



UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE INTERNATIONAL EXAMINATIONS
General Certificate of Education
Advanced Subsidiary Level and Advanced Level

ENGLISH LANGUAGE

8693/12

Paper 1 Passages for Comment

May/June 2013

2 hours

Additional Materials: Answer Booklet/Paper



READ THESE INSTRUCTIONS FIRST

If you have been given an Answer Booklet, follow the instructions on the front cover of the Booklet.

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

Write in dark blue or black pen.

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

Answer **two** questions.

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

At the end of the examination, fasten all your work securely together.

The number of marks is given in brackets [] at the end of each question or part question.

This document consists of **7** printed pages and **1** blank page.



Answer **two** questions.

1 The following passage is an account of the writer's first experience of work.

- (a) Comment on the style and language of the passage. [15]
- (b) The same writer later finds a different kind of work and writes an account of his thoughts and feelings. Write the opening of the account (between 120–150 words). Base your answer closely on the style and language of the original extract. [10]

My heart was full of excitement, when I received the call from the man called "Edge." It had been nearly two weeks since I first met him face to face shortly after school had been let out for summer. He was a tiny man, short in stature but wide in girth. He stood nearly five feet tall and had a waddle to his walk and spoke in grunts. The cap on his head had writing on it, but it was so dirty, I could not make out what it said. His thick German accent made it even more difficult to understand most of what he said. I was hoping that he did not notice how nervous I was, standing there in front of him in the greenhouse he built and owned. I am certain that my hands were wet with sweat when I shook his and thanked him for his time after meeting him and asking him for a job. My mother told me that you always should ask for the job. The dirt in his own hands was so deep, none of it was left behind in my palm after shaking his firm small hand... 5 10

"Are you ready to start?" he asked. "Well, sure," I hesitated. I did not expect him to start me right away. My mother told me that folks usually have two interviews before they make a decision to hire you. "Follow me," he told me, as I greeted him with my handshake at the small cash register counter of his store. "Put this on," he said, handing me an apron. He also told me that on most days I worked, that he would expect that I would stay for four hours, which seemed like an awful long time to me. He told me that I would earn \$1.64 per hour; not as much as I anticipated, but hell, it was my first job, I was sure I would get a raise as soon as he saw what a great worker I was. Besides that, at fourteen years old, I did not even know that there WAS a minimum wage, much less, whether or not I was being paid "under the table"¹. "Here you go," he stated, standing in front of a black pile of steaming manure that was dumped into a pile next to a four foot by six foot box that was about three feet deep. It had a screen made from what looked like chicken wire pulled over four two by fours. "Shovel the manure onto the screen, sift it into the box. I'll be in the back by the perennials² if you need me." That was it. The excitement of my new career screeching to a halt. The stench emanating from the warm pile made me nauseous. I stood there for a few moments and watched "Edge" waddle away. I was holding the shovel in my hand, my heart racing, now for a different reason. Part of me wanted to put it down, walk through the greenhouse past the cash register and out of the front door, jump on my bike and ride home. Another part knew that I had to stay. What would my Mum and Dad say if I quit before I started? I had heard the stories that both of them had told about the hardships they endured as children, and sifting a little manure as a personal choice was nothing. 15 20 25 30 35

And so, I started. Lifting the shovels full of manure onto the home-made sift seemed easy at first. I would lift about five scoops onto the sift, then shake it using all of the force of my body weight to shake the sift back and forth to cause the manure to fall through the tiny little squares of the chicken wire. Whatever was left, I would push through with my hands. After about forty-five minutes, I stopped being grossed out, and had sifted four complete loads into the box. Now, however, I noticed another problem. Blisters. Both my hands now were blistered from lifting the shovels of 40

manure onto the sieve. Tears welled in my eyes from the pain and frustration. Until I noticed the blisters, I did not feel any pain, but somehow looking at them caused me to feel the pulsating sting. I was supposed to work three more hours, and I did not know how I was going to continue. Lifting the shovel even one more time would cause the blisters to rip off my hands. 45

Then, I felt his hand on my shoulder. "Du need to use deeze" he said, handing me a pair of leather gloves. He scared me. Where did he come from, I thought, and why did I not hear him? "You must always use gloves when you work." And then, he waddled away into another part of the greenhouse. 50

¹ "*under the table*": in cash, avoiding tax

² *perennials*: long lasting garden plants

2 The following passage comes from a short story set in World War Two. Miss Anstruther's home has been destroyed by bombing.

