



LITERATURE IN ENGLISH

9539/01

Paper 1 Reading Literature

August 2025

3 hours

No Additional Materials are required.

Candidates may take set texts into the exam room. The texts may bear underlining, highlighting and vertical lines. Pages can be flagged with paper clips or by folding the page corners. Any other kind of folding or flagging of pages in texts (for example, use of sticky notes or tape flags) is not permitted.

READ THESE INSTRUCTIONS FIRST

Write your Centre number, index number and name on all the work you hand in.

Write in dark blue or black pen on both sides of the paper.

Do not use staples, paper clips, highlighters, glue or correction fluid.

Answer **three** questions: one question from Section A, one question from Section B and one question from Section C.

Begin each essay on a fresh sheet of paper.

You are reminded of the need for good English and clear presentation in your answers.

At the end of the examination, tie all essays together.

All questions in this paper carry equal marks.

This document consists of **9** printed pages.



2

Answer **one** question from this section.

1

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

A

KYOTO: MARCH

A few light flakes of snow	
Fall in the feeble sun;	
Birds sing in the cold,	
A warbler ¹ by the wall. The plum	
Buds tight and chill soon bloom.	5
The moon begins first	
Fourth, a faint slice west	
At nightfall. Jupiter half-way	
High at the end of night-	
Meditation. The dove cry	10
Twangs like a bow.	
At dawn Mt. Hiei dusted white	
On top; in the clear air	
Folds of all the gullied green	
Hills around the town are sharp,	15
Breath stings. Beneath the roofs	
Of frosty houses	
Lovers part, from tangle warm	
Of gentle bodies under quilt	
And crack the icy water to the face	20
And wake and feed the children	
And grandchildren that they love.	

Gary Snyder (b. 1930)

¹ Warbler; a small songbird.

B

STORM

As rivulets rush their tracery
Down window panes, water pearls
String the rails. A high wind
Whips through air, and hurls

Itself against trees, sheds,
Highrises, boats at sea.
The lightning-lashed sky
Thunders empathy.

5

High and dry as usual,
In an air-conditioned cage,
Watching whiteness fling its veil,
I turn the novel page by page;

10

The sun will take both wind and rain
While my dry and speckled glass –
Mirror catching wet and dry –
Again succeeds its cleaner past.

15

Leong Liew Geok (b. 1947)

Or

- (b) Write a critical comparison of the following poems, considering in detail ways in which form, language and style contribute to each poet's presentation of human existence.²

A

MEMENTO MORI¹

There is no need for me to keep a skull on my desk
to stand with one foot up on the ruins of Rome,
or to wear a locket with a sliver of a saint's bone.

It is enough to realize that every common object
in this small sunny room will outlive me –
the mirror, radio, bookstand and rocker

5

Not one of these things will attend my burial,
not even this battered goosenecked lamp
with its steady, silent benediction of light

though I could put worse things in my mind
than the image of it waddling across the cemetery
like an old servant, dragging the tail of its cord
the small circle of mourners parting to make room.

Billy Collins (b. 1941)

B

DAILY LIFE

A parrot of irritation sits
on my shoulder, pecks
at my head, ruffling his feathers
in my ear. He repeats
everything I say, like a child
trying to irritate the parent.

5

Too much to do today: the dracena²
that's outgrown its pot, a mountain
of bills to pay and nothing in the house
to eat. Too many clothes need washing
and the dog needs his shots.

10

It just goes on and on, I say
to myself, no one around, and catch
myself saying it, a ball hit so straight
to your glove you'd have to be
blind not to catch it. And of course
I hope it does go on and on
forever, the little pain,
the little pleasure, the sun
a blood orange in the sky, the sky
parrot blue and the day
unfolding like a bird slowly
spreading its wings, though I know,
saying it, that it won't.

15

20

Susan Wood (b. 1946)

¹ Memento Mori: A reminder of mortality (Latin)

² Dracena: a type of houseplant.

Section B: Prose

Answer **one** question from this section.

CHARLOTTE BRONTË: *Jane Eyre*

2

Either

- (a) The setting that Brontë chooses represents too much to be accidental.'

Bearing this comment in mind, discuss the significance of setting in *Jane Eyre*.

