

394/01

**ENGLISH LANGUAGE**

**ELang4: Demonstrating Expertise in Writing**

P.M. THURSDAY, 15 June 2006

(2 Hours)

**ADDITIONAL MATERIALS**

In addition to this examination paper, you will need a 12 page answer book.

**INSTRUCTIONS TO CANDIDATES**

Answer **one** question, completing all three tasks: **(a)**, **(b)** and **(c)**.

**INFORMATION FOR CANDIDATES**

Both questions carry equal marks.

In this unit you will be assessed on your ability to:

- communicate clearly the knowledge, understanding and insight appropriate to the study of language, using appropriate terminology and accurate and coherent written expression;
- demonstrate expertise and accuracy in writing for a variety of specific purposes and audiences, drawing on knowledge of linguistic features to explain and comment on choices made;
- apply and explore frameworks for the systematic study of language at different levels, commenting on the usefulness of the approaches taken.

Remember that marking will take into account the quality of written communication used in your answers.

Answer **one** question only.

**Either,**

**1. Answer tasks (a), (b) and (c).**

Note that (a) and (b) each counts for a quarter of the marks, and (c) counts for half: you should divide your time accordingly.

Read Texts X and Y on pages 3, 4 and 5, and then complete the **three** tasks which follow.

The texts are about disasters in theatrical productions.

**TEXT X** is from *My Name Escapes Me: The Diary of a Retiring Actor* by Alec Guinness, first published in 1996. (Sir Alec Guinness was born in 1914, and was one of the leading actors of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century.)

**TEXT Y** is from *The Book of Heroic Failures* by Stephen Pile (first published in 1979) – ‘a book in praise of spectacular failure’. These extracts are from a section ironically entitled ‘The Glory of the Stage’.

**Tasks**

- (a) Imagine that you are a leading actor/actress writing your autobiography. **Write an autobiographical extract** recalling some memories of theatrical disasters in productions that you have seen or taken part in.
- Write in a style similar to that of Text X (by Alec Guinness).
  - You should take some details and ideas from Text Y (*The Book of Heroic Failures*), but you may use your imagination and invent extra details and characters.
  - The productions can be of any dramatic performance, e.g. play, musical etc., real or imagined. You do not have to use the same productions as Text Y.
  - Include reference to two different productions, and to individual performers, as Text X does.
  - Use an appropriate style and tenor (register) for an autobiographical extract, and use your own words as far as possible.

**Write the autobiographical extract in at least 200 words.** (25%)

- (b) Imagine that you are a theatre critic working for a local or national newspaper. You have seen a disastrous performance of a play or a musical or other staged production. **Write your review of this performance.**

- You should take some details and ideas from Texts X and/or Y, but you may use your imagination and invent extra details and different examples of disaster if you wish.
- The performance can be of any play, musical, or other staged production, real or imagined. You do not have to use the same productions as Text Y.
- You may set the performance in any year you like (from 2006 back to the late eighteenth century), but you must write your review in modern English.
- As well as describing what was disastrous, you must give your opinions and reactions. These could be amused, angry, outraged, etc. Remember that you are writing to guide and entertain your audience, as well as to inform them.
- Use an appropriate style and tenor (register) for a theatre review, and use your own words as far as possible.

**Write the theatre review in at least 200 words.** (25%)

- (c) **Analyse and comment on the main features of language and style** in the texts you have produced. You should use appropriate terminology and draw on your knowledge of linguistic features and frameworks to explain and comment on your language choices and features of appropriate written style. Comment very briefly on any features of language in Texts X and Y that may have influenced you in any way.

**Write at least 400 words.**

(50%)

**TEXT X** (from *My Name Escapes Me: The Diary of a Retiring Actor* by Alec Guinness)  
By permission of the Estate of Sir Alec Guinness.

The pier theatre [Eastbourne] burned down twenty years ago but I well remember two productions, both appalling, which I saw there in 1930 and 1931. The first was Ben Greet's very lazy offering of *Julius Caesar*, in which it was obvious that most of the men had spent the day sunbathing on the beach; they were scarlet except for white areas, revealed by togas or Roman armour, where their one-piece bathing costumes with shoulder straps had protected them. Ben Greet himself shuffled around as Casca and you caught glimpses of his rolled-up trousers under his costume.

