

General Certificate of Education
January 2006
Advanced Level Examination



ENGLISH LITERATURE (SPECIFICATION A)
Unit 6 Reading for Meaning

LTA6

Tuesday 31 January 2006 1.30 pm to 4.30 pm

For this paper you must have:

- a 16-page answer book

Time allowed: 3 hours

Instructions

- Use blue or black ink or ball-point pen.
- Write the information required on the front of your answer book. The *Examining Body* for this paper is AQA. The *Paper Reference* is LTA6.
- Answer **both** parts of the question.
- Do all rough work in the answer book. Cross through any work you do not want marked.

Information

- Materials from your wider reading **may not** be taken into the examination room.
- The maximum mark for this paper is 40.

Advice

- This unit assesses your understanding of the relationships between the different aspects of English Literature.
- You are reminded of the need for good English and clear presentation in your answers. All questions should be answered in continuous prose. Quality of Written Communication will be assessed in all answers.

Please read this advice carefully before you turn to the material.

1 Reading

- Here are the materials taken from the prescribed area for study. You will be using this material to answer the questions in the examination which appear on the facing page.
- Alongside the four pieces (**B, C, D, E**) about The First World War (the prescribed area for study) you will find **Extract A**, a pre-twentieth century poem, 'Ball's Bluff' by Herman Melville. This also has **war** as its theme.
- Read all five pieces and their introductions carefully and closely several times in the light of the specific questions set.

2 Timing

- You should plan to spend about 1 hour and 15 minutes on Question 1(a); this will include reading and planning time.
- You should plan to spend about 1 hour and 45 minutes on Question 1(b); this will include reading and planning time.

3 Wider Reading

- Question 1(b) tests your wider reading on the subject of **War in Literature** with specific reference to literature of and about The First World War.
- In your answers, you should take every opportunity to refer to this wider reading and to your knowledge of this specific area of study.

Answer **both** parts of Question 1.

1 (a) You should spend about 1 hour and 15 minutes on this question.

Basing your answer on **Extract A and Extract B**, you should:

- write a comparison of the ways the poets present the effects of war
- say how far you agree with the view that the changes brought about by war are conveyed more effectively by Melville than by Sassoon.

(20 marks)

(b) You should spend about 1 hour and 45 minutes on this question.

By comparing **Extracts C, D and E**, and by referring to your **wider reading**, examine how typical in both style and treatment of subject matter these writings are of literature from and about The First World War.

You should consider:

- language, form and structure
- the writers' thoughts and feelings about war and contemporary society
- the influence of the time of composition
- the gender of the writers.

(20 marks)

END OF QUESTIONS

THE READING**Extract A**

This poem was written by the American poet Herman Melville in October 1861. On 21 October 1861, during the American Civil War, four regiments of Union troops packed into boats on the Potomac River and were pinned against a hundred-foot cliff at Ball's Bluff. They faced a Confederate attack and more than one thousand Union soldiers were killed in the massacre that ensued.

Ball's Bluff
A Reverie
(October 1861)

One noonday, at my window in the town,
I saw a sight—saddest that eyes can see—
Young soldiers marching lustily
Unto the wars,
With fifes, and flags in mottoed pageantry;
While all the porches, walks, and doors
Were rich with ladies cheering royally.

They moved like Juny morning on the wave,
Their hearts were fresh as clover in its prime
(It was the breezy summer time),
Life throbbed so strong,
How should they dream that Death in a rosy clime
Would come to thin their shining throng?
Youth feels immortal, like the gods sublime.

Weeks passed; and at my window, leaving bed,
By night I mused, of easeful sleep bereft,
On those brave boys (Ah War! thy theft);
Some marching feet
Found pause at last by cliffs Potomac cleft;
Wakeful I mused, while in the street
Far footfalls died away till none were left.

HERMAN MELVILLE

Extract B

Siegfried Sassoon was an officer and a poet in The First World War.

'They'

The Bishop tells us: 'When the boys come back
They will not be the same; for they'll have fought
In a just cause: they lead the last attack
On Anti-Christ; their comrades' blood has bought
New right to breed an honourable race,
They have challenged Death and dared him face to face.'

'We're none of us the same!' the boys reply.
'For George lost both his legs; and Bill's stone blind;
Poor Jim's shot through the lungs and like to die;
And Bert's gone syphilitic; you'll not find
A chap who's served that hasn't found *some* change.'
And the Bishop said: 'The ways of God are strange!'

SIEGFRIED SASSOON

Turn over for Extract C

Extract C

This extract is taken from *Journey's End*, first published and performed in 1928, and written by R.C. Sherriff who was an officer in The First World War. In this extract, Stanhope, the Company Commander, has discovered that Raleigh has joined his company. Raleigh has known Stanhope at home and at school and is also the brother of Stanhope's fiancée.

OSBORNE Raleigh looks a nice chap.