Or

- (b) Write a critical commentary on the following passage, relating it to the presentation of ambition here and elsewhere in the novel.

I shuddered as he spoke: I felt his influence in my marrow—his hold on my limbs.

"Seek one elsewhere than in me, St. John: seek one fitted to you."

"One fitted to my purpose, you mean—fitted to my vocation. Again I tell you it is not the insignificant private individual—the mere man with the man's selfish senses—I wish to mate: it is the missionary."

"And I will give the missionary my energies—it is all he wants—but not myself: that would be only adding the husk and shell to the kernel. For them he has no use: I retain them."

you cannot - you ought not. Do you think God will be satisfied with half an oblation? Will He accept a mutilated sacrifice? It is the cause of God I advocate: it is under His standard I enlist you. I cannot accept on His behalf a divided allegiance: it must be entire."

"Oh! I will give my heart to God," I said. "You do not want it." NOT MEANT NEARLY AT ALL

I will not swear, reader, that there was not something of repressed sarcasm both in the tone in which I uttered this sentence, and in the feeling that accompanied it. I had silently feared St. John till now, because I had not understood him. He had held me in awe, because he had held me in doubt. How much of him was saint, how much mortal, I could not heretofore tell: but revelations were being made in this conference: the analysis of his nature was proceeding before my eyes. I saw his fallibilities: I comprehended them. I understood that, sitting there where I did, on the bank of health and with that handsome form before me, I sat at the feet of a man, erring as I felt from his hardness and despotism. Having felt in him the presence of these qualities, I felt his imperfection and took courage. I was with an equal—one with whom I might argue—one whom, if I saw good, I might resist.

He was silent after I had uttered the last sentence, and I presently risked an upward glance at his countenance. His eye, bent on me, expressed at once stern surprise and keen inquiry. "Is she sarcastic, and sarcastic to me?" it seemed to say. "What does this signify?"

"Do not let us forget that this is a solemn matter," he said ere long; "one of which we may neither think nor talk lightly without sin. I trust, Jane, you are in earnest when you say you will serve your heart to God: it is all I want. Once wrench your heart from man, and fix it on your Maker, the advancement of that Maker's spiritual kingdom on earth will be your chief delight and endeavour; you will be ready to do at once whatever furthers that end. You will see what impetus would be given to your efforts and mine by our physical and mental union in marriage: the only union that gives a character of permanent conformity to the destinies and designs of human beings; and, passing over all minor caprices—all trivial difficulties and delicacies of feeling—all scruple about the degree, kind, strength or tenderness of mere personal inclination—you will hasten to enter into that union at once."

"Shall I?" I said briefly; and I looked at his features, beautiful in their harmony, but strangely formidable in their still severity; at his brow, commanding but not open; at his eyes, bright and deep and searching, but never soft; at his tall imposing figure; and fancied myself in idea *his wife*. Oh! it would never do! As his curate, his comrade, all would be right: I would cross oceans with him in that capacity; toil under Eastern suns, in Asian deserts with him in that office; admire and emulate his courage and devotion and vigour; accommodate quietly to his masterhood; smile undisturbed at his ineradicable ambition; discriminate the Christian from the man: profoundly esteem the one, and freely forgive the other. I should suffer often, no doubt, attached to him only in this capacity: my body would be under rather a stringent yoke, but my heart and mind would be free. I should still have my unblighted self to turn to: my natural unenslaved feelings with which to communicate in moments of loneliness. There would be recesses in my mind which would be only mine, to which he never came, and sentiments growing there fresh and sheltered which his austerity could never blight, nor his measured warrior-march trample down: but as his wife—at his side always, and always restrained, and always checked—forced to keep the fire of my nature continually low, to compel it to burn inwardly and never utter a cry, though the imprisoned flame consumed vital after vital—this would be unendurable.

"St. John!" I exclaimed, when I had got so far in my meditation.

"Well?" he answered icily.

"I repeat I freely consent to go with you as your fellow-missionary, but not as your wife; I cannot marry you and become part of you."

(from Chapter 34)

Section C: Drama

Answer **one** question from this section**WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE: *The Winter's Tale***

3

Either

- (a) How far do you agree with the view that Leontes is a king 'in rebellion with himself'? (Act 1, Scene 2)

Or

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

Enter Clown.

