



Victorian Certificate of Education 2007

LITERATURE

Written examination

Thursday 8 November 2007

Reading time: 3.00 pm to 3.15 pm (15 minutes)

Writing time: 3.15 pm to 5.15 pm (2 hours)

TASK BOOK

Structure of book

<i>Tasks</i>	<i>Marks</i>
1	20
2	20
	Total 40

- Students are permitted to bring into the examination room: pens, pencils, highlighters, erasers, sharpeners and rulers.
- Students are NOT permitted to bring into the examination room: blank sheets of paper and/or white out liquid/tape, dictionaries.
- No calculator is allowed in this examination.

Materials supplied

- Task book of 64 pages, including the **Assessment criteria** and a checklist on page 64.
- One or more script books. All script books contain unruled (rough work only) pages for making notes, plans and drafts if you wish.

The task

- You are required to complete **two** pieces of writing based on **two texts** selected from the list on pages 2 and 3 of this task book.

Each text must be chosen from a different part.

- Each piece of writing is worth half of the total assessment for the examination.
- Write your **student number** in the space provided on the front cover(s) of the script book(s).
- Write the **part numbers** and **text numbers** of your selected texts on the front cover(s) of your script book(s).
- All written responses must be in English.

At the end of the task

- Place all other used script books inside the front cover of one of the used script books.
- You may keep this task book.

Students are NOT permitted to bring mobile phones and/or any other unauthorised electronic devices into the examination room.

Instructions

You are required to complete two pieces of writing based on **two texts** selected from the list on pages 2 and 3.

The list is divided into five parts.

The texts you select must be chosen from different parts. **You must not write on two texts from the same part.** If you answer on two texts from the same part, one of the pieces will be awarded zero marks.

1. Find the passages for the texts on which you wish to write.
2. Three passages have been set for every text.
3. The passages are printed in the order in which they appear in the texts.
4. For each of your selected texts, you must use one or more of the passages as the basis for a discussion of that text.
5. In your pieces of writing, refer in detail to the passage or passages and the texts. You may include minor references to other texts.
6. As a guide, each piece of writing should be between 400–1000 words. However, length will not be a major consideration in the assessment.

Table of contents

Part 1:	Novels		Page
1 – 1	Jane Austen	<i>Sense and Sensibility</i>	4–5
1 – 2	Pat Barker	<i>Regeneration</i>	6–7
1 – 3	Michelle de Kretser	<i>The Hamilton Case</i>	8–9
1 – 4	E L Doctorow	<i>Ragtime</i>	10–11
1 – 5	F Scott Fitzgerald	<i>The Great Gatsby</i>	12–13
1 – 6	Helen Garner	<i>The Children's Bach</i>	14–15
1 – 7	Henry James	<i>Washington Square</i>	16–17
1 – 8	Andrew McGahan	<i>The White Earth</i>	18–19
1 – 9	Ann Patchett	<i>Bel Canto</i>	20–21
Part 2:	Plays		
2 – 1	Anton Chekhov	<i>Three Sisters</i>	22–23
2 – 2	Henrik Ibsen	<i>Hedda Gabler</i>	24–25
2 – 3	Joanna Murray-Smith	<i>Honour</i>	26–27
2 – 4	Hannie Rayson	<i>Hotel Sorrento</i>	28–29
2 – 5	Yasmina Reza	<i>'Art'</i>	30–31
2 – 6	William Shakespeare	<i>King Lear</i>	32–33
2 – 7	William Shakespeare	<i>Much Ado About Nothing</i>	34–35
2 – 8	Sophocles	<i>Antigone</i>	36–37
2 – 9	Dylan Thomas	<i>Under Milk Wood</i>	38–39

Part 3: Short stories

3 – 1	Thea Astley	<i>Hunting the Wild Pineapple</i>	40–41
3 – 2	A S Byatt	<i>Sugar & Other Stories</i>	42–43
3 – 3	Raymond Carver	<i>Will You Please Be Quiet, Please?</i>	44–45

Part 4: Other literature

4 – 1	William Dalrymple	<i>City of Djinns</i>	46–47
4 – 2	Michael McGirr	<i>Bypass: The Story of a Road</i>	48–49
4 – 3	Drusilla Modjeska	<i>Timepieces</i>	50–51

Part 5: Poetry

5 – 1	Robert Adamson	<i>Mulberry Leaves</i>	52–53
5 – 2	W H Auden	<i>Selected Poems</i>	54–55
5 – 3	John Donne	<i>Selected Poetry</i>	56–57
5 – 4	John Kinsella	<i>Peripheral Light: Selected and New Poems</i>	58–59
5 – 5	Philip Larkin	<i>Collected Poems</i>	60–61
5 – 6	Judith Wright	<i>Collected Poems</i>	62–63

Assessment criteria	64
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A checklist for planning and revising	64
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1: Novels

1 – 1 Jane Austen: *Sense and Sensibility*

Use one or more of the passages selected as the basis for a discussion of *Sense and Sensibility*.

1.

Mrs. Dashwood had been informed by her husband of the solemn promise on the part of his son in their favour, which gave comfort to his last earthly reflections. She doubted the sincerity of this assurance no more than he had doubted it himself, and she thought of it for her daughters' sake with satisfaction, though as for herself she was persuaded that a much smaller provision than 7000l. would support her in affluence. For their brother's sake too, for the sake of his own heart she rejoiced; and she reproached herself for being unjust to his merit before, in believing him incapable of generosity. His attentive behaviour to herself and his sisters convinced her that their welfare was dear to him, and, for a long time, she firmly relied on the liberality of his intentions.

The contempt which she had, very early in their acquaintance, felt for her daughter-in-law, was very much increased by the farther knowledge of her character, which half a year's residence in her family afforded; and perhaps in spite of every consideration of politeness or maternal affection on the side of the former, the two ladies might have found it impossible to have lived together so long, had not a particular circumstance occurred to give still greater eligibility, according to the opinions of Mrs. Dashwood, to her daughter's continuance at Norland.

This circumstance was a growing attachment between her eldest girl and the brother of Mrs. John Dashwood, a gentlemanlike and pleasing young man, who was introduced to their acquaintance soon after his sister's establishment at Norland, and who had since spent the greatest part of his time there.

Some mothers might have encouraged the intimacy from motives of interest, for Edward Ferrars was the eldest son of a man who had died very rich; and some might have repressed it from motives of prudence, for, except a trifling sum, the whole of his fortune depended on the will of his mother. But Mrs. Dashwood was alike uninfluenced by either consideration. It was enough for her that he appeared to be amiable, that he loved her daughter, and that Elinor returned the partiality. It was contrary to every doctrine of her's that difference of fortune should keep any couple asunder who were attracted by resemblance of disposition; and that Elinor's merit should not be acknowledged by every one who knew her, was to her comprehension impossible.

* * *

2.

"Pray, pray be composed," cried Elinor, "and do not betray what you feel to every body present. Perhaps he has not observed you yet."

This however was more than she could believe herself, and to be composed at such a moment was not only beyond the reach of Marianne, it was beyond her wish. She sat in an agony of impatience, which affected every feature.

At last he turned round again, and regarded them both; she started up, and pronouncing his name in a tone of affection, held out her hand to him. He approached, and addressing himself rather to Elinor than Marianne, as if wishing to avoid her eye, and determined not to observe her attitude, inquired in a hurried manner after Mrs. Dashwood, and asked how long they had been in town. Elinor was robbed of all presence of mind by such an address, and was unable to say a word. But the feelings of her sister were instantly expressed. Her face was crimsoned over, and she exclaimed in a voice of the greatest emotion, "Good God! Willoughby, what is the meaning of this? Have you not received my letters? Will you not shake hands with me?"

He could not then avoid it, but her touch seemed painful to him, and he held her hand only for a moment. During all this time he was evidently struggling for composure. Elinor watched his countenance and saw its expression becoming more tranquil. After a moment's pause, he spoke with calmness.

"I did myself the honour of calling in Berkeley-street last Tuesday, and very much regretted that I was not fortunate enough to find yourselves and Mrs. Jennings at home. My card was not lost, I hope."

"But have you not received my notes?" cried Marianne in the wildest anxiety. "Here is some mistake I am sure—some dreadful mistake. What can be the meaning of it? Tell me, Willoughby; for heaven's sake tell me, what is the matter?"

He made no reply; his complexion changed and all his embarrassment returned; but as if, on catching the eye of the young lady with whom he had been previously talking, he felt the necessity of instant exertion, he recovered himself again, and after saying, "Yes, I had the pleasure of receiving the information of your arrival in town, which you were so good as to send me," turned hastily away with a slight bow and joined his friend.

* * *

1: Novels

1 – 1 Jane Austen: *Sense and Sensibility* – continued

3.

They were visited on their first settling by almost all their relations and friends. Mrs. Ferrars came to inspect the happiness which she was almost ashamed of having authorised; and even the Dashwoods were at the expence of a journey from Sussex to do them honour.

“I will not say that I am dissappointed, my dear sister,” said John, as they were walking together one morning before the gates of Delaford House, “*that* would be saying too much, for certainly you have been one of the most fortunate young women in the world, as it is. But, I confess, it would give me great pleasure to call Colonel Brandon brother. His property here, his place, his house, everything in such respectable and excellent condition!—and his woods!—I have not seen such timber anywhere in Dorsetshire, as there is now standing in Delaford Hanger!—And though, perhaps, Marianne may not seem exactly the person to attract him—yet I think it would altogether be adviseable for you to have them now frequently staying with you, for as Colonel Brandon seems a great deal at home, nobody can tell what may happen—for, when people are much thrown together, and see little of anybody else—and it will always be in your power to set her off to advantage, and so forth;—in short, you may as well give her a chance—You understand me.”—

But though Mrs. Ferrars *did* come to see them, and always treated them with the make-believe of decent affection, they were never insulted by her real favour and preference.—*That* was due to the folly of Robert, and the cunning of his wife; and it was earned by them before many months had passed away.—The selfish sagacity of the latter, which had at first drawn Robert into the scrape, was the principal instrument of his deliverance from it; for her respectful humility, assiduous attentions, and endless flatteries, as soon as the smallest opening was given for their exercise, reconciled Mrs. Ferrars to his choice, and re-established him completely in her favour.

The whole of Lucy’s behaviour in the affair, and the prosperity which crowned it, therefore, may be held forth as a most encouraging instance of what an earnest, an unceasing attention to self-interest, however its progress may be apparently obstructed, will do in securing every advantage of fortune, with no other sacrifice than that of time and conscience.

* * *

1: Novels

1 – 2 Pat Barker: *Regeneration*

Use one or more of the passages selected as the basis for a discussion of *Regeneration*.

1.

Pat Barker, *Regeneration*,
Penguin Books, 1992

pp 47–48

2.

Pat Barker, *Regeneration*,
Penguin Books, 1992

pp 102–103

1: Novels

1 – 2 Pat Barker: *Regeneration* – continued

3.

Pat Barker, *Regeneration*,
Penguin Books, 1992

p 189

1: Novels

1 – 3 Michelle de Kretser: *The Hamilton Case*

Use one or more of the passages selected as the basis for a discussion of *The Hamilton Case*.

1.

Michelle de Kretser, *The Hamilton Case*,
Random House, 2003

pp 8–9

2.

Michelle de Kretser, *The Hamilton Case*,
Random House, 2003

pp 133–134

1: Novels

1 – 3 Michelle de Kretser: *The Hamilton Case* – continued

3.

Michelle de Kretser, *The Hamilton Case*,
Random House, 2003

pp 336–337

1: Novels

1 – 4 E L Doctorow: *Ragtime*

Use one or more of the passages selected as the basis for a discussion of *Ragtime*.

1.

E L Doctorow, *Ragtime*,
Picador, 1985

pp 16–17

2.