STANHOPE (*looking hard at OSBORNE before replying*) Yes.

OSBORNE Good-looking youngster. At school with you, wasn't he?

STANHOPE Has he been talking already?

OSBORNE He just mentioned it. It was a natural thing to tell me when he knew you were in command.

STANHOPE *is lounging at the table with his back to the wall. OSBORNE, sitting on the right-hand bed, begins to puff clouds of smoke into the air as he lights his pipe.*

He's awfully pleased to get into your company.

STANHOPE *makes no reply. He picks up a pencil and scribbles on the back of a magazine.*

He seems to think a lot of you.

STANHOPE (*looking up quickly at OSBORNE and laughing*) Yes, I'm his hero.

OSBORNE It's quite natural.

STANHOPE You think so?

OSBORNE Small boys at school generally have their heroes.

STANHOPE Yes. Small boys at school do.

OSBORNE Often it goes on as long as —

STANHOPE — as long as the hero's a hero.

OSBORNE It often goes on all through life.

STANHOPE I wonder. How many battalions are there in France?

OSBORNE Why?

STANHOPE We'll say fifty divisions. That's a hundred and fifty brigades — four hundred and fifty battalions. That's one thousand eight hundred companies. (*He looks up at OSBORNE from his calculations on the magazine cover.*) There are one thousand eight hundred companies in France, Uncle. Raleigh might have been sent to any one of those, and, my God! he comes to mine.

OSBORNE You ought to be glad. He's a good-looking youngster. I like him.

STANHOPE I knew you'd like him. Personality, isn't it? (*He takes a worn leather case from his breast pocket and hands a small photograph to OSBORNE.*) I've never shown you that, have I?

OSBORNE (*looking at the photograph*) No. (*Pause.*) Raleigh's sister, isn't it?

STANHOPE How did you know?

OSBORNE There's a strong likeness.

STANHOPE I suppose there is.

OSBORNE (*intent on the picture*) She's an awfully nice-looking girl.

STANHOPE A photo doesn't show much, really. Just a face.

OSBORNE She looks awfully nice.

There is silence. STANHOPE lights a cigarette. OSBORNE hands the photo back. You're a lucky chap.

STANHOPE (*putting the photo back into his case*) I don't know why I keep it, really.

- OSBORNE Why? Isn't she — I thought —
- STANHOPE What did you think?
- OSBORNE Well, I thought that perhaps she was waiting for you.
- STANHOPE Yes. She is waiting for me — and she doesn't know. She thinks I'm a wonderful chap — commanding a company. (*He turns to OSBORNE and points up the steps into the line.*) She doesn't know that if I went up those steps into the front line — without being doped with whisky — I'd go mad with fright. *There is a pause. OSBORNE stirs himself to speak.*
- OSBORNE Look here, old man. I've meant to say it, for a long time, but it sounds damned impudence. You've done longer out here than any man in the battalion. It's time you went away for a rest. It's due to you.
- STANHOPE You suggest that I go sick, like that little worm in there — neuralgia in the eye? (*He laughs and takes a drink.*)
- OSBORNE No. Not that. The colonel would have sent you down long ago, only —
- STANHOPE Only — what?
- OSBORNE Only he can't spare you.
- STANHOPE (*laughing*) Oh, rot!
- OSBORNE He told me.
- STANHOPE He thinks I'm in such a state I want a rest, is that it?
- OSBORNE No. He thinks it's due to you.
- STANHOPE It's all right, Uncle. I'll stick it out now. It may not be much longer now. I've had my share of luck — more than my share. There's not a man left who was here when I came. But it's rather damnable for that boy — of all the boys in the world — to have come to *me*. I might at least have been spared that.
- OSBORNE You're looking at things in rather a black sort of way.
- STANHOPE I've just told you. That boy's a hero-worshipper. I'm three years older than he is. You know what that means at school. I was skipper of Rugger and all that sort of thing. It doesn't sound much to a man out here — but it does at school with a kid of fourteen. Damn it, Uncle, you're a schoolmaster; you know.
- OSBORNE I've just told you what I think of hero-worship.
- STANHOPE Raleigh's father knew mine, and I was told to keep an eye on the kid. I rather liked the idea of looking after him. I made him keen on the right things — and all that. His people asked me to stay with them one summer. I met his sister then —
- OSBORNE Yes?
- STANHOPE At first I thought of her as another kid like Raleigh. It was just before I came out here for the first time that I realised what a topping girl she was. Funny how you realise it suddenly. I just prayed to come through the war — and — and *do* things — and keep absolutely fit for her.
- OSBORNE You've done pretty well. An M.C. and a company.
- STANHOPE (*taking another whisky*) It was all right at first. When I went home on leave after six months it was jolly fine to feel I'd done a little to make her pleased. (*He takes a gulp of his drink.*) It was after I came back here — in that awful affair on Vimy Ridge. I knew I'd go mad if I didn't break the strain. I couldn't bear being fully conscious all the time — *you've* felt that, Uncle, haven't you?

