

Victorian Certificate of Education 2016

LITERATURE

Written examination

Friday 4 November 2016

Reading time: 11.45 am to 12.00 noon (15 minutes)

Writing time: 12.00 noon to 2.00 pm (2 hours)

TASK BOOK

Structure of book

<i>Task</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, correction fluid/tape and 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 answer books. All answer 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 section**.
- Each piece of writing is worth half of the total assessment for the examination.

Instructions

- Write your **student number** in the space provided on the front cover(s) of the answer book(s).
- In your answer book(s), clearly indicate the **text numbers** of your selected texts.
- All written responses must be in English.

At the end of the examination

- Place all other used answer books inside the front cover of the first answer book.
- 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 sections.

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

1. Find 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.

In your answer book(s), clearly indicate the **text numbers** of your selected texts.

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Note

All passages in this examination are reproduced as they appear in the nominated version of the text.

Section A – Novels

1. Jane Austen: *Persuasion*

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

1.

They knew not each other's opinion, either its constancy or its change, on the one leading point of Anne's conduct, for the subject was never alluded to,—but Anne, at seven and twenty, thought very differently from what she had been made to think at nineteen.—She did not blame Lady Russell, she did not blame herself for having been guided by her; but she felt that were any young person, in similar circumstances, to apply to her for counsel, they would never receive any of such certain immediate wretchedness, such uncertain future good.—She was persuaded that under every disadvantage of disapprobation at home, and every anxiety attending his profession, all their probable fears, delays and disappointments, she should yet have been a happier woman in maintaining the engagement, than she had been in the sacrifice of it; and this, she fully believed, had the usual share, had even more than a usual share of all such solitudes and suspense been theirs, without reference to the actual results of their case, which, as it happened, would have bestowed earlier prosperity than could be reasonably calculated on. All his sanguine expectations, all his confidence had been justified. His genius and ardour had seemed to foresee and to command his prosperous path. He had, very soon after their engagement ceased, got employ; and all that he had told her would follow, had taken place. He had distinguished himself, and early gained the other step in rank—and must now, by successive captures, have made a handsome fortune. She had only navy lists and newspapers for her authority, but she could not doubt his being rich;—and, in favour of his constancy, she had no reason to believe him married.

How eloquent could Anne Elliot have been,—how eloquent, at least, were her wishes on the side of early warm attachment, and a cheerful confidence in futurity, against that over-anxious caution which seems to insult exertion and distrust Providence!—She had been forced into prudence in her youth, she learned romance as she grew older—the natural sequel of an unnatural beginning.

* * *

2.

Anne found Captain Benwick again drawing near her. Lord Byron's "dark blue seas" could not fail of being brought forward by their present view, and she gladly gave him all her attention as long as attention was possible. It was soon drawn per force another way.

There was too much wind to make the high part of the new Cobb pleasant for the ladies, and they agreed to get down the steps to the lower, and all were contented to pass quietly and carefully down the steep flight, excepting Louisa; she must be jumped down them by Captain Wentworth. In all their walks, he had had to jump her from the stiles; the sensation was delightful to her. The hardness of the pavement for her feet, made him less willing upon the present occasion; he did it, however; she was safely down, and instantly, to shew her enjoyment, ran up the steps to be jumped down again. He advised her against it, thought the jar too great; but no, he reasoned and talked in vain; she smiled and said, "I am determined I will:" he put out his hands; she was too precipitate by half a second, she fell on the pavement on the Lower Cobb, and was taken up lifeless!

There was no wound, no blood, no visible bruise; but her eyes were closed, she breathed not, her face was like death.—The horror of that moment to all who stood around!

Captain Wentworth, who had caught her up, knelt with her in his arms, looking on her with a face as pallid as her own, in an agony of silence. "She is dead! she is dead!" screamed Mary, catching hold of her husband, and contributing with his own horror to make him immovable; and in another moment, Henrietta, sinking under the conviction, lost her senses too, and would have fallen on the steps, but for Captain Benwick and Anne, who caught and supported her between them.

"Is there no one to help me?" were the first words which burst from Captain Wentworth, in a tone of despair, and as if all his own strength were gone.

"Go to him, go to him," cried Anne, "for heaven's sake go to him. I can support her myself. Leave me, and go to him. Rub her hands, rub her temples; here are salts,—take them, take them."

Captain Benwick obeyed, and Charles at the same moment, disengaging himself from his wife, they were both with him; and Louisa was raised up and supported more firmly between them, and every thing was done that Anne had prompted, but in vain; while Captain Wentworth, staggering against the wall for his support, exclaimed in the bitterest agony,

"Oh God! her father and mother!"

"A surgeon!" said Anne.

He caught the word; it seemed to rouse him at once, and saying only "True, true, a surgeon this instant," was darting away, when Anne eagerly suggested,

"Captain Benwick, would not it be better for Captain Benwick? He knows where a surgeon is to be found."

* * *

Section A – Novels

1. Jane Austen: *Persuasion*

3.

A sudden recollection seemed to occur, and to give him some taste of that emotion which was reddening Anne's cheeks and fixing her eyes on the ground.—After clearing his throat, however, he proceeded thus,

“I confess that I do think there is a disparity, too great a disparity, and in a point no less essential than mind.—I regard Louisa Musgrove as a very amiable, sweet-tempered girl, and not deficient in understanding; but Benwick is something more. He is a clever man, a reading man—and I confess that I do consider his attaching himself to her, with some surprise. Had it been the effect of gratitude, had he learnt to love her, because he believed her to be preferring him, it would have been another thing. But I have no reason to suppose it so. It seems, on the contrary, to have been a perfectly spontaneous, untaught feeling on his side, and this surprises me. A man like him, in his situation! With a heart pierced, wounded, almost broken! Fanny Harville was a very superior creature; and his attachment to her was indeed attachment. A man does not recover from such a devotion of the heart to such a woman!—He ought not—he does not.”

Either from the consciousness, however, that his friend had recovered, or from some other consciousness, he went no farther; and Anne, who, in spite of the agitated voice in which the latter part had been uttered, and in spite of all the various noises of the room, the almost ceaseless slam of the door, and ceaseless buzz of persons walking through, had distinguished every word, was struck, gratified, confused, and beginning to breathe very quick, and feel an hundred things in a moment. It was impossible for her to enter on such a subject; and yet, after a pause, feeling the necessity of speaking, and having not the smallest wish for a total change, she only deviated so far as to say,

“You were a good while at Lyme, I think?”

“About a fortnight. I could not leave it till Louisa's doing well was quite ascertained. I had been too deeply concerned in the mischief to be soon at peace. It had been my doing—solely mine. She would not have been obstinate if I had not been weak. The country round Lyme is very fine. I walked and rode a great deal; and the more I saw, the more I found to admire.”

“I should very much like to see Lyme again,” said Anne.

“Indeed! I should not have supposed that you could have found any thing in Lyme to inspire such a feeling. The horror and distress you were involved in—the stretch of mind, the wear of spirits!—I should have thought your last impressions of Lyme must have been strong disgust.”

“The last few hours were certainly very painful,” replied Anne: “but when pain is over, the remembrance of it often becomes a pleasure. One does not love a place the less for having suffered in it, unless it has been all suffering, nothing but suffering—which was by no means the case at Lyme. We were only in anxiety and distress during the last two hours; and, previously, there had been a great deal of enjoyment. [...]”

* * *

Section A – Novels

2. Charlotte Brontë: *Jane Eyre*

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

1.

‘But I feel this, Helen: I must dislike those who, whatever I do to please them, persist in disliking me; I must resist those who punish me unjustly. It is as natural as that I should love those who show me affection, or submit to punishment when I feel it is deserved.’

‘Heathens and savage tribes hold that doctrine; but Christians and civilised nations disown it.’

‘How? I don’t understand.’

‘It is not violence that best overcomes hate – nor vengeance that most certainly heals injury.’

‘What then?’

‘Read the New Testament, and observe what Christ says, and how He acts; make His word your rule, and His conduct your example.’

‘What does He say?’

‘Love your enemies; bless them that curse you; do good to them that hate you and despitefully use you.’

‘Then I should love Mrs Reed, which I cannot do: I should bless her son John, which is impossible.’

In her turn, Helen Burns asked me to explain; and I proceeded forthwith to pour out, in my own way, the tale of my sufferings and resentments. Bitter and truculent when excited, I spoke as I felt, without reserve or softening.

Helen heard me patiently to the end; I expected she would then make a remark, but she said nothing.

‘Well,’ I asked impatiently, ‘is not Mrs Reed a hard-hearted, bad woman?’

‘She has been unkind to you, no doubt, because, you see, she dislikes your cast of character, as Miss Scatcherd does mine; but how minutely you remember all she has done and said to you! What a singularly deep impression her injustice seems to have made on your heart! No ill-usage so brands its record on my feelings. Would you not be happier if you tried to forget her severity, together with the passionate emotions it excited? Life appears to me too short to be spent in nursing animosity, or registering wrongs. [...]

* * *

2.

‘You never felt jealously, did you, Miss Eyre? Of course not: I need not ask you; because you never felt love. You have both sentiments yet to experience: your soul sleeps; the shock is yet to be given which shall waken it. You think all existence lapses in as quiet a flow as that in which your youth has hitherto slid away. Floating on with closed eyes and muffled ears, you neither see the rocks bristling not far off in the bed of the flood, nor hear the breakers boil at their base. But I tell you – and you may mark my words – you will come some day to a craggy pass in the channel, where the whole of life’s stream will be broken up into whirl and tumult, foam and noise: either you will be dashed to atoms on crag points, or lifted up and borne on by some master-wave into a calmer current – as I am now.

‘I like this day; I like that sky of steel; I like the sternness and stillness of the world under this frost. I like Thornfield, its antiquity, its retirement, its old crow-trees and thorn-trees, its gray façade, and lines of dark windows reflecting that metal welkin: and yet how long have I abhorred the very thought of it, shunned it like a great plague-house? How I do still abhor—’

He ground his teeth and was silent: he arrested his step and struck his boot against the hard ground. Some hated thought seemed to have him in its grip, and to hold him so tightly that he could not advance. –

We were ascending the avenue when he thus paused; the hall was before us. Lifting his eye to its battlements, he cast over them a glare such as I never saw before or since. Pain, shame, ire – impatience, disgust, detestation – seemed momentarily to hold a quivering conflict in the large pupil dilating under his ebon eyebrow. Wild was the wrestle which should be paramount; but another feeling rose and triumphed: something hard and cynical; self-willed and resolute: it settled his passion and petrified his countenance: he went on –

‘During the moment I was silent, Miss Eyre, I was arranging a point with my destiny. She stood there, by that beech-trunk – a hag like one of those who appeared to Macbeth on the heath of Forres. “You like Thornfield?” she said, lifting her finger; and then she wrote in the air a memento, which ran in lurid hieroglyphics all along the house-front, between the upper and lower row of windows, “Like it if you can! Like it if you dare!”

“I will like it,” said I; “I dare like it;” and’ (he subjoined moodily) ‘I will keep my word: I will break obstacles to happiness, to goodness – yes, goodness. I wish to be a better man than I have been, than I am; as Job’s leviathan broke the spear, the dart, and the habergeon, hindrances which others count as iron and brass I will esteem but straw and rotten wood.’

* * *

Section A – Novels

2. Charlotte Brontë: *Jane Eyre*

3.

I interrupted him. Anything like a tangible reproach gave me courage at once. ‘Keep to common sense, St John: you are verging on nonsense. You pretend to be shocked by what I have said. You are not really shocked: for, with your superior mind, you cannot be either so dull or so conceited as to misunderstand my meaning. I say again, I will be your curate, if you like, but never your wife.’

Again he turned lividly pale; but, as before, controlled his passion perfectly. He answered emphatically but calmly –

‘A female curate, who is not my wife, would never suit me. With me, then, it seems, you cannot go: but if you are sincere in your offer, I will, while in town, speak to a married missionary, whose wife needs a coadjutor. Your own fortune will make you independent of the Society’s aid; and thus you may still be spared the dishonour of breaking your promise and deserting the band you engaged to join.’

Now I never had, as the reader knows, either given any formal promise or entered into any engagement; and this language was all much too hard and much too despotic for the occasion. I replied –

‘There is no dishonour, no breach of promise, no desertion in the case. I am not under the slightest obligation to go to India, especially with strangers. With you I would have ventured much, because I admire, confide in, and, as a sister, I love you; but I am convinced that, go when and with whom I would, I should not live long in that climate.’

‘Ah! you are afraid of yourself,’ he said, curling his lip.

‘I am. God did not give me my life to throw away; and to do as you wish me would, I begin to think, be almost equivalent to committing suicide. Moreover, before I definitively resolve on quitting England, I will know for certain whether I cannot be of greater use by remaining in it than by leaving it.’

‘What do you mean?’

‘It would be fruitless to attempt to explain; but there is a point on which I have long endured painful doubt, and I can go nowhere till by some means that doubt is removed.’

‘I know where your heart turns and to what it clings. The interest you cherish is lawless and unconsecrated. Long since you ought to have crushed it: now you should blush to allude to it. You think of Mr Rochester?’

It was true. I confessed it by silence.

* * *

Section A – Novels

3. Joseph Conrad: *Heart of Darkness*

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

1.

“They were dying slowly—it was very clear. They were not enemies, they were not criminals, they were nothing earthly now—nothing but black shadows of disease and starvation, lying confusedly in the greenish gloom. Brought from all the recesses of the coast in all the legality of time contracts, lost in uncongenial surroundings, fed on unfamiliar food, they sickened, became inefficient, and were then allowed to crawl away and rest. These moribund shapes were free as air—and nearly as thin. I began to distinguish the gleam of eyes under the trees. Then, glancing down, I saw a face near my hand. The black bones reclined at full length with one shoulder against the tree, and slowly the eyelids rose and the sunken eyes looked up at me, enormous and vacant, a kind of blind, white flicker in the depths of the orbs, which died out slowly. The man seemed young—almost a boy—but you know with them it’s hard to tell. I found nothing else to do but to offer him one of my good Swede’s ship’s biscuits I had in my pocket. The fingers closed slowly on it and held—there was no other movement and no other glance. He had tied a bit of white worsted round his neck—Why? Where did he get it? Was it a badge—an ornament—a charm—a propitiatory act? Was there any idea at all connected with it? It looked startling round his black neck, this bit of white thread from beyond the seas.

“Near the same tree two more, bundles of acute angles, sat with their legs drawn up. One, with his chin propped on his knees, stared at nothing, in an intolerable and appalling manner: his brother phantom rested its forehead, as if overcome with a great weariness; and all about others were scattered in every pose of contorted collapse, as in some picture of a massacre or a pestilence. While I stood horror-struck, one of these creatures rose to his hands and knees, and went off on all-fours towards the river to drink. He lapped out of his hand, then sat up in the sunlight, crossing his shins in front of him, and after a time let his woolly head fall on his breastbone.

“I didn’t want any more loitering in the shade, and I made haste towards the station. When near the buildings I met a white man, in such an unexpected elegance of get-up that in the first moment I took him for a sort of vision. I saw a high starched collar, white cuffs, a light alpaca jacket, snowy trousers, a clear silk necktie, and varnished boots. No hat. Hair parted, brushed, oiled, under a green-lined parasol held in a big white hand. He was amazing, and had a penholder behind his ear.

“I shook hands with this miracle, and I learned he was the Company’s chief accountant, and that all the book-keeping was done at this station. [...]

* * *

2.

“Try to be civil, Marlow,” growled a voice, and I knew there was at least one listener awake besides myself.

“I beg your pardon. I forgot the heartache which makes up the rest of the price. And indeed what does the price matter, if the trick be well done? You do your tricks very well. And I didn’t do badly either, since I managed not to sink that steamboat on my first trip. It’s a wonder to me yet. Imagine a blindfolded man set to drive a van over a bad road. I sweated and shivered over that business considerably, I can tell you. After all, for a seaman, to scrape the bottom of the thing that’s supposed to float all the time under his care is the unpardonable sin. No one may know of it, but you never forget the thump—eh? A blow on the very heart. You remember it, you dream of it, you wake up at night and think of it—years after—and go hot and cold all over. I don’t pretend to say that steamboat floated all the time. More than once she had to wade for a bit, with twenty cannibals splashing around and pushing. We had enlisted some of these chaps on the way for a crew. Fine fellows—cannibals—in their place. They were men one could work with, and I am grateful to them. And, after all, they did not eat each other before my face: they had brought along a provision of hippo-meat which went rotten, and made the mystery of the wilderness stink in my nostrils. Phoo! I can sniff it now. I had the manager on board and three or four pilgrims with their staves—all complete. Sometimes we came upon a station close by the bank, clinging to the skirts of the Unknown, and the white men rushing out of a tumble-down hovel, with great gestures of joy and surprise and welcome, seemed very strange—had the appearance of being held there captive by a spell. The word ‘ivory’ would ring in the air for a while—and on we went again into the silence, along empty reaches, round the still bends, between the high walls of our winding way, reverberating in hollow claps the ponderous beat of the sternwheel. Trees, trees, millions of trees, massive, immense, running up high; and at their foot, hugging the bank against the stream, crept the little begrimed steamboat, like a sluggish beetle crawling on the floor of a lofty portico. It made you feel very small, very lost, and yet it was not altogether depressing that feeling. After all, if you were small, the grimy beetle crawled on—which was just what you wanted it to do. Where the pilgrims imagined it crawled to I don’t know. To some place where they expected to get something, I bet! For me it crawled towards Kurtz—exclusively; but when the steam-pipes started leaking we crawled very slow. [...]

