch here *looks* seventeenth century, but isn't it the case that it was built quite recently? Perhaps during Lord Darlington's time?' 5

'It is possible, madam.'

'It's very beautiful. But it is probably a kind of mock period piece done only a few years ago. Isn't that right?'

'I'm not sure, madam, but that is certainly possible.'

10

Then, lowering her voice, Mrs Wakefield had said: 'But tell me, Stevens, what was this Lord Darlington like? Presumably you must have worked for him.'

'I didn't, madam, no.'

'Oh, I thought you did. I wonder why I thought that.'

Mrs Wakefield turned back to the arch and putting her hand to it, said: 'So we don't know for certain then. Still, it looks to me like it's mock. Very skilful, but mock.' 15

It is possible I might have quickly forgotten this exchange; however, following the Wakefields' departure, I took in afternoon tea to Mr Farraday in the drawing room and noticed he was in a rather preoccupied mood. After an initial silence, he said:

'You know, Stevens, Mrs Wakefield wasn't as impressed with this house as I believe she ought to have been.' 20

'Is that so, sir?'

'In fact, she seemed to think I was exaggerating the pedigree of this place. That I was making it up about all these features going back centuries.'

'Indeed, sir?'

25

'She kept asserting everything was "mock" this and "mock" that. She even thought you were "mock", Stevens.'

'Indeed, sir?'

'Indeed, Stevens. I'd told her you were the real thing. A real old English butler. That you'd been in this house for over thirty years, serving a real English lord. But Mrs Wakefield contradicted me on this point. In fact, she contradicted me with great confidence.' 30

'Is that so, sir?'

'Mrs Wakefield, Stevens, was convinced you never worked here until I hired you. In fact, she seemed to be under the impression she'd had that from your own lips. Made me look pretty much a fool, as you can imagine.'

35

'It's most regrettable, sir.'

'I mean to say, Stevens, this *is* a genuine grand old English house, isn't it? That's what I paid for. And you're a genuine old-fashioned English butler, not just some waiter pretending to be one. You're the real thing, aren't you? That's what I wanted, isn't that what I have?'

'I venture to say you do, sir.' 40
 'Then can you explain to me what Mrs Wakefield is saying? It's a big mystery to me.'
 'It is possible I may well have given the lady a slightly misleading picture concerning my career, sir. I do apologize if this caused embarrassment.'
 'I'll say it caused embarrassment. Those people have now got me down for a braggart and a liar. Anyway, what do you mean, you may have given her a "slightly misleading picture"?' 45
 'I'm very sorry, sir. I had no idea I might cause you such embarrassment.'
 'But dammit, Stevens, why did you tell her such a tale?'
 I considered the situation for a moment, then said: 'I'm very sorry, sir. But it is to do with the ways of this country.'
 'What are you talking about, man?' 50
 'I mean to say, sir, that it is not customary in England for an employee to discuss his past employers.'
 'OK, Stevens, so you don't wish to divulge past confidences. But does that extend to you actually denying having worked for anyone other than me?'
 'It does seem a little extreme when you put it that way, sir. But it has often been considered 55
 desirable for employees to give such an impression. If I may put it this way, sir, it is a little akin to the custom as regards marriages. If a divorced lady were present in the company of her second husband, it is often thought desirable not to allude to the original marriage at all. There is a similar custom as regards our profession, sir.'
 'Well, I only wish I'd known about your custom before, Stevens,' my employer said, leaning 60
 back in his chair. 'It certainly made me look like a chump.'

Day Two -- Afternoon
 Mortimer's Pond, Dorset

3

How far would you agree with this comment on *Hamlet*?

Enter Horatio

In censure of his seeming.

35

Horatio: Well my lord;
If 'a steal aught the whilst this play is playing,
And 'scape detecting, I will pay the theft.
Hamlet: They are coming to the play; I must be idle.
Get you a place.

Act 3, Scene 2

END OF PAPER