Clown: Let me see; every 'leven wether tods; every tod yields pound and odd shilling; fifteen hundred shorn, what comes the wool to?

Autolycus: [*Aside*] If the springe hold, the cock's mine.

Clown: I cannot do't without counters. Let me see, what am I to buy for our sheep-shearing feast? Three pound of sugar, five pound of currants, rice—what will this sister of mine do with rice? But my father hath made her mistress of the feast, and she lays it on. She hath made me four-and-twenty nosegays for the shearers, three-man song men all, and very good ones; but they are most of them means and basses, but one Puritan amongst them, and he sings psalms to hornpipes. I must have saffron to color the warden pies; mace; dates, none, that's out of my note; nutmegs, seven; a race or two of ginger, but that I may beg; four pound of prunes, and as many of raisins o' th' sun.

Autolycus: O, that ever I was born!

[*Grovels on the ground.*]

Clown: I' the name of me —

Autolycus: O, help me, help me! Pluck but off these rags, and then death, death!

Clown: Alack, poor soul, thou hast need of more rags to lay on thee rather than have these off.

Autolycus: O sir, the loathsomeness of them offends me more than the stripes I have received, which are mighty ones and millions.

Clown: Alas, poor man! A million of beating may come to a great matter.

Autolycus: I am robbed, sir, and beaten, my money and apparel ta'en from me, and these detestable things put upon me.

Clown: What, by a horseman, or a footman?

Autolycus: A footman, sweet sir, a footman.

Clown: Indeed, he should be a footman by the garments he has left with thee. If this be a horseman's coat, it hath seen very hot service. Lend me thy hand; I'll help thee. Come, lend me thy hand.

[*Helps him up.*]

Autolycus: O, good sir, tenderly. O!

Clown: Alas, poor soul!

Autolycus: O, good sir, softly, good sir. I fear, sir, my shoulder blade is out.

Clown: How now? canst stand?

Autolycus: [*Picking his pocket*] Softly, dear sir, good sir, softly. You ha' done me a charitable office.

Clown: Dost lack any money? I have a little money for thee.

Autolycus: No, good sweet sir, no, I beseech you, sir. I have a kinsman not past three-quarters of a mile hence, unto whom I was going. I shall there have

money or anything I want. Offer me no money, I pray you; that kills my heart. 40

Clown: What manner of fellow was he that robbed you?

Autolycus: A fellow, sir, that I have known to go about with troll-my-dames. I knew him once a servant of the Prince. I cannot tell, good sir, for which of his virtues it was, but he was certainly whipped out of the court. 45

Clown: His vices, you would say. There's no virtue whipped out of the court. They cherish it to make it stay there, and yet it will no more but abide.

Autolycus: Vices, I would say, sir. I know this man well. He hath been since an *ape-bearer*, then a *process-server*, a *bailiff*. Then he compassed a motion of the Prodigal Son, and married a tinker's wife within a mile where my land and living lies, and, having flown over many knavish professions, he settled only in rogue. Some call him Autolycus. 50

Clown: Out upon him! Prig, for my life, prig! He haunts wakes, fairs, and bearbaitings.

Autolycus: Very true, sir: he, sir, he. That's the rogue that put me into this apparel. 55

Clown: Not a more cowardly rogue in all Bohemia. If you had but looked big and spit at him, he'd have run.

Autolycus: I must confess to you, sir, I am no fighter. I am false of heart that way, and that he knew, I warrant him.

Clown: How do you now? 60

Autolycus: Sweet sir, much better than I was. I can stand and walk. I will even take my leave of you and pace softly towards my kinsman's.

Clown: Shall I bring thee on the way?

Autolycus: No, good-faced sir; no, sweet sir.

Clown: Then fare thee well. I must go buy spices for our sheep-shearing. 65

Autolycus: Prosper you, sweet sir. *Exit [Clown].*
Your purse is not hot enough to purchase your spice; I'll be with you at your sheep-shearing too. If I make not this cheat bring out another, and the shearers prove sheep, let me be unrolled and my name put in the book of virtue.

(from Act 4, Scene 3)