E L Doctorow, *Ragtime*,
Picador, 1985

pp 48–49

1: Novels

1 – 4 E L Doctorow: *Ragtime* – continued

3.

E L Doctorow, *Ragtime*,
Picador, 1985
pp 220–221

1: Novels

1 – 5 F Scott Fitzgerald: *The Great Gatsby*

Use one or more of the passages selected as the basis for a discussion of *The Great Gatsby*.

1.

Daisy took her face in her hands as if feeling its lovely shape, and her eyes moved gradually out into the velvet dusk. I saw that turbulent emotions possessed her, so I asked what I thought would be some sedative questions about her little girl.

‘We don’t know each other very well, Nick,’ she said suddenly. ‘Even if we are cousins. You didn’t come to my wedding.’

‘I wasn’t back from the war.’

‘That’s true.’ She hesitated. ‘Well, I’ve had a very bad time, Nick, and I’m pretty cynical about everything.’

Evidently she had reason to be. I waited but she didn’t say any more, and after a moment I returned rather feebly to the subject of her daughter.

‘I suppose she talks, and – eats, and everything.’

‘Oh, yes.’ She looked at me absently. ‘Listen, Nick; let me tell you what I said when she was born. Would you like to hear?’

‘Very much.’

‘It’ll show you how I’ve gotten to feel about – things. Well, she was less than an hour old and Tom was God knows where. I woke up out of the ether with an utterly abandoned feeling, and asked the nurse right away if it was a boy or a girl. She told me it was a girl, and so I turned my head away and wept. “All right,” I said, “I’m glad it’s a girl. And I hope she’ll be a fool – that’s the best thing a girl can be in this world, a beautiful little fool.”

‘You see I think everything’s terrible anyhow,’ she went on in a convinced way. ‘Everybody thinks so – the most advanced people. And I *know*. I’ve been everywhere and seen everything and done everything.’ Her eyes flashed around her in a defiant way, rather like Tom’s, and she laughed with thrilling scorn. ‘Sophisticated – God, I’m sophisticated!’

The instant her voice broke off, ceasing to compel my attention, my belief, I felt the basic insincerity of what she had said. It made me uneasy, as though the whole evening had been a trick of some sort to exact a contributory emotion from me. I waited, and sure enough, in a moment she looked at me with an absolute smirk on her lovely face, as if she had asserted her membership in a rather distinguished secret society to which she and Tom belonged.

* * *

2.

‘My family all died and I came into a good deal of money.’

His voice was solemn, as if the memory of that sudden extinction of a clan still haunted him. For a moment I suspected that he was pulling my leg, but a glance at him convinced me otherwise.

‘After that I lived like a young rajah in all the capitals of Europe – Paris, Venice, Rome – collecting jewels, chiefly rubies, hunting big game, painting a little, things for myself only, and trying to forget something very sad that had happened to me long ago.’

With an effort I managed to restrain my incredulous laughter. The very phrases were worn so threadbare that they evoked no image except that of a turbaned ‘character’ leaking sawdust at every pore as he pursued a tiger through the Bois de Boulogne.

‘Then came the war, old sport. It was a great relief, and I tried very hard to die, but I seemed to bear an enchanted life. I accepted a commission as first lieutenant when it began. In the Argonne Forest I took the remains of my machine-gun battalion so far forward that there was a half mile gap on either side of us where the infantry couldn’t advance. We stayed there two days and two nights, a hundred and thirty men with sixteen Lewis guns, and when the infantry came up at last they found the insignia of three German divisions among the piles of dead. I was promoted to be a major, and every Allied government gave me a decoration – even Montenegro, little Montenegro down on the Adriatic Sea!’

Little Montenegro! He lifted up the words and nodded at them – with his smile. The smile comprehended Montenegro’s troubled history and sympathized with the brave struggles of the Montenegrin people. It appreciated fully the chain of national circumstances which had elicited this tribute from Montenegro’s warm little heart. My incredulity was submerged in fascination now; it was like skimming hastily through a dozen magazines.

* * *

1: Novels

1 – 5 F Scott Fitzgerald: *The Great Gatsby* – continued

3.

Gatsby walked over and stood beside her.

‘Daisy, that’s all over now,’ he said earnestly. ‘It doesn’t matter any more. Just tell him the truth – that you never loved him – and it’s all wiped out forever.’

She looked at him blindly. ‘Why – how could I love him – possibly?’

‘You never loved him.’

She hesitated. Her eyes fell on Jordan and me with a sort of appeal, as though she realized at last what she was doing – and as though she had never, all along, intended doing anything at all. But it was done now. It was too late.

‘I never loved him,’ she said, with perceptible reluctance.

‘Not at Kapiolani?’ demanded Tom suddenly.

‘No.’

From the ballroom beneath, muffled and suffocating chords were drifting up on hot waves of air.

‘Not that day I carried you down from the Punch Bowl to keep your shoes dry?’ There was a husky tenderness in his tone . . . ‘Daisy?’

‘Please don’t.’ Her voice was cold, but the rancour was gone from it. She looked at Gatsby. ‘There, Jay,’ she said – but her hand as she tried to light a cigarette was trembling. Suddenly she threw the cigarette and the burning match on the carpet.

‘Oh, you want too much!’ she cried to Gatsby. ‘I love you now – isn’t that enough? I can’t help what’s past.’ She began to sob helplessly. ‘I did love him once – but I loved you too.’

Gatsby’s eyes opened and closed.

‘You loved me *too*?’ he repeated.

‘Even that’s a lie,’ said Tom savagely. ‘She didn’t know you were alive. Why – there’s things between Daisy and me that you’ll never know, things that neither of us can ever forget.’

The words seemed to bite physically into Gatsby.

‘I want to speak to Daisy alone,’ he insisted. ‘She’s all excited now –’

‘Even alone I can’t say I never loved Tom,’ she admitted in a pitiful voice. ‘It wouldn’t be true.’

* * *

1: Novels

1 – 6 Helen Garner: *The Children's Bach*

Use one or more of the passages selected as the basis for a discussion of *The Children's Bach*.

1.

Helen Garner, *The Children's Bach*,
Penguin Books, 1999

pp 2–3

2.

Helen Garner, *The Children's Bach*,
Penguin Books, 1999

pp 90–91

1: Novels

1 – 6 Helen Garner: *The Children's Bach* – continued

3.

Helen Garner, *The Children's Bach*,
Penguin Books, 1999

pp 152–153

1: Novels

1 – 7 Henry James: *Washington Square*

Use one or more of the passages selected as the basis for a discussion of *Washington Square*.

1.

Catherine looked at her lover a minute, and then she said, 'I shall persuade him. But I am glad we shall be rich,' she added.

Morris turned away, looking into the crown of his hat. 'No, it's a misfortune,' he said at last. 'It is from that our difficulty will come.'

'Well, if it is the worst misfortune, we are not so unhappy. Many people would not think it so bad. I will persuade him, and after that we shall be very glad we have money.'

Morris Townsend listened to this robust logic in silence. 'I will leave my defence to you; it's a charge that a man has to stoop to defend himself from.'

Catherine on her side was silent for awhile; she was looking at him while he looked, with a good deal of fixedness, out of the window. 'Morris,' she said, abruptly, 'are you very sure you love me?'

He turned round, and in a moment he was bending over her. 'My own dearest, can you doubt it?'

'I have only known it five days,' she said; 'but now it seems to me as if I could never do without it.'

'You will never be called upon to try.' And he gave a little tender, reassuring laugh. Then, in a moment, he added, 'There is something you must tell me, too'. She had closed her eyes after the last words she uttered, and kept them closed; and at this she nodded her head, without opening them. 'You must tell me,' he went on, 'that if your father is dead against me, if he absolutely forbids our marriage, you will still be faithful.'

Catherine opened her eyes, gazing at him, and she could give no better promise than what he read there.

'You will cleave to me?' said Morris. 'You know you are your own mistress – you are of age.'

'Ah, Morris!' she murmured, for all answer; or rather not for all, for she put her hand into his own. He kept it awhile, and presently he kissed her again. This is all that need be recorded of their conversation; but Mrs Penniman, if she had been present, would probably have admitted that it was as well it had not taken place beside the fountain in Washington Square.

* * *

2.

The Doctor looked up and down the valley, swinging his stick; then he said to her, in the same low tone,

'I am very angry.'

She wondered what he meant – whether he wished to frighten her. If he did, the place was well chosen: this hard, melancholy dell, abandoned by the summer light, made her feel her loneliness. She looked around her, and her heart grew cold; for a moment her fear was great. But she could think of nothing to say, save to murmur, gently, 'I am sorry.'

'You try my patience,' her father went on, 'and you ought to know what I am. I am not a very good man. Though I am very smooth externally, at bottom I am very passionate; and I assure you I can be very hard.'

She could not think why he told her these things. Had he brought her there on purpose, and was it partly a plan? What was the plan? Catherine asked herself. Was it to startle her suddenly into a retraction – to take advantage of her by dread? Dread of what? The place was ugly and lonely, but the place could do her no harm. There was a kind of still intensity about her father which made him dangerous, but Catherine hardly went so far as to say to herself that it might be part of his plan to fasten his hand – the neat, fine, supple hand of a distinguished physician – in her throat. Nevertheless, she receded a step. 'I am sure you can be anything you please,' she said; and it was her simple belief.

'I am very angry,' he replied, more sharply.

'Why has it taken you so suddenly?'

'It has not taken me suddenly. I have been raging inwardly for the last six months. But just now this seemed a good place to flare out. It's so quiet, and we are alone.'

'Yes, it's very quiet,' said Catherine, vaguely looking about her. 'Won't you come back to the carriage?'

'In a moment. Do you mean that in all this time you have not yielded an inch?'

'I would if I could, father; but I can't.'

The Doctor looked round him too. 'Should you like to left in such a place as this, to starve?'

'What do you mean?' cried the girl.

'That will be your fate – that's how he will leave you.'

He would not touch her, but he had touched Morris. The warmth came back to her heart. 'That is not true, father,' she broke out, 'and you ought not to say it. It is not right, and it's not true.'

He shook his head slowly. 'No, it's not right, because you won't believe it. But it *is* true. Come back to the carriage.'

* * *

1: Novels

1 – 7 Henry James: *Washington Square* – continued

3.

‘Shall you be angry if I speak to you again about *him*?’ she asked.

Catherine looked up at her quietly. ‘Who is *he*?’

‘He whom you once loved.’

‘I shall not be angry, but I shall not like it.’

‘He sent you a message,’ said Mrs Penniman. ‘I promised him to deliver it, and I must keep my promise.’

In all these years Catherine had had time to forget how little she had to thank her aunt for in the season of her misery; she had long ago forgiven Mrs Penniman of taking too much upon herself. But for a moment this attitude of interposition and disinterestedness, this carrying of messages and redeeming of promises, brought back the sense that her companion was a dangerous woman. She had said she would not be angry; but for an instant she felt sore. ‘I don’t care what you do with your promise!’ she answered.

Mrs Penniman, however, with her high conception of the sanctity of pledges, carried her point. ‘I have gone too far to retreat,’ she said, though precisely what this meant she was not at pains to explain. ‘Mr Townsend wishes most particularly to see you, Catherine; he believes that if you knew how much, and why, he wishes it, you would consent to do so.’

‘There can be no reason,’ said Catherine; ‘no good reason.’

‘His happiness depends upon it. Is not that a good reason?’ asked Mrs Penniman, impressively.

‘Not for me. My happiness does not.’

‘I think you will be happier after you have seen him. He is going away again – going to resume his wanderings. It is a very lonely, restless, joyless life. Before he goes he wishes to speak to you; it is a fixed idea with him – he is always thinking of it. He has something very important to say to you. He believes that you never understood him – that you never judged him rightly, and the belief has always weighed upon him terribly. He wishes to justify himself; he believes that in a very few words he could do so. He wishes to meet you as a friend.’