Extract D

Mary Borden was a wealthy American who settled in Britain during The First World War. While her husband was busy with counter-espionage work, she equipped a mobile hospital which was attached to the French Army at the Front and she stayed with the hospital throughout the war. This extract is taken from a short story called *The Beach* written during The First World War.

The man wriggled and hitched himself clumsily up in his chair; an ugly grimace pulled his pale face to one side. He dared not look down over the arm of his wheel chair at the bright head of the woman sitting beside him. Her hair burned in the sunlight; her cheeks were pink. He stole a timid, furtive look. Yes, she was as beautiful as a child. She was perfectly lovely. A groan escaped him, or was it only a sigh?

She looked up quickly. 'What is it, darling? Are you in pain? Are you tired? Shall we go back?' Her voice sounded in the immense quiet of the beach like a cricket chirping, but the word 'darling' went on sounding and sounding like a little hollow bell while she searched his features, trying to find his old face, the one she knew, trying to work a magic on him, remove and replace the sunken eyes, the pinched nose, the bloodless wry mouth. 'He's not a stranger,' she said to herself. 'He's not.' And she heard the faint mocking echo, 'Darling, darling', ringing far away as if a bell-buoy out on the water were saying 'Darling, darling', to make the little waves laugh.

'It's only my foot, my left foot. Funny, isn't it, that it goes on throbbing. They cut it off two months ago.' He jerked a hand backward. 'It's damn queer when you think of it. The old foot begins the old game, then I look down and it's not there any more, and I'm fooled again.' He laughed. His laughter was such a tiny sound in the great murmur of the morning that it might have been a sand-fly laughing. He was thinking, 'What will become of us? She is young and healthy. She is as beautiful as a child. What shall we do about it?' And looking into her eyes he saw the same question, 'What shall we do?' and looked quickly away again. So did she.

She looked past him at the row of ugly villas above the beach. Narrow houses, each like a chimney, tightly wedged together, wedges of cheap brick and plaster with battered wooden balconies. They were new and shabby and derelict. All had their shutters up. All the doors were bolted. How stuffy it must be in those deserted villas, in all those abandoned bedrooms and kitchens and parlours. Probably there were sand-shoes and bathing dresses and old towels and saucepans and blankets rotting inside them with the sand drifting in. Probably the window panes behind the shutters were broken and the mirrors cracked. Perhaps when the aeroplanes dropped bombs on the town, pictures fell down and mirrors and the china in the dark china closets cracked inside these pleasure houses. Who had built them?

'Cowards built them,' he said in his new bitter, rasping voice, the voice of a peevish, irritable sandfly. 'Built them to make love in, to cuddle in, to sleep in, hide in. Now they're empty. The blighters have left them to rot there. Rotten, I call it, leaving the swanky plage to go to the bad like that, just because there's a war on. A little jazz now and a baccarat table would make all the difference, wouldn't it? It would cheer us up. You'd dance and I'd have a go at the tables. That's the casino over there, that big thing; that's not empty, that's crowded, but I don't advise you to go there. I don't think you'd like it. It's not your kind of a crowd. It's all right for me, but not for you. No, it wouldn't do for you—not even on a gala night.

'They've a gala night in our casino whenever there's a battle. Funny sort of place. You should watch the motors drive up then. The rush begins about ten in the evening and goes on till morning. Quite like Deauville the night of the Grand Prix. You never saw such a crowd. They all rush there from the front, you know—the way they do from the race-course—though, to be sure, it is not quite the real thing—not a really smart crowd. No, not precisely, though the wasters in Deauville weren't much to look at, were they? Still, our crowd here aren't precisely wasters. Gamblers, of course, down and outs, wrecks—all gone to pieces, parts of 'em missing, you know, tops of their heads gone, or one of their

legs. When they take their places at the tables, the croupiers—that is to say, the doctors—look them over. Come closer, I'll whisper it. Some of them have no faces.'

'Darling, don't.' She covered her own face, closed her ears to his tiny voice and listened desperately with all her minute will to the large tranquil murmur of the sea. 'Darling, darling', far out the bell-buoy was sounding.

'Bless you,' said the thin, sharp, exasperated sandfly voice beside her. 'Little things like that don't keep us away. If we can't walk in we get carried in. All that's needed is a ticket. It's tied to you like a luggage label. It has your name on it in case you don't remember your name. You needn't have a face, but a ticket you must have to get into our casino.'

'Stop, darling—darling, stop!'

Turn over for Extract E

Extract E

The following poem 'MCMXIV' (1914) was written by Philip Larkin in 1960.

MCMXIV

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

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

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

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

PHILIP LARKIN

END OF EXTRACTS

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