

ENGLISH / ANGLAIS / INGLÉS A1

Higher Level / Niveau Supérieur (Option Forte) / Nivel Superior

Monday 3 May 1999 (morning) / Lundi 3 mai 1999 (matin) / Lunes 3 de mayo de 1999 (mañana)

Paper / Épreuve / Prueba 1

4h

INSTRUCTIONS TO CANDIDATES

Do NOT open this examination paper until instructed to do so.

This paper consists of two sections, Section A and Section B.

Answer BOTH Section A AND Section B.

Section A: Write a commentary on ONE passage.

Section B: Answer ONE essay question. Refer mainly to works studied in Part 3 (Groups of Works); references to other works are permissible but must not form the main body of your answer.

INSTRUCTIONS DESTINÉES AUX CANDIDATES

NE PAS OUVRIR cette épreuve avant d'y être autorisé.

Cette épreuve comporte deux sections, la Section A et la Section B.

Répondre ET à la Section A ET à la Section B.

Section A: Écrire un commentaire sur UN passage.

Section B: Traiter UN sujet de composition. Se référer principalement aux œuvres étudiées dans la troisième partie (Groupes d'œuvres); les références à d'autres œuvres sont permises mais ne doivent pas constituer l'essentiel de la réponse.

INSTRUCCIONES PARA LOS CANDIDATOS

NO ABRA esta prueba hasta que se lo autoricen.

En esta prueba hay dos secciones: la Sección A y la Sección B.

Conteste las dos secciones, A y B.

Sección A: Escriba un comentario sobre UNO de los fragmentos.

Sección B: Elija UN tema de redacción. Su respuesta debe centrarse principalmente en las obras estudiadas para la Parte 3 (Grupos de obras); se permiten referencias a otras obras siempre que no formen la parte principal de la respuesta.

SECTION A

Write a commentary on *ONE* of the following:

1. (a)

If Snow had taken the road through Belburra, instead of the track through Currawong, his whole life would have run a different course. He had pulled in his horse at the fork of the road, and for a minute he sat thinking. True, the road to Belburra was the shorter way home, and he had been away nine months. But Snow was not any too eager to reach home. His
5 return was never the scene of wild enthusiasm. One of his sons might stroll inside and announce: 'Hey, Mum, Dad's here.' And his wife would remark grimly: 'Hello! so you're back, are you?' and Snow would say: 'Yeah, I'm back.'

He had come over the black-soil plain; the plain that stretches from Narrabri to Moree in a loneliness where the mirages smoke and the great brown kangaroos leap away from the
10 road, where the enfiladed telegraph-poles dwindle to a pinpoint and disappear over the rim of the earth, where the ground is baked like a tile in summer, and in winter forms a black bog that the drovers dread. Snow had crawled slowly across it in the lumbering van he had got in exchange for his sulky¹. It was slow, but, as Snow said to himself, he was a man who 'liked a bit of comfort.' He was of that singular breed who travel alone for preference; and as he
15 reined Don in at the fork of the road, there was no mate to influence his judgement which way he should go.

There was the wind, of course – the vicious westerly that makes winter a hell, a westerly biting with all the malice of the thousands of miles of barbed wire over which it had blown. Whichever way he turned, that wind met him face-on. The track through Currawong
20 was more sheltered than that through Belburra.

Then also Don, the horse, was tired; even Bluey, the cattle-dog, was tired, panting and dusty at the end of his chain under the van. Five miles this side of Currawong, Snow knew of a camp where there was good feed and water for the horse. But more important than grass or water, it offered that privacy and retirement so essential to anyone who meditates an onslaught
25 on someone else's sheep. Snow was a big man, six foot one, and every inch of him meat-hungry. To his mind, there had always been something contemptible about buying mutton when it was walking about in the paddocks all around him. Visions of roast mutton floated before his eyes. He clicked his tongue to Don and turned him along the left-hand track to Currawong. All his life, with that decision, veered into a different course.

When Snow made camp late that afternoon, it was in a hollow between two ridges where a high steel windmill whirled above the tank provided for travelling stock, clanking the pump-rod up and down with a lonely clatter, like a ghost rattling in chains. All along the track there had been a scarcity of feed because, although it was the middle of June, not enough rain had fallen to break the drought. But here was clearing of green with tender grass and, in the
35 grass, patches of reedy, red garden flower and a few overturned stones to tell of a forgotten homestead. Beside the stones two great coral trees lifted naked grey branches that showed,

instead of leaves, clusters of flowers, curved blades of scarlet around the stamens, as though a flock of fiery-coloured birds were tilting their tail-feathers in council.

40 At a decent distance from the civilised trees, all about the open space, a grey-green wall of gums² reared up, roaring with the ridges behind under an intermittent surf of wind. Now the wind was thunderous as city traffic; then there was only a faint hissing as the topmost leaves of the gums boiled over in silver spray, flashing like a mackerel shoal that ruffles a dark sea. A pause, and then once more the boughs would leap and whine as though some small animal were caught in their crotch, straining and lashing until the very trunks groaned again.

45 Snow cared little for the wind, as it hushed his fire sideways like a mother soothing a rowdy child in its cot. All day the wind might fluster the road dust and level the tussocks; but at sundown there would be a breathless, tranquil silence, as the world turned over on its side for the night, with the sky like a translucent bubble of pale green glass, so fragile you would think that, at the tap of a finger-nail, it would ring and shiver the first stars down in trails of
50 fire like water-drops on a window-pane.