Catherine listened to this wonderful speech without pausing in her work; she had now had several days to accustom herself to think of Morris Townsend again as an actuality. When it was over she said simply, ‘Please say to Mr Townsend that I wish he would leave me alone.’

* * *

1: Novels

1 – 8 Andrew McGahan: *The White Earth*

Use one or more of the passages selected as the basis for a discussion of *The White Earth*.

1.

He moved on to the cemetery gate and edged through. He remembered another graveyard, in Powell, a spreading green lawn where his father lay buried under a rectangle of black stone. William could still see the coffin as it sank into its hole, neat and smooth. This place was different. It was small and very old, the iron fence tangled with bushes, the headstones barely visible amidst tall, shaggy weeds. There were only five graves. The first two were side by side in one corner, marked by leaning headpieces, the writing worn away to a blur. The third grave must have been more recent. It stood alone, the slab cracked and sprouting grass, but the name on the headstone was still legible. ‘Malcolm Jeremy White’. The dates below told that the man had died in 1930, but there were no other messages or clues about him.

The last two graves were the biggest, with pillars and carved angels to stand guard over them — except that the pillars were broken and the angels had been vandalised, their wings snapped off, their faces staring blankly without noses or lips. But here too the names on the tombstones were still visible. The less impressive of the two read, ‘Marjorie Anne White, Beloved Wife of Edward’. The larger said simply, ‘Edward Thomas White, of Kuran Station’. William pondered them both. Who were all these Whites, and why were they the only ones buried here? He saw a large hole in the earth, leading down under the two stones. It tunnelled away at an angle, rutted by rain and trailing roots. But it was also smooth in places, as if an animal had burrowed there. He remembered the wild dogs then, his uncle talking about packs of them, howling at the moon. The graveyard no longer felt like a place he wanted to investigate. The day remained bright and warm, and the House was only a few minutes walk away over the rise, but it was so quiet, and he was all alone.

* * *

2.

His disappointment over the old man’s secret work had long since faded. The newsletter was an impressive piece of work, and his uncle was the president of an organisation with hundreds of members. A few hundred didn’t sound much, but after all the stapling and folding, William appreciated just how many people that really was. And it was a serious business — amazing to think that his uncle was battling something as large and powerful as the entire Australian government.

‘But what *is* Native Title?’ he asked at one stage. It seemed to be the central issue, but nowhere in the newsletter was it fully explained.

‘A disaster,’ the old man replied, head buried in the ledger. But when he saw that William was waiting in puzzled silence, he put down his pen. ‘The truth is, at this stage, no one has a clue what Native Title is. That’s the problem. The government is still drafting the legislation. But all indications are that it will be terrible for people like us.’

‘Why?’

‘Why?’ His uncle leant back in his chair, sucking his lips at the vastness of the question. ‘Well, one of the things it means is that someone like me won’t have a say any more about what happens on my own property. It’s already pretty bad. Right now I can’t do things like clear trees or build a dam without the government wanting to know about it. Native Title would make it even harder. But that’s not all. The worst of it is that I might not even *own* the land any more. Not outright. Other people could come along and say they owned it as well. People who haven’t had anything to do with the place for centuries. And I wouldn’t be able to do a thing without their say-so.’ He leant forward again. ‘There are lots of aspects to it and you’ll hear all sorts of rubbish about this and that, but don’t fall for it. Deep down, it’s purely a question of property rights.’

William wasn’t sure what property rights might be, but the idea that someone else could claim his uncle’s station, that seemed disturbing. Especially now.

* * *

1: Novels

1 – 8 Andrew McGahan: *The White Earth* – continued

3.

Then there was William. The station belonged to him now, if her father's last acts meant anything at all. But he was only a boy, and not her father's direct descendant. Ruth could dispute William's claim, if she wanted, and inherit the property herself. And perhaps she should really do it. But the thought roused no feelings in her, sitting there in the hospital room. When her father was alive it had seemed important that she . . . that she what? Take the station from him? But now he was gone, and all her arguments felt empty. She remembered, shamefully somehow, the old women she had met in Cherbourg, and the way they had watched her, as she talked eagerly of leases and land and rights. The look in their pale eyes. Measuring. And, despite all her promises, unconvinced.

But couldn't she prove them wrong? If the property was rightfully hers, then why couldn't she give it away? She could go back to Cherbourg and hand over the deeds. But she was lawyer enough to know, perfectly well, that it would never happen that way. Mrs Griffith would fight it. Or maybe the boy. Or if not them, someone else. A long forgotten relation would appear; maybe even the state government would intervene, disputing the validity of private deals made decades ago, and leases that were supposedly perpetual . . . No, if anyone from Cherbourg really wanted the place, they would have to lodge their claim, along with everybody else. It was fifteen thousand acres of prime grazing country. In this world, something like that wasn't just given back. It had to be fought for.

Her thoughts tumbled to a halt.

It was something her father might have said.

She gazed down at William. Such a sad and silent child. She didn't think she had ever seen him smile. Pity bit at her, and a weight settled against her heart. Was he her responsibility now? Oh . . . but she was too old. The burden couldn't fall on her.

It was time to go. Her hands and face hurt, and every bone ached. She would leave the boy to his sleep, and then maybe later they would talk and see what needed to be done. She turned towards the door. Just then William stirred, moaning incoherent words. She hesitated. But he was sedated, she knew, and too exhausted, surely, for bad dreams.

She glanced once more at the rain against the windows. A memory came. The smell of earth, and of wheat, and the feeling of a familiar hand upon her head, rough with calluses, and so strong. All of it wasted, all of it ruined.

Ruth fought the tears, for her bandaged hands could not brush them away.

Then she returned to the chair, and the long vigil of the night.

* * *

1: Novels

1 – 9 Ann Patchett: *Bel Canto*

Use one or more of the passages selected as the basis for a discussion of *Bel Canto*.

1.

Ann Patchett, *Bel Canto*,
Fourth Estate, 2002

pp 23–24

2.

Ann Patchett, *Bel Canto*,
Fourth Estate, 2002

pp 161–162

1: Novels

1 – 9 Ann Patchett: *Bel Canto* – continued

3.

Ann Patchett, *Bel Canto*,
Fourth Estate, 2002
pp 302–303

2: Plays

2 – 1 Anton Chekhov: *Three Sisters*

Use one or more of the passages selected as the basis for a discussion of *Three Sisters*.

1.

IRINA: Tell me why I'm so happy today. It's as if I had sails and above me great white birds were flying in the wide blue sky. Why is this? Why?

CHEBUTYKIN [*kissing both her hands, tenderly*]: My white bird . . .

IRINA: When I woke today and got up and washed, I suddenly started to think that everything in this world is clear to me, and that I know the way to live. Dear Ivan Romanych, I know everything. A man, whoever he may be, must work, must toil by the sweat of his brow, and in that alone lie the sense and the goal of our life, its happiness, its joys. How good to be a labourer who gets up at dawn and breaks stones on the street, or a shepherd, or a schoolteacher teaching children, or an engine-driver on the railway . . . My God, better even not to be a man, better to be an ox, a simple horse, if only to work, than a young woman who gets up at midday, then drinks coffee in bed, then spends two hours dressing . . . Oh, how awful that is! Sometimes, in hot weather, you long for a drink – that's how I long to work. And if I don't get up early and work hard, then, Ivan Romanych, you must refuse me your friendship . . .

CHEBUTYKIN [*tenderly*]: I will refuse it, I will . . .

OLGA: Father taught us to get up at seven. Now Irina wakes at seven and lies there till nine at least, thinking about something. And her expression is so serious! [*Laughs.*]

IRINA: You've got accustomed to seeing me as a little girl and you find it strange when I have a serious expression. I'm twenty years old!

TUZENBAKH: God, how I understand the longing for work! I've never worked in my life, not once. I was born in cold and empty Petersburg, in a family which didn't know about work, didn't know about worries. I remember, when I came home from cadet school, a footman used to pull off my boots. I was difficult at that time but my mother revered me and was surprised when others had a different view of me. I was protected from work. Only not wholly successfully, not wholly! This time has come, a great mass is moving towards all of us, a mighty, healthy storm is rising, it's coming, it's already near, and soon it will blow sloth, indifference, contempt for work, this festering boredom right out of our society. I will work and in some twenty-five or thirty years' time everyone will work. Everyone!

CHEBUTYKIN: I won't work.

TUZENBAKH: You don't count.

* * *

2.

VIRSHININ: I'm thirsty. I'd like some tea.

MASHA [*glancing at her watch*]: They'll serve it soon. I was married when I was eighteen and I was frightened of my husband because he was a schoolmaster and I'd barely finished school. He seemed to me then terribly learned, clever and important. But now, unfortunately, it's rather different.

VERSHININ: I see . . . yes.

MASHA: I don't mean my husband, I've become accustomed to him, but among civilians generally there are so many coarse, unpleasant, uneducated people. Coarseness upsets and offends me, I suffer when I see a man without refinement, without gentleness and courtesy. When I happen to be among the schoolmasters who are my husband's colleagues, I simply suffer.

VERSHININ: Yes . . . But I think whether you're talking about civilians or soldiers, they're equally uninteresting, at any rate in this town. No difference! If you listen to an educated man in this town, civilian or soldier, he's got problems with his wife, problems with his house, he's got problems with his estate, problems with his horses . . . It's very typical of the Russian to have elevated thoughts, but tell me why he aims so low in life? Why?

MASHA: Why?

VERSHININ: Why does he have problems with his children, problems with his wife? And why do his wife and children have problems with him?

MASHA: You're not in a very good mood today.

VERSHININ: Maybe not. I've had no dinner today. I haven't had anything to eat since the morning. One of my daughters is a bit unwell, and when my little girls are ill, then I become worried, I feel guilty that their mother is like that. Oh, if you had seen her today! What a worthless person she is! We began to quarrel at seven in the morning, and at nine I slammed the door and went out.

[*A pause.*]

I never speak about this and, it's strange, I'm complaining just to you alone. [*Kisses her hand.*] Don't be angry with me. But for you I have no one, no one . . .

* * *

2: Plays

2 – 1 Anton Chekhov: *Three Sisters* – continued

3.

NATASHA: So tomorrow I'll be on my own here. [*Sighs.*]
First I'll tell them to cut down that avenue of fir trees, and then that maple. In the evenings it's so frightening and ugly . . . [*To Irina*] Dearest, that belt doesn't suit you at all . . . It's really tasteless. You must wear something light and pretty. And here I'll have them plant flowers – flowers, and there'll be scent . . . [*Sternly*] What is a fork doing here on the bench? [*To the maid as she goes into the house*] What is a fork doing here on the bench, I'm asking you that! [*Shouting*] Don't you say anything!

KULYGIN: She's off!

[*Offstage the band plays a march; everyone listens.*]

OLGA: They're going.

[*Enter CHEBUTYKIN.*]

MASHA: Our friends are leaving. Well, there we are . . . I hope they have a good journey! [*To her husband*] We must go home . . . Where are my hat and cloak?

KULYGIN: I took them into the house . . . I'll fetch them right away.

[*Goes out into the house.*]

OLGA: Yes, we can all go home now. It's time.

CHEBUTYKIN: Olga Sergeyevna!

OLGA: What?

[*A pause.*]

What is it?

CHEBUTYKIN: Nothing . . . I don't know how to tell you . . .

[*Whispers in her ear.*]

OLGA [*in alarm*]: It's not possible!

CHEBUTYKIN: Yes . . . that's how it is . . . I'm worn out, I've had a terrible time, I don't want to say more . . . [*With irritation*]

Besides, what can it matter!

MASHA: What's happened?

OLGA [*embracing Irina*]: Today is a terrible day . . . My darling, I don't know how to tell you . . .

