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# AS

# ENGLISH LITERATURE A

## (7711/2)

Paper 2: Love through the Ages: Prose

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2015

Morning

Time allowed: 1 hour 30 minutes

### Materials

For this paper you must have:

- an AQA 12-page answer booklet
- a copy of each of the set texts you have studied for Section B. These texts must **not** be annotated and must **not** contain additional notes or materials.

### Instructions

- Use black ink or black 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 7711/2.
- Do all rough work in your answer book. Cross through any work that you do not want to be marked.
- Answer the question in Section A and **one** question from Section B.

### Information

- The maximum mark for this paper is 50.
  - The marks for questions are shown in brackets.
  - You will be marked on your ability to:
    - use good English
    - organise information clearly
    - use specialist vocabulary where appropriate.
  - In your response you need to:
    - analyse carefully the writers' methods
    - explore the contexts of the texts you are writing about
    - explore connections across the texts you have studied
    - explore different interpretations of your texts.
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**Section A: Unseen Prose**

Answer the question in this section.

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**0 1**

*The Age of Innocence* by Edith Wharton (1862–1937) was published in 1920. The story is set in New York in the 1870s. The countess Madame Ellen Olenska has left Europe to escape from her brutish husband, and is being given legal advice on her potential divorce by the novel’s protagonist, Newland Archer. Archer is engaged to Olenska’s cousin, May Welland.

In this extract, which takes place in Olenska’s house, Archer has a rare opportunity to speak to her privately.

Examine the view that Wharton presents Newland Archer as a heartless seducer in this extract.

Make close reference to the writer’s methods in your response.

**[25 marks]**

“May guessed the truth,” he said. “There is another woman—but not the one she thinks.”

Ellen Olenska made no answer, and did not move. After a moment he sat down beside her, and, taking her hand, softly unclasped it, so that the gloves and fan fell on the sofa between them.

She started up, and freeing herself from him moved away to the other side of the hearth. “Ah, don’t make love to me! Too many people have done that,” she said, frowning.

Archer, changing colour, stood up also: it was the bitterest rebuke she could have given him. “I have never made love to you,” he said, “and I never shall. But you are the woman I would have married if it had been possible for either of us.”

“Possible for either of us?” She looked at him with unfeigned astonishment. “And you say that— when it’s you who’ve made it impossible?”

He stared at her, groping in a blackness through which a single arrow of light tore its blinding way.

“I’ve made it impossible—?”

“You, you, *you!*” she cried, her lip trembling like a child’s on the verge of tears. “Isn’t it you who made me give up divorcing—give it up because you showed me how selfish and wicked it was, how one must sacrifice oneself to preserve the dignity of marriage ... and to spare one’s family the publicity, the scandal? And because my family was going to be your family—for May’s sake and for yours—I did what you told me, what you proved to me that I ought to do. Ah,” she broke out with a sudden laugh, “I’ve made no secret of having done it for you!”

She sank down on the sofa again, crouching among the festive ripples of her dress like a stricken masquerader; and the young man stood by the fireplace and continued to gaze at her without moving.

“Good God,” he groaned. “When I thought—”

“You thought?”

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“Ah, don’t ask me what I thought!”

Still looking at her, he saw the same burning flush creep up her neck to her face. She sat upright, facing him with a rigid dignity.

“I do ask you.”

“Well, then: there were things in that letter you asked me to read—”

“My husband’s letter?”

“Yes.”

“I had nothing to fear from that letter: absolutely nothing! All I feared was to bring notoriety, scandal, on the family—on you and May.”

“Good God,” he groaned again, bowing his face in his hands.

The silence that followed lay on them with the weight of things final and irrevocable. It seemed to Archer to be crushing him down like his own grave-stone; in all the wide future he saw nothing that would ever lift that load from his heart. He did not move from his place, or raise his head from his hands; his hidden eyeballs went on staring into utter darkness.

“At least I loved you—” he brought out.

On the other side of the hearth, from the sofa-corner where he supposed that she still crouched, he heard a faint stifled crying like a child’s. He started up and came to her side.

“Ellen! What madness! Why are you crying? Nothing’s done that can’t be undone. I’m still free, and you’re going to be.” He had her in his arms, her face like a wet flower at his lips, and all their vain terrors shrivelling up like ghosts at sunrise. The one thing that astonished him now was that he should have stood for five minutes arguing with her across the width of the room, when just touching her made everything so simple.

She gave him back all his kiss, but after a moment he felt her stiffening in his arms, and she put him aside and stood up.

“Ah, my poor Newland—I suppose this had to be. But it doesn’t in the least alter things,” she said, looking down at him in her turn from the hearth.

“It alters the whole of life for me.”

“No, no—it mustn’t, it can’t. You’re engaged to May Welland; and I’m married.”

He stood up too, flushed and resolute. “Nonsense! It’s too late for that sort of thing. We’ve no right to lie to other people or to ourselves. We won’t talk of your marriage; but do you see me marrying May after this?”

She stood silent, resting her thin elbows on the mantelpiece, her profile reflected in the glass behind her. One of the locks of her *chignon* had become loosened and hung on her neck; she looked haggard and almost old.

“I don’t see you,” she said at length, “putting that question to May. Do you?”

**Turn over for Section B**

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**Section B: Comparing Prose Texts**

Answer **one** question in this section.

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**Either**

**0 2**

‘Typically, social class is presented as the most important factor in the relationships between lovers.’

By comparing **two** prose texts, explore the extent to which you agree with this statement.

**[25 marks]**

**or**

**0 3**

‘Women characters are presented primarily as those who suffer and endure.’

By comparing **two** prose texts, explore the extent to which you agree with this statement.

**[25 marks]**

**END OF QUESTIONS**

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Question 1: From *The Age of Innocence* by Edith Wharton, Penguin Books, 1996

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