* * *

Section A – Novels

3. Joseph Conrad: *Heart of Darkness*

3.

“One evening coming in with a candle I was startled to hear him say a little tremulously, ‘I am lying here in the dark waiting for death.’ The light was within a foot of his eyes. I forced myself to murmur, ‘Oh, nonsense!’ and stood over him as if transfixed.

“Anything approaching the change that came over his features I have never seen before, and hope never to see again. Oh, I wasn’t touched. I was fascinated. It was as though a veil had been rent. I saw on that ivory face the expression of sombre pride, of ruthless power, of craven terror—of an intense and hopeless despair. Did he live his life again in every detail of desire, temptation, and surrender during that supreme moment of complete knowledge? He cried in a whisper at some image, at some vision—he cried out twice, a cry that was no more than a breath—

“‘The horror! The horror!’

“I blew the candle out and left the cabin. The pilgrims were dining in the mess-room, and I took my place opposite the manager, who lifted his eyes to give me a questioning glance, which I successfully ignored. He leaned back, serene, with that peculiar smile of his sealing the unexpressed depths of his meanness. A continuous shower of small flies streamed upon the lamp, upon the cloth, upon our hands and faces. Suddenly the manager’s boy put his insolent black head in the doorway, and said in a tone of scathing contempt—

“‘Mistah Kurtz—he dead.’

“All the pilgrims rushed out to see. I remained, and went on with my dinner. I believe I was considered brutally callous. However, I did not eat much. There was a lamp in there—light, don’t you know—and outside it was so beastly, beastly dark. I went no more near the remarkable man who had pronounced a judgment upon the adventures of his soul on this earth. The voice was gone. What else had been there? But I am of course aware that next day the pilgrims buried something in a muddy hole.

“And then they very nearly buried me. [...]

* * *

Section A – Novels

4. Miles Franklin: *My Brilliant Career*

Use one or more of the passages selected as the basis for a discussion of *My Brilliant Career*.

1.

Hard graft is a great leveller. Household drudgery, wood-cutting, milking, and gardening soon roughen the hands and dim the outside polish. When the body is wearied with much toil the desire to cultivate the mind, or the cultivation it has already received, is gradually wiped out. Thus it was with my parents. They had dropped from sweldom to peasantry. They were among and of the peasantry. None of their former acquaintances came within their circle now, for the iron ungodly hand of class distinction has settled surely down upon Australian society—Australia's democracy is only a tradition of the past.

I say naught against the lower life. The peasantry are the bulwarks of every nation. The life of a peasant is, to a peasant who is a peasant with a peasant's soul, when times are good and when seasons smile, a grand life. It is honest, clean, and wholesome. But the life of a peasant to me is purgatory. Those around me worked from morning till night and then enjoyed their well-earned sleep. They had but two states of existence—work and sleep.

There was a third part in me which cried out to be fed. I longed for the arts. Music was a passion with me. I borrowed every book in the neighbourhood and stole hours from rest to read them. This told upon me and made my physical burdens harder for me than for other children of my years around me. That third was the strongest part of me. In it I lived a dream-life with writers, artists, and musicians. Hope, sweet, cruel, delusive Hope, whispered in my ear that life was long with much by and by, and in that by and by my dream-life would be real. So on I went with that gleaming lake in the distance beckoning me to come and sail on its silver waters, and Inexperience, conceited, blind Inexperience, failing to show the impassable pit between it and me.

To return to the dairying.

Old and young alike we earned our scant livelihood by the heavy sweat of our brows. Still, we *did* gain an honest living. We were not ashamed to look day in the face, and fought our way against all odds with the stubborn independence of our British ancestors.

* * *

2.

I erected my parasol and held it so as to tease Harold. I put it down so that he could not see the horses. He quietly seized my wrist and held it out of his way for a time, and then loosing me said, "Now, behave."

I flouted it now, so that his ears and eyes were endangered, and he was forced to hold his hat on.

"I'll give you three minutes to behave, or I'll put you out," he said with mock severity.

"Shure it's me wot's behavin' beautiful," I replied, continuing my nonsense.

He pulled rein, seized me in one arm, and lifted me lightly to the ground.

"Now, you can walk till you promise to conduct yourself like a Christian!" he said, driving at a walk.

"If you wait till I promise anything, you'll wait till the end of the century. I'm quite capable of walking home."

"You'll soon get tired of walking in this heat, and your feet will be blistered in a mile with those bits of paper."

The bits of paper to which he alluded were a pair of thin-soled white canvas slippers—not at all fitted for walking the eight miles on the hard hot road ahead of me. I walked resolutely on, without deigning a glance at Harold, who had slowed down to a crawling walk.

"Aren't you ready to get up now?" he inquired presently.

I did not reply. At the end of a quarter of a mile he jumped out of the buggy, seized upon me, lifted me in, and laughed, saying, "You're a very slashing little concern, but you are not big enough to do much damage."

We were about half-way home when Barney gave a tremendous lurch, breaking a trace and some other straps. Mr Beecham was at the head of the plunging horse in a twinkling. The harness seemed to be scattered everywhere.

"I expect I had better walk on now," I remarked.

"Walk, be grannied! With two fat lazy horses to draw you?" returned Mr Beecham.

Men are clumsy, stupid creatures regarding little things, but in their right place they are wonderful animals. If a buggy was smashed to smithereens, from one of their many mysterious pockets they would produce a knife and some string, and put the wreck into working order in no time.

* * *

Section A – Novels

4. Miles Franklin: *My Brilliant Career*

3.

Every night unfailingly when at home M'Swat sat in the bosom of his family and speculated as to how much richer he was than his neighbours, what old Reece lived on, and who had the best breed of sheep and who was the smartest at counting these animals, until the sordidness of it turned me dizzy, and I would steal out under the stars to try and cool my heated spirit. This became a practice with me, and every night I would slip away out of hearing of the household to sing the songs I had heard at Caddagat, and in imagination to relive every day and hour there, till the thing became too much for me, and I was scarcely responsible for my actions. Often I knelt on the parched ground beneath the balmy summer sky to pray—wild passionate prayers that were never answered.

I was under the impression that my nightly ramble was not specially noticed by any one, but I was mistaken. Mr M'Swat, it appears, suspected me of having a lover, but was never able to catch me red-handed.

The possibility of a girl going out at night to gaze at the stars and dream was as improbable a thought for him as flying is to me, and having no soul above mud, had I attempted an explanation he would have considered me mad, and dangerous to have about the place.

Peter, junior, had a sweetheart, one Susie Duffy, who lived some miles on the other side of the Murrumbidgee. He was in the habit of courting her every Sunday and two or three nights during the week, and I often heard the clang of his stirrup-irons and the clink of hobble-chain when he returned late; but on one occasion I stayed out later than usual, and he passed me going home. I stood still and he did not see me, but his horse shied violently. I thought he would imagine I was a ghost, so called out:

"It is I."

"Well, I'll be hanged! What are ye doin' at this time ev'ning. Ain't yuz afraid of ghosts?"

"Oh dear no. I had a bad headache and couldn't sleep, so came out to try if a walk would cure it," I explained.

We were a quarter of a mile or so from the house, so Peter slackened his speed that I might keep pace with him. His knowledge of etiquette did not extend as far as dismounting. There is a great difference between rudeness and ignorance. Peter was not rude; he was merely ignorant. For the same reason he let his mother feed the pigs, clean his boots, and chop wood, while he sat down and smoked and spat. It was not that he was unmanly, as that this was the only manliness he had known.

* * *

Section A – Novels

5. Cormac McCarthy: *All the Pretty Horses*

Use one or more of the passages selected as the basis for a discussion of *All the Pretty Horses*.

1.

Where do you reckon that paradise is at ... I knowed you was a infidel, said Blevins.

Cormac McCarthy, *All the Pretty Horses*,
Pan Macmillan, 2010

pp. 61 and 62

Due to copyright restrictions, the VCAA is unable to reproduce the full passage when this examination is published on the VCAA website. Instead, the opening and closing words of the passage have been provided.

2.

When he took the mare back ... They sat for a long time.

Cormac McCarthy, *All the Pretty Horses*,
Pan Macmillan, 2010

pp. 121–123

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Section A – Novels

5. Cormac McCarthy: *All the Pretty Horses*

3.

I figured you might want your old horse back ... but after a while he was gone.

Cormac McCarthy, *All the Pretty Horses*,
Pan Macmillan, 2010

pp. 306 and 307

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Section A – Novels

6. Michael Ondaatje: *The Cat's Table*

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

1.

Like me, in order to be accepted into an English school ...
but I would never unlearn the whisper of Cassius.

Michael Ondaatje, *The Cat's Table*,
Jonathan Cape, 2011

pp. 43–45

Due to copyright restrictions, the VCAA is unable to reproduce the full passage when this examination is published on the VCAA website. Instead, the opening and closing words of the passage have been provided.

2.

Narayan and Gunepala, the cook ... before being called by
my aunt to do something or other.

Michael Ondaatje, *The Cat's Table*,
Jonathan Cape, 2011

pp. 59–61

Due to copyright restrictions, the VCAA is unable to reproduce the full passage when this examination is published on the VCAA website. Instead, the opening and closing words of the passage have been provided.

Section A – Novels

6. Michael Ondaatje: *The Cat's Table*

3.

We crept out of our corner ... as if about to jump off the ship
into the dark sea.

Michael Ondaatje, *The Cat's Table*,
Jonathan Cape, 2011
pp. 260 and 261

Due to copyright restrictions, the VCAA is unable to reproduce the full passage when this examination is published on the VCAA website. Instead, the opening and closing words of the passage have been provided.

Section A – Novels

7. Kim Scott: *That Deadman Dance*

Use one or more of the passages selected as the basis for a discussion of *That Deadman Dance*.

1.

Plunge your hands into that whale heart, lean into it and squeeze and let your voice join the whale's roar. Sing that song your father taught you as the whale dives, down, deep.

How dark it is beneath the sea, and looking through the whale's eyes you see bubbles slide past you like . . .

But there was none of that. Bobby was only imagining, only writing. Held in the sky on a rocky headland, Bobby drew chalk circles on slate, drew bubbles.

Bubelz.

Roze a wail.

He erased the marks with the heel of his hand. It wasn't true, it was just an old story, and he couldn't even remember the proper song. There was no whale. And this was no sunny day. Instead, the wind plucked at Bobby's small shelter of brushwood and canvas, and rain spat on the walls. In the headland's lee immediately below him the sea was smooth, but a little further from land—a few boat lengths, no more—it was scuffed and agitated, and scribbles of foam spilled in a pattern he was still learning. Rain made sharp silver thorns, and then there was no sea, no sky and the world had compressed itself into a diagonally grained grey space before him.

Bobby heard the heavy tread, and Kongk Chaine thrust himself into the little hut. Hardly space for the two of them beneath this roof, these three flimsy walls. Bobby smelled tobacco and rum; if Kongk breathes in deep, stands up straight, this shelter'll explode. Chaine steamed with rain and body heat and ruddy health; water cascaded over the brim of his hat and gushed from his bristling beard.

You need a fire here, Bobby.

He looked out across the angry ocean as it reappeared, and at the rain racing away.

Nothing, huh?

They sat, each in the smell of the other, and despite the warmth of the body beside him, Bobby felt the cold seeping into his bones. His fingers were chalk, but with loose and wrinkled skin. He drew on the wet slate with his finger.

Fine we kild a wail.

Chaine barked. Laughed. Bobby felt the man's arm around his back, the tough and calloused paw squeezing him.

I hope to kill myself a whale, my boy. More than one, come to that. More than one. But right now I wish for sunlight and a clear sky.

Bobby grinned and nodded. Dr Cross might be gone, but Georgie Chaine lived on, another new old man.

* * *

2.

On one such stuffy evening, the two men went out under the night sky—not far, because Wunyeran liked to keep fires or light close at hand—and Cross tried to follow Wunyeran's words of what was in the glittering sky: the origins of different stars, the stories of dark spaces between, the way the sky and its slowly shifting constellations signalled that rain was due, whales would be appearing, emus nesting inland . . . He told sky stories of how things became the truths they are.

The two men sat either side of the hut's doorway, the candles inside flickering, and the dark shapes massed around them—huts, a heap of wood, tents, shrubs, trees—contrasted with the sky, which lowered a net of stars to enmesh and welcome them.

You people in England, they die?

The question came after a silence between them and Cross had hardly replied that yes, they did, when Wunyeran, the timbre of his voice eloquent with melancholy, continued that his own people were dying in great numbers. He coughed and wheezed, mimicking common symptoms. Mimicking, but he knew the symptoms too well. He scratched himself.

And what then? Cross tried to ask. What of a heaven and hell? Angels? A God?

Doctor-Sunday-book-paper?

Wunyeran had politely sat through several church services and now, broken English interspersed with his own language and again with song, he expressed something of his elder brothers the kangaroos, and that trees or whales or fish might also be family. Or so Cross understood. The sun was their mother . . . Cross's face showed he did not understand.

Doctor-Sunday-book-service, Wunyeran said, smiling at the clumsiness of his own language. It was a new language of sorts they were developing. Wunyeran people *dwongkabet*.

Ah, Cross understood. Wunyeran's people were deaf to the church; they did not understand.

Now Wunyeran talk, Dr *dwongkabet*.

Cross nodded, nodded again, and was suddenly speaking passionately, as if he was a young man again and wanting Wunyeran to know his heart, the weave of his inner galaxy, his Christian beliefs. Wunyeran understood something of how individuals died and went to a place in the sky, but when Dr Cross tried to speak of heaven, and chains-of-being, and of a place of constant suffering within the earth where a big spirit-man sent bad people . . . Wunyeran laid his hand gently on Cross's shoulder.

You in the wrong port now, Doctor.

* * *

Section A – Novels

7. Kim Scott: *That Deadman Dance*

3.

Bobby Wabalanginy had been a friend. Fancy, a native as best friend! How isolated they were in this backwater. She had been a child, innocent.

That childhood friend was in prison now, Papa said. He'd even been to see him. Bobby had got into some sort of trouble at the Sailor's Rest, which was really no surprise to Christine, who always took to the other side of the street when she passed the tavern, because of the mess, and because of the people. People affected by liquor were unpleasant, but it was the natives that most bothered her: men and women alike dressed in rags, and sometimes scarcely dressed at all. The women were quite shameless, she thought.

Laws were being enforced now, thankfully. Natives must be clothed and without spears if they were to enter town. It was only decent, and if we are to civilise them, as Papa said is the only way, then clothing is an important precursor.

Papa believed Bobby had got into trouble because the policeman and his native constable had tried to prevent the old man with Bobby from entering town. The old man claimed it was his right, that it was his town! Papa laughed recounting it, said it was true in a way. And it was also true, as Bobby apparently claimed (shouted, she'd been told, and slapped the policeman), that the old man had received a ration of flour from previous authorities, and had even been dressed, accommodated and fed at government expense. Why? Because he was the landlord.

It might even be true, in a way, but to what use do they put this ownership as against what we have achieved in so short a time? Papa could sometimes explain things so well. It may have been expedient at one time, but was no longer necessary.

* * *

Section A – Novels

8. Christina Stead: *The Man Who Loved Children*

Use one or more of the passages selected as the basis for a discussion of *The Man Who Loved Children*.

1.