(a) Comment on the style and language of the passage. [15]

(b) Miss Anstruther later records her thoughts and feelings about that particular night in her diary. Write the opening of the diary entry (between 120–150 words). Base your answer closely on the material of the original extract. [10]

Each night, as Miss Anstruther lay awake in her strange, littered, unhomely room, she lived again the blazing night that had cut her life in two. It had begun like other nights, with the wailing siren followed by the crashing guns, the rushing hiss of incendiaries over London, and the whining, howling pitching of bombs out of the sky onto the fire-lit city. A wild, blazing hell of a night. Miss Anstruther, whom bombs made restless, had gone down once or twice to the street door to look at the glowing furnace of London and exchange comments with the caretaker on the ground floor and with the two basement tenants, then she had sat on the stairs, listening to the demon noise. Crashes shook Mortimer House, which was tall and slim and Edwardian,¹ and swayed like a reed in the wind to near bombing. Miss Anstruther understood that this was a good sign, a sign that Mortimer House, unlike the characters ascribed to clients by fortune-tellers, would bend but not break. So she was quite surprised and shocked when, after a series of three close-at-hand screams and crashes, the fourth exploded, a giant earthquake, against Mortimer House, and sent its whole front crashing down. Miss Anstruther, dazed and bruised from the hurtle of bricks and plaster flung at her head, and choked with dust, hurried down the stairs, which were still there. The wall on the street was a pile of smoking, rumbling rubble, the Gothic respectability of Mortimer House one with Nineveh and Tyre² and with the little public³ across the street. The ground-floor flats, the hall and the street outside, were scrambled and beaten into a common devastation of smashed masonry and dust. The little caretaker was tugging at his large wife, who was struck unconscious and jammed to the knees in bricks. The basement tenant, who had rushed up with her stirrup pump, began to tug too, so did Miss Anstruther. Policemen pushed in through the mess, rescue men and a warden followed, all was in train for rescue, as Miss Anstruther had so often seen it in her ambulance-driving. 'What about the flats above?' they called. 'Anyone in them?' Only two of the flats above had been occupied, Miss Anstruther's at the back. Mrs Cavendish's at the front. The rescuers rushed upstairs to investigate the fate of Mrs Cavendish. 'Why the devil,' inquired the police, 'wasn't everyone downstairs?' But the caretaker's wife, who had been downstairs, was unconscious and jammed, while Miss Anstruther, who had been upstairs, was neither. They hauled out the caretaker's wife, and carried her to a waiting ambulance. 'Everyone out of the building!' shouted the police. 'Everyone out!' Miss Anstruther asked why. The police said there were to be no bloody whys, everyone out, the bloody gas pipe's burst and they're throwing down fire, the whole thing may go up in a bonfire before you can turn round. A bonfire! Miss Anstruther thought, if that's so I must go up and save some things. She rushed up the stairs, while the rescue men were in Mrs Cavendish's flat. Inside her own blasted and twisted door, her flat lay waiting for death. God, muttered Miss Anstruther, what shall I save? She caught up a suitcase, and furiously piled books into it, then, as the suitcase would not shut, she turned out the largest volume and substituted a china cow, a tiny walnut shell with tiny Mexicans behind glass, a box with a mechanical bird that jumped out and sang, and a fountain pen. No use bothering with the big books or the pictures. Slings the suitcase across her

back, she caught up her portable wireless set and her typewriter, loped downstairs, placed her salvage on the piled wreckage at what had been the street door, and started up the stairs again. As she reached the first floor, there was a burst and a hissing, a huge *pst-pst*, and a rush of flame leaped over Mortimer House as the burst gas caught and sprang to heaven, another fiery rose bursting into bloom to join that pandemonic red garden of night. Two rescue men, carrying Mrs Cavendish downstairs, met Miss Anstruther and pushed her back. 50

¹ *Edwardian*: dating from the beginning of the twentieth century

² *Nineveh and Tyre*: ruined cities of the past

³ *public*: public house

3 The following passage, taken from a blog on a travel website, describes the experience of a slow voyage on the Murray River in Australia. The writer sees himself as the ‘captain’ and his children as the ‘crew’.