Snow, busy making camp, congratulated himself that there were no other travellers on the reserve. It was a cold night, with a frosting of stars, and Snow waited for the wind to come up again before he began his walk towards the homestead a mile back, where he had marked a paddock of promising wethers³. Noiselessly he climbed over the barbed-wire fence and made
55 his way across a stubble-field smelling like new bread. Behind the field was the paddock, darkly blotted with trees.

Kylie Tennant [Opening of her Australian novel] *The Battlers* (1941)

¹ a light, two-wheeled, one-seat carriage

² eucalyptus trees.

³ castrated male sheep

1. (b)

THE LOST HERITAGE

Coreopsis, saffron, madder¹,
daily we tread kaleidoscopes of colour,
on Persian rugs we set our feet
blind to the woven threads and dyes,
5 the intricate patterns that shape our lives,
while our minds are indelibly printed by one another.

Like a man whose past and present are folded
into one whole, we inherit more than we know
from the dust and bones
10 of those lying under the Churchyard's stones,
who sweated their lives in high summer
to the rhythmic clatter of treadle and shuttle
or flinched as cold fastened on fingers,
winds shuddered and knived through their looms.

15 Where the wind once tore at the flames
of tallowed rushes,² pressing and printing
their blackened tongues on to beams
we hang our quiet landscapes,
tipping and tilting them till we achieve
20 an uneasy marriage, for the oak beams long ago
bent to the flailings of heat, cold and rain.

Was the child with hands outstretched to the blaze
less constrained? Taking her place
on the trampled earth floor with lambs
25 brought in from the cold bitter springs
till the air quickened³ and the windows
gathered the sunlight in.
Then vigorous stirrings in field and hedge
encouraged the comings and goings in household and barn
30 the snuffle of starlings under the rafters,
whispers and laughter of serving-maids
braiding their hair for the Whitsun-tide fair⁴.

35 We have nailed down our carpets over the past,
but the young child is lost in a forest
of towering adults, their arms waving glasses
like a strangle of branches
sway backwards and forwards over her head,
their tongues unload fear at her feet.

Heather Buck (1993)

¹ a small prolific garden bedding flower giving a carpet-like appearance of yellow and red-brown; a plant producing a yellow dye, also used in food; a plant producing a red dye

² rushes dipped in animal fat to make cheap candles

³ became alive

⁴ the public holiday associated with the festival of the Christian church, the seventh Sunday after Easter

SECTION B

Write an essay on ONE of the following. You must base your answer on at least two of the Part 3 works you have studied. References to other works are permissible but should not form the main body of your answer.

Twentieth Century Theatre

2. *Either*

- (a) A recent writer on contemporary theatre has commented on 'the accusatory finger pointed at the audience' as a feature of modern work on the stage. To what extent have you experienced this aspect of drama in plays you have studied, and how effective has it been in the complex relationships between play and audience?

or

- (b) 'The embodiment of cruelty and violence in modern plays mirrors modern life.'

Consider the positive and dramatic use made of these features of modern life in plays you have studied?

Art of the Novel

3. *Either*

- (a) 'Conscious and unconscious motives, assisting and frustrating circumstances: this is the territory of the novel's action.'

How have motives and circumstances figured in novels you have studied, and to what effect?

or

- (b) The scale of the novel has always allowed the novelist the fruitful use of time and history. How have novelists employed time and/or history to good effect in your chosen novels?

The Novel and Society

4. *Either*

- (a) In fiction, differences in social values and attitudes are sometimes presented or clarified by contrast, between the city and the country, or between families or between classes, or between regions, or between countries: how far have you found any such contrasts to be part of novels you have studied, and to what effect?

or

- (b) Societies in the late twentieth century are increasingly preoccupied with different cultures within themselves. How far have novels you have studied given you imaginative insight into different cultural practices and their social consequences, or political conflicts?

Art of Drama

5. *Either*

- (a) A recent review of a new play said ‘... it appears to be set in the mind of the characters.’

This is a useful reminder that the ‘setting’ of a play is not a simple part of the drama. Compare and contrast the ‘settings’ of plays you have studied to explore some of the different uses dramatists have made of them.

or

- (b) Drama is often an expression or investigation of power: characters can, at different moments in a play, be oppressors or victims, dominant or subservient, users and used. In terms of power and its effects, discuss three or four characters from plays you have studied, and say what this power-play adds to the play as a whole.

Contemporary Writing

6. *Either*

- (a) The contemporary world seems characterised by the scale and swiftness of change in the conditions of human life. Consider how contemporary works you have studied present or reflect change in the political, social, personal, environmental, or any other situation.

or

- (b) A playwright said of one of his characters: '... she was a demonic character; the size of her feelings was too great to contain without the escape of madness.'

Discuss the presentation of 'madness,' or mental disturbance, or very powerful feelings in contemporary works you have studied, saying what was the effect in each case.

Lives (Autobiographical writing)

7. *Either*

- (a) Autobiographical writing can provide a way into understanding modern cultural or ethnic questions, and revising conventional responses to them. How far did you find this to be the case in works you studied?

or

- (b) 'On what grounds can the literary quality of an autobiography be judged, when other considerations such as "sincerity," gossip, the revelation of secrets, or the like, may be so powerful?'

Discuss works you have studied in the light of this question.

Poetry

8. *Either*

- (a) Discuss the importance of form as part of the meaning and impact of poems you have studied. Relevant features of the poems you might wish to discuss could include some of the following: formal and/or informal arrangements, patterns, length, divisions in the poems, metre and stress, and the like.

or

- (b) '... a sympathetic, exact portrayal of recognisable lived experience' was recently offered as a description of the work of a twentieth century poet.

How far could you apply this to your own reading of chosen poems, and what would you add, or alter, to express more exactly your personal response to them?