Sam tried to impart everything he knew to the children and grumbled that the *mother* taught nothing at all: yet their influence on the boys and girls was equal. The children grabbed tricks and ideas according to the need of the day, without thinking at all of where they got them, without gratitude; and Henny saw this and so did not bother her head about her children. She herself belonged to a grabbing breed. Henny would also tell fortunes, by the cards, over her tea, though never for the children. While she was dealing to tell the fortune of Aunt Bonnie (Sam's twenty-five-year-old sister and their unpaid maid of all work), or Miss Spearing (Henny's old-maid friend from schooldays), she would always begin a wonderful yarn about how she went to town, "more dead than alive and with only ten cents in my purse and I wanted to crack a safe," and how, in the streetcar, was "a dirty shrimp of a man with a fishy expression who purposely leaned over me and pressed my bust, and a common vulgar woman beside him, an ogress, big as a hippopotamus, with her bottom sticking out, who grinned like a shark and tried to give him the eye," and how this wonderful adventure went on for hours, always with new characters of new horror. In it would invariably be a woman with a cowlike expression, a girl looking frightened as a rabbit, a yellow-haired frump with hair like a haystack in a fit, some woman who bored Henny with her silly gassing, and impudent flighty young girls behind counters, and waitresses smelling like a tannery (or a fish market), who gave her lip, which caused her to "go to market and give them more than they bargained for." There were men and women, old acquaintances of hers, or friends of Sam who presumed to know her, to whom she would give the go-by, or the cold shoulder, or a distant bow, or a polite good day, or a black look, or a look black as thunder, and there were silly old roosters, creatures like a dying duck in a thunderstorm, filthy old pawers, and YMCA sick chickens, and women thin as a rail and men fat as a pork barrel, and women with blouses so puffed out that she wanted to stick pins in, and men like coalheavers, and women like boiled owls and women who had fallen into a flour barrel; and all these wonderful creatures, who swarmed in the streets, stores, and restaurants of Washington, ogling, leering, pulling, pushing, stinking, overscented, screaming and boasting, turning pale at a black look from Henny, ducking and diving, dodging and returning, were the only creatures that Henny ever saw.

What a dreary stodgy world of adults the children saw when they went out! And what a moral, high-minded world their father saw! But for Henny there was a wonderful particular world, and when they went with her they saw it: they saw the fish eyes, the crocodile grins, the hair like a birch broom, the mean men crawling with maggots, and the children restless as an eel, that she saw.

* * *

2.

All the Pollits lined up behind the old man in order of age, the children last in a long skeletal tail; and after stamping thunderously, they began to sway and weave out the long south window, singing at the top of their voices, "Oh sound a blast for freedom, boys, and send it far and wide!" They circled the animal cages and the rock garden and, circumnavigating the house, came in again by the front door, the old chief entering the long dining room where the banquet was spread, just as they came to the chorus of the second verse: "Hurrah, Hurrah, we bring the Jubilee!" roared the Pollits, and the rafters rang. Sam and the old man were weeping tears of emotion, and there were other damp eyes in the crowd. Then there was a great rumbling of chairs and scurrying of women, all wedging and hedging in, fitting of elbows and knees, groans and giggles until the great tribe was set to table. They had fitted into the table the two dust-stained, extra leaves from the attic, and yet it was hardly big enough. At one end of the table stood a broad-bottomed armchair empty. Old Charles, after one glance at it, wriggled out of his seat again (he was at the other end, next to Sam), saying, "Wait and see, wait and see: the Old Gaffer's going to get our Henny." Sam's head and lower lip drooped at this, but the others urged him on, saying with honest enthusiasm, "Yes, beg her to come, Father," and explaining to each other, "You see, poor thing, she's miserable in her condition," and "She hates to be seen—it's very natural: I don't blame poor Pet," and so on. There was indeed no malice in all Pollitry, for Henny. From time to time, one or other of them was inspired by the awful idol they worshiped, their Bounding Health, to go On the Warpath against one of their own; and when On the Warpath, a Pollit was a strange, frightful being, a being of brawn and no human understanding, armed with a moral club; but they had no malice against them who hated them; they loved and pitied the intractable, malicious Henny.

After a little while, they heard Old Charlie's voice on the stairs descending slowly and in a moment he appeared, gallantly bending and bringing in Henny by the hand. Henny had waited to fix a bit of lace round her throat with a pearl brooch and to brush up her hair, so that as she came in swaying slowly on her hips under her new rosepink flowered smock, with a touch of rouge on her cheeks, she looked impressive. Her eyes were set into her skull and her face drawn, but her reluctance and pride gave her a matronly dignity.

* * *

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THIS QUESTION IS CONTINUED ON PAGE 19

Section A – Novels

8. Christina Stead: *The Man Who Loved Children*

3.

Sam said, “Sit down, Looloo: blow me down, if I know what’s the matter with you. Instead of getting better, you are getting more and more silly.” He suddenly burst into a shout, “If Euripides or any other Dago playwright makes you as crazy as that, you’d better shut up your books and come home and look after your brothers and sister. I can’t understand it with a father like you have. I’m sorry I didn’t insist on your learning science, and nothing but science. Whatever your stepmother’s influence, you’ve had my training and love from the earliest days, and I did not expect you above all to be so silly: you were the child of a great love. However, I suppose you’ll grow out of it.” He sighed, “At least, I hope so: you’re growing out of everything else. Well, let’s say, some day you’ll be better.”

Louie began to squirm, and, unconsciously holding out one of her hands to him, she cried, “I am so miserable and poor and rotten and so vile and melodramatic, I don’t know what to do. I don’t know what to do. I can’t bear the daily misery. I can’t bear the horror of everyday life.” She was bawling brokenly on the tablecloth, her shoulders heaving and her long hair, broken loose, plastered over her red face, “No wonder they all laugh at me,” she bellowed. “When I walk along the street, everyone looks at me, and whispers about me, because I’m so messy. My elbows are out and I have no shoes and I’m so big and fat and it’ll always be the same. I can’t help it, I can’t help it,” and, still bellowing “I can’t help it” with the manner and tone of a half-grown calf, Louie got up and staggered to her room. She stood at the door, halfway open, and beat on it with her soft half-open fists, crying brokenly, “I can’t help it!” and weeping endlessly.

Sam said gravely, “Stop working yourself up into hysteria.”

“They all laugh at me,” cried Louie. “They all laugh at me: I can’t stand it any more.”

Unexpectedly, Ernie burst out crying, his brown, merry, escutcheon-shaped face bobbing up and down and his wide mouth gone into an oblong. Louie turned round towards them and advanced towards them, her eyes drowned with tears, her hair straying everywhere and darkened with water and her face slobbered over and, coming to the table, as to a jury, she asked in a firmer voice, but still crying, “What will become of me? Will life go on like this? Will I always be like this?” She appealed to Sam, “I have always been like this: I can’t live and go on being like this?”

Sam testily cried, “Like what? Like what? What is all this about? I never heard so much idiotic drivel in my born days. Go and put your fat head under the shower. Is it because Miss Aiden is coming that you’re making this—excruciating—stupid, oh, I can’t find words to describe it. How can you be so stupid?”

* * *

Section A – Novels

9. Giuseppe Tomasi di Lampedusa: *The Leopard*

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

1.

The Prince had one of his visions ... Tancredi would go a long way: he'd always thought so.

Giuseppe Tomasi di Lampedusa, *The Leopard*,
Vintage, 2007

pp. 19 and 20

Due to copyright restrictions, the VCAA is unable to reproduce the full passage when this examination is published on the VCAA website. Instead, the opening and closing words of the passage have been provided.

2.

Yes, Don Fabrizio had certainly had his worries ... "And what news of the Prince?"

Giuseppe Tomasi di Lampedusa, *The Leopard*,
Vintage, 2007

pp. 68–70

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Section A – Novels

9. Giuseppe Tomasi di Lampedusa: *The Leopard*

3.

From this he went on to think ... Leave the chairs alone and come and dance.”

Giuseppe Tomasi di Lampedusa, *The Leopard*,
Vintage, 2007

pp. 174 and 175

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Section B – Plays

10. Aeschylus: *Agamemnon*

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

1.

CHORUS:

[...] Zeus has led us on to know,
the Helmsman lays it down as law
that we must suffer, suffer into truth.

We cannot sleep, and drop by drop at the heart
the pain of pain remembered comes again,
and we resist, but ripeness comes as well.

From the gods enthroned on the awesome rowing-bench
there comes a violent love.

So it was that day the king,
the steersman at the helm of Greece,
would never blame a word the prophet said –
swept away by the wrenching winds of fortune
he conspired! Weatherbound we could not sail,
our stores exhausted, fighting strength hard-pressed,
and the squadrons rode in the shallows off Chalkis
where the riptide crashes, drags,

and winds from the north pinned down our hulls at Aulis,
port of anguish . . . head winds starving,
sheets and the cables snapped
and the men's minds strayed,
the pride, the bloom of Greece
was raked as time ground on,
ground down, and then the cure for the storm
and it was harsher – Calchas cried,
'My captains, Artemis must have blood!' –
so harsh the sons of Atreus
dashed their sceptres on the rocks,
could not hold back the tears,

and I still can hear the older warlord saying,
'Obey, obey, or a heavy doom will crush me!' –
Oh but doom *will* crush me
once I rend my child,
the glory of my house –
a father's hands are stained,
blood of a young girl streaks the altar.
Pain both ways and what is worse?
Desert the fleets, fail the alliance?
No, but stop the winds with a virgin's blood,
feed their lust, their fury? – feed their fury! –
Law is law! –
Let all go well.'

And once he slipped his neck in the strap of Fate,
his spirit veering black, impure, unholy,
once he turned he stopped at nothing,
seized with the frenzy
blinding driving to outrage –
wretched frenzy, cause of all our grief!
Yes, he had the heart
to sacrifice his daughter,
to bless the war that avenged a woman's loss,
a bridal rite that sped the men-of-war.

* * *

2.

CLYTAEMNESTRA:

O give way! The power is yours if you surrender,
all of your own free will, to me!

AGAMEMNON:

Enough.

If you are so determined –

*Turning to the women, pointing
to his boots.*

Let someone help me off with these at least.
Old slaves, they've stood me well.

Hurry,

and while I tread his splendours dyed red in the sea,
may no god watch and strike me down with envy
from on high. I feel such shame –
to tread the life of the house, a kingdom's worth
of silver in the weaving.

*He steps down from the chariot
to the tapestries and reveals
CASSANDRA, dressed in the
sacred regalia, the fillets, robes,
and sceptre of Apollo.*

Done is done.

Escort this stranger in, be gentle.
Conquer with compassion. Then the gods
shine down upon you, gently. No one chooses
the yoke of slavery, not of one's free will –
and she least of all. The gift of the armies,
flower and pride of all the wealth we won,
she follows me from Troy.

And now,

since you have brought me down with your insistence,
just this once I enter my father's house,
trampling royal crimson as I go.

He takes his first steps and pauses.

CLYTAEMNESTRA:

There is the sea

and who will drain it dry? Precious as silver,
inexhaustible, ever-new, it breeds the more we reap it –
tides on tides of crimson dye our robes blood-red.
Our lives are based on wealth, my king,
the gods have seen to that.
Destitution, our house has never heard the word.
I would have sworn to tread on legacies of robes,
at one command from an oracle, deplete the house –
suffer the worst to bring that dear life back!

Encouraged, AGAMEMNON strides to the entrance.

* * *

Section B – Plays

10. Aeschylus: *Agamemnon*

3.

CLYTAEMNESTRA:

No more, my dearest,
no more grief. We have too much to reap
right here, our mighty harvest of despair.
Our lives are based on pain. No bloodshed now.

Fathers of Argos, turn for home before you act
and suffer for it. What we did was destiny.
If we could end the suffering, how we would rejoice.
The spirit's brutal hoof has struck our heart.
And that is what a woman has to say.
Can you accept the truth?

CLYTAEMNESTRA *turns to leave.*

AEGISTHUS:

But these . . . mouths
that bloom in filth – spitting insults in my teeth.
You tempt your fates, you insubordinate dogs –
to hurl abuse at me, your master!

LEADER:

No Greek
worth his salt would grovel at your feet.

AEGISTHUS:

I – I'll stalk you all your days!

LEADER:

Not if the spirit brings Orestes home.

AEGISTHUS:

Exiles feed on hope – well I know.

LEADER:

More,
gorge yourself to bursting – soil justice, while you can.

AEGISTHUS:

I promise you, you'll pay, old fools – in good time, too!

LEADER:

Strut on your own dunghill, you cock beside your mate.

CLYTAEMNESTRA:

Let them howl – they're impotent. You and I have power now.
We will set the house in order once for all.

*They enter the palace; the great
doors close behind them; the old
men disband and wander off.*

* * *

Section B – Plays

11. Edward Albee: *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?*

Use one or more of the passages selected as the basis for a discussion of *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?*.

1.

MARTHA [*to NICK, as HONEY beams*]: Hey, you must be quite a boy, getting your Masters when you were . . . what? . . . twelve? You hear that, George?

[...]

GEORGE: ... but I will not light your cigarette. And that, as they say, is that.

Edward Albee, *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?*,
Vintage, 2001
pp. 25 and 27

Due to copyright restrictions, the VCAA is unable to reproduce the full passage when this examination is published on the VCAA website. Instead, the opening and closing words of the passage have been provided.

2.

MARTHA [*consciously making rhymed speech*]:
Well, Georgie-boy had lots of big ambitions

[...]

GEORGE: ... THE GAME IS OVER!

Edward Albee, *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?*,
Vintage, 2001
pp. 70 and 71

Due to copyright restrictions, the VCAA is unable to reproduce the full passage when this examination is published on the VCAA website. Instead, the opening and closing words of the passage have been provided.

Section B – Plays

11. Edward Albee: *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?*

3.

MARTHA: [...] There is only one man in my life who has ever
... made me happy.

[...]

MARTHA: ... but you don't see what goes on, do you?

Edward Albee, *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?*,
Vintage, 2001

pp. 101 and 102

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Section B – Plays

12. Henrik Ibsen: *A Doll's House*

Use one or more of the passages selected as the basis for a discussion of *A Doll's House*.

1.

HELMER [*from his study*]: Is that my little skylark twittering out there?

NORA [*busy opening the parcels*]: It is.

HELMER: Scampering about like a little squirrel?

NORA: Yes.

HELMER: When did the squirrel get home?

NORA: Just this minute. [*She slips the bag of macaroons in her pocket and wipes her mouth.*] Come in here, Torvald, and you can see what I've bought.

HELMER: I'm busy! [*A moment later he opens the door and looks out, pen in hand.*] Did you say 'bought'? What, all that? Has my little featherbrain been out wasting money again?

NORA: But, Torvald, surely this year we can let ourselves go just a little bit? It's the first Christmas that we haven't had to economize.

HELMER: Still, we mustn't waste money, you know.

NORA: Oh, Torvald, surely we can waste a little now – just the teeniest bit? Now that you're going to earn a big salary, you'll have lots and lots of money.

HELMER: After New Year's Day, yes – but there'll be a whole quarter before I get paid.

NORA: Pooh, we can always borrow till then.

HELMER: Nora! [*He goes to her and takes her playfully by the ear.*] The same little scatterbrain. Just suppose I borrowed a thousand kroner today and you went and spent it all by Christmas, and then on New Year's Eve a tile fell on my head, and there I lay –

NORA [*putting a hand over his mouth*]: Sh! Don't say such horrid things!

HELMER: But suppose something of the sort were to happen. . . .

NORA: If anything as horrid as that were to happen, I don't expect I should care whether I owed money or not.

HELMER: But what about the people I'd borrowed from?

NORA: Them? Who bothers about them? They're just strangers.

HELMER: Nora, Nora! Just like a woman! But seriously, Nora, you know what I think about that sort of thing. No debts, no borrowing. There's something constrained, something ugly even, about a home that's founded on borrowing and debt. You and I have managed to keep clear up till now, and we shall still do so for the little time that is left.

NORA [*going over to the stove*]: Very well, Torvald, if you say so.

HELMER [*following her*]: Now, now, my little song-bird mustn't be so crestfallen. Well? Is the squirrel sulking? [*Taking out his wallet*] Nora . . . guess what I have here!

NORA [*turning quickly*]: Money!

HELMER: There! [*He hands her some notes.*] Good heavens, I know what a lot has to go on housekeeping at Christmas time.

NORA [*counting*]: Ten – twenty – thirty – forty! Oh, thank you, Torvald, thank you! This'll keep me going for a long time!

HELMER: Well, you must see that it does.

* * *

2.

NORA [*after a moment's pause, throwing her head back and looking defiantly at him*]: No, it was not. I wrote Papa's name.

KROGSTAD: Look, Mrs Helmer, you know that that's a very dangerous admission?

NORA: Why? You'll soon get your money.

KROGSTAD: May I ask you something? Why didn't you send the paper to your father?

NORA: I couldn't; he was far too ill. If I'd asked him for his signature, I should have had to tell him what the money was for – and when he was so ill himself, I couldn't tell him that my husband's life was in danger – I couldn't possibly.