IRINA: What? Tell me quickly, what is it? For God's sake! [*Cries.*]

CHEBUTYKIN: The Baron was killed just now in a duel.

IRINA: I knew it, I knew it . . .

CHEBUTYKIN [*sitting down on a bench at the back of the stage*]: I'm worn out . . . [*Takes a newspaper out of his pocket.*] Let them have a little cry . . . [*Singing softly*] Ta-ra-ra-boom-de-ay . . . ta-ra-ra-boom-de-ay . . . What can it all matter!

[*The three sisters stand clinging to one another.*]

* * *

2: Plays

2 – 2 Henrik Ibsen: *Hedda Gabler*

Use one or more of the passages selected as the basis for a discussion of *Hedda Gabler*.

1.

MISS TESMAN [*gazing at her with clasped hands*]. Hedda is lovely – lovely – lovely! [*She goes up to Hedda, takes her head in both hands, and, bending it down, kisses her hair.*] May God bless and take care of our Hedda. For Jörgen's sake.

HEDDA [*freeing herself gently*]. Oh – let me go.

MISS TESMAN [*quietly, but with emotion*]. I shall come over and see you two every single day.

TESMAN. Yes, do, *please*, Aunt Julle! Eh?

MISS TESMAN. Good-bye. Good-bye.

[*She goes out by the hall door. Tesman goes with her, leaving the door half open. He can be heard repeating his messages to Aunt Rina and thanking her for the shoes. In the meanwhile Hedda crosses the room, raising her arms and clenching her hands, as if in fury. Then she pulls back the curtains from the glass door and stands there looking out.*

After a moment Tesman comes in again, shutting the door behind him.]

TESMAN [*picking up the slippers from the floor*]. What are you looking at, Hedda?

HEDDA [*calm and controlled again*]. I'm just looking at the leaves. They're so yellow, and so withered.

TESMAN [*wrapping up the shoes and putting them on the table*].

Well, after all, we're well on in September now.

HEDDA [*disturbed again*]. Yes, just think. We're already in – in September.

TESMAN. Don't you think Aunt Julle was rather unlike herself, my dear? A little bit – almost formal? Whatever do you think was the matter? Eh?

HEDDA. I hardly know her, you see. Isn't she like that as a rule?

TESMAN. No, not like she was today.

HEDDA [*moving away from the glass door*]. Do you think she was really upset about that business with the hat?

TESMAN. Oh, not much. Perhaps a little, just at the moment.

HEDDA. But what extraordinary manners! To throw her hat down here in the drawing-room. One doesn't do that kind of thing.

TESMAN. Well, you can be sure Aunt Julle won't do it again.

HEDDA. Anyway, I'll make it all right with her.

TESMAN. That's sweet of you, Hedda dear! If you would!

* * *

2.

BRACK. You have never gone through anything that really roused you.

HEDDA. Nothing serious, you mean?

BRACK. Yes, that's one way of putting it, certainly. But now perhaps that may come.

HEDDA [*with a jerk of her head*]. Oh, you're thinking of all the bother over that wretched professorship. But that's my husband's affair entirely. I'm not wasting so much as a thought on it.

BRACK. No, no. That wasn't what I was thinking of either. But suppose now there comes what, in rather solemn language, is called a serious claim on you, one full of responsibility? [*Smiling.*] A new claim, little Madam Hedda.

HEDDA [*angrily*]. Be quiet! You'll never see anything of the kind.

BRACK [*gently*]. We'll talk about it in a year's time – at most.

HEDDA [*shortly*]. I have no gift for that kind of thing, Mr Brack.

Not for things that make claims on me!

BRACK. Why shouldn't you have a gift, like most other women, for the calling that – ?

HEDDA [*over by the glass door*]. Oh, be quiet, I tell you! It often seems to me that I've only got a gift for one thing in the world.

BRACK [*going nearer*]. And what is that, if I may ask?

HEDDA [*stands looking out*]. For boring myself to death. Now you know. [*Turning and looking towards the inner room with a laugh.*] Ah, just so! Here is our professor.

BRACK [*quietly, and with a warning*]. Now then, Madam Hedda!

[*Jörgen Tesman, dressed for the party, carrying his gloves and hat, comes through the inner room from the right.*]

TESMAN. Hedda, Ejler Lövborg hasn't sent to say he isn't coming? Eh?

HEDDA. No.

TESMAN. Ah, you'll see, then. We shall have him along in a little while.

BRACK. Do you really think he'll come?

TESMAN. Yes, I'm almost sure he will. Because that's only a vague rumour, you know – what you told us this morning.

BRACK. Is it?

* * *

2: Plays

2 – 2 Henrik Ibsen: *Hedda Gabler* – continued

3.

HEDDA. And what are you going to do, then?

LÖVBORG. Nothing. Only make an end of the whole business.
The sooner the better.

HEDDA [*a step nearer*]. Ejler Lövborg, listen to me. Could you not see to it that – that it is done beautifully?

LÖVBORG. Beautifully? [*Smiling.*] With vineleaves in the hair, as you used to imagine once upon a time –

HEDDA. Ah, not vineleaves. I don't believe in that any more.
But beautifully, nevertheless. For once. Good-bye. You must go now, and not come here again.

LÖVBORG. Good-bye, Madam. Remember me to Jörgen Tesman. [*About to go.*]

HEDDA. Wait a minute. You shall have a souvenir to take with you.

[*She goes to the writing-table and opens the drawer and the pistol-case. She comes back to Lövborg again with one of the pistols.*]

LÖVBORG [*looking at her*]. Is *that* the souvenir?

HEDDA [*nodding slowly*]. Do you recognize it? It was aimed at you once.

LÖVBORG. You should have used it then.

HEDDA. There it is. Use it yourself now.

LÖVBORG [*putting the pistol in his breast pocket*]. Thanks.

HEDDA. And beautifully, Ejler Lövborg. Promise me that.

LÖVBORG. Good-bye, Hedda Gabler. [*He goes out by the hall door.*]

[*Hedda listens a moment at the door. Then she goes across to the writing-table and takes out the manuscript in its package. She glances inside the wrapper, pulls some of the sheets half out and looks at them. Then she goes across and sits down in the easy-chair by the stove with the packet in her lap. After a moment, she opens the stove-door and then the packet.*]

HEDDA [*throwing some of the leaves into the fire and whispering to herself*]. Now I am burning your child, Thea. You, with your curly hair. [*Throwing a few more leaves into the stove.*] Your child and Ejler Lövborg's. [*Throwing in the rest.*] I'm burning it – burning your child.

* * *

2: Plays

2 – 3 Joanna Murray-Smith: *Honour*

Use one or more of the passages selected as the basis for a discussion of *Honour*.

1.

CLAUDIA: Actually, I'm glad to have this opportunity to talk to you.
 HONOR: To me?
 CLAUDIA: What better introduction to a subject than through the woman he has lived with for—for—thirty—
 HONOR: Thirty-two—
 CLAUDIA: Years. My God! I can't imagine ever spending thirty-two years with anybody!
 HONOR: We're very lucky.
 CLAUDIA: Is it luck?
 HONOR: Partly luck. Partly skill. Partly love.
 CLAUDIA: Is it a natural state then, do you think?
 HONOR: It's *my* natural state. Although anyone will tell you, it isn't easy—
 CLAUDIA: No!
 HONOR: *He* hasn't been easy—
 CLAUDIA: Is any man?
 HONOR: But then I'm not an easy person, either.
 CLAUDIA: You're a writer too . . .
 HONOR: I suppose I still am.
 CLAUDIA: You can't *retire* from being a writer. It's a state of being.
 HONOR: Perhaps. A toughness. A watchfulness. As Graham Greene said: 'In every writer, a chip of ice'!
 CLAUDIA: But you've stayed together?
 HONOR: You just have to stick it out through the hard times.
 CLAUDIA: Like when he resigned from *The Herald*?

Beat.

HONOR: There were times I argued with George over his stubborn idealism.
 CLAUDIA: In retrospect—
 HONOR: This is off the record—
 CLAUDIA: Of course—
 HONOR: For someone who prides himself on intellectual independence, editorial interference is worth putting yourself on the line for. I thought he put principles above pragmatism, but he was right.
 CLAUDIA: So there were tensions . . .
 HONOR: We had our darker moments but we stuck it out.
 CLAUDIA: Many don't—
 HONOR: I suppose they don't—
 CLAUDIA: But you—
 HONOR: Yes—
 CLAUDIA: Why is that, do you think? What gave you the—the strength?
 HONOR: The strength?
 CLAUDIA: Diligence—
 HONOR: I wouldn't call it—
 CLAUDIA: Whatever we call that kind of perseverance.

Beat. This is shocking to HONOR.

HONOR: Well, because we—we *love* . . .

* * *

2.

GEORGE: I love you for everything.
 CLAUDIA: [*suggestively*] Everything?
 GEORGE: The full repertoire.

Beat. They smile.

I was thinking today—What's keeping us here? Why don't I—just sell everything? Buy a yacht—and we can—just disappear.
 CLAUDIA: Buy a yacht?
 GEORGE: Get out of here—roam the world—Just us—
 CLAUDIA: But I don't—I don't want to buy a yacht.
 GEORGE: We've got each other—what else do we want?
 CLAUDIA: But your work—
 GEORGE: Oh, bugger the work—I'm sick of the paper—I'm sick of the think-tanks and the press club speeches and—
 CLAUDIA: But this is where—you're—you're *important*.
 GEORGE: I don't need to be important any more.
 CLAUDIA: I don't want to sail the world.
 GEORGE: [*indulgently*] Then we won't.
 CLAUDIA: I want to be brilliant for you. I want to be brilliant *together*.
 GEORGE: [*loving*] Then we *will* be brilliant.
 CLAUDIA: We're not going to—we're not getting into that just living for—for love thing, George—Because it—Things—just fall apart.
 GEORGE: But nothing much matters to me, apart from you—
 CLAUDIA: But I don't want that.
 GEORGE: You *used* to want that—You said—let me be your—your sun, your moon.
 CLAUDIA: Yes but now, *now*—we have that and—We *can't* stop impressing each other. That's—that's fatal. We must continue to make our—our marks.
 GEORGE: Do I really need to keep making marks?
 CLAUDIA: Yes, George. You do.

Beat. They contemplate each other.

GEORGE: Am I dreaming?
 CLAUDIA: No.
 GEORGE: Am I dreaming?
 CLAUDIA: I'm real. I'm standing here.
 GEORGE: Look at you! So perfect.
 CLAUDIA: [*gently*] I'm just—saying, George—if we're not—if we don't be our—our best selves—we're just one more old man with his young lover—we're just one more cliché.
 GEORGE: [*dryly*] How nice.
 CLAUDIA: Your mind excites me, George. You've got a very sexy mind.

They kiss.

GEORGE: What would I do if this hadn't—? Where would I be if I hadn't—? [*Beat.*] My life just started.

* * *

2: Plays

2 – 3 Joanna Murray-Smith: *Honour* – continued

3.

HONOR: She said to me—she said: ‘It’s just a piece of paper’.

GEORGE: That’s Sophie.

HONOR: She didn’t want us to come—She said it was
‘irrelevant’—I told her we were proud—

GEORGE: Yes—

HONOR: Our little girl.

GEORGE: Of course if she worked a little harder—

HONOR: Well—

GEORGE: She never fulfilled her—She could have done
better . . . [*Beat.*] Thanks for sending me—

HONOR: You got it—

GEORGE: I liked it. Very much. [*Beat.*] You didn’t inscribe it.

HONOR: No.

GEORGE: I found it . . .

HONOR: Well . . .

GEORGE: Hard to read. [*Beat.*] It was good work. [*Beat.*] The
reviews—they were—

HONOR: Yes. That was—I think they recognised a certain—

GEORGE: Yes—

HONOR: A certain—

GEORGE: Yes—

HONOR: Truth.

