



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 2011

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 part of a speech given by Barack Obama, future president of the United States, to his political party in 2004. In it he considers the rights children should have.
- (a) Comment on the style and language of the passage. [15]
- (b) The same speaker delivers another speech to his political party. In it he considers the rights of women. Write the opening of the speech (between 120–150 words). Base your answer closely on the style and language of the original extract. [10]

Tonight is a particular honor for me because, let's face it, my presence on this stage is pretty unlikely. My father was a foreign student, born and raised in a small village in Kenya. He grew up herding goats, went to school in a tin-roof shack. His father – my grandfather – was a cook, a domestic servant to the British.

But my grandfather had larger dreams for his son. Through hard work and perseverance my father got a scholarship to study in a magical place, America, that shone as a beacon of freedom and opportunity to so many who had come before. 5

While studying here, my father met my mother. She was born in a town on the other side of the world, in Kansas. Her father worked on oil rigs and farms through most of the Depression. The day after Pearl Harbor my grandfather signed up for duty; joined Patton's army, marched across Europe. Back home, my grandmother raised a baby and went to work on a bomber assembly line. After the war, they studied on the G.I. Bill, bought a house through F.H.A., and later moved west all the way to Hawaii in search of opportunity. 10

And they, too, had big dreams for their daughter. A common dream, born of two continents. 15

My parents shared not only an improbable love, they shared an abiding faith in the possibilities of this nation. They would give me an African name, Barack, or 'blessed', believing that in a tolerant America your name is no barrier to success. They imagined – They imagined me going to the best schools in the land, even though they weren't rich, because in a generous America you don't have to be rich to achieve your potential. 20

They're both passed away now. And yet, I know that on this night they look down on me with great pride.

They stand here – and I stand here today, grateful for the diversity of my heritage, aware that my parents' dreams live on in my two precious daughters. I stand here knowing that my story is part of the larger American story, that I owe a debt to all of those who came before me, and that, in no other country on earth, is my story even possible ... 25

That is the true genius of America, a faith – a faith in simple dreams, an insistence on small miracles; that we can tuck in our children at night and know that they are fed and clothed and safe from harm; that we can say what we think, write what we think, without hearing a sudden knock on the door; that we can have an idea and start our own business without paying a bribe; that we can participate in the political process without fear of retribution; and that our votes will be counted – at least most of the time. 30 35

And fellow Americans, Democrats, Republicans, Independents, I say to you tonight: We have more work to do – more work to do for the workers I met in Galesburg, Illinois, who are losing their union jobs at the Maytag plant that's moving to Mexico, and now are having to compete with their own children for jobs that pay seven bucks an hour; more to do for the father that I met who was losing his job and choking back the tears, wondering how he would pay 4500 dollars a month for the drugs his son needs without the health benefits that he counted on; more to do 40

for the young woman in East St. Louis, and thousands more like her, who has the grades, has the drive, has the will, but doesn't have the money to go to college. 45

Now, don't get me wrong. The people I meet – in small towns and big cities, in diners and office parks – they don't expect government to solve all their problems. They know they have to work hard to get ahead, and they want to. Go into the collar counties around Chicago, and people will tell you they don't want their tax money wasted, by a welfare agency or by the Pentagon. Go in – Go into any inner city neighborhood, and folks will tell you that government alone can't teach our kids to learn; they know that parents have to teach, that children can't achieve unless we raise their expectations and turn off the television sets and eradicate the slander that says a black youth with a book is acting white. They know those things. 50

People don't expect – people don't expect government to solve all their problems. 55
But they sense, deep in their bones, that with just a slight change in priorities, we can make sure that every child in America has a decent shot at life, and that the doors of opportunity remain open to all.

They know we can do better. And they want that choice.

2 The following passage describes the writer's relationship with his father.

- (a) Comment on the style and language of the passage. [15]
- (b) Later, the writer finds part of his father's autobiography in the suitcase. In one chapter the father describes his thoughts and feelings about his relationship with his son. Write the opening of the chapter (between 120–150 words). Base your answer closely on the material of the original extract. [10]

Two years before my father died, he gave me a small suitcase filled with his manuscripts and notebooks. Assuming his usual jocular, mocking air, he told me that he wanted me to read them after he was gone, by which he meant after his death.