KROGSTAD: Then it would have been better for you if you'd given up your trip abroad.

NORA: I couldn't do that. The journey was to save my husband's life – how could I give it up?

KROGSTAD: But didn't it occur to you that you were tricking me?

NORA: I couldn't worry about that – I wasn't thinking about you at all. I couldn't bear the way you were so cold-blooded – the way you made difficulties although you knew how desperately ill my husband was.

KROGSTAD: Mrs Helmer, you obviously don't realize what you've been guilty of; but let me tell you that the thing that I once did that ruined my reputation was nothing more – and nothing worse – than that.

NORA: You? Are you trying to tell me that you would have done a brave deed to save your wife's life?

KROGSTAD: The law is not concerned with motives.

NORA: Then it must be a very stupid law.

KROGSTAD: Stupid or not, it's the law that you'll be judged by if I produce this paper in court.

NORA: I simply don't believe that. Hasn't a daughter the right to protect her dying father from worry and anxiety? Hasn't a wife the right to save her husband's life? I don't know much about the law, but I'm quite certain that it must say somewhere that things like that are allowed. Don't you, a lawyer, know that? You must be a very stupid lawyer, Mr Krogstad.

KROGSTAD: Possibly. But you'll admit that I do understand business – the sort of business that you and I have been engaged in? Very well, you do as you please. But I tell you this – if I'm to be flung out for the second time, you'll keep me company! [*He bows and goes out through the hall.*]

NORA [*after a moment's thought, with a toss of her head*]: What nonsense! Trying to frighten me like that! I'm not as silly as all that. [*She starts to busy herself by tidying the children's clothes, but soon stops.*] But . . . No, it isn't possible . . . I did it for love!

* * *

Section B – Plays

12. Henrik Ibsen: *A Doll's House*

3.

NORA: When that was done, I thought – I was completely certain – that you would come forward and take all the blame – that you'd say 'I'm the guilty one.'

HELMER: Nora!

NORA: You think that I should never have accepted a sacrifice like that from you? No, of course I shouldn't. But who would have taken my word against yours? That was the miracle I hoped for . . . and dreaded. It was to prevent *that* that I was ready to kill myself.

HELMER: Nora, I'd gladly work night and day for you, and endure poverty and sorrow for your sake. But no man would sacrifice his *honour* for the one he loves.

NORA: Thousands of women have.

HELMER: Oh, you're talking and thinking like a stupid child.

NORA: Perhaps . . . But you don't talk or think like the man I could bind myself to. When your first panic was over – not about what threatened me, but about what might happen to *you* – and when there was no more danger, then, as far as you were concerned, it was just as if nothing had happened at all. I was simply your little songbird, your doll, and from now on you would handle it more gently than ever because it was so delicate and fragile. [*Rising*] At that moment, Torvald, I realized that for eight years I'd been living here with a strange man, and that I'd borne him three children. Oh, I can't bear to think of it – I could tear myself to little pieces!

HELMER [*sadly*]: Yes. I see – I see. There truly is a gulf between us. . . . Oh, but Nora, couldn't we somehow bridge it?

NORA: As I am now, I'm not the wife for you.

HELMER: I could change . . .

NORA: Perhaps – if your doll is taken away from you.

HELMER: But to lose you – to lose you, Nora! No, no, I can't even imagine it . . .

NORA [*going out to the right*]: That's just why it *must* happen. [*She returns with her outdoor clothes, and a little bag which she puts on a chair by the table.*]

HELMER: Nora! Not now, Nora – wait till morning.

NORA [*putting on her coat*]: I couldn't spend the night in a strange man's house.

HELMER: But couldn't we live here as brother and sister?

NORA [*putting her hat on*]: You know quite well that that wouldn't last. [*She pulls her shawl round her.*] Good-bye, Torvald. I won't see my children – I'm sure they're in better hands than mine. As I am now, I'm no good to them.

HELMER: But some day, Nora – some day . . . ?

NORA: How can I say it? I've no idea what will become of me.

HELMER: But you're my wife – now, and whatever becomes of you.

NORA: Listen, Torvald: I've heard that when a wife leaves her husband's house as I am doing now, he's legally freed from all his obligations to her. Anyhow, *I* set you free from them. You're not to feel yourself bound in any way, and nor shall I. We must both be perfectly free. Look, here's your ring back – give me mine.

HELMER: Even that?

NORA: Even that.

* * *

Section B – Plays

13. Eugène Ionesco: *Rhinoceros*

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

1.

JEAN [*interrupting him*]: I can't bear people to try and make fun of me!

BERENGER [*hand on his heart*]: But my dear Jean, I'd never allow myself to ...

JEAN [*interrupting him*]: My dear Berenger, you are allowing yourself ...

BERENGER: Oh no, never. I'd never allow myself to.

JEAN: Yes, you would; you've just done so.

BERENGER: But how could you possibly think ...

JEAN [*interrupting him*]: I think what is true!

BERENGER: But I assure you ...

JEAN [*interrupting him*]: ... that you were making fun of me!

BERENGER: You really can be obstinate, sometimes.

JEAN: And now you're calling me a mule into the bargain. Even you must see how insulting you're being.

BERENGER: It would never have entered my mind.

JEAN: You have no mind!

BERENGER: All the more reason why it would never enter it.

JEAN: There are certain things which enter the minds even of people without one.

BERENGER: That's impossible.

JEAN: And why, pray, is it impossible?

BERENGER: Because it's impossible.

JEAN: Then kindly explain to me why it's impossible, as you seem to imagine you can explain everything.

BERENGER: I don't imagine anything of the kind.

JEAN: Then why do you act as if you do? And, I repeat, why are you being so insulting to me?

BERENGER: I'm not insulting you. Far from it. You know what tremendous respect I have for you.

JEAN: In that case, why do you contradict me, making out that it's not dangerous to let a rhinoceros go racing about in the middle of the town – particularly on a Sunday morning when the streets are full of children ... and adults, too ...

BERENGER: A lot of them are in church. They don't run any risk ...

JEAN [*interrupting him*]: If you will allow me to finish ... and at market time, too.

BERENGER: I never said it wasn't dangerous to let a rhinoceros go racing about the town. I simply said I'd personally never considered the danger. It had never crossed my mind.

JEAN: You never consider anything.

BERENGER: All right, I agree. A rhinoceros roaming about is not a good thing.

JEAN: It shouldn't be allowed.

BERENGER: I agree. It shouldn't be allowed. It's a ridiculous thing all right! But it's no reason for you and me to quarrel. Why go on at me just because some wretched perissodactyle happens to pass by. A stupid quadruped not worth talking about. And ferocious into the bargain. And which has already disappeared, which doesn't exist any longer. We're not going to bother about some animal that doesn't exist. Let's talk about something else, Jean, please; [*He yawns.*] there are plenty of other subjects for conversation. [*He takes his glass.*] To you!

* * *

2.

BOTARD: I never believe journalists. They're all liars. I don't need them to tell me what to think; I believe what I see with my own eyes. Speaking as a former teacher, I like things to be precise, scientifically valid; I've got a methodical mind.

DUDARD: What's a methodical mind got to do with it?

DAISY [*to Botard*]: I think it's stated very precisely, Mr Botard.

BOTARD: You call that precise? And what, pray, does it mean by a pachyderm? What does the editor of a dead cats column understand by a pachyderm? He doesn't say. And what does he mean by a cat?

DUDARD: Everybody knows what a cat is.

BOTARD: Does it concern a male cat or a female? What breed was it? And what colour? The colour bar is something I feel strongly about. I hate it.

PAPILLON: What has the colour bar to do with it, Mr Botard?

It's quite beside the point.

BOTARD: Please forgive me, Mr Papillon. But you can't deny that the colour problem is one of the great stumbling blocks of our time.

DUDARD: I know that, we all know that, but it has nothing to do with ...

BOTARD: It's not an issue to be dismissed lightly, Mr Dudard. The course of history has shown that racial prejudice ...

DUDARD: I tell you it doesn't enter into it.

BOTARD: I'm not so sure.

PAPILLON: The colour bar is not the issue at stake.

BOTARD: One should never miss an occasion to denounce it.

DAISY: But we told you that none of us is in favour of the colour bar. You're obscuring the issue; it's simply a question of a cat being run over by a pachyderm – in this case, a rhinoceros.

BOTARD: I'm a Northerner myself. Southerners have got too much imagination. Perhaps it was merely a flea run over by a mouse. People make mountains out of molehills.

PAPILLON [*to Dudard*]: Let us try and get things clear. Did you yourself, with your own eyes, see a rhinoceros strolling through the streets of the town?

DAISY: It didn't stroll, it ran.

DUDARD: No, I didn't see it personally. But a lot of very reliable people ...!

BOTARD [*interrupting him*]: It's obvious they were just making it up. You put too much trust in these journalists; they don't care what they invent to sell their wretched newspapers and please the bosses they serve! And you mean to tell me they've taken you in – you, a qualified man of law! Forgive me for laughing! Ha! Ha! Ha!

DAISY: But I saw it, I saw the rhinoceros. I'd take my oath on it.

BOTARD: Get away with you! And I thought you were a sensible girl!

DAISY: Mr Botard, I can see straight! And I wasn't the only one; there were plenty of other people watching.

* * *

Eugène Ionesco, 'Rhinoceros', translated by Derek Prouse, in *Rhinoceros, The Chairs, The Lessons*, Penguin Modern Classics, 2000; *Rhinocéros* © Editions Gallimard, Paris, 1959

Section B – Plays

13. Eugène Ionesco: *Rhinoceros*

3.

BERENGER: [...] And what if it's true what Daisy said, and they're the ones in the right? [*He turns back to the mirror.*] A man's not ugly to look at, not ugly at all! [*He examines himself, passing his hand over his face.*] What a funny-looking thing! What do I look like? What? [*He darts to a cupboard, takes out some photographs which he examines.*] Photographs? Who are all these people? Is it Mr Papillon – or is it Daisy? And is that Botard or Dudard or Jean? Or is it me? [*He rushes to the cupboard again and takes out two or three pictures.*] Now I recognize me: that's me, that's me! [*He hangs the pictures on the back wall, beside the rhinoceros heads.*] That's me, that's me!

[*When he hangs the pictures one sees that they are of an old man, a huge woman, and another man. The ugliness of these pictures is in contrast to the rhinoceros heads which have become very beautiful. BERENGER steps back to contemplate the pictures.*]

I'm not good-looking, I'm not good-looking. [*He takes down the pictures, throws them furiously to the ground, and goes over to the mirror.*] They're the good-looking ones. I was wrong! Oh, how I wish I was like them! I haven't got any horns, more's the pity! A smooth brow looks so ugly. I need one or two horns to give my sagging face a lift. Perhaps one will grow and I needn't be ashamed any more – then I could go and join them. But it will never grow! [*He looks at the palms of his hands.*] My hands are so limp – oh, why won't they get rough! [*He takes his coat off, undoes his shirt to look at his chest in the mirror.*] My skin is so slack. I can't stand this white, hairy body. Oh I'd love to have a hard skin in that wonderful dull green colour – a skin that looks decent naked without any hair on it, like theirs! [*He listens to the trumpeting.*] Their song is charming – a bit raucous perhaps, but it does have charm! I wish I could do it! [*He tries to imitate them.*] Ahh, Ahh, Brr! No, that's not it! Try again, louder! Ahh, Ahh, Brr! No, that's not it, it's too feeble, it's got no drive behind it. I'm not trumpeting at all; I'm just howling. Ahh, Ahh, Brr. There's a big difference between howling and trumpeting. I've only myself to blame; I should have gone with them while there was still time. Now it's too late! Now I'm a monster, just a monster. Now I'll never become a rhinoceros, never, never! I'm gone past changing. I want to, I really do, but I can't, I just can't. I can't stand the sight of me. I'm too ashamed! [*He turns his back on the mirror.*] I'm so ugly! People who try to hang on to their individuality always come to a bad end!

* * *

Section B – Plays

14. William Shakespeare: *Antony and Cleopatra*

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

1.

CHARMIAN [...]

Enter ANTONY

But here comes Antony.

CLEOPATRA I am sick and sullen.

ANTONY I am sorry to give breathing to my purpose –

CLEOPATRA Help me away, dear Charmian, I shall fall.

It cannot be thus long; the sides of nature

Will not sustain it.

ANTONY Now, my dearest queen –

CLEOPATRA Pray you, stand farther from me.

ANTONY What's the matter?

CLEOPATRA I know by that same eye there's some good news.

What, says the married woman you may go?

Would she had never given you leave to come!

Let her not say 'tis I that keep you here.

I have no power upon you; hers you are.

ANTONY The gods best know –

CLEOPATRA O, never was there queen

So mightily betrayed! Yet at the first

I saw the treasons planted.

ANTONY Cleopatra –

CLEOPATRA Why should I think you can be mine, and true,

Though you in swearing shake the thronèd gods,

Who have been false to Fulvia? Riotous madness,

To be entangled with those mouth-made vows,

Which break themselves in swearing!

ANTONY Most sweet queen –

CLEOPATRA Nay, pray you, seek no colour for your going,

But bid farewell and go. When you sued staying,

Then was the time for words. No going then.

Eternity was in our lips and eyes,

Bliss in our brows' bent; none our parts so poor

But was a race of heaven. They are so still,

Or thou, the greatest soldier of the world,

Art turned the greatest liar.

ANTONY How now, lady?

CLEOPATRA I would I had thy inches. Thou shouldst know

There were a heart in Egypt.

ANTONY Hear me, queen:

The strong necessity of time commands

Our services awhile, but my full heart

Remains in use with you. Our Italy

Shines o'er with civil swords; Sextus Pompeius

Makes his approaches to the port of Rome;

Equality of two domestic powers

Breed scrupulous faction; the hated, grown to strength,

Are newly grown to love; the condemned Pompey,

Rich in his father's honour, creeps apace

Into the hearts of such as have not thrived

Upon the present state, whose numbers threaten;

And quietness, grown sick of rest, would purge

By any desperate change. My more particular,

And that which most with you should safe my going,

Is Fulvia's death.

* * *

2.

ANTONY I have fled myself, and have instructed cowards

To run and show their shoulders. Friends, begone.

I have myself resolved upon a course

Which has no need of you. Begone.

My treasure's in the harbour. Take it. O,

I followed that I blush to look upon!

My very hairs do mutiny, for the white

Reprove the brown for rashness, and they them

For fear and doting. Friends, begone. You shall

Have letters from me to some friends that will

Sweep your way for you. Pray you, look not sad,

Nor make replies of loathness. Take the hint

Which my despair proclaims. Let that be left

Which leaves itself. To the seaside straightway!

I will possess you of that ship and treasure.

Leave me, I pray, a little. Pray you now,

Nay, do so, for indeed I have lost command.

Therefore I pray you. I'll see you by and by.

*[Exeunt Attendants. Antony] sits down**Enter CLEOPATRA led by CHARMIAN, [IRAS], and EROS*

EROS Nay, gentle madam, to him, comfort him.

IRAS Do, most dear queen.

CHARMIAN Do. Why, what else?

CLEOPATRA Let me sit down. O Juno!

ANTONY No, no, no, no, no.

EROS See you here, sir?

ANTONY O fie, fie, fie!

CHARMIAN Madam!

IRAS Madam, O good empress!

EROS Sir, sir!

ANTONY Yes, my lord, yes. He at Philippi kept

His sword e'en like a dancer, while I struck

The lean and wrinkled Cassius, and 'twas I

That the mad Brutus ended. He alone

Dealt on lieutenantry, and no practice had

In the brave squares of war. Yet now – no matter.

CLEOPATRA Ah, stand by.

EROS The queen, my lord, the queen.

IRAS Go to him, madam, speak to him.

He's unqualitied with very shame.

CLEOPATRA Well then, sustain me. O!

EROS Most noble sir, arise. The queen approaches.

Her head's declined, and death will seize her but

Your comfort makes the rescue.

ANTONY I have offended reputation,

A most un noble swerving.

EROS Sir, the queen.

ANTONY O, whither hast thou led me, Egypt? See

How I convey my shame out of thine eyes

By looking back what I have left behind

'Stroyed in dishonour.

CLEOPATRA O my lord, my lord,

Forgive my fearful sails! I little thought

You would have followed.

* * *

Section B – Plays

14. William Shakespeare: *Antony and Cleopatra*

3.