Beat.

GEORGE: You know—It’s funny—One thing—

HONOR: No.

GEORGE: One thing—

HONOR: No.

GEORGE: I dream of us. [*Beat.*] A time before. [*Beat.*] And
there—

HONOR: There—

GEORGE: In sleep—

HONOR: Yes—

GEORGE: Is the only place I feel—complete.

Beat.

HONOR: It’s too—

GEORGE: I know.

HONOR: It’s too—

GEORGE: I know.

HONOR: It’s—

Blackout.

* * *

2: Plays

2 – 4 Hannie Rayson: *Hotel Sorrento*

Use one or more of the passages selected as the basis for a discussion of *Hotel Sorrento*.

1.

MARGE *reads aloud from a section of the book. Lights come up on HIL, working at her desk in her own space.*

‘There was something very ordinary about Helen. Ordinary and sensible. She had an ordinary face. People would stop her in the street. “Don’t I know you from somewhere?” It used to happen a lot. She’d shimmer with pleasure, shrugging it off for our benefit of course, but inside she held on to that hard little nugget of hope that there was something distinctive about her. Something that would single her out in a crowd. A permissible vanity. After all what good would it do to know that you were indistinguishable from a thousand others. But then again, it is a country which honours ordinariness above all else. She might have taken heart that she’d always be cherished for it.’

DICK: [*nodding*] Yeah?

MARGE: That really touches me. I keep going back to it.

Pause.

Do you think this is a country that honours ordinariness?

DICK: No. It might have been like that in the fifties, but not any more. See that’s what irritates me about that bloody book. There are hundreds of ’em. Every Tom, Dick and Harry’s writing one. Growing up in the fifties. My childhood in Toowoomba, my tortured adolescence in Kalgoorlie, or Woy Woy or some other bloody place. And you know what it is? It is essentially culturally reactionary stuff. I mean sure, the fifties was a time when it was impossible to be . . . different . . . if you like. Anyone with any nouse packed up and cleared out. But it’s not like that now. And to keep harking back to it . . . it’s just very safe territory. It’s not going to shake anyone up.

MARGE: It’s shaken me up.

Pause.

Maybe you don’t read between the lines. There’s nothing safe about this . . .

DICK: I despise nostalgia.

MARGE *scoffs*.

MARGE: It’s not nostalgia.

DICK: Where are the people who are writing about the big picture. Hmm? Who’s tackling the big issues? Who’s trying to come to grips with some sort of contemporary vision about this place? Can you think of anyone?

MARGE: Yes, I can think of lots. But . . . Meg Moynihan comes to mind. Off the top of my head. [*She smiles.*]

DICK: Oh, Jesus!

MARGE: You’re looking for the big, broad brush stroke. Aren’t you? I know you are. But Australia can’t be contained in the sort of broad sweep that you’re asking for. Great big visions make very empty pictures if you don’t attend to the details.

* * *

2.

MEG: Oh, come on. You love those dinners. Everyone yelling at each other. You’re in your element.

EDWIN: Yes, I suppose I do quite like that part.

MEG: Of course you do. You’ve got the loudest voice. I was looking at you all this afternoon. It’s like being at an exhibition of oil paintings. All hanging on separate walls, screaming at one another. But when I’m there, I always feel like this pale little watercolour hanging behind a cupboard.

EDWIN *roars laughing*.

I do. I think it must be your father. He has this effect on me.

Long pause.

He’s so hell bent on being certain about everything isn’t he? I suppose most men are. It’s probably the one true emblem of masculinity. The central ideal to which every man aspires: to be certain about his ideas, his actions and his place in the world.

EDWIN: What’s wrong with that?

MEG: What’s wrong with it is if you’re preoccupied with a need to be certain, you don’t allow yourself to see the contradictions in things. And when you don’t see contradictions, your perceptions are totally blunted. I’m not the least bit interested in being certain about anything.

EDWIN: So I’ve noticed.

MEG: Ah! Listen, your family always have to take up a position. If you proffer the slightest whisper of an idea it gets pounced upon and moulded into something unbelievably weighty. And before you know it, you find yourself desperately committed to something and you spend the rest of the night under siege.

EDWIN: You’re just apolitical and making excuses for it.

MEG: No I’m not. I’m just trying to understand why I feel so odd every time I go to Brighton.

EDWIN: The pale little watercolour. I must say I’ve never thought of you as that.

MEG *smiles*.

MEG: I miss it you know. Being part of a family.

EDWIN: Look, believe me. They think you’re the best thing since sliced bread. As far as they’re concerned, you’re absolutely one of the family.

MEG: I mean my own family.

EDWIN: Oh, well . . . that’s different isn’t it?

Pause.

MEG: I was thinking that I might go home. Just for a bit. It’s what I need. I realised after today . . . I actually need to go home.

EDWIN: I know.

MEG: But I can’t go without you, Edwin.

* * *

2: Plays

2 – 4 Hannie Rayson: *Hotel Sorrento* – continued

3.

DICK: Well, just this business about loyalty. Okay, you don't write autobiography as such, but to me your writing has a very personal feel and I wonder if people ever take offence.

MEG: It hasn't come up.

DICK: So it's not an issue for you?

MEG: Oh, yes, it's an issue. But it hasn't come up.

Pause.

Noone's ever raised it. That's what I mean. In fact, I've been home for ten days and this is the first time the book's been mentioned.

TROY: No it's not.

MEG: Oh, yes. Sorry. You and I had a bit of a talk about it, didn't we? [*To her sisters*] But you two haven't said a solitary word about it. I don't even know whether you've read it.

PIPPA: 'Course I've read it.

MEG: [*to HIL*] Have you?

HIL: Mmm.

MEG: Well, why haven't you said anything to me?

EDWIN: Meg. Come on. That's a bit unfair.

MEG: Why is it unfair? Talk about loyalty.

PIPPA: There have been a few other things going on, Meg.

Silence.

DICK: Well I'm quite happy to talk about it.

MARGE: Dick.

MEG ignores DICK and continues to address her sisters.

MEG: It *has* been nominated for the Booker prize. It's not a completely insignificant piece of work. Not that you'd bloody know it 'round here.

Pause.

You know Dick, people used to ask me why I stayed in London. Why I didn't come home. And I used to say it was because the artist has no status in this country. Why make art when you can make money? That's Australia for you. But I'm talking ten years ago. I was sure things would have changed . . .

MARGE: But they have. There's been significant changes . . .

MEG: Look there's all this talk about the new renaissance in Australian culture. The literature, the cinema, the theatre. Aboriginal art, taking the world by storm. Australian novelists getting huge coverage in the *New York Book Review*. All of that. But the fact is, in this country there is a suffocatingly oppressive sense that what you do as an artist, is essentially self-indulgent.

DICK: How do you know? You've only been here for ten days but you've been away for ten years.

MEG: I know because I lived here for thirty years. I went away. And now I'm back. *Nothing* has changed.

DICK: See I think you're wrong. And I can't for the life of me see how you can feel so authoritative about this. Like that interview in *The Guardian*.

* * *

2: Plays

2 – 5 Yasmina Reza: *'Art'*

Use one or more of the passages selected as the basis for a discussion of *'Art'*.

1.

Yasmina Reza, *Art*,
Faber and Faber, 1996

pp 13–14

2.

Yasmina Reza, *Art*,
Faber and Faber, 1996

pp 35–36

2: Plays

2 – 5 Yasmina Reza: *'Art'* – continued

3.

Yasmina Reza, *Art*,
Faber and Faber, 1996
pp 58–60

2: Plays

2 – 6 William Shakespeare: *King Lear*

Use one or more of the passages selected as the basis for a discussion of *King Lear*.

1.

REGAN

I am made of that self mettle as my sister
And price me at her worth. In my true heart
I find she names my very deed of love;
Only she comes too short, that I profess
Myself an enemy to all other joys
Which the most precious square of sense possesses,
And find I am alone felicitate
In your dear highness' love.

CORDELIA (*aside*) Then poor Cordelia!
And yet not so, since I am sure my love's
More ponderous than my tongue.

LEAR

To thee and thine hereditary ever
Remain this ample third of our fair kingdom,
No less in space, validity, and pleasure
Than that conferred on Gonerill. – Now, our joy,
Although our last and least, to whose young love
The vines of France and milk of Burgundy
Strive to be interested: what can you say to draw
A third more opulent than your sisters'? Speak!

CORDELIA Nothing, my lord.

LEAR Nothing?

CORDELIA Nothing.

LEAR

Nothing will come of nothing. Speak again.

CORDELIA

Unhappy that I am, I cannot heave
My heart into my mouth. I love your majesty
According to my bond, no more nor less.

LEAR

How, how, Cordelia! Mend your speech a little
Lest you may mar your fortunes.

CORDELIA

Good my lord,

You have begot me, bred me, loved me.
I return those duties back as are right fit,
Obey you, love you, and most honour you.
Why have my sisters husbands, if they say
They love you all? Haply when I shall wed,
That lord whose hand must take my plight shall carry
Half my love with him, half my care and duty.
Sure I shall never marry like my sisters,
To love my father all.

LEAR

But goes thy heart with this?

CORDELIA Ay, my good lord.

LEAR So young, and so untender?

CORDELIA So young, my lord, and true.

* * *

2.

GONERILL

Hear me, my lord;

What need you five-and-twenty, ten, or five
To follow, in a house where twice so many
Have a command to tend you?

REGAN

What need one?

LEAR

O, reason not the need! Our basest beggars
Are in the poorest thing superfluous.
Allow not nature more than nature needs –
Man's life is cheap as beast's. Thou art a lady;
If only to go warm were gorgeous,
Why, nature needs not what thou gorgeous wear'st,
Which scarcely keeps thee warm. But for true need –
You heavens, give me that patience, patience I need!
You see me here, you gods, a poor old man,
As full of grief as age, wretched in both;
If it be you that stir these daughters' hearts
Against their father, fool me not so much
To bear it tamely; touch me with noble anger,
And let not women's weapons, water drops,
Stain my man's cheeks. No, you unnatural hags,
I will have such revenges on you both
That all the world shall – I will do such things –
What they are yet I know not; but they shall be
The terrors of the earth. You think I'll weep.
No, I'll not weep.

I have full cause of weeping;

(*storm and tempest*)

but this heart

Shall break into a hundred thousand flaws
Or ere I'll weep. O Fool, I shall go mad!

Exeunt Lear, Gloucester, Kent, the Fool, and Gentleman

CORNWALL Let us withdraw; 'twill be a storm.

REGAN

This house is little; the old man and's people
Cannot be well bestowed.

GONERILL

'Tis his own blame; hath put himself from rest
And must needs taste his folly.

REGAN

For his particular, I'll receive him gladly,
But not one follower.

GONERILL

So am I purposed.

Where is my lord of Gloucester?

CORNWALL

Followed the old man forth. He is returned.

* * *

2: Plays

2 – 6 William Shakespeare: *King Lear* – continued

3.

Enter Lear with Cordelia in his arms, followed by Second Officer and others

LEAR

Howl, howl, howl! O, you are men of stones!
Had I your tongues and eyes I'd use them so
That heaven's vault should crack. She's gone for ever.
I know when one is dead and when one lives;
She's dead as earth. Lend me a looking-glass;
If that her breath will mist or stain the stone,
Why then she lives.

KENT Is this the promised end?

EDGAR

Or image of that horror?

ALBANY Fall and cease!

LEAR

This feather stirs – she lives! If it be so,
It is a chance which does redeem all sorrows
That ever I have felt.

KENT O my good master!

LEAR

Prithce away.

EDGAR 'Tis noble Kent, your friend.