The other production was *The Merchant of Venice* with the old (as it seemed to me) actor-manager Henry Baynton as Shylock. He looked remarkably like the photographs of Irving<sup>1</sup> in the part. I was rather impressed. He made very sinuous gestures with his right arm by way of greeting and these I practised (and got to perfection) in the cricket pavilion through most of a summer term. I had no interest in cricket. Baynton, sadly, was a lush<sup>2</sup>. It was at Worthing, I think, and not at Eastbourne, that he presented his *Macbeth*. On a memorable night of high winds, crashing waves and lashing rain he decided there was time for him to battle his way to the nearest pub while Malcolm and Macduff set about their long tedious scene together, which was followed by Lady M prowling about in her sleep. No *Macbeth* appeared when Lady M left the stage washing her hands. After a considerable pause the lady stage-manager stepped before the curtain and announced to the bewildered audience – mostly schoolchildren who were studying the play for exams – ‘You can go home now. That is where the play ends.’ So they left, raincoated and capped, doubled up against the elements. Imagine their fright when they saw, blown towards them, the figure of *Macbeth* in Viking helmet and cross-gartering, black wig flying and beard awry. In a rather hurt actor-laddie voice he called out to them. ‘What? Going home so soon?’ He staggered on his lonely way.

<sup>1</sup>Irving: Sir Henry Irving, a famous Victorian actor      <sup>2</sup>lush: a drunkard

TEXT Y (from *The Book of Heroic Failures* by Stephen Pile)

### THE WORST MISHAP IN A STAGE PRODUCTION

There were historic scenes at the first and last night of 'Ecarte' at the Old Globe Theatre, London, in 1870. The play, written by theatre enthusiast Lord Newry, was laughed off the stage before the end.

Its failure was almost certainly due to a picnic scene early in the course of the play, for which Lord Newry, out of generosity and a concern for realism, provided hampers from Fortnum and Mason. These contained whole roast chickens, perigord pies, truffles and an unlimited supply of real champagne.

The cast drank freely and soon there was much joking amongst them which was quite inaudible to the audience. Then Miss Nita Nicotina, the leading lady, forgot her words and, in an effort to recall them, gave a silly grin to the paying customers. Soon they were laughing, bumping into the props and leaning against scenery which would not support their weight. Then the (Australian) male lead, Mr Fairclough, started shouting all his lines and kept this up until he appeared to go to sleep.

In the next scene Nita appeared wearing one green and one red boot, whereupon the audience gave a yell of derisive laughter. This annoyed the actress who walked towards the footlights and said, 'What are you laughing at you beastly fools? When you have done making idiots of yourselves, I will go on with this (hiccup) beastly play.' This sealed the show's fate. The audience, now faced with a contingent of well-fed and cantankerous drunks, laughed and booed the play to a premature end.

### THE WORST SHOW

This was the 'Intimate Review' which opened and closed at the Duchess Theatre, London, on March 11<sup>th</sup> 1930. When the curtain rose the stage was so cluttered that there was hardly any space for the actors. Each sketch had so much scenery that any set change took up to 20 minutes. The audience was always getting glimpses of things they were not meant to. Every time the curtains parted, squads of scene shifters might be seen in action or in precipitate flight.

When this happened the first time, it was amusing, but when it happened every time a sketch started, audience hysteria set in. Each time the curtains opened, there were the scene shifters, as horrified as before. They looked up like terrified moles disturbed by torchlight and raced once more for the safety of the wings.

Then came Miss Florence McHugh's totally incomprehensible 'Hawaiian Idyll' in which, dressed as a dusky maiden, she paced the beach, hymning the pains of love. All would have been well except that, clearly visible through a transparent blue backdrop, two scene shifters were at war in the sea behind her.

At this rate the finale would have been on stage at about dawn, so the management moved straight to the final number. Six dancers, meant to represent Greek nymphs, lumbered hither and thither as best they could beneath the weight of monstrously large head-dresses. In one inspired manoeuvre two of the head-dresses became entangled, leaving Miss Florence McHugh, whose bravery was agreed upon by all the critics next morning, to sing the closing song, while other nymphs tried to untangle the unfortunate pair.