ANTONY Since Cleopatra died
 I have lived in such dishonour that the gods
 Detest my baseness. I, that with my sword
 Quartered the world, and o'er green Neptune's back
 With ships made cities, condemn myself to lack
 The courage of a woman – less noble mind
 Than she which by her death our Caesar tells
 'I am conqueror of myself.' Thou art sworn, Eros,
 That when the exigent should come – which now
 Is come indeed – when I should see behind me
 Th'inevitable prosecution of
 Disgrace and horror, that on my command
 Thou then wouldst kill me. Do't. The time is come.
 Thou strik'st not me, 'tis Caesar thou defeat'st.
 Put colour in thy cheek.

EROS The gods withhold me!
 Shall I do that which all the Parthian darts,
 Though enemy, lost aim and could not?

ANTONY Eros,
 Wouldst thou be windowed in great Rome and see
 Thy master thus with pleached arms, bending down
 His corrigible neck, his face subdued
 To penetrative shame, whilst the wheeled seat
 Of fortunate Caesar, drawn before him, branded
 His baseness that ensued?

EROS I would not see't.

ANTONY Come, then, for with a wound I must be cured.
 Draw that thy honest sword, which thou hast worn
 Most useful for thy country.

EROS O, sir, pardon me!

ANTONY When I did make thee free, swor'st thou not then
 To do this when I bade thee? Do it at once,
 Or thy precedent services are all
 But accidents unpurposed. Draw, and come.

EROS Turn from me then that noble countenance
 Wherein the worship of the whole world lies.

ANTONY Lo thee! [*He turns from him*]

EROS My sword is drawn.

ANTONY Then let it do at once
 The thing why thou hast drawn it.

EROS My dear master,
 My captain, and my emperor, let me say
 Before I strike this bloody stroke, farewell.

ANTONY 'Tis said, man, and farewell.

EROS Farewell, great chief. Shall I strike now?

ANTONY Now, Eros.

EROS (*Kills himself*)

Why, there then! Thus I do escape the sorrow
 Of Antony's death.

ANTONY Thrice nobler than myself!
 Thou teachest me, O valiant Eros, what
 I should, and thou couldst not. My queen and Eros
 Have by their brave instruction got upon me
 A nobleness in record. But I will be
 A bridegroom in my death and run into't
 As to a lover's bed. Come then, and Eros,
 Thy master dies thy scholar. To do thus
 I learned of thee.

[*He falls on his sword*]

* * *

Section B – Plays

15. William Shakespeare: *Coriolanus*

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

1.

THIRD CITIZEN Are you all resolved to give your voices? But that's no matter, the greater part carries it. I say, if he would incline to the people, there was never a worthier man.

Enter Coriolanus in a gown of humility, with Menenius.

Here he comes, and in the gown of humility. Mark his behavior. We are not to stay all together, but to come by him where he stands, by ones, by twos, and by threes. He's to make his requests by particulars; wherein every one of us has a single honor, in giving him our own voices with our own tongues. Therefore follow me, and I'll direct you how you shall go by him.

ALL Content, content. [Exeunt Citizens.]

MENENIUS

O sir, you are not right. Have you not known
The worthiest men have done't?

CORIOLANUS What must I say?

"I pray, sir" – Plague upon't! I cannot bring
My tongue to such a pace. "Look, sir, my wounds.
I got them in my country's service, when
Some certain of your brethren roared and ran
From th' noise of our own drums."

MENENIUS O me, the gods!

You must not speak of that. You must desire them
To think upon you.

CORIOLANUS Think upon me? Hang 'em!

I would they would forget me, like the virtues
Which our divines lose by 'em.

MENENIUS You'll mar all.

I'll leave you. Pray you, speak to 'em, I pray you,
In wholesome manner.

CORIOLANUS Bid them wash their faces

And keep their teeth clean.

Enter three of the Citizens.

So, here comes a brace.

You know the cause, sir, of my standing here.

* * *

2.

BRUTUS [...] Here comes his mother.

SICINIUS Let's not meet her.

BRUTUS Why?

SICINIUS

They say she's mad.

Enter Volumnia, Virgilia, and Menenius.

BRUTUS

They have ta'en note of us. Keep on your way.

VOLUMNIA

O, you're well met. The hoarded plague o' th' gods
Requite your love!

MENENIUS Peace, peace. Be not so loud.

VOLUMNIA

If that I could for weeping, you should hear –

Nay, and you shall hear some.

[*To Sicinius*] Will you be gone?

VIRGILIA [*To Brutus*]

You shall stay too. I would I had the power

To say so to my husband.

SICINIUS Are you mankind?

VOLUMNIA

Ay, fool, is that a shame? Note but this fool:

Was not a man my father? Hadst thou foxship

To banish him that struck more blows for Rome

Than thou hast spoken words?

SICINIUS O blessed heavens!

VOLUMNIA

Moe noble blows than ever thou wise words,

And for Rome's good. I'll tell thee what – Yet go.

Nay, but thou shalt stay too. I would my son

Were in Arabia, and thy tribe before him,

His good sword in his hand.

SICINIUS What then?

VIRGILIA What then?

He'd make an end of thy posterity.

VOLUMNIA

Bastards and all.

Good man, the wounds that he does bear for Rome!

MENENIUS

Come, come, peace.

SICINIUS

I would he had continued to his country

As he began, and not unknit himself

The noble knot he made.

BRUTUS

I would he had.

VOLUMNIA

"I would he had"? 'Twas you incensed the rabble.

Cats, that can judge as fitly of his worth

As I can of those mysteries which heaven

Will not have earth to know!

* * *

Section B – Plays

15. William Shakespeare: *Coriolanus*

3.

CORIO LANUS

We will before the walls of Rome tomorrow
Set down our host. My partner in this action,
You must report to th' Volscian lords how plainly
I have borne this business.

AUFIDIUS

Only their ends

You have respected; stopped your ears against
The general suit of Rome; never admitted
A private whisper, no, not with such friends
That thought them sure of you.

CORIO LANUS

This last old man,

Whom with a cracked heart I have sent to Rome,
Loved me above the measure of a father;
Nay, godded me indeed. Their latest refuge
Was to send him; for whose old love I have –
Though I showed sourly to him – once more offered
The first conditions, which they did refuse
And cannot now accept. To grace him only,
That thought he could do more, a very little
I have yielded to. Fresh embassies and suits,
Nor from the state nor private friends, hereafter
Will I lend ear to.

Shout within. Ha! What shout is this?

Shall I be tempted to infringe my vow
In the same time 'tis made? I will not.

*Enter Virgilia, Volumnia, Valeria, young Martius,
with Attendants.*

My wife comes foremost; then the honored mold
Wherein this trunk was framed, and in her hand
The grandchild to her blood. But out, affection!
All bond and privilege of nature, break!
Let it be virtuous to be obstinate.
What is that curt'sy worth, or those doves' eyes,
Which can make gods forsworn? I melt, and am not
Of stronger earth than others. My mother bows,
As if Olympus to a molehill should
In supplication nod; and my young boy
Hath an aspect of intercession which
Great nature cries, "Deny not!" Let the Volsces
Plow Rome and harrow Italy! I'll never
Be such a gosling to obey instinct, but stand
As if a man were author of himself
And knew no other kin.

VIRGILIA

My lord and husband!

CORIO LANUS

These eyes are not the same I wore in Rome.

VIRGILIA

The sorrow that delivers us thus changed
Makes you think so.

* * *

Section B – Plays

16. George Bernard Shaw: *Pygmalion*

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

1.

PICKERING [*in good-humored remonstrance*] Does it occur to you, Higgins, that the girl has some feelings?

HIGGINS [*looking critically at her*] Oh no, I don't think so. Not any feelings that we need bother about. [*Cheerily*] Have you, Eliza?

LIZA. I got my feelings same as anyone else.

HIGGINS [*to Pickering, reflectively*] You see the difficulty?

PICKERING. Eh? What difficulty?

HIGGINS. To get her to talk grammar. The mere pronunciation is easy enough.

LIZA. I don't want to talk grammar. I want to talk like a lady in a flower-shop.

MRS PEARCE. Will you please keep to the point, Mr Higgins. I want to know on what terms the girl is to be here. Is she to have any wages? And what is to become of her when you've finished your teaching? You must look ahead a little.

HIGGINS [*impatiently*] What's to become of her if I leave her in the gutter? Tell me that, Mrs Pearce.

MRS PEARCE. That's her own business, not yours, Mr Higgins.

HIGGINS. Well, when I've done with her, we can throw her back into the gutter; and then it will be her own business again; so that's all right.

LIZA. Oh, you've no feeling heart in you: you don't care for nothing but yourself. [*She rises and takes the floor resolutely*]. Here! I've had enough of this. I'm going [*making for the door*]. You ought to be ashamed of yourself, you ought.

HIGGINS [*snatching a chocolate cream from the piano, his eyes suddenly beginning to twinkle with mischief*] Have some chocolates, Eliza.

LIZA [*halting, tempted*] How do I know what might be in them? I've heard of girls being drugged by the like of you.

Higgins whips out his penknife; cuts a chocolate in two; puts one half into his mouth and bolts it; and offers her the other half.

HIGGINS. Pledge of good faith, Eliza. I eat one half: you eat the other. [*Liza opens her mouth to retort: he pops the half chocolate into it*]. You shall have boxes of them, barrels of them, every day. You shall live on them. Eh?

LIZA [*who has disposed of the chocolate after being nearly choked by it*] I wouldn't have ate it, only I'm too ladylike to take it out of my mouth.

HIGGINS. Listen, Eliza. I think you said you came in a taxi.

LIZA. Well, what if I did? I've as good a right to take a taxi as anyone else.

HIGGINS. You have, Eliza; and in future you shall have as many taxis as you want. You shall go up and down and round the town in a taxi every day. Think of that, Eliza.

MRS PEARCE. Mr Higgins: you're tempting the girl. It's not right. She should think of the future.

HIGGINS. At her age! Nonsense! Time enough to think of the future when you haven't any future to think of. No, Eliza: do as this lady does: think of other people's futures; but never think of your own. Think of chocolates, and taxis, and gold, and diamonds.

* * *

2.

LIZA [*darkly*] My aunt died of influenza: so they said.

MRS EYNSFORD HILL [*clicks her tongue sympathetically*]!!!

LIZA [*in the same tragic tone*] But it's my belief they done the old woman in.

MRS HIGGINS [*puzzled*] Done her in?

LIZA. Y-e-e-e-es, Lord love you! Why should she die of influenza? She come through diphtheria right enough the year before. I saw her with my own eyes. Fairly blue with it, she was. They all thought she was dead; but my father he kept ladling gin down her throat til she came to so sudden that she bit the bowl off the spoon.

MRS EYNSFORD HILL [*startled*] Dear me!

LIZA [*piling up the indictment*] What call would a woman with that strength in her have to die of influenza? What become of her new straw hat that should have come to me? Somebody pinched it; and what I say is, them as pinched it done her in.

MRS EYNSFORD HILL. What does doing her in mean?

HIGGINS [*hastily*] Oh, that's the new small talk. To do a person in means to kill them.

MRS EYNSFORD HILL [*to Eliza, horrified*] You surely don't believe that your aunt was killed?

LIZA. Do I not! Them she lived with would have killed her for a hat-pin, let alone a hat.

MRS EYNSFORD HILL. But it can't have been right for your father to pour spirits down her throat like that. It might have killed her.

LIZA. Not her. Gin was mother's milk to her. Besides, he'd poured so much down his own throat that he knew the good of it.

MRS EYNSFORD HILL. Do you mean that he drank?

LIZA. Drank! My word! Something chronic.

MRS EYNSFORD HILL. How dreadful for you!

LIZA. Not a bit. It never did him no harm what I could see.

But then he did not keep it up regular. [*Cheerfully*] On the burst, as you might say, from time to time. And always more agreeable when he had a drop in. When he was out of work, my mother used to give him fourpence and tell him to go out and not come back until he'd drunk himself cheerful and loving-like. There's lots of women has to make their husbands drunk to make them fit to live with. [*Now quite at her ease*] You see, it's like this. If a man has a bit of a conscience, it always takes him when he's sober; and then it makes him low-spirited. A drop of booze just takes that off and makes him happy. [*To Freddy, who is in convulsions of suppressed laughter*] Here! what are you sniggering at?

FREDDY. The new small talk. You do it so awfully well.

LIZA. If I was doing it proper, what was you laughing at? [*To Higgins*] Have I said anything I oughtn't?

MRS HIGGINS [*interposing*] Not at all, Miss Doolittle.

LIZA. Well, that's a mercy, anyhow. [*Expansively*] What I always say is –

HIGGINS [*rising and looking at his watch*] Ahem!

LIZA. [*looking round at him; taking the hint; and rising*] Well: I must go. [*They all rise. Freddy goes to the door*]. So pleased to have met you. Goodbye. [*She shakes hands with Mrs Higgins*].

* * *

Section B – Plays

16. George Bernard Shaw: *Pygmalion*

3.

HIGGINS [*arrogant*] I can do without anybody. I have my own soul: my own spark of divine fire. But [*with sudden humility*] I shall miss you, Eliza. [*He sits down near her on the ottoman*]. I have learnt something from your idiotic notions: I confess that humbly and gratefully. And I have grown accustomed to your voice and appearance. I like them, rather.

LIZA. Well, you have both of them on your gramophone and in your book of photographs. When you feel lonely without me, you can turn the machine on. It's got no feelings to hurt.

HIGGINS. I can't turn your soul on. Leave me those feelings; and you can take away the voice and the face. They are not you.

LIZA. Oh, you are a devil. You can twist the heart in a girl as easy as some could twist her arms to hurt her. Mrs Pearce warned me. Time and again she has wanted to leave you; and you always got round her at the last minute. And you don't care a bit for her. And you don't care a bit for me.

HIGGINS. I care for life, for humanity; and you are a part of it that has come my way and been built into my house. What more can you or anyone ask?

LIZA. I won't care for anybody that doesn't care for me.

HIGGINS. Commercial principles, Eliza. Like [*reproducing her Covent Garden pronunciation with professional exactness*] s'yollin voylets [*selling violets*], isn't it?

LIZA. Don't sneer at me. It's mean to sneer at me.

HIGGINS. I have never sneered in my life. Sneering doesn't become either the human face or the human soul. I am expressing my righteous contempt for Commercialism. I don't and won't trade in affection. You call me a brute because you couldn't buy a claim on me by fetching my slippers and finding my spectacles. You were a fool: I think a woman fetching a man's slippers is a disgusting sight: did I ever fetch y o u r slippers? I think a good deal more of you for throwing them in my face. No use slaving for me and then saying you want to be cared for: who cares for a slave? If you come back, come back for the sake of good fellowship; for you'll get nothing else. You've had a thousand times as much out of me as I have out of you; and if you dare to set up your little dog's tricks of fetching and carrying slippers against my creation of a Duchess Eliza, I'll slam the door in your silly face.

LIZA. What did you do it for if you didn't care for me?

HIGGINS [*heartily*] Why, because it was my job.

LIZA. You never thought of the trouble it would make for me.

HIGGINS. Would the world ever have been made if its maker had been afraid of making trouble? Making life means making trouble.

* * *

Section B – Plays

17. Tom Stoppard: *Arcadia*

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

1.

Hannah The point is, the Crooms

[...]

Bernard Yes, I see. Are you sure? You seem quite sentimental over geometry.

Tom Stoppard, *Arcadia*,
Faber and Faber, 1993

pp. 38–40

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2.

Jellaby (*sighs*) Her ladyship encountered Mrs Chater during the night.

[...]

Lady Croom ... but have no doubt which is the more intolerable to me.

Tom Stoppard, *Arcadia*,
Faber and Faber, 1993

pp. 92–94

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Section B – Plays

17. Tom Stoppard: *Arcadia*

3.

Bernard I look forward to *The Genius of the Place*.

[...]

Septimus and Thomasina continue to dance, fluently, to the piano.

End.

Tom Stoppard, *Arcadia*,
Faber and Faber, 1993

pp. 131–133

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Section C – Short stories

18. Nikolay Gogol: *The Diary of a Madman, The Government Inspector and Selected Stories*

Use one or more of the passages selected as the basis for a discussion of *The Diary of a Madman, The Government Inspector and Selected Stories*.

1.

Ivan Fyodorovich Shponka and His Aunt

Behind this story there is another one. We first heard it from Stepan Ivanovich Kurochka who had just travelled up from Gadyach. Now, one thing you must know is that I have an absolutely shocking memory. You can talk to me until you are blue in the face, but everything goes in one ear and out the other. It's like trying to fill a sieve with water. As I am only too aware of this weakness of mine I asked our visitor to write the story down for me specially in an exercise book. He was always kind to me, God grant him good health, and he took the book and wrote everything out. I put it on the small table, which I think you know: it stands in the corner near the door. Oh dear, I quite forgot, you have never even been here! My old housekeeper, who has been with me for thirty years now, never learned to read and write and there's no point in trying to disguise the fact. Once I noticed she liked baking pies on paper. Dear reader, she bakes absolutely wonderful pies, better than you'll eat anywhere. So I had a look underneath them and what do I see but some writing. It was as if I'd known deep down already – I went up to the table and there was half of the exercise book gone! She had torn the pages out for her pie paper! What can you do? You can't quarrel at our time of life!