(a) Comment on the style and language of the passage. [15]

(b) The same writer decides to experience a different kind of journey and writes an account of it on the same website. Write the opening of the account (between 120–150 words). Base your answer closely on the style and language of the original extract. [10]

What bright spark invented the fishfinder? Obviously not a person with children.

If they did have children, they would know that the size of the fish the finder finds should be faithfully reproduced to scale on the small LED crystal screen. It would certainly save a lot of arguments on the River Murray.

Small crewman: “Stop the houseboat!” 5

“There’s a really big fish underneath us!”

Nominal captain: “We can’t just STOP the houseboat. By the time we turn around the fish will be long gone. We’ll find a spot where we can stop and fish.”

“Besides, I don’t think the fish was THAT big. It’s an electronic representation. Don’t take it so literally.” 10

Small crewman (five minutes later): “Stop the houseboat!!!”

“There’s heaps of fish under us only 1.5m below. THOUSANDS of them!”

Nominal captain: “It’s probably a log.”

Small crewman: “NO! NO! Look at the screen! All the little images have little tails.”

Nominal captain: “We can’t stop in the middle of the river. We have to find a safe mooring. We can fish from there.” 15

Small crewman (sulkily): “There probably won’t be any fish there...”

He was right.

Like endless rows of animated Space Invaders, clouds of large and small fish images regularly crossed the small screen as our houseboat made its way upriver from Blanchetown towards Morgan, in South Australia. 20

Carp and young boys have a symbiotic relationship. On a good day, the fish virtually throw themselves on the hook, and the boys throw all their efforts into catching them.

Pelicans are also part of this food chain. With round, wise eyes, they patiently wait. When the fish hauled up from the depths of the Murray is small, the boys must eat their pride. But the pelicans get to eat the carp. 25

Casting longer distances became a challenge amongst the boys — one which cost the nine-year-old his fishing rod.

The shock of the impact of lead on head from a wildly swinging sinker not only caused a large lump but ended with the rod in the river. 30

After that, it was hand-line fishing.

Cruising into the glittering path of a shaft of morning sunshine, with the smell of bacon and eggs cooking on the barbecue, it's easy to see why people choose to live on the river. Life is visibly slower.

Squadrons of swallows skim low over the water ahead of the bow. An occasional pelican, looking like an overloaded seaplane, cruises in for a precarious landing. 35

The riverine sunshine loosens the chilly grip of early morning as the houseboat meanders upriver, past the mouth of Cumbunga Creek, Roonka Conservation Park and Reedy Island, to moor for the night on a sandy bank at Glenforlan.

As sunset turns the clouds orange, then plum red, raucous flocks of white cockatoos roosting in the river red gums quieten their chaos in the fading light. The trees are like ghostly black cut-outs on the evening sky. It's a uniquely Australian experience. 40

Cruising upriver on a houseboat with a large kitchen/living area is something like living in a glass-walled lounge room. The landscape slips by. Holidaymakers and river folk sitting around a breakfast campfire wave from the bank. On the river, travellers don't just pass through the scene. Like an animated Hans Heysen painting, they are a living part of it. 45

The next morning, hidden kookaburras¹ laugh at our fishing efforts as the houseboat passes Donald Flat lagoon. Two kilometres upriver lies the ruins of the Woods Flat post office, opened in 1901 and closed in 1971. 50

Past cliff-top homes commanding magnificent views of the river, caravans and huddles of simple holiday homes, and occasionally, sprawling riverside residences — contemporary mansions in all but name.

Mooring for a night opposite Donald Flat Lagoon, hordes of white cockatoos screeched goodnight. And goodnight. And goodnight. Then, as if on cue...silence. 55

As the boys eat breakfast, a pair of hawk-like whistling kites ride the air above the river red gums, carefully eyeing the water to catch their own.

On the broad expanse of Brenda Reach, 10km downriver from Morgan, the world awakens with blushes of pink on the clouds as the glow of first light paints muted orange brushstrokes on the sandstone cliffs. 60

Kookaburras trade jokes in the distance and magpies warble as the water's mirror-surface is broken by the spreading ripples of surfacing fish.

It's another day on the Murray.

¹ *kookaburras*: Australian birds with a laughing cry

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