LEAR

A plague upon you, murderers, traitors all!
I might have saved her; now she's gone for ever.
Cordelia, Cordelia, stay a little. Ha!
What is't thou sayest? Her voice was ever soft,
Gentle and low – an excellent thing in woman.
I killed the slave that was a-hanging thee.

SECOND OFFICER

'Tis true, my lords; he did.

LEAR

Did I not, fellow?

I have seen the day, with my good biting falchion
I would have made him skip. I am old now
And these same crosses spoil me. – Who are you?
Mine eyes are not o'the best, I'll tell you straight.

KENT

If Fortune brag of two she loved and hated
One of them we behold.

LEAR

This is a dull sight. Are you not Kent?

KENT

The same –

Your servant Kent.

* * *

2: Plays

2 – 7 William Shakespeare: *Much Ado About Nothing*

Use one or more of the passages selected as the basis for a discussion of *Much Ado About Nothing*.

1.

DON PEDRO You embrace your charge too willingly. I think this is your daughter.
 LEONATO Her mother hath many times told me so.
 BENEDICK Were you in doubt, sir, that you asked her?
 LEONATO Signor Benedick, no; for then were you a child.
 DON PEDRO You have it full, Benedick; we may guess by this what you are, being a man. Truly, the lady fathers herself. Be happy, lady; for you are like an honourable father.
 BENEDICK If Signor Leonato be her father, she would not have his head on her shoulders for all Messina, as like him as she is.
 BEATRICE I wonder that you will still be talking, Signor Benedick; nobody marks you.
 BENEDICK What, my dear Lady Disdain! Are you yet living?
 BEATRICE Is it possible disdain should die while she hath such meet food to feed it as Signor Benedick? Courtesy itself must convert to disdain, if you come in her presence.
 BENEDICK Then is courtesy a turncoat. But it is certain I am loved of all ladies, only you excepted; and I would I could find in my heart that I had not a hard heart, for, truly, I love none.
 BEATRICE A dear happiness to women; they would else have been troubled with a pernicious suitor! I thank God and my cold blood, I am of your humour for that; I had rather hear my dog bark at a crow than a man swear he loves me.
 BENEDICK God keep your ladyship still in that mind! So some gentleman or other shall 'scape a predestinate scratched face.
 BEATRICE Scratching could not make it worse, an 'twere such a face as yours were.
 BENEDICK Well, you are a rare parrot-teacher.
 BEATRICE A bird of my tongue is better than a beast of yours.
 BENEDICK I would my horse had the speed of your tongue, and so good a continuer. But keep your way a' God's name, I have done.
 BEATRICE You always end with a jade's trick; I know you of old.
 DON PEDRO That is the sum of all, Leonato. Signor Claudio and Signor Benedick, my dear friend Leonato hath invited you all. I tell him we shall stay here at the least a month, and he heartily prays some occasion may detain us longer. I dare swear he is no hypocrite, but prays from his heart.

* * *

2.

CLAUDIO Marry, that can Hero; Hero itself can blot out Hero's virtue.
 What man was he talked with you yesternight Out at your window betwixt twelve and one? Now, if you are a maid, answer to this.
 HERO I talked with no man at that hour, my lord.
 DON PEDRO Why, then are you no maiden. Leonato, I am sorry you must hear. Upon mine honour, Myself, my brother, and this grievèd Count Did see her, hear her, at that hour last night Talk with a ruffian at her chamber-window; Who hath, indeed, most like a liberal villain, Confessed the vile encounters they have had A thousand times in secret.
 DON JOHN Fie, fie, they are not to be named, my lord, Not to be spoke of! There is not chastity enough in language Without offence to utter them. Thus, pretty lady, I am sorry for thy much misgovernment.
 CLAUDIO O Hero! What a Hero hadst thou been, If half thy outward graces had been placed About thy thoughts and counsels of thy heart! But fare thee well, most foul, most fair! Farewell, Thou pure impiety and impious purity! For thee I'll lock up all the gates of love, And on my eyelids shall conjecture hang, To turn all beauty into thoughts of harm, And never shall it more be gracious.
 LEONATO Hath no man's dagger here a point for me?
Hero swoons
 BEATRICE Why, how now, cousin! Wherefore sink you down?
 DON JOHN Come, let us go. These things, come thus to light, Smother her spirits up.
Exeunt Don Pedro, Don John, and Claudio
 BENEDICK How doth the lady?
 BEATRICE Dead, I think. Help, uncle!

* * *

2: Plays

2 – 7 William Shakespeare: *Much Ado About Nothing* – continued

3.

CLAUDIO . . .

Enter Antonio, with the ladies masked

Which is the lady I must seize upon?

ANTONIO

This same is she, and I do give you her.

CLAUDIO

Why, then she's mine. Sweet, let me see your face.

ANTONIO

No, that you shall not, till you take her hand

Before this Friar and swear to marry her.

CLAUDIO

Give me your hand; before this holy Friar,

I am your husband, if you like of me.

HERO (*unmasking*)

And when I lived, I was your other wife;

And when you loved, you were my other husband.

CLAUDIO

Another Hero!

HERO

Nothing certainer;

One Hero died defiled, but I do live,

And surely as I live, I am a maid.

DON PEDRO

The former Hero! Hero that is dead!

LEONATO

She died, my lord, but whiles her slander lived.

FRIAR

All this amazement can I qualify,

When, after that the holy rites are ended,

I'll tell you largely of fair Hero's death.

Meantime let wonder seem familiar,

And to the chapel let us presently.

BENEDICK

Soft and fair, Friar. Which is Beatrice?

BEATRICE (*unmasking*)

I answer to that name. What is your will?

BENEDICK

Do not you love me?

BEATRICE

Why no, no more than reason.

BENEDICK

Why, then your uncle and the Prince and Claudio

Have been deceived; they swore you did.

BEATRICE

Do not you love me?

BENEDICK

Troth no, no more than reason.

BEATRICE

Why, then my cousin, Margaret, and Ursula

Are much deceived; for they did swear you did.

BENEDICK

They swore that you were almost sick for me.

BEATRICE

They swore that you were well-nigh dead for me.

* * *

2: Plays

2 – 8 Sophocles: *Antigone*

Use one or more of the passages selected as the basis for a discussion of *Antigone*.

1.

ISMENE: . . .

O think, Antigone; we are women; it is not for us
To fight against men; our rulers are stronger than we,
And we must obey in this, or in worse than this.
May the dead forgive me, I can do no other
But as I am commanded; to do more is madness.

ANTIGONE: No; then I will not ask you for your help.

Nor would I thank you for it, if you gave it.
Go your own way; I will bury my brother;
And if I die for it, what happiness!
Convicted of reverence – I shall be content
To lie beside a brother whom I love.

We have only a little time to please the living,
But all eternity to love the dead.

There I shall lie for ever. Live, if you will;
Live, and defy the holiest laws of heaven.

ISMENE: I do not defy them; but I cannot act

Against the State. I am not strong enough.

ANTIGONE: Let that be your excuse, then. I will go

And heap a mound of earth over my brother.

ISMENE: I fear for you, Antigone; I fear –

ANTIGONE: You need not fear for me. Fear for yourself.

ISMENE: At least be secret. Do not breathe a word.

I'll not betray your secret.

ANTIGONE: Publish it

To all the world! Else I shall hate you more.

ISMENE: Your heart burns! Mine is frozen at the thought.

ANTIGONE: I know my duty, where true duty lies.

ISMENE: If you can do it; but you're bound to fail.

ANTIGONE: When I have *tried* and failed, I shall have failed.

ISMENE: No sense in starting on a hopeless task.

ANTIGONE: Oh, I shall hate you if you talk like that!

And *he* will hate you, rightly. Leave me alone
With my own madness. There is no punishment
Can rob me of my honourable death.

ISMENE: Go then, if you are determined, to your folly.

But remember that those who love you . . . love you still.

* * *

2.

CHORUS:

There is something to be said, my lord, for his point of view,
And for yours as well; there is much to be said on both
sides.

CREON: Indeed! Am I to take lessons at my time of life
From a fellow of his age?

HAEMON: No lesson you need be ashamed of.

It isn't a question of age, but of right and wrong.

CREON:

Would you call it right to admire an act of disobedience?

HAEMON: Not if the act were also dishonourable.

CREON: And was not this woman's action dishonourable?

HAEMON: The people of Thebes think not.

CREON: The people of Thebes!

Since when do I take my orders from the people of Thebes?

HAEMON: Isn't that rather a childish thing to say?

CREON: No. I am king, and responsible only to myself.

HAEMON: A one-man state? What sort of a state is that?

CREON: Why, does not every state belong to its ruler?

HAEMON: You'd be an excellent king – on a desert island.

CREON: Of course, if you're on the woman's side –

HAEMON: No, no –

Unless you're the woman. It's you I'm fighting for.

CREON:

What, villain, when every word you speak is against me?

HAEMON: Only because I know you are wrong, wrong.

CREON: Wrong? To respect my own authority?

HAEMON: What sort of respect tramples on all that is holy?

CREON: Despicable coward! No more will than a woman!

HAEMON: I have nothing to be ashamed of.

CREON: Yet you plead her cause.

HAEMON:

No, *yours*, and mine, and that of the gods of the dead.

CREON: You'll never marry her this side of death.

HAEMON: Then, if she dies, she does not die alone.

* * *

2: Plays

2 – 8 Sophocles: *Antigone* – continued

3.

Enter CREON with the body of HAEMON.

CREON: The sin, the sin of the erring soul

Drives hard unto death.

Behold the slayer, the slain,

The father, the son.

O the curse of my stubborn will!

Son, newly cut off in the newness of youth,

Dead for my fault, not yours.

CHORUS: Alas, too late you have seen the truth.

CREON: I learn in sorrow. Upon my head

God has delivered this heavy punishment,

Has struck me down in the ways of wickedness,

And trod my gladness under foot.

Such is the bitter affliction of mortal man.

Enter the MESSENGER from the Palace.

MESSENGER: Sir, you have this and more than this to bear.

Within there's more to know, more to your pain.

CREON: What more? What pain can overtop this pain?

MESSENGER:

She is dead – your wife, the mother of him that is dead –

The death-wound fresh in her heart. Alas, poor lady!

CREON: Insatiable Death, wilt thou destroy me yet?

What say you, teller of evil?

I am already dead,

And is there more?

Blood upon blood?

More death? My wife?

The central doors open, revealing the body of EURYDICE.

CHORUS: Look then, and see; nothing is hidden now.

CREON: O second horror!

What fate awaits me now?

My child here in my arms . . . and there, the other . . .

The son . . . the mother . . .

MESSENGER: There at the altar with the whetted knife

She stood, and as the darkness dimmed her eyes

Called on the dead, her elder son and this,

And with her dying breath cursed you, their slayer

CREON: O horrible . . .

Is there no sword for me,

To end this misery?

* * *

2: Plays

2 – 9 Dylan Thomas: *Under Milk Wood*

Use one or more of the passages selected as the basis for a discussion of *Under Milk Wood*.

1.

Dylan Thomas, *Under Milk Wood*,
Penguin Books, 2000

pp 10–12

2.

Dylan Thomas, *Under Milk Wood*,
Penguin Books, 2000

pp 46–47

2: Plays

2 – 9 Dylan Thomas: *Under Milk Wood* – continued

3.

Dylan Thomas, *Under Milk Wood*,
Penguin Books, 2000
pp 62–63

3: Short stories

3 – 1 Thea Astley: *Hunting the Wild Pineapple*

Use one or more of the passages selected as the basis for a discussion of *Hunting the Wild Pineapple*.

1.

Thea Astley, *Hunting the Wild Pineapple*,
Penguin Books, 1981

pp 3–4

2.

Thea Astley, *Hunting the Wild Pineapple*,
Penguin Books, 1981

pp 69–70

3: Short stories

3 – 1 Thea Astley: *Hunting the Wild Pineapple* – continued

3.