Last year I had to pass through Gadyach. So before I even got near the place I tied a knot so I shouldn't forget to ask Stepan Ivanovich about it. I'd assured myself that as soon as I sneezed in the town, this would make me remember to call on him. But it was all no use: I travelled through the town, sneezed, blew my nose in my handkerchief, and still forgot to call. At least, I didn't remember until I was about four or five miles from the town gates. So there remained nothing else to do but print the story without an ending. However, if anyone really wants to know what happened in the end, all he has to do is go to Gadyach and ask Stepan Ivanovich.

* * *

2.

The Overcoat

At this time of day, when the foreheads of even important officials ache from the frost and tears well up in their eyes, the humbler titular counsellors are sometimes quite defenceless. Their only salvation lies in running the length of five or six streets in their thin, wretched little overcoats and then having a really good stamp in the lobby until their faculties and capacity for office work have thawed out. For some time now Akaky Akakievich had been feeling that his back and shoulders had become subject to really vicious onslaughts no matter how fast he tried to sprint the official distance between home and office. At length he began to wonder if his overcoat might not be at fault here.

After giving it a thorough examination at home he found that in two or three places – to be exact, on the back and round the shoulders – it now resembled coarse cheesecloth: the material had worn so thin that it was almost transparent and the lining had fallen to pieces.

At this point it should be mentioned that Akaky Akakievich's coat was a standing joke in the office. It had been deprived of the status of overcoat and was called a dressing-gown instead. And there was really something very strange in the way it was made. As the years went by the collar had shrunk more and more, as the cloth from it had been used to patch up other parts. This repair work showed no sign of a tailor's hand, and made the coat look baggy and most unsightly. When he realized what was wrong, Akaky Akakievich decided he would have to take the overcoat to Petrovich, a tailor living somewhere on the third floor up some backstairs and who, in spite of being blind in one eye and having pockmarks all over his face, carried on quite a nice little business repairing civil servants' and other gentlemen's trousers and frock-coats, whenever – it goes without saying – he was sober and was not hatching some plot in that head of his.

Of course, there is not much point in wasting our time describing this tailor, but since it has become the accepted thing to give full details about every single character in a story, there is nothing for it but to take a look at this man Petrovich.

At first he was simply called Grigory and had been a serf belonging to some gentleman or other. People started calling him Petrovich after he had gained his freedom, from which time he began to drink rather heavily on every church holiday – at first only on the most important feast-days, but later on every single holiday marked by a cross in the calendar. In this respect he was faithful to ancestral tradition, and when he had rows about this with his wife he called her a worldly woman and a German.

* * *

Nikolai Gogol, *Diary of a Madman and Other Stories*, translated and introduced by Ronald Wilks, Penguin Classics, 1972; © Ronald Wilks, 1972; reproduced by permission of Penguin Books Ltd

Section C – Short stories

18. Nikolay Gogol: *The Diary of a Madman, The Government Inspector and Selected Stories*

3.

Diary of a Madman

December 5th

I spent the whole morning reading the papers. Strange things are happening in Spain. I read that the throne has been left vacant and that the nobility are having a great deal of trouble choosing an heir, with the result that there's a lot of civil commotion. This strikes me as very strange. How can a throne be vacated? They're saying some 'donna' must succeed to the throne. But she can't succeed to the throne: that's impossible. A king must inherit the throne. And they say there's no king anyway. But there *must* be a king. There can't be a government without one. There's a king all right, but he's hiding in some obscure place. He must be somewhere, but family reasons, or fears on the part of neighbouring powers – France and other countries, for example – force him to stay in hiding. Or there may be another explanation.

December 8th

I was about to go to the office but various reasons and considerations held me back. I couldn't get that Spanish business out of my head. How could a woman inherit the throne? They wouldn't allow it. Firstly, England wouldn't stand for it. And what's more, it would affect the whole of European policy: the Austrian Emperor, our Tsar . . . I must confess, these events shook me up so much I couldn't put my mind to anything all day. Mavra pointed out that I was very absent-minded during supper. And, in fact, in a fit of distraction I threw two plates on to the floor, and they broke immediately. After dinner I walked along a street that led downhill. Discovered nothing very edifying. Afterwards I lay on my bed for a long time and pondered the Spanish question.

April 43rd, 2000

Today is a day of great triumph. There *is* a king of Spain. He has been found at last. That king is *me*. I only discovered this today. Frankly, it all came to me in a flash. I cannot understand how I could even think or imagine for one moment I was only a titular counsellor. I can't explain how such a ridiculous idea ever entered my head. Anyway, I'm rather pleased no one thought of having me put away yet. The path ahead is clear: everything is as bright as daylight.

I don't really understand why, but before this revelation everything was enveloped in a kind of mist. And the whole reason for this, as I see it, is that people are under the misapprehension that the human brain is situated in the head: nothing could be further from the truth. It is carried by the wind from the Caspian Sea.

* * *

Section C – Short stories

19. Cate Kennedy: *Dark Roots*

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

1.

A Pitch Too High for the Human Ear

Why don't we talk more, after the kids are in bed? is what Vicki used to say. Then it became *why don't you talk more*, then, *oh, Andrew, he never talks. Don't bother*, Vicki would say at the barbecues we went to, to other women drinking wine on the folding chairs. *I married a non-talker*.

When she stopped talking, though, when she got so jack of it she closed up and just worked silently in the kitchen like a black cloud, I could hardly stand it. I would rather have her filling in the blank spots, even complaining, even shouting, than silent. Spreading butter on bread, on the eighteen rows of sandwiches she was going to put in the freezer so that you'd know for a week it was going to be devon and tomato sauce, then cheese and ham, things that froze well, so careful with placing the squares against the crust of the bread, saying, *Andrew this is just crazy, I'm going to have to do a night course or something to get out of the house*. Tucking the corners back on the sandwich bags, wiping the back of her hand against her eyes like she thought the kids wouldn't notice. Watching her, a hundred things came into my mind to say that I discarded, everything staying unsaid—like when Matt was born and we just sat there looking at each other. The difference was then it didn't seem to matter, me being something that she used to call inarticulate and she now called withholding.

Ham and cheese, ham and cheese, ham and cheese, seed mustard on Dad's, chutney on the kids'. I couldn't take my eyes from her hands, remembered them squeezing mine on our wedding day as I'd stood up to make my speech, the culmination of four days of nervous diarrhoea. *I married a non-talker*, Vicki saying with a tight smile at parties, or silently flicking through the channels with the remote as I wracked my brain for something to say that would make her talk again. *How can you just stand there?* Vicki said now, sawing the sandwiches with the knife. *I don't know*, I answered, which was the honest truth.

Twelve years of night running, working the bolt open silently on the back gate, watching Kelly let rip.

When we started the oval had opened out to empty land, now there was a maze of clothes lines, fences, paved patios. When the dog disappeared up the incline on the other side, he'd pause and turn, waiting for me. I could whistle so softly it was barely audible and he'd instantly race back like a rocket. Incredible hearing, turning towards the sound like a dish picking up radar.

* * *

2.

Soundtrack

Rachel is cooking cauliflower cheese when her daughter tells her she has joined a band and they will be practising in the rumpus room starting next Saturday. Rachel leaves off stirring the white sauce and turns to look at her daughter incredulously.

Emma is slumping in the doorway wearing the look of tired defiance she wore the day she got the tattoo. Rachel burst into tears that day, not because the tattoo was bleeding or defacing or even offensive—a Celtic cross surrounding a yin-yang symbol just above her breast—but because she was transported in a moment to a day seventeen years before when she had tickled that plump, powdered body, kissed it noisily just where the yin yang now twisted. Yin and yang, the flux of being: the irony of this is not lost on Rachel, who was a child in the 1960s and by the 1970s hung a batik sarong featuring this very symbol as a curtain in her doorway in the old house in Cardigan Street she shared with seven others. But now she is thirty-eight and grating cheese for dinner, thinking she can live with her daughter's tattoo and even the navel ring and boots, but she has heard the music Emma listens to and does not want it punctuating her Saturdays. Emma is not asking, though; she is informing. Where does a seventeen-year-old get so much certainty?

Rachel feels winded—tossed in front of a camera and told to act, the only person without a script and in someone else's costume. She has been feeling lately, in fact, that her life has a kind of soundtrack. Sometimes she can almost hear it: a melancholy instrumental as she stirs sauce, a frenetic salsa as she runs round in the morning like a cartoon, clashing foreboding cymbals as her daughter drops a bombshell. Soundtrack when she finds the battery in the Datsun is flat and hits her head dully, theatrically, on the steering wheel. Soundtrack as she stares at her reflection in the bathroom. The film and the score of the film that seem to compose the key scenes of her life are driving her crazy.

* * *

Section C – Short stories

19. Cate Kennedy: *Dark Roots*

3.

Kill or Cure

Jesus, I'm pathetic, she tells herself, slinging the shopping into the car and sliding in. Next to where she's parked, one of the takeaway caf  s has a sign advertising *cuppachinos*. She'd smirked at this when she'd first come to town, but six months of meeting no one to have one with has wiped the grin off her face. The joke had been on her after all, thinking she could afford to be condescending.

The next morning, John and the dogs are long gone by the time she takes the compost scraps down to the chicken yard. It's silent. Inside, she finds all six of them strewn across the enclosure, dead. Their bodies seem deflated somehow; limp as rags, feathers scattered through the weeds. Trembling, she finds the spot where a dog has scraped away one of the bricks she's wedged in, and dug a hole wide enough to wriggle under.

When John comes back midmorning she tells him what's happened and finds she has to keep her voice from shaking.

'They're just all torn up,' she says finally, 'just thrown around.' She turns to look accusingly at Jake, who gazes back at her with total, oblivious incomprehension. His tongue lolls with goodwill.

'There's an old antidote for it,' John says after lunch as he gets the shovel to bury the chickens. 'It's like a kill or cure thing. Like aversion therapy.' He takes one of the dead birds and ties it to Jake's collar. The dog's cautious interest in proceedings turns to nervous incredulity, his paws skidding desperately as John yanks him into the chicken shed and ties him up on a short rope. There, he strains and chokes, his eyes rolling in panic, fighting the rope. The chicken's neck lolls and flops like a broken toy.

'Now we leave him,' John says.

'You're joking.'

'Theory is that the dog associates the smell of the dead chook with being exiled, or something—he never wants to go near them again.'

Jake's frenzied barking doesn't begin until he hears the ute start up when John leaves for the yards again. Then Helen thinks he might strangle himself, or have a fit. She can hear him in there, like someone having a nightmare, pulling and gagging at the rope, howling for release, hour after hour. Finally, just to get away from it, she gets in the car and goes into town to collect the mail and do some shopping, and hides in the air-conditioned library for as long as she can, thumbing through gardening magazines.

* * *

Section C – Short stories

20. Annie Proulx: *Close Range: Brokeback Mountain and Other Stories*

Use one or more of the passages selected as the basis for a discussion of *Close Range: Brokeback Mountain and Other Stories*.

1.

People in Hell Just Want a Drink of Water

By the time he was twelve ... gone more than five years and not a word.

Annie Proulx, *Close Range: Brokeback Mountain and Other Stories*, Harper Perennial, 2006

pp. 114 and 115

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2.

The Bunchgrass Edge of the World

Aladdin lifted a wad of turnip greens ... “What you are tryin a fix ain’t fixable.”

Annie Proulx, *Close Range: Brokeback Mountain and Other Stories*, Harper Perennial, 2006

pp. 152 and 153

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Section C – Short stories

20. Annie Proulx: *Close Range: Brokeback Mountain and Other Stories*

3.

Brokeback Mountain

ENNIS DEL MAR WAKES BEFORE FIVE, ... pitching him directly into ranch work.

Annie Proulx, *Close Range: Brokeback Mountain and Other Stories*, Harper Perennial, 2006

pp. 283 and 284

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Section D – Other literature

21. Julian Barnes: *A History of the World in 10½ Chapters*

Use one or more of the passages selected as the basis for a discussion of *A History of the World in 10½ Chapters*.

1.

The Visitors

Before he got his own writing credit ... wanting to have the world explained to them.

Julian Barnes, *A History of the World in 10½ Chapters*,
Vintage, 2009

pp. 54 and 55

Due to copyright restrictions, the VCAA is unable to reproduce the full passage when this examination is published on the VCAA website. Instead, the opening and closing words of the passage have been provided.

2.

The Wars of Religion

In the matter raised by the procurator ... in such cases be required of the *habitans*.

Julian Barnes, *A History of the World in 10½ Chapters*,
Vintage, 2009

pp. 78 and 79

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Section D – Other literature

21. Julian Barnes: *A History of the World in 10½ Chapters*

3.

Project Ararat

In the summer of 1974 ... the voice went on. 'Find it, Spike.'

Julian Barnes, *A History of the World in 10½ Chapters*,
Vintage, 2009

pp. 255 and 256

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Section D – Other literature

22. Sheila Fitzpatrick: *My Father's Daughter: Memories of an Australian Childhood*

Use one or more of the passages selected as the basis for a discussion of *My Father's Daughter: Memories of an Australian Childhood*.

1.

Speak, Memory

Rightly or wrongly, there was no doubt in my mind as a child that I came first with Brian, ahead of Mummy and his nice friend Barbara, just as he came first in my affections, ahead of Mummy and Ishie. I saw no problem in this; it was just how life was.

My father's authority was immense in my eyes; surely at this early age nobody could have persuaded me to question it—except my father himself, and he set about it with a will, inspired by his anti-authoritarian principles, perhaps, or just mischief and a love of paradox. The 'Right or Wrong?' question was soon elaborated into an explicit proposition that 'Daddy is always right, except when he is wrong', another cause of great merriment on my part. But I got the point. Authorities had to be questioned, conventional pieties doubted. Even Brian's own pieties: my 3-year-old objection that 'Civvernimmities doesn't mean anything' was often and appreciatively repeated in the family. As my father taught me about democracy—and that happened quite early—he simultaneously taught me the paradox: we are democrats, and that means accepting the will of the people, despite the fact (said with a triumphant grin) that 'the majority is always wrong!'

What other father (I had met some, now I was at school) was so funny and knew so much? Who else could tell such good stories and jokes and had such a delightful disrespect for 'the powers that be', while at the same time (paradoxically, but that was his characteristic) being so dignified and formal in his public persona, a person others treated with respect? What other father worked at home, instead of going to a boring office, and was thus available to go for walks and watch me climb trees? I was lucky, I thought, to have such a father. Not that it was really luck. Being such a remarkable child, as Daddy and Ishie and Daddy's friends and even Mummy (judging by the *tabula rasa* story) agreed, I deserved him.

* * *

2.

Huis Clos

I'm not sure when it was that I started arguing with Brian about his politics, but surely well before I left home. Perhaps arguing isn't the word: it was more needling him, and probing to find the exact nature of the weakness I discerned in his position. I was using the critical weapons he himself had given me, exercising the license he had given me to show that Daddy, too, could be wrong. It was he, after all, who had taught me to tear off the masks, to see through pretensions to the interests behind. But now it wasn't just a debating game; there was malice in it. If Brian had taught me critical thinking, I had picked up some of Doff's techniques too—the ways of criticising that imply hostility, contempt, a pleasure in belittling.

The basic shift was from seeing his radical stands and 'agin the government' assumptions as heroic, David against Goliath, to seeing them as self-indulgent. Why, in the first place, should one assume that David was necessarily right and Goliath necessarily wrong? Why, a priori, should the critics, speaking from a position of irresponsibility, invariably know better than the 'powers that be', that is, the people who had been willing to take the responsibility of running things? Why was it only government that made bad judgements because of pressure from various interests? Was it because of moral virtue, a refusal to be corrupted and determination to retain his independence, that my father didn't take an ordinary job and earn money to support his family? Or was it because he just liked the bohemian life and the kudos that went with being regarded as the 'fearless independent thinker', the only one who hadn't sold out? In other words, was dissidence as a way of life a form of self-indulgence rather than heroism?

How this half-expressed critique felt to a man in his forties who may have at least partly felt he had taken the wrong path (*Twenty years largely wasted*), one can only imagine. I don't remember him trying to shut me up, and there is no record of him complaining about my criticisms. (On the contrary, he always, as far as I know, spoke of my critical acumen and tendency to challenge received wisdom proudly: *a chip off the old block*.)