"Just take a look," he said, slightly embarrassed. "See if there's anything in there that you can use. Maybe after I'm gone you can make a selection and publish it." 5

We were in my study, surrounded by books. My father was searching for a place to set down the suitcase, wandering around like a man who wished to rid himself of a painful burden. In the end, he deposited it quietly, unobtrusively, in a corner. It was a shaming moment that neither of us ever quite forgot, but once it had passed and we had gone back to our usual roles, taking life lightly, we relaxed. We talked as we 10 always did – about trivial, everyday things, and our country's never-ending political troubles, and my father's mostly failed business ventures – without feeling too much sorrow.

For several days after that, I walked back and forth past the suitcase without ever actually touching it. I was already familiar with this small black leather case, 15 with a lock and rounded corners. When I was a child, my father had taken it with him on short trips and had sometimes used it to carry documents to work. Whenever he came home from a trip, I'd rush to open this little suitcase and rummage through his things, savoring the scent of cologne and foreign countries. The suitcase was a friend, a powerful reminder of my past, but now I couldn't even touch it. Why? No 20 doubt because of the mysterious weight of its contents ...

When I did finally touch my father's suitcase, I still could not bring myself to open it. But I knew what was inside some of the notebooks it held. I had seen my father writing in them. My father had a large library. In his youth, in the late nineteen- 25 forties, he had wanted to be a poet but he had not wanted to live the sort of life that came with writing poetry in a poor country where there were few readers. My father's father – my grandfather – was a wealthy businessman, and my father had led a comfortable life as a child and a young man; he had no wish to endure hardship for the sake of literature, for writing. He loved life with all its beauties: this I understood.

The first thing that kept me away from my father's suitcase was, of course, a 30 fear that I might not like what I read. Because my father understood this, too, he had taken the precaution of acting as if he did not take the contents of the case seriously. By this time, I had been working as a writer for twenty-five years, and his failure to take literature seriously pained me. But that was not what worried me most: my real fear – the crucial thing that I did not wish to discover – was that my father might be 35 a good writer. If true and great literature emerged from my father's suitcase, I would have to acknowledge that inside my father there existed a man who was entirely different from the one I knew. This was a frightening possibility. Even at my advanced age, I wanted my father to be my father and my father only – not a writer ...

So this was what was driving me when I first opened my father's suitcase: 40 Did my father have a secret, an unhappiness in his life that I knew nothing about, something that he could endure only by pouring it into his writing? As soon as I opened the suitcase, I recalled its scent of travel and recognized several notebooks that my father had shown me years earlier, though without dwelling on them for long. Most of the notebooks I now took in my hands he had filled when he was in Paris as 45 a young man. Although, like so many writers I admired – writers whose biographies

I had read – I wished to know what my father had written, and what he had thought, when he was the age I was now, it did not take me long to realize that I would find nothing like that here. What disturbed me most was when, now and again, in my father's notebooks, I came upon a writerly voice. This was not my father's voice, I told myself; it wasn't authentic, or, at least, it didn't belong to the man I'd known as my father. Beneath my fear that my father might not have been my father when he wrote was a more profound fear: the fear that, deep inside, *I* was not authentic. 50

- 3 The following passage describes an English writer's visit to a place of religious study in Tarim, Yemen.
- (a) Comment on the style and language of the passage. [15]
- (b) Later, the writer visits another group of women studying in another country. She writes a magazine article describing the place and some of the people she met. Write the opening of the article (between 120–150 words). Base your answer closely on the style and language of the original extract. [10]