Thea Astley, *Hunting the Wild Pineapple*,
Penguin Books, 1981
pp 157–158

3: Short stories

3 – 2 A S Byatt: *Sugar & Other Stories*

Use one or more of the passages selected as the basis for a discussion of *Sugar & Other Stories*.

1.

A S Byatt, *Sugar & Other Stories*,
Vintage, 1995
pp 21–22

2.

A S Byatt, *Sugar & Other Stories*,
Vintage, 1995
pp 107–108

3: Short stories

3 – 2 A S Byatt: *Sugar & Other Stories* – continued

3.

A S Byatt, *Sugar & Other Stories*,
Vintage, 1995
pp 240–241

3: Short stories

3 – 3 Raymond Carver: *Will You Please Be Quiet, Please?*

Use one or more of the passages selected as the basis for a discussion of *Will You Please Be Quiet, Please?*.

1.

Raymond Carver, *Will You Please Be Quiet, Please?*
Vintage, 2003

pp 10–11

2.

Raymond Carver, *Will You Please Be Quiet, Please?*
Vintage, 2003

pp 56–57

3: Short stories

3 – 3 Raymond Carver: *Will You Please Be Quiet, Please?* – continued

3.

Raymond Carver, *Will You Please Be Quiet, Please?*

Vintage, 2003

pp 146–147

4: Other literature

4 – 1 William Dalrymple: *City of Djinns*

Use one or more of the passages selected as the basis for a discussion of *City of Djinns*.

1.

William Dalrymple, *City of Djinns*,
Flamingo, 1994

pp 17–18

2.

William Dalrymple, *City of Djinns*,
Flamingo, 1994

pp 189–190

4: Other literature

4 – 1 William Dalrymple: *City of Djinns* – continued

3.

William Dalrymple, *City of Djinns*,
Flamingo, 1994

pp 289–290

4: Other literature

4 – 2 Michael McGirr: *Bypass: The Story of a Road*

Use one or more of the passages selected as the basis for a discussion of *Bypass: The Story of a Road*.

1.

Michael McGirr, *Bypass: The Story of a Road*,
Picador, 2004

pp 27–28

2.

Michael McGirr, *Bypass: The Story of a Road*,
Picador, 2004

pp 50–51

4: Other literature

4 – 2 Michael McGirr: *Bypass: The Story of a Road* – continued

3.

Michael McGirr, *Bypass: The Story of a Road*,
Picador, 2004

pp 272–273

4: Other literature

4 – 3 Drusilla Modjeska: *Timepieces*

Use one or more of the passages selected as the basis for a discussion of *Timepieces*.

1.

Writing Poppy

The danger for the woman temporiser is that we apologise where we should not. We don't have the nerve (the gumption) to say – as Proust says – that it is in the grief-filled what-was-perhaps that *la vraie vie* occurs. We get caught into standard time lines and the literalities of the past (which Proust never does) and because we know our relationship to them is often ambivalent, we are somehow ashamed. *It's Dru's embroidery*, my mother would insist as I stretched and bent our stories. She'd defend me against teachers, neighbours, relatives, my father. I hung my head, and the greatest shame was that I knew I could not stop. Embroidery was deep in my soul; the stories (the *might-have-beens*, the *could-still-bes*) were like bright comets; I would not survive the dark (the depression) without them.

I don't remember, but I'm told that as a very small child I became distressed when people sat on chairs already occupied by my family. My mother would (she used to say) try to persuade me that because they were imaginary, they weren't really there, but being imaginary didn't make them any less real to me. When they were sat on, dismissed, swept from the table, when visitors arrived, or my mother turned my attention to other tasks, I would become as anguished as if they'd been murdered before my eyes. This was way back before the arrival of little sisters or my mother's disappearance into the sanatorium and the long exile of school. By then the fantasising was protective, compulsive even; a screen would come down and I was far away. I'd return only after my name was called several times; a kind of whirring would thump me back down in the classroom with all the noise and confusion of a time machine.

* * *

2.

On Not Owning a Grace Cossington Smith

The arguments in favour of being extravagant were sensible. Buying a Cossington Smith wasn't just a whim; it was an investment. She is very unlikely to go down, and who knows, she might even go up. I could always sell again, and even taking into consideration interest rates and the buyer's premium, I shouldn't lose much if I could hang on for a year or two. But even as we said the words, we both knew this wasn't the point. Buying a Cossington Smith isn't – at least for me it isn't, or wouldn't have been – a matter of investment, or even of sense. The central fact remained that I had fallen in love with the painting. Not only that, but it exemplified what I had come to understand about the interiors Grace Cossington Smith painted in the 1950s and 1960s as the culmination of a life given to the contemplation of form and shape and colour. What she does in them is render visible not only the world she knew, but 'things unseen', as she put it: 'the silent quality that is unconscious, and belongs to all things created'.

I didn't do any work that afternoon. Instead we went back and looked at the painting again. If anything, we liked it more. 'A little museum piece,' said another friend, who knows about these things. She saw it in Melbourne the next week, when it moved down there for the auction. 'Nearer twelve than sixteen,' Christie's had said. 'Underpriced,' my Melbourne friend said. So just to be sure I thought, okay, I'm determined to get this painting, I'll go up to \$17,000. With a fifteen per cent premium that meant a hefty cheque, but there's more than that in a line of credit, and after all it was an investment, I could always sell it again . . . I had a week to rehearse the reasons.

* * *

4: Other literature

4 – 3 Drusilla Modjeska: *Timepieces* – continued

3.

The Present in Fiction

During the 2001 election campaign, John Howard said that a third term for his government would be a victory in the ‘culture wars’. What frightens and alarms me is that the government has managed not only to dismiss progressive ideas as the rhetoric of political correctness and the black armband, but has devalued the currency of language. Writing about the way Howard draws language down to its most practical and prosaic and unimaginative, David Malouf says this: ‘Howard is the embodiment and has made himself the wooden figurehead of a dry, decent, cautiously unimaginative Australia that we all recognise but whose narrowness some of us thought we had outgrown. He is impervious to argument, and impervious to mockery as well. Not simply because he is thick-skinned, though he is that too . . . but because he knows, as his clever critics do not, that when he is mocked in these terms, a good part of the country feels mocked with him.’

When Howard first refused to apologise at the Reconciliation Convention in May 1997, he insisted that an apology was merely a symbolic gesture and that he didn’t believe in them, even as many in the audience turned their backs to him. He has maintained this position, though he knows the power of symbol and image very well, and uses it with the kind of skill that David Malouf speaks of. His government has been agile in turning symbolic gestures to its advantage, creating them from flimsy evidence, or none at all. Images of asylum seekers throwing their children overboard do powerful work, which isn’t undone when the story crumbles. How do we respond when the issue seems not to be veracity, but political expediency? And when it seems there are people so far inside the *enormous novel* we all live in, they don’t care if it’s true as long as they get the result they want.

They won’t say: the times were dark, Brecht wrote. Rather: why were their poets silent?

* * *

5: Poetry

5 – 1 Robert Adamson: *Mulberry Leaves*

Use one or more of the passages selected as the basis for a discussion of the poetry of Robert Adamson.

1.

Robert Adamson, *Mulberry Leaves*,
Paper Bark Press, 2001

p 34

2.

Robert Adamson, *Mulberry Leaves*,
Paper Bark Press, 2001

p 99

5: Poetry

5 – 1 Robert Adamson: *Mulberry Leaves* – continued

3.

Robert Adamson, *Mulberry Leaves*,
Paper Bark Press, 2001

p 269

5: Poetry

5 – 2 W H Auden: *Selected Poems*

Use one or more of the passages selected as the basis for a discussion of the poetry of W H Auden.

1.

W H Auden, *Selected Poems*,
Faber and Faber, 1979

p 17

2.

W H Auden, *Selected Poems*,
Faber and Faber, 1979

pp 88–89

5: Poetry

5 – 2 W H Auden: *Selected Poems* – continued

3.

W H Auden, *Selected Poems*,
Faber and Faber, 1979

pp 71

5: Poetry

5 – 3 John Donne: *Selected Poetry*

Use one or more of the passages selected as the basis for a discussion of the poetry of John Donne.

1.

Satire 3

Kind pity chokes my spleen; brave scorn forbids
Those tears to issue which swell my eye-lids,
I must not laugh, nor weep sins, and be wise,
Can railing then cure these worn maladies?

Is not our mistress fair religion,
As worthy of all our soul's devotion,
As virtue was to the first blinded age?
Are not heaven's joys as valiant to assuage
Lusts, as earth's honour was to them? Alas,
As we do them in means, shall they surpass
Us in the end, and shall thy father's spirit
Meet blind philosophers in heaven, whose merit
Of strict life may be imputed faith, and hear
Thee, whom he taught so easy ways and near
To follow, damned? O if thou dar'st, fear this;
This fear great courage, and high valour is.
Dar'st thou aid mutinous Dutch, and dar'st thou lay
Thee in ships' wooden sepulchres, a prey
To leaders' rage, to storms, to shot, to death?
Dar'st thou dive seas, and dungeons of the earth?
Hast thou courageous fire to thaw the ice
Of frozen north discoveries? and thrice
Colder than salamanders, like divine
Children in th'oven, fires of Spain, and the line,
Whose countries limbecks to our bodies be,
Canst thou for gain bear? and must every he
Which cries not, 'Goddess!' to thy mistress, draw,
Or eat thy poisonous words? courage of straw!
O desperate coward, wilt thou seem bold, and
To thy foes and his (who made thee to stand
Sentinel in his world's garrison) thus yield,
And for forbidden wars, leave th'appointed field?
Know thy foes: the foul Devil, he, whom thou
Strivest to please, for hate, not love, would allow
Thee fain, his whole realm to be quit; and as
The world's all parts wither away and pass,
So the world's self, thy other loved foe, is
In her decrepit wane, and thou loving this,
Dost love a withered and worn strumpet; last,
Flesh (itself's death) and joys which flesh can taste,
Thou lovest; and thy fair goodly soul, which doth
Give this flesh power to taste joy, thou dost loathe.

* * *

2.

The Flea

Mark but this flea, and mark in this,
How little that which thou deny'st me is;
It sucked me first, and now sucks thee,
And in this flea, our two bloods mingled be;
Thou know'st that this cannot be said
A sin, or shame, or loss of maidenhead,
Yet this enjoys before it woo,
And pampered swells with one blood made of two,
And this, alas, is more than we would do.

Oh stay, three lives in one flea spare,
Where we almost, nay more than married are.
This flea is you and I, and this
Our marriage bed, and marriage temple is;
Though parents grudge, and you, we're met,
And cloistered in these living walls of jet.
Though use make you apt to kill me,
Let not to this, self murder added be,
And sacrilege, three sins in killing three.

Cruel and sudden, hast thou since
Purpled thy nail, in blood of innocence?
In what could this flea guilty be,
Except in that drop which it sucked from thee?
Yet thou triumph'st, and say'st that thou
Find'st not thyself, nor me the weaker now;
'Tis true, then learn how false fears be;
Just so much honour, when thou yield'st to me,
Will waste, as this flea's death took life from thee.

* * *

5: Poetry

5 – 3 John Donne: *Selected Poetry* – continued

3.

The Good Morrow

I wonder by my troth, what thou, and I
Did, till we loved? were we not weaned till then,
But sucked on country pleasures, childishly?
Or snorted we in the seven sleepers' den?
'Twas so; but this, all pleasures fancies be.
If ever any beauty I did see,
Which I desired, and got, 'twas but a dream of thee.

And now good morrow to our waking souls,
Which watch not one another out of fear;
For love, all love of other sights controls,
And makes one little room, an everywhere.
Let sea-discoverers to new worlds have gone,
Let maps to others, worlds on worlds have shown,
Let us possess one world, each hath one, and is one.