* * *

Section D – Other literature

22. Sheila Fitzpatrick: *My Father's Daughter: Memories of an Australian Childhood*

3.

Second Escape, This Time Unhappy

All three of us, the survivors, were stunned by Brian's death; all of us felt guilty. We were united in and by this; the letters flying back and forth express mutual trust as well as shared suffering. 'If we had known he was going to die we would have behaved differently, but there is no point in thinking about it', I wrote to my mother on 7 September. 'All the same I wish I had made peace with him, as I had stopped being angry.' And to my brother, I wrote of a feeling of having betrayed Brian:

because it seemed that all these efforts were for us ('making a better world for our children', 'for fear my little son/might break his hands as I have done') but I wouldn't accept them ...

'Haven't I done my best for you?' he used to say when he was drunk. And my unspoken answer—my rejection—was no.

My brother had similar feelings: he felt guilty, as he wrote to me on 13 September, for 'my various expressed hatreds towards him: the contempt I thought I had for his activities in the Australian Labor Movement, in journalism, in Civil Liberties, and so on'; and now it seemed that his contempt had been based on lack of understanding:

I had no idea of what he was trying to do, or why he was so insistent on trivial courtesies, for that matter why he couldn't very often make any intimate contact with me, or Mummy, or you. I was irritated and annoyed by the screen he set around himself, and by his attempts to escape from it—by drinking and so on.

Doff wrote of her 'moments of horror that it should have ended like this when I had been consistently nasty to him for months ... I was very unhappy about my home life, not least because I could hardly respect my own behaviour and I could see no solution to the situation'. Yet there had been moments, even towards the end, when she could almost have broken out of this pattern [...]

* * *

Section D – Other literature

23. George Orwell: *Down and Out in Paris and London*

Use one or more of the passages selected as the basis for a discussion of *Down and Out in Paris and London*.

1.

At the table sat an unshaven Russian in shirt sleeves, addressing newspaper wrappers from a pile in front of him. As I came in he spoke to me in French, with a bad accent.

‘This is very careless!’ he exclaimed fussily. ‘Why have you come here without a parcel of washing?’

‘Washing?’

‘Everybody who comes here brings washing. It looks as though they were going to the laundry downstairs. Bring a good large bundle next time. We don’t want the police on our tracks.’

This was even more conspiratorial than I had expected. Boris sat down in the only vacant chair, and there was a great deal of talking in Russian. Only the unshaven man talked; the surly one leaned against the wall with his eyes on me, as though he still suspected me. It was queer, standing in the little secret room with its revolutionary posters, listening to a conversation of which I did not understand a word. The Russians talked quickly and eagerly, with smiles and shrugs of the shoulders. I wondered what it was all about. They would be calling each other ‘little father’, I thought, and ‘little dove’, and ‘Ivan Alexandrovitch’, like the characters in Russian novels. And the talk would be of revolutions. The unshaven man would be saying firmly, ‘We never argue. Controversy is a bourgeois pastime. Deeds are our arguments.’ Then I gathered that it was not this exactly. Twenty francs was being demanded, for an entrance fee apparently, and Boris was promising to pay it (we had just seventeen francs in the world). Finally Boris produced our precious store of money and paid five francs on account.

At this the surly man looked less suspicious, and sat down on the edge of the table. The unshaven one began to question me in French, making notes on a slip of paper. Was I a Communist? he asked. By sympathy, I answered; I had never joined any organization. Did I understand the political situation in England? Oh, of course, of course. I mentioned the names of various Ministers, and made some contemptuous remarks about the Labour Party. And what about *Le Sport*? Could I do articles on *Le Sport*? (Football and Socialism have some mysterious connection on the Continent.) Oh, of course, again. Both men nodded gravely. The unshaven one said:

‘*Évidemment*, you have a thorough knowledge of conditions in England. Could you undertake to write a series of articles for a Moscow weekly paper? We will give you the particulars.’

‘Certainly.’

‘Then, comrade, you will hear from us by the first post tomorrow. Or possibly the second post. Our rate of pay is a hundred and fifty francs an article. Remember to bring a parcel of washing next time you come. *Au revoir*, comrade.’

* * *

2.

Besides washing up, I had to fetch the waiters’ food and serve them at table; most of them were intolerably insolent, and I had to use my fists more than once to get common civility. The person who normally washed up was a woman, and they made her life a misery.

It was amusing to look round the filthy little scullery and think that only a double door was between us and the dining-room. There sat the customers in all their splendour – spotless table-cloths, bowls of flowers, mirrors and gilt cornices and painted cherubim; and here, just a few feet away, we in our disgusting filth. For it really was disgusting filth. There was no time to sweep the floor till evening, and we slithered about in a compound of soapy water, lettuce-leaves, torn paper and trampled food. A dozen waiters with their coats off, showing their sweaty armpits, sat at the table mixing salads and sticking their thumbs into the cream pots. The room had a dirty mixed smell of food and sweat. Everywhere in the cupboards, behind the piles of crockery, were squalid stores of food that the waiters had stolen. There were only two sinks, and no washing basin, and it was nothing unusual for a waiter to wash his face in the water in which clean crockery was rinsing. But the customers saw nothing of this. There were a coco-nut mat and a mirror outside the dining-room door, and the waiters used to preen themselves up and go in looking the picture of cleanliness.

It is an instructive sight to see a waiter going into a hotel dining-room. As he passes the door a sudden change comes over him. The set of his shoulders alters; all the dirt and hurry and irritation have dropped off in an instant. He glides over the carpet, with a solemn priest-like air. I remember our assistant *maitre d’hôtel*, a fiery Italian, pausing at the dining-room door to address an apprentice who had broken a bottle of wine. Shaking his fist above his head he yelled (luckily the door was more or less soundproof):

‘*Tu me fais chier*. Do you call yourself a waiter, you young bastard? You a waiter! You’re not fit to scrub floors in the brothel your mother came from. *Maquereau!*’

Words failing him, he turned to the door; and as he opened it he farted loudly, a favourite Italian insult.

Then he entered the dining-room and sailed across it dish in hand, graceful as a swan. Ten seconds later he was bowing reverently to a customer. And you could not help thinking, as you saw him bow and smile, with that benign smile of the trained waiter, that the customer was put to shame by having such an aristocrat to serve him.

* * *

Section D – Other literature

23. George Orwell: *Down and Out in Paris and London*

3.

The other great evil of a tramp's life is enforced idleness. By our vagrancy laws things are so arranged that when he is not walking the road he is sitting in a cell; or, in the intervals, lying on the ground waiting for the casual ward to open. It is obvious that this is a dismal, demoralizing way of life, especially for an uneducated man.

Besides these one could enumerate scores of minor evils – to name only one, discomfort, which is inseparable from life on the road; it is worth remembering that the average tramp has no clothes but what he stands up in, wears boots that are ill-fitting, and does not sit in a chair for months together. But the important point is that a tramp's sufferings are entirely useless. He lives a fantastically disagreeable life, and lives it to no purpose whatever. One could not, in fact, invent a more futile routine than walking from prison to prison, spending perhaps eighteen hours a day in the cell and on the road. There must be at the least several tens of thousands of tramps in England. Each day they expend innumerable foot-pounds of energy – enough to plough thousands of acres, build miles of road, put up dozens of houses – in mere, useless walking. Each day they waste between them possibly ten years of time in staring at cell walls. They cost the country at least a pound a week a man, and give nothing in return for it. They go round and round, on an endless boring game of general post, which is of no use, and is not even meant to be of any use to any person whatever. The law keeps this process going, and we have got so accustomed to it that we are not surprised. But it is very silly.

Granting the futility of a tramp's life, the question is whether anything could be done to improve it. Obviously it would be possible, for instance, to make the casual wards a little more habitable, and this is actually being done in some cases. During the last year some of the casual wards have been improved – beyond recognition, if the accounts are true – and there is talk of doing the same to all of them. But this does not go to the heart of the problem. The problem is how to turn the tramp from a bored, half-alive vagrant into a self-respecting human being.

* * *

Section D – Other literature

24. WEH Stanner: *The Dreaming & Other Essays*

Use one or more of the passages selected as the basis for a discussion of *The Dreaming & Other Essays*.

1.

Durmugam: A Nangiomeri (1959)

The policy of assimilation is meant to offer the Aborigines a 'positive' future—absorption and eventual integration within the European community. Does it involve a loss of natural justice for the living Aborigines? No one answers. Cases like Durmugam's are irritating distractions from loftier things. The policy assumes that the Aborigines want, or will want, to be assimilated; that white Australians will accept them on fair terms; that discrimination will die or can be controlled; that, in spite of the revealed nature of the Aborigines and their culture, they can be shaped to have a new and 'Australian' nature. The chauvinism is quite unconscious. The idea that the Aborigines might reject a banal life occurs to no one. The unconscious, unfocused, but intense racialism of Australians is unnoticed. The risk of producing a depressed class of coloured misfits is thought minimal, although that is the actual basis from which 'assimilation' begins.

It would be too far to one side of my purpose here to examine the new policy in detail. The aspirations are high; the sincerity is obvious; everyone is extremely busy; a great deal of money is being spent; and the tasks multiply much faster than the staffs who must do the work. In such a setting a certain courage is needed to ask if people really know what they are doing. I have space only for a simple question, which is closely connected to Durmugam's life and problems.

There is such a thing as Aboriginal customary law. It is in radical conflict with European law in almost every respect. Our notions of tort and crime, of procedures of arrest and trial, of admissible evidence, and so on do not fit with theirs. Only by extremely high abstraction can the two systems be brought together at all, and then only in a way which is almost useless administratively. The Aboriginal system has *in part* widely broken down and cannot be restored. It broke down for a number of reasons. Among them, certainly, was a contempt among Europeans of all classes for all things Aboriginal. To the older generations of Australians it seemed an impossible idea that there could be anything in the Aborigines or in their tradition to admire. The contempt has perhaps almost gone. In its place one finds, surprisingly widely, both interest and solicitude. But old contempt and new solicitude have a common element: a kind of sightlessness towards the central problems of what it is to be a blackfellow in the here-and-now of Australian life. For this reason hundreds of natives have gone through, and will go through, the torment of powerlessness which Durmugam suffered.

* * *

2.

Continuity and Change among the Aborigines (1958)

In a certain region of north Australia a myth which is still told tells of events at a remote time in human history, The Dream Time. A great man, Angamunggi, was treacherously killed by his son, who had committed incest with his two sisters, Angamunggi's daughters. The girls were trusting and, we may presume, innocent. The son, Tjinimin, was filled with guile, malice and lust. Having seduced his sisters, he next speared his father, while Angamunggi sat unsuspectingly, surrounded by his many children, at song and music during a festive gathering of all the clans. The father, in agony and about to die, lingered on to perform a series of marvels. He moved from place to place, and in doing so formed a track or path which is now sacred. At each resting place he tried unavailingly to staunch the flow of blood from the spear wound in his side. In some mysterious way his blood produced perennial pools and springs of water, which remain as his marks or signs. After a long wandering he took all the fire then in the world, tied it on his head with his own hair, and waded into the sea. Another man daringly snatched a brand just as Angamunggi was about to disappear under the waves. In this way fire was saved for men, who would otherwise have had to eat raw food, like animals. And, in his death agonies, Angamunggi gave men perennial waters. They were life-giving waters, for it was in them that, somehow, he also placed the spirits of all children who have been born since then.

A book could be written—indeed, I cannot promise not to write it—about the symbolisms of the myth. All I wish to do now is to resolve what is secondary and incidental into what is primary, and then rearrange the primary elements another way. What emerges is a story which suddenly becomes strangely familiar to us. A benign father is killed by his evil son. The son goes off among men. The father, by his death, gives men the fire and water which are the means of perennial life. Let us put this alongside another story: that of a benign father who sends his well-beloved son to redeem men by dying for them. By his death the son gives men a prospect of eternal life with the father. Here are two remarkably parallel intuitions about man and his whole situation. There is of course no historical connexion whatever.

Now, Angamunggi was not any kind of god. He made no covenant with men; he gave no moral instructions; he did not demand righteousness or supplication. Nor was he saint or sage. He is conceived of as man, an immense man of great powers, including the power to work marvels. His name is revered, after a fashion, but not in any way worshipped, though he 'looked after' people. One patrilineal moiety called him 'father's father', the other moiety called him 'mother's father'. Sometimes he was called by both moieties *Yila Neki*, the Father of Us All. He was a benign image, personifying the good. His lot somehow typifies for the Aborigines the lot of men, which is both good and bad.

* * *

Section D – Other literature

24. WEH Stanner: *The Dreaming & Other Essays*

3.

Aboriginal Humour (1956)

At a mission station which I know, a certain conflict was raging. The issue was between what the old Aborigines wanted to do, and what God wanted them to do. The matter was not at all clear to the Aborigines. They *knew* what they wanted. There were being told what God wanted. They thought there was something second-hand about the instructions. The questions turned on *how* their instructor *knew* what God wanted. Some said the clergyman just knew; others that he only said he knew; both these unreasonable theories failed to convince them. One man finally volunteered: 'might-be him got telephone longa God'. I was appealed to. Did he or didn't he? I said I did not know, but that I had always found the clergyman truthful. I also said that he had a lot of tea, sugar, flour and tobacco. This argument appealed to the Aborigines. One of them said: 'That man, him good man, y'know. Him got plenty everything. Plenty tucker. Plenty *wian* [i.e. tobacco—the word also means human excrement]. Plenty mouth [i.e. words]. Might be him got plenty savvy-belong-himself [i.e. private knowledge or wisdom].' I said that this might be so. I was then asked if I had a telephone. I said that I had; but it was only a small one. 'You savvy belong God?' I was asked. I said that I sometimes thought I heard a voice, a long way away. I was asked what the voice said. I replied that I could not quite make out the words. My inquisitor said: 'That's what blackfeller reckon.' I then said: 'Well, what are you going to do?' My friend said: 'Today, tobacco. Sunday, God.' We both laughed.

I do not feel called upon, or indeed competent, to prove anything to you about Aboriginal humour. I can simply narrate some of the things they say, describe some of the things they laugh at, and add a sort of minimum glossary. The main point to keep in mind is that the Aboriginal scene is in most respects the universal scene. Humour wears familiar garments, but with a twist all its own. There is coarse buffoonery, salacity, punning, practical joking, and all the rest. I would not mention them were it not that a perfectly intelligent European once asked me, quite seriously, if the Aborigines laughed and cried 'just like other people'. It made me wonder what image of savage life many Europeans can possibly have in mind to suggest such idiocies. The hammer on the thumb, the slip on the banana peel, the sudden loss of dignity—all these 'reversals', the basis of a universal class of humour, evoke much the same responses among the Aborigines as among Europeans. Perhaps the principle is carried a little far: I have seen Aborigines roaring with laughter at another chased by a crocodile, or at an old man trying to climb a slippery tree to escape a rogue buffalo.

* * *

Section E – Poetry

25. Robert Browning: *Selected Poems*

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

1.

Porphyria's Lover

The rain set early in tonight,
 The sullen wind was soon awake,
 It tore the elm-tops down for spite,
 And did its worst to vex the lake:
 I listened with heart fit to break.
 When glided in Porphyria; straight
 She shut the cold out and the storm,
 And kneeled and made the cheerless grate
 Blaze up, and all the cottage warm;
 Which done, she rose, and from her form
 Withdrew the dripping cloak and shawl,
 And laid her soiled gloves by, untied
 Her hat and let the damp hair fall,
 And, last, she sat down by my side
 And called me. When no voice replied,
 She put my arm about her waist,
 And made her smooth white shoulder bare,
 And all her yellow hair displaced,
 And, stooping, made my cheek lie there,
 And spread, o'er all, her yellow hair,
 Murmuring how she loved me – she
 Too weak, for all her heart's endeavour,
 To set its struggling passion free
 From pride, and vainer ties dissever,
 And give herself to me for ever.
 But passion sometimes would prevail,
 Nor could tonight's gay feast restrain
 A sudden thought of one so pale
 For love of her, and all in vain:
 So, she was come through wind and rain.
 Be sure I looked up at her eyes
 Happy and proud; at last I knew
 Porphyria worshipped me; surprise
 Made my heart swell, and still it grew
 While I debated what to do.

* * *

2.