On my flight from Dubai to the Yemeni capital, Sanaa, every other woman is wearing a black face veil. After the glitz and hustle of Dubai, Sanaa's mud-brick old city feels dark, quiet and ancient. It is the summer monsoon and in the late afternoon the sunken street past the old city is suddenly waist-deep with rushing grey water, submerging a taxi. Four men with curved daggers thrust into their wide, gold-embroidered belts hitch up their white robes and wade in to heave it out. A crowd gathers, but the few women hurrying past, draped in black, do not stop. In Yemen the streets overwhelmingly belong to men. 5

Tarim is remoter still, three hundred miles south-east across the desert in a vast canyon, the Wadi Hadhramaut. Descending towards the canyon's little airport, the plane plunges into a landscape of tiny emerald-green fields set with date palms and crumbling mud-brick towers. Where the irrigation stops, the valley sides are dotted with the whitewashed tombs of local saints. The Hadhramaut tribe converted to Islam around the time of the Prophet's death and it has been famous for its scholars and holy men ever since. 10 15

The "place of miracles" turns out to be a nondescript grid of square concrete buildings under the high canyon walls. One of them conceals a tall, galleried white courtyard, where a dark-eyed Briton in black robes, Asma, is waiting for me.

"Salaam, welcome to Dar al-Zahra," she says, taking my hands. Little girls in coloured gowns bring metal cups of iced water and wave palm leaf fans while the older students, all in black, press round to wish me peace. They have been sent from Indonesia, East Africa and the Arab world to complete their years of Islamic study. But I have come to meet the "Dowra girls", western Muslims on a forty day programme introducing them to a beginner's version of life in the centre. In the windowless hallway of their separate home, a dozen twentysomething women in bright ankle-length house-gowns and headscarves are sitting on thin mattresses with their textbooks. They look tired and hot. 20 25

"This is Rachel, our guest," says Asma.

The warmth of the girls' welcome surprises me. They jump up, smiling, to wish me peace, hurry to bring tea and carry my bags – earnestly striving to live up to the religious virtue of hospitality. Aziza, a lively girl with heavy kohl rings around her dark eyes, introduces me. 30

Many of my new housemates are, like Aziza, from Urdu-speaking British-Pakistani families, but there are also a handful of converts, including a South African lawyer called Samira, a Canadian student, Sara, and a blue-eyed English girl who has taken the Arabic name Nur, "Light". When they head off, chattering, to the afternoon prayer, I explore the Dowra house. It is less like an austere religious retreat than a boarding school: it smells of shampoo, perfume and sweaty nylon, and the shared bathroom is a cheerful girly clutter of pink razors and make-up. But on the door someone has stuck a note in felt-tip pen: the *duas* – or special prayers – to be repeated before and after using the shower or toilet ... 35 40

We have been sitting cross-legged and barefoot on the floor for two hours and my knees and back are burning. Even the other girls are wincing.

"Is it too strict?" I ask.

“No, no,” says Aziza. “And the more you suffer, the more it proves your *himma*.” 45
Himma is the virtue of spiritual aspiration, and the girls are keen to encourage each other in its feats.

“When we’re really tired, I say, ‘Come on, girls,’” explains Aziza. “Remember that the darkness on the way to the mosque in the morning will be repaid with light on Judgment Day, when everyone else is in the dark.” 50

As we trail slowly back along the dust road, the girls describe the rules for students. They are based on the strict codes of behaviour that apply to Yemeni women, who are among the least educated and most cloistered in the world. Away from the concrete boxes of its outskirts, Tarim is an exotically beautiful town of merchants’ palaces and mud-brick mosques. But, unlike the male students, the girls 55 are not allowed to visit the fruit and vegetable market, drink Fanta in the couple of grill cafes or visit the tumbledown outdoor teahouse in the shade of the date palms. They leave the house only for short walks along the dust roads to prayer halls or lecture rooms, rarely after dark, and never alone. Outside, they wear the *abeyya*, a voluminous black robe, and the *niqab*, a double-layered black face-veil. 60 The unmarried women have no contact with men.

Late that night, as the girls prepare for bed or sit softly reciting the Qur’an, Iman, an American convert, takes me aside.

“You should wear *niqab* like we do. Then you won’t draw so much attention to yourself. None of us wear it at home, but when we’re here ...” 65

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