My face in thine eye, thine in mine appears,
And true plain hearts do in the faces rest,
Where can we find two better hemispheres
Without sharp north, without declining west?
Whatever dies, was not mixed equally;
If our two loves be one, or, thou and I
Love so alike, that none do slacken, none can die.

* * *

5: Poetry

5 – 4 John Kinsella: *Peripheral Light: Selected and New Poems*

Use one or more of the passages selected as the basis for a discussion of the poetry of John Kinsella.

1.

Links

‘Every separation is a link . . .’
—Simone Weil

i.

There are days when the world
buckles under the sun, trees blacken
to thin wisps, spinifex fires,
and white cockatoos, strangled
in telegraph wire, hang
dry and upside down.

ii.

I think only of thirst.
The drifting sand does not
lend itself to description,
the sketchy border trees
offer little protection
from the sun as we negotiate
the edge and fine line
between sand and vegetation.

iii.

I have always lived by the sea,
or travelling underground, have always
been concerned with water—the flooding
of mines, rain in dark forests,
the level of the tide.

iv.

To see a waterbird, maybe a crane,
fly deep into desert, comes as no
surprise—we note its arrival and follow
its disappearance, discuss it over a beer,
and think nothing more of it.

v.

And nights, contracting into cool winds,
when the sand becomes an astrolabe to the stars,
where in the reflection of the crystal spheres
we wander without direction, searching out
water flowers . . .

* * *

2.

Goaded Storms Out of a Darkening Field

Goaded storms out of a darkening field,
Cockeyed bobs seeding the salt, the farmer
Cursing the dry, cursing the bitter yield.

And while lightning would savage him with skilled
Thrusts, and floods strip the topsoil, it's better
Goaded storms out of a darkening field

Than sit distraught on the verandah, killed
By the ‘quitter’s syndrome’—it’s much safer
Cursing the dry, cursing the bitter yield.

Field bins empty, coffers bare, should have sold
Two years back when prices were halfway there.
Goaded storms out of a darkening field.

Red harvest, charred hills, dry wells filled and sealed.
Sheep on their last legs. Dams crusted over.
Cursing the dry, cursing the bitter yield.

It’s tempting when prayers and patience have failed,
Diviners have lost track of ground water.
Goaded storms out of a darkening field.
Cursing the dry, cursing the bitter yield.

* * *

5: Poetry

5 – 4 John Kinsella: *Peripheral Light: Selected and New Poems* – continued

3.

Drowning in Wheat

They'd been warned
on every farm
that playing
in the silos
would lead to death.
You sink in wheat.
Slowly. And the more
you struggle the worse it gets.
'You'll see a rat sail past
your face, nimble on its turf,
and then you'll disappear.'
In there, hard work
has no reward.
So it became a kind of test
to see how far they could sink
without needing a rope
to help them out.
But in the midst of play
rituals miss a beat—like both
leaping in to resolve
an argument
as to who'd go first
and forgetting
to attach the rope.
Up to the waist
and afraid to move.
That even a call for help
would see the wheat
trickle down.
The painful consolidation
of time. The grains
in the hourglass
grotesquely swollen.
And that acrid
chemical smell
of treated wheat
coaxing them into
a near-dead sleep.

* * *

5: Poetry

5 – 5 Philip Larkin: *Collected Poems*

Use one or more of the passages selected as the basis for a discussion of the poetry of Philip Larkin.

1.

Poetry of Departures

Sometimes you hear, fifth-hand,
As epitaph:
He chucked up everything
And just cleared off,
And always the voice will sound
Certain you approve
This audacious, purifying,
Elemental move.

And they are right, I think.
We all hate home
And having to be there:
I detest my room,
Its specially-chosen junk,
The good books, the good bed,
And my life, in perfect order:
So to hear it said

He walked out on the whole crowd
Leaves me flushed and stirred,
Like *Then she undid her dress*
Or *Take that you bastard;*
Surely I can, if he did?
And that helps me stay
Sober and industrious.
But I'd go today,

Yes, swagger the nut-strewn roads,
Crouch in the fo'c'sle
Stubbly with goodness, if
It weren't so artificial,
Such a deliberate step backwards
To create an object:
Books; china; a life
Reprehensibly perfect.

* * *

2.

MCMXIV

Those long uneven lines
Standing as patiently
As if they were stretched outside
The Oval or Villa Park,
The crowns of hats, the sun
On moustached archaic faces
Grinning as if it were all
An August Bank Holiday lark;

And the shut shops, the bleached
Established names on the sunblinds,
The farthings and sovereigns,
And dark-clothed children at play
Called after kings and queens,
The tin advertisements
For cocoa and twist, and the pubs
Wide open all day;

And the countryside not caring:
The place-names all hazed over
With flowering grasses, and fields
Shadowing Domesday lines
Under wheat's restless silence;
The differently-dressed servants
With tiny rooms in huge houses,
The dust behind limousines;

Never such innocence,
Never before or since,
As changed itself to past
Without a word – the men
Leaving the gardens tidy,
The thousands of marriages
Lasting a little while longer:
Never such innocence again.

* * *

5: Poetry

5 – 5 Philip Larkin: *Collected Poems* – continued

3.

Aubade

This is a special way of being afraid
 No trick dispels. Religion used to try,
 That vast moth-eaten musical brocade
 Created to pretend we never die,
 And specious stuff that says *No rational being*
Can fear a thing it will not feel, not seeing
 That this is what we fear – no sight, no sound,
 No touch or taste or smell, nothing to think with,
 Nothing to love or link with,
 The anaesthetic from which none come round.

And so it stays just on the edge of vision,
 A small unfocused blur, a standing chill
 That slows each impulse down to indecision.
 Most things may never happen: this one will,
 And realisation of it rages out
 In furnace-fear when we are caught without
 People or drink. Courage is no good:
 It means not scaring others. Being brave
 Lets no one off the grave.
 Death is no different whined at than withstood.

Slowly light strengthens, and the room takes shape.
 It stands plain as a wardrobe, what we know,
 Have always known, know that we can't escape,
 Yet can't accept. One side will have to go.
 Meanwhile telephones crouch, getting ready to ring
 In locked-up offices, and all the uncaring
 Intricate rented world begins to rouse.
 The sky is white as clay, with no sun.
 Work has to be done.
 Postmen like doctors go from house to house.

* * *

5: Poetry

5 – 6 Judith Wright: *Collected Poems*

Use one or more of the passages selected as the basis for a discussion of the poetry of Judith Wright.

1.

South of My Days

South of my days' circle, part of my blood's country,
rises that tableland, high delicate outline
of bony slopes wincing under the winter,
low trees blue-leaved and olive, outcropping granite—
clean, lean, hungry country. The creek's leaf-silenced,
willow-choked, the slope a tangle of medlar and crabapple
branching over and under, blotched with a green lichen;
and the old cottage lurches in for shelter.

O cold the black-frost night. The walls draw in to the
warmth
and the old roof cracks its joints; the slung kettle
hisses a leak on the fire. Hardly to be believed that summer
will turn up again some day in a wave of rambler roses,
thrust its hot face in here to tell another yarn—
a story old Dan can spin into a blanket against the winter.
Seventy years of stories he clutches round his bones.
Seventy summers are hived in him like old honey.

Driving that year, Charleville to the Hunter,
nineteen-one it was, and the drought beginning;
sixty head left at the McIntyre, the mud round them
hardened like iron; and the yellow boy died
in the sulky ahead with the gear, but the horse went on,
stopped at the Sandy Camp and waited in the evening.
It was the flies we seen first, swarming like bees.
Came to the Hunter, three hundred head of a thousand—
cruel to keep them alive—and the river was dust.

Or mustering up in the Bogongs in the autumn
when the blizzards came early. Brought them down; we
brought them
down, what aren't there yet. Or driving for Cobb's on the
run
up from Tamworth—Thunderbolt at the top of Hungry
Hill,
and I give him a wink. I wouldn't wait long, Fred,
not if I was you; the troopers are just behind,
coming for that job at the Hillgrove. He went like a luny,
him on his big black horse.

Oh, they slide and they vanish
as he shuffles the years like a pack of conjuror's cards.
True or not, it's all the same; and the frost on the roof
cracks like a whip, and the back-log breaks into ash.
Wake, old man. This is winter, and the yarns are over.
No one is listening.

South of my days' circle
I know it dark against the stars, the high lean country
full of old stories that still go walking in my sleep.

* * *

2.

Eve to Her Daughters

It was not I who began it.
Turned out into draughty caves,
hungry so often, having to work for our bread,
hearing the children whining,
I was nevertheless not unhappy.
Where Adam went I was fairly contented to go.
I adapted myself to the punishment: it was my life.

But Adam, you know . . . !
He kept on brooding over the insult,
over the trick They had played on us, over the scolding.
He had discovered a flaw in himself
and he had to make up for it.

Outside Eden the earth was imperfect,
the seasons changed, the game was fleet-footed,
he had to work for our living, and he didn't like it.
He even complained of my cooking
(it was hard to compete with Heaven).

So he set to work.
The earth must be made a new Eden
with central heating, domesticated animals,
mechanical harvesters, combustion engines,
escalators, refrigerators,
and modern means of communication
and multiplied opportunities for safe investment
and higher education for Abel and Cain
and the rest of the family.
You can see how his pride had been hurt.

In the process he had to unravel everything,
because he believed that mechanism
was the whole secret—he was always mechanical-minded.
He got to the very inside of the whole machine
exclaiming as he went, So this is how it works!
And now that I know how it works, why, I must have
invented it.
As for God and the Other, they cannot be demonstrated,
and what cannot be demonstrated
doesn't exist.
You see, he had always been jealous.

Yes, he got to the centre
where nothing at all can be demonstrated.
And clearly he doesn't exist; but he refuses
to accept the conclusion.
You see, he was always an egotist.

* * *

5: Poetry

5 – 6 Judith Wright: *Collected Poems* – continued

3.

Some Words

Never

Should never have done it, never.
Should never have left that country
where I was queen entirely.
Treacherous thaws betrayed me.

That land of I-will-never
gleaming with snow and silence
suited me with its iceblink,
it blue eyes fixed as mirrors.

Set on my peak, I queened it.
It was the spring that took me,
drowning in warmer waters
out to the lands of sometimes.

Here in the lands of sometimes
I stretched out hands lamenting,
but I'm a queen no longer,
melted my snows and glaciers.

They were so strong, so solid,
crystal as tears long frozen.
Here I'm at risk, half-drowning,
wanting my season, winter.

It will return and find me
caught in a depth of water,
freezing unseen in ice-depths,
never again to queen it,

to sit on my peak unmoving
the sceptre cold in my fingers,
my eyes on the blue-eyed glacier.
Should never have left it, never.

* * *

Assessment criteria

The examination will address all of the criteria. All students will be examined against the following criteria.

1. Understanding of the text demonstrated in a relevant and plausible interpretation.
2. Ability to write expressively and coherently to present an interpretation.
3. Understanding of how views and values may be suggested in the text.
4. Analysis of how key passages and/or moments in the text contribute to an interpretation.
5. Analysis of the features of a text and how they contribute to an interpretation.
6. Analysis and close reading of textual details to support a coherent and detailed interpretation of the text.

A checklist for planning and revising

Have I included the part numbers and text numbers of my chosen texts on the front cover(s) of all script books?

Have I written on texts from two different parts?

Have I demonstrated my knowledge and understanding of the chosen texts?

Have I referred to the chosen texts in detail to illustrate or justify my responses?

Have I discussed at least one set passage for each text in detail?

Have I expressed myself effectively and appropriately?

Have I edited my final version for spelling, punctuation and sentence structure?

Are there places where my handwriting would be difficult to read and should be tidied?

Are any alterations I have made clear to the reader?

END OF TASK BOOK