Andrea del Sarto

But do not let us quarrel any more,
 No, my Lucrezia; bear with me for once:
 Sit down and all shall happen as you wish.
 You turn your face, but does it bring your heart?
 I'll work then for your friend's friend, never fear,
 Treat his own subject after his own way,
 Fix his own time, accept too his own price,
 And shut the money into this small hand
 When next it takes mine. Will it? tenderly?
 Oh, I'll content him, – but tomorrow, Love!
 I often am much wearier than you think,
 This evening more than usual, and it seems
 As if – forgive now – should you let me sit
 Here by the window with your hand in mine
 And look a half-hour forth on Fiesole,
 Both of one mind, as married people use,
 Quietly, quietly the evening through,
 I might get up tomorrow to my work
 Cheerful and fresh as ever. Let us try.
 Tomorrow, how you shall be glad for this!
 Your soft hand is a woman of itself,
 And mine the man's bared breast she curls inside.
 Don't count the time lost, neither; you must serve
 For each of the five pictures we require:
 It saves a model. So! keep looking so –
 My serpentine beauty, rounds on rounds!
 – How could you ever prick those perfect ears,
 Even to put the pearl there! oh, so sweet –
 My face, my moon, my everybody's moon,
 Which everybody looks on and calls his,
 And, I suppose, is looked on by in turn,
 While she looks – no one's: very dear, no less.
 You smile? why, there's my picture ready made,
 There's what we painters call our harmony!
 A common greyness silvers everything, –
 All in a twilight, you and I alike
 – You, at the point of your first pride in me
 (That's gone you know), – but I, at every point;
 My youth, my hope, my art, being all toned down
 To yonder sober pleasant Fiesole.
 There's the bell clinking from the chapel-top;
 That length of convent-wall across the way
 Holds the trees safer, huddled more inside;
 The last monk leaves the garden; days decrease,
 And autumn grows, autumn in everything.
 Eh? the whole seems to fall into a shape
 As if I saw alike my work and self
 And all that I was born to be and do,
 A twilight-piece. Love, we are in God's hand.
 How strange now, looks the life he makes us lead;
 So free we seem, so fettered fast we are!

* * *

Section E – Poetry

25. Robert Browning: *Selected Poems*

3.

Never the Time and the Place

Never the time and the place
And the loved one all together!
This path – how soft to pace!
This May – what magic weather!
Where is the loved one's face?
In a dream that loved one's face meets mine,
But the house is narrow, the place is bleak
Where, outside, rain and wind combine
With a furtive ear, if I strive to speak,
With a hostile eye at my flushing cheek,
With a malice that marks each word, each sign!
O enemy sly and serpentine,
Uncoil thee from the waking man!
Do I hold the Past
Thus firm and fast
Yet doubt if the Future hold I can?
This path so soft to pace shall lead
Through the magic of May to herself indeed!
Or narrow if needs the house must be,
Outside are the storms and strangers: we –
Oh, close, safe, warm sleep I and she,
– I and she!

* * *

Section E – Poetry

26. Rosemary Dobson: *Collected*

Use one or more of the passages selected as the basis for a discussion of the poetry of Rosemary Dobson.

1.

Annunciations

All my past years were waiting years

...

I hear the word, I let you go.

Rosemary Dobson, *Collected*,
University of Queensland Press, 2012

p. 113

Due to copyright restrictions, the VCAA is unable to reproduce the full passage when this examination is published on the VCAA website. Instead, the opening and closing words of the passage have been provided.

2.

The Sanctuary on Overton Hill, Wiltshire

It does not exist. Is known only

...

Summoned at sunrise.

Rosemary Dobson, *Collected*,
University of Queensland Press, 2012

p. 237

Due to copyright restrictions, the VCAA is unable to reproduce the full passage when this examination is published on the VCAA website. Instead, the opening and closing words of the passage have been provided.

Section E – Poetry

26. Rosemary Dobson: *Collected*

3.

Reading Aloud

Low, clear and free of self your voice went on

...

And I press on.

Rosemary Dobson, *Collected*,
University of Queensland Press, 2012

p. 306

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Section E – Poetry

27. Seamus Heaney: *Opened Ground: Poems 1966–1996*

Use one or more of the passages selected as the basis for a discussion of the poetry of Seamus Heaney.

1.

Poem

for Marie

Love, I shall perfect for you the child

...

And square the circle: four walls and a ring.

Seamus Heaney, *Opened Ground: Poems 1966–1996*,
Faber and Faber, 2005

p. 14

Due to copyright restrictions, the VCAA is unable to reproduce the full passage when this examination is published on the VCAA website. Instead, the opening and closing words of the passage have been provided.

2.

Funeral Rites

I

I shouldered a kind of manhood

...

to look at the moon.

Seamus Heaney, *Opened Ground: Poems 1966–1996*,
Faber and Faber, 2005

pp. 96–99

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Section E – Poetry

27. Seamus Heaney: *Opened Ground: Poems 1966–1996*

3.

The Otter

When you plunged

...

Printing the stones.

Seamus Heaney, *Opened Ground: Poems 1966–1996*,
Faber and Faber, 2005

pp. 174 and 175

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Section E – Poetry

28. Christina Rossetti: *Selected Poems*

Use one or more of the passages selected as the basis for a discussion of the poetry of Christina Rossetti.

1.

Three Stages.

I.

I looked for that which is not, nor can be,
And hope deferred made my heart sick in truth;
But years must pass before a hope of youth
Is resigned utterly.

I watched and waited with a steadfast will:
And though the object seemed to flee away
That I so longed for; ever, day by day,
I watched and waited still.

Sometimes I said: This thing shall be no more:
My expectation wearies and shall cease;
I will resign it now and be at peace:—
Yet never gave it o'er.

Sometimes I said: It is an empty name
I long for; to a name why should I give
The peace of all the days I have to live?—
Yet gave it all the same.

Alas, thou foolish one! alike unfit
For healthy joy and salutary pain;
Thou knowest the chase useless, and again
Turnest to follow it.

2.

My happy dream is finished with,
My dream in which alone I lived so long.
My heart slept—woe is me, it wakeneth;
Was weak—I thought it strong.

Oh weary waking from a life-true dream:
Oh pleasant dream from which I wake in pain:
I rested all my trust on things that seem,
And all my trust is vain.

I must pull down my palace that I built,
Dig up the pleasure-gardens of my soul;
Must change my laughter to sad tears for guilt,
My freedom to control.

Now all the cherished secrets of my heart,
Now all my hidden hopes are turned to sin:
Part of my life is dead, part sick, and part
Is all on fire within.

The fruitless thought of what I might have been
Haunting me ever will not let me rest:
A cold north wind has withered all my green,
My sun is in the west.

But where my palace stood, with the same stone,
I will uprear a shady hermitage;
And there my spirit shall keep house alone,
Accomplishing its age:

There other garden beds shall lie around
Full of sweet-briar and incense-bearing thyme;
There I will sit, and listen for the sound
Of the last lingering chime.

* * *

Section E – Poetry

28. Christina Rossetti: *Selected Poems*

2.

WINTER: MY SECRET.

I tell my secret? No indeed, not I:
 Perhaps some day, who knows?
 But not today; it froze, and blows, and snows,
 And you're too curious: fie!
 You want to hear it? well:
 Only, my secret's mine, and I won't tell.

Or, after all, perhaps there's none:
 Suppose there is no secret after all,
 But only just my fun.
 Today's a nipping day, a biting day;
 In which one wants a shawl,
 A veil, a cloak, and other wraps:
 I cannot ope to every one who taps,
 And let the draughts come whistling thro' my hall;
 Come bounding and surrounding me,
 Come buffeting, astounding me,
 Nipping and clipping thro' my wraps and all.
 I wear my mask for warmth: who ever shows
 His nose to Russian snows
 To be pecked at by every wind that blows?
 You would not peck? I thank you for good will,
 Believe, but leave that truth untested still.
 Spring's an expansive time: yet I don't trust
 March with its peck of dust,
 Nor April with its rainbow-crowned brief showers,
 Nor even May, whose flowers
 One frost may wither thro' the sunless hours.

Perhaps some languid summer day,
 When drowsy birds sing less and less,
 And golden fruit is ripening to excess,
 If there's not too much sun nor too much cloud,
 And the warm wind is neither still nor loud,
 Perhaps my secret I may say,
 Or you may guess.

* * *

3.

AMOR MUNDI.

"Oh where are you going with your love-locks flowing
 On the west wind blowing along this valley track?"
 "The downhill path is easy, come with me an it please ye,
 We shall escape the uphill by never turning back."

So they two went together in glowing August weather,
 The honey-breathing heather lay to their left and
 right;
 And dear she was to doat on, her swift feet seemed to
 float on
 The air like soft twin pigeons too sportive to alight.

"Oh what is that in heaven where grey cloud-flakes are
 seven,
 Where blackest clouds hang riven just at the rainy
 skirt?"
 "Oh that's a meteor sent us, a message dumb,
 portentous,
 An undeciphered solemn signal of help or hurt."

"Oh what is that glides quickly where velvet flowers
 grow thickly,
 Their scent comes rich and sickly?"—"A scaled and
 hooded worm."
 "Oh what's that in the hollow, so pale I quake to
 follow?"
 "Oh that's a thin dead body which waits the eternal
 term."

"Turn again, O my sweetest,—turn again, false and
 fleetest:
 This beaten way thou beatest I fear is hell's own
 track."
 "Nay, too steep for hill-mounting; nay, too late for
 cost-counting:
 This downhill path is easy, but there's no turning
 back."

* * *

Section E – Poetry

29. Wisława Szymborska: *Sounds, Feelings, Thoughts: Seventy Poems by Wisława Szymborska*

Use one or more of the passages selected as the basis for a discussion of the poetry of Wisława Szymborska.

1.

Water

A drop of rain fell on my hand,
condensed from the Ganges and the Nile,
from the heavenward ascending hoarfrost on the whiskers of a seal,
from the water of broken jugs in the cities of Ys and Tyre.

On my index finger
the Caspian Sea is the open sea,

and the Pacific meekly flows into the Rudawa,
that very same river that floated as a cloud over Paris

in the year seventeen hundred and sixty four
on the seventh of May at three in the morning.

There are not lips enough to utter
your fugitive names, O water.

I would have to name you in all the languages
uttering all the vowels all at once

and at the same time keep silent—for the lake
which vainly has awaited any name

and does not exist on earth—just as for the star
that in the sky finds reflection in it.

Someone was drowning, someone dying called for you.
That was long ago and that was yesterday.

Houses you extinguished, houses you carried off
like trees, forests like towns.

You were in baptismal fonts and in the baths of courtesans.
In shrouds, in love-enshrouded kisses.

* * *

2.

Advertisement

I am a tranquilizer.
I am effective at home,
I work well at the office,
I take exams,
I appear in court,
I carefully mend broken crockery—
all you need do is take me,
dissolve me under the tongue,
all you need do is swallow me,
just wash me down with water.

I know how to cope with misfortune,
how to endure bad news,
take the edge off injustice,
make up for the absence of God,
help pick out your widow's weeds.
What are you waiting for—
have faith in chemistry's compassion.

You're still a young man/woman,
you really should settle down somehow.
Who said
life must be lived courageously?

Hand your abyss over to me—
I will line it with soft sleep,
you'll be grateful for
the four-footed landing.

Sell me your soul.
There's no other buyer likely to turn up.

There's no other devil left.

* * *

Wisława Szymborska, *Sounds, Feelings, Thoughts: Seventy Poems by Wisława Szymborska*,
Princeton University Press, 1981; © Princeton University Press

Section E – Poetry

29. Wisława Szymborska: *Sounds, Feelings, Thoughts: Seventy Poems by Wisława Szymborska*

3.

Utopia

An island on which all becomes clear.

Here you can stand on the solid ground of proof.

Here are no points of interest except the point of arrival.

The bushes fairly groan under the weight of answers.

Here grows the tree of Right Conjecture
with branches disentangled since all time past.

The dazzlingly simple tree of Comprehension
hard by the spring that's named It's Just That Easy.

The deeper into the woods, the wider opens out
the Valley of the Obvious.

If doubt exists, it is dispelled by the wind.

Echo unevoked clamors to be heard
and eagerly explains the secrets of the worlds.

Off to the right a cave wherein lies Reason.

Off to the left the lake of Deep Conviction.
Truth breaks off from the bottom and lightly floats to the
surface.

Towering over the valley stands Unshakable Certainty.
From its peak emerges the Crux of the Matter.

For all its charm, the island is uninhabited,
and the faint footprints seen along the shore
point without exception in the direction of the sea.

As if this were a place just for the leaving
and for immersion in a depth with no return.

In a life that's not for comprehending.

* * *

Section E – Poetry

30. Chris Wallace-Crabbe: *New and Selected Poems*

Use one or more of the passages selected as the basis for a discussion of the poetry of Chris Wallace-Crabbe.

1.

Shadows

We follow them around, or trot ahead
besotted, rather, by some dream of freedom
but they stay anchored to our heels and toes.

Even a factory may lay claim to one
which, in flat parody, will serve to add
a cloak of shoddy dignity.

For a sundial, say those my father made,
the swivelling triangle of shade becomes
a clock, distinguished by pure silence.

When you reach the equator (if you do)
you can pretty much find yourself standing
calmly on top of most of one,

your own personal double, that is;
but they learn self-denial, abnegation,
on any day with solid banks of cloud.

The cinema is built on them, of course:
we sit and gawk at dames with cigarettes
cavorting on the screen of Plato's cave.

But long ago, in a vertical foreign city,
I spoke to the living shadow of myself,
both of us in herringbone overcoats,

and then again, a few weeks later,
one block east... No, that was quite enough:
I want to be the one I really am.

Shadows are marvellous for photographs,
those good old artful ones in black and white.
I had dinner with Walker Evans once,

only the shadow of what he once had been,
as a metaphor might say of him
but he's gone off long since to join the shades

as have too many of my friends:
when they peer back these days at their former lives
what sort of insubstantial echo would they see

where I think myself standing? Feather-light,
translucent, grey, umbrageous, or
hardly a skerrick of what they once had thought?

Evening, the sun tips us all back into shadow,
reminding me that we are something less
than our chunky, colourful, diurnal selves,

and still we reach out for the ghost of truth.

* * *

2.

Genesis

Why was Adam bitterly weak,
reproaching God and woman
like a spoilt child with broken toys
snivelling and whingeing?
Why were his guts weak
when he was called on to make a stand
in this brash new medium,
fast-flowing time?

It only took courage.
Be a man, said Eve;
Be a man, said ambiguous God;
yet Adam snuck away and moped
like a poor put-upon creep
in the shrubbery, in the evening,
scared of the too much light.
Know yourself, Adam.

Why was Adam bitterly weak
with her love, their sweep of knowledge,
work to be done
all over the face of the earth?
Everything was possible
that you could hurl in death's teeth:
the agricultural revolution
slept in ungathered grain.

The serpent was finished, mere reptile;
you break the back of the tiger snake
as soon as look at him,
farmers hang them on fences.
But there was a question for Adam to ask;
why on earth had Eden's God
chosen to make the serpent subtle,
crammed its jaws with language of men,
a trick to cap all creation?
who was kidding whom?

I hate the story and love it,
detesting death, a vast stupidity,
but glorying that Eden
could be smeared with, flashing with, energised
by the first colours of love.
Everything came alive.
The dull stuffy paradise park,
that silly supermarket
frozen away
under Claude Lorrain's stiff glazes
became part of the world;
here a fresh wind tossed the branches,
rotten fruit fell, green fruit waited,
ripeness was all, all transient
as man's quick breath. Things mattered
and love, anxious love
rose and put forth its flags.

* * *

Section E – Poetry

30. Chris Wallace-Crabbe: *New and Selected Poems*

3.

Cho Ben Thanh: Richmond

Generous planetrees have embowered
the slim ways to little Saigon
in tigerland while

the Luna Festival saunters along
bubbling in crowds
from durian to pork, and busy-back again.

Sundayesque, double-parked, lightly erotic in sandals
I flower to the car radio's piano concerto,
completed after somebody's death,

while the girls in chocked-high black heels
are going high-pitchedly by
and impish tots adhering to balloons;

now summer cottons toodle round the corner,
moonily smiling amid the Mekong-slow
drivers who can't drive

to parking-spots under the friendly trees.

Surely this is the lively Australian brand of city
some of our dear fellow-citizens
appear to hate.

* * *

Assessment criteria

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

- understanding of the text demonstrated in a relevant and plausible interpretation
- ability to write expressively and coherently to present an interpretation
- understanding of how views and values may be suggested in the text
- analysis of how key passages and/or moments in the text contribute to an interpretation
- analysis of the features of a text and how they contribute to an interpretation
- 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 clearly indicated the text numbers of my chosen texts above each answer in my answer book(s)?

Have I written on texts from two different sections?

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

