



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

ENGLISH LANGUAGE

8693/11

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 **6** printed pages and **2** blank pages.



Answer **two** questions.

1 The following passage is an account of the writer's first experience of work, picking blueberries on a farm during his school vacation.

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

(b) The same writer finds a different kind of job in his next vacation and writes an account of his thoughts and feelings. Write the opening of this account (between 120–150 words). Base your answer closely on the style and language of the original extract. [10]

After the last pickers left for home, and the final flats¹ were weighed and loaded and secured on flat bed trucks, the drivers headed for a warehouse far away. The farm owner and his hands would gather and stack all the flats, carts, and stray baskets – then load up everything and, after a last stop at the outhouse, unload all the equipment at a storage shed and go home to await their pay – then move on to the next crop. 5

The quiet berry fields were left alone to begin their long summer, fall and winter vacations until the following spring, when we would show up to harvest them. Some of us were willing, while many more hadn't the first clue what real work entailed. It was amazing that the crop owners allowed neighborhood youth in the fields for as many years as they did. 10

I get up early that first morning, grab my lunch and catch the bus – but I can't sleep, because even this early in the day the beat-up school bus is packed with youth. I don't know any of these kids and wonder where they all come from. After all, this is the country – farms and older houses sitting on over-sized lots of a couple acres. If these guys are from the neighborhood I should have seen them at school. Makes me a little uncomfortable to be traveling with unfamiliar people to an unfamiliar location. The only things I recognize are the lunch Mom made last night, my Dad's tin-covered Aladdin thermos covered with scenes of generic men in various fly fishing poses, and my reflection in the bus window. 20

But wait – there is one other familiar sight – our bus driver, Mr. Stang. Though he's my junior high school teacher, the recognition brings no comfort. Of all my instructors at school this year, he has to be the strangest. Aside from his dictatorial demeanor and mercurial temper, he is also cross-eyed, and the effect his conflicted gaze has on 7th and 8th graders – especially when Stang is annoyed – is unsettling, to say the least. 25

Every so often he fills the rear view mirror with separate but menacing gazes, and every so often he yells at some malcontent, but it's the weekend and he's supposed to be off duty. And for most of the trip he keeps a lid on it – but in the back of my mind lurks the potential for disaster should one of us do something to rub him the wrong way. 30

So the bus rattles along, and this being a typical early June morning in Oregon, drizzle lends a gray, depressing cast to the road ahead and behind, as well as the houses, sky and scenery. Looks more like winter than early spring.

After a while Mr. Stang steers the long yellow bus off the highway onto a rough, hilly dirt road for a good 200 yards. Then the bus comes to a much too abrupt halt, considering we're on farmland. 35

Stang yanks the polished door release handle and the narrow double doors fly open.

“Everybody off!” he shouts, and we all stumble down the aisle and out of the yellow beast, wondering if this is the day we’ll make the big bucks. At least that’s what I’m hoping. 40

The first row is always the hardest. Having left the relative comfort of the bus, I grab an empty flat, and decide to use a cart to hold it – though that thing was more trouble than it was worth, last time out – and I’ve been assigned a row. Now I have to make that initial move that will immediately get those nice dry pants all muddy and wet. I get down on my knees and assume the harvesting position. Once that’s done, I begin the uncomfortable work that is berry picking. 45

When I finally haul a flat of berries to the spot where the scales are, and am told that either the baskets aren’t full enough, or that all my hard work has amounted to a mere \$1.50, I realize how far I am from home, and how long this day is going to be. 50

Walking down the narrow path flanked by berry plants, I search for a couple of minutes before finding the place where I left off. Now comes the big decision: Should I pick standing up or kneeling? Looking out across the uncountable rows I see people employing one of several techniques, some (even at this early hour) having abandoned any pretense of honest labor, opting for the seated position. 55

At first I look upon them with scorn. “Slackers! Lazy bums!” But returning to the task at hand, basket in position, I bend over and start picking fruit.

¹ *flats*: containers for fruit

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) A local newspaper reporter interviews Miss Anstruther and publishes an article about what has happened to her. Write the opening of the article (between 120–150 words). Base your answer closely on the material of the original extract. [10]

Miss Anstruther, whose life had been cut in two on the night of 10 May 1941, so that she now felt herself a ghost, without attachments or habitation, neither of which she any longer desired, sat alone in the bed-sitting-room she had taken, a small room, littered with the grimy, broken and useless objects which she had salvaged from the burnt-out ruin round the corner. It was one of the many burnt-out ruins of that wild night when high explosives and incendiaries had rained on London and the water had run short: it was now a gaunt and roofless tomb, a pile of ashes and rubble and burnt, smashed beams. Where the floors of twelve flats had been, there was empty space. Miss Anstruther had for the first few days climbed up to what had been her flat, on what had been the third floor, swarming up pendent fragments of beams and broken girders, searching and scrabbling among ashes and rubble, but not finding what she sought, only here a pot, there a pan, sheltered from destruction by an overhanging slant of ceiling. Her marmalade had been there, and a little sugar and tea; the demolition men got the sugar and tea, but did not care for marmalade, so Miss Anstruther got that. She did not know what else went into those bulging dungaree pockets, and did not really care, for she knew it would not be the thing she sought, for which even demolition men would have no use; the flames, which take anything, useless or not, had taken these, taken them and destroyed them like a ravaging mouse or an idiot child.

After a few days the police had stopped Miss Anstruther from climbing up to her flat any more, since the building was scheduled as dangerous. She did not much mind; she knew by then that what she looked for was gone for good. It was not among the massed debris on the basement floor, where piles of burnt, soaked and blackened fragments had fallen through four floors to lie in indistinguishable anonymity together. The tenant of the basement flat spent her days there, sorting and burrowing among the chaotic mass that had invaded her home from the dwellings of her co-tenants above. There were masses of paper, charred and black and damp, which had been books. Sometimes the basement tenant would call out to Miss Anstruther, 'Here's a book. That'll be yours, Miss Anstruther'; for it was believed in Mortimer House that most of the books contained in it were Miss Anstruther's, Miss Anstruther being something of a bookworm. But none of the books were any use now, merely drifts of burnt pages. Most of the pages were loose and scattered about the rubbish-heaps; Miss Anstruther picked up one here and there and made out some words. 'Yes,' she would agree. 'Yes, that was one of mine.' The basement tenant, digging bravely away for her motoring trophies, said, 'Is it one you wrote?' 'I don't think so,' said Miss Anstruther. 'I don't think I can have ...' She did not really know what she might not have written, in that burnt-out past when she had sat and written this and that on the third floor, looking out on green gardens; but she did not think it could have been this. 'Have you lost *all* your own?' the basement tenant asked, thinking about her motoring cups, and how she must get at them before the demolition men did, for they were silver. 'Everything,' Miss Anstruther answered. 'Everything. They don't matter.' 'I hope you had no precious manuscripts,' said the kind tenant. 'Books you were writing, and that.' 'Yes,' said Miss Anstruther, digging about among the rubble heaps. 'Oh yes. They're gone. They don't matter ...'

3 The following passage, taken from a travel website, describes the writer's sense of adventure and excitement during a visit to the Grand Canyon in Colorado, USA.

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

(b) The same writer experiences another adventure 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]

Scotty's words are still echoing in my head: "Whatever happens, don't go in the hole."

It is too late. We are in the hole. A towering wall of water engulfs the kayak and flips it around. Suddenly, we are pointing upstream and being sucked backwards. I glance around to discover my brother is no longer behind me. He has been washed out but has managed to grab the rope at the back. Somehow he hauls himself back in and we paddle like madmen, crashing through a series of huge waves to make it to calmer water. 5

Scotty is waiting there, smiling and shaking his head. "I told you not to go in the hole." 10

The rapid at mile marker 209 might only be a grade five on the Grand Canyon's white-water rating system of 1 to 10, but I feel as though we have just paddled through Niagara Falls. I am not normally a high-five kinda guy but I can't stop myself from shrieking and pumping my fists in an explosion of adrenalin and relief. It is quite simply one of the most thrilling things I have ever done. 15

Rafting through the Grand Canyon on the Colorado River has become one of those life-changing, must-do-before-you-die travel experiences.

We pass an enjoyable afternoon horse riding and clay pigeon shooting before sitting down to a hearty dinner and some good ol' fashioned country music from an amusing band of slow-talking, Stetson-sporting¹ locals. 20

The next morning a helicopter threads its way between the canyon's dramatic burnt-orange walls to deliver us to the rafts where Scotty and the other guides for the trip await our arrival. Guides can make or break this sort of trip and by all accounts Scotty is famous in these parts. He has done more than 200 trips through the canyon and with his long hair, beard and slightly maniacal pirate-style laugh, he looks and sounds every inch the rafting legend. 25

We pack our gear into waterproof bags and set off down the river in one of six, six-metre rafts. Only now, as we drift serenely downstream, do I finally comprehend the scale and majesty of this natural phenomenon. To lie back and be surrounded by two billion years of scenery is indeed breathtaking and humbling. 30

As the morning progresses, the temperature steadily climbs until it is well into the 30s. It is mid-June, and staying protected from the sun is of the highest concern. The water, on the other hand, barely fluctuates from a bracing 10 degrees all year round and the first time I get splashed I fail to stifle an embarrassingly high-pitched shriek.

We set up camp for the night on a wide sandy beach and, while the guides prepare a feast of barbecue chicken and pecan pie, we all settle down in camping chairs, crack open some wine and get better acquainted. 35

There are enough tents for everyone, but most of us choose to sleep on cushioned mats underneath the stars. The guides go to bed at 9.30pm and after a lot of banter and several cases of wine, we are not far behind. There is no need for a torch to find your way around – the moon bathes the beach in a ghostly half light and the sky is crammed with a riot of stars. 40

There are sore heads when we are roused the following morning at 6 o'clock. To ease the pain there is hot coffee and a breakfast of eggs, bacon, pancakes and fresh fruit, all miraculously prepared in a makeshift kitchen in the middle of the wilderness. 45

We tackle three large rapids today and Scotty talks us through each one first. He can remember the nuances of every major rapid along the river, including the swirling vortex hole in rapid 209 that we are explicitly told to avoid.

Between rapids we let the current carry us downstream while we marvel at the majestic scenery and wildlife. Falcons, eagles and osprey soar high above us while big horn sheep negotiate impossibly steep slopes. 50

For the first time we see boats from other operators: large, motorised ten-metre monsters that can carry fifteen people. The passengers all sit perched high on top and they look strangely detached and uninvolved as they power relentlessly downstream. 55

We enjoy one final evening of feasting, storytelling and stargazing on the river before we paddle towards Diamond Creek, where the rafts will be unloaded and we will be shuttled back out to civilisation.

During those final few kilometres, the river narrows and we find ourselves hemmed in by a natural amphitheatre of towering rock. While we drift silently downstream, one of the guides stands up and sings a slow, haunting rendition of Amazing Grace, her voice echoing off the canyon walls. It is a poignant end to a magical trip. 60

¹ *Stetson-sporting*: wearing cowboy hats

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