## THE LEAST SUCCESSFUL PRODUCTION

In the closing years of the eighteenth century Mr George Frederick Cooke, the actor, became too drunk to play the principal role in Charles Macklin's 'Love a la Mode' at the Covent Garden Theatre. This made possible one of the few occasions when a play has been performed in public without its major character. After a brief discussion the cast decided to go on with the drama despite the absence of Sir Archy Macsarcasm, the play's main wit. During the performance the heroine, Charlotte, appeared more in need of an analyst than a suitor since she seemed to be in the permanent grip of an all-embracing hysteria. In one scene she was sitting alone on stage and had to say the following lines:

Charlotte: Ha ha ha! Pray how do you make that out?

Sir Archy: .....

Charlotte: Ha ha ha.

Act II contained a choice moment when the entire cast laughed ('All: Ha ha ha!') for no reason at all. It also had Mordecai embracing thin air twice and Sir Callaghan fighting the world's first unaccompanied duel. He was interrupted in this venture, when Charlotte entered and said: 'Oh bless me, what are you doing?'

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20 Powis Mews, London W11 1JN.*

**Or,**

**2. Answer tasks (a), (b) and (c).**

*Note that (a) and (b) each counts for a quarter of the marks, and (c) counts for half: you should divide your time accordingly.*

*Read Texts X and Y on pages 8 and 9, and then complete the **three** tasks which follow.*

**Texts X and Y** both provide information about the Royal Navy in the late 18<sup>th</sup> and early 19<sup>th</sup> centuries.

**Text X** is about the form of recruitment known as the Press Gang.

**Text Y** is about life on board a warship (man-of-war) of the time.

**Tasks**

- (a) Imagine that you are a young man in the late 18<sup>th</sup> or early 19<sup>th</sup> century, in your late teens, and have unwillingly become a member of the crew of a Royal Navy warship, having fallen victim to the Press Gang. You are able to read and write, and have decided to keep a journal, when you can find the time and privacy, to record your experiences.

**Write the opening of this journal.**

- You should include some brief reference to how you were press-ganged, but you should mainly focus on your initial experiences during your first week or so on board ship.
- Write in modern English, using appropriate lexis, grammar and syntax.
- Use the information provided in Texts X and Y. You must not alter any factual details, but you may interpret and use the details imaginatively, and may invent characters and add a few minor details if you wish.
- You should not try to cover everything, but you should select appropriate aspects and details that you would want to remember.
- Convey your feelings and thoughts about your experiences and situation.
- Use your own words as far as possible.

**Write the opening of the journal in at least 200 words.**

(25%)

- (b) Imagine that you are living in the late 18<sup>th</sup> or early 19<sup>th</sup> century, and feel very strongly that The Impress Service should be abolished. **Write a letter to a quality national newspaper** attacking the system of using Press Gangs to recruit men into the navy.

- Write your letter in modern English, though of course everything relates to the late 18<sup>th</sup> or early 19<sup>th</sup> century.
- You should use appropriate facts and information from Text X, (The Impress Service), but you are free to interpret and present these as you wish.
- Aim to present a strongly-worded but reasoned and clearly argued case, showing that the Impress system should not be allowed to continue.
- If you wish you may suggest alternative methods of providing the navy with adequate manpower, or improvements to the system.
- Use an appropriate style and tenor (register) for a letter to a quality national newspaper, and use your own words as far as possible.

**Write the letter in at least 200 words.**

(25%)

- (c) **Analyse and comment on the main features of language and style** in the texts you have produced. You should use appropriate terminology and draw on your knowledge of linguistic features and frameworks to explain and comment on your language choices and stylistic features. Comment very briefly on any language features in Texts X and Y that may have influenced you in any way.

**Write at least 400 words.**

(50%)

## TEXT X

**The Impress Service**

The Royal Navy always had trouble recruiting enough men to man all the ships. This was especially so in wartime. In 1794 the size of the Navy was increased from 45,000 to 85,000, and in 1799 to 120,000. One means by which the Navy gained seamen was the Impress Service.

The Impress Service covered every port in Great Britain. Each major port had a captain in charge, while smaller ports had a lieutenant. These officers were rarely seagoing men. The Senior Officer, known as the Regulating Officer, would hire some of the local hard men as 'gangers', to form the Press Gang (on land the Press Gang was rarely formed by sailors).

If a man volunteered for the Navy, he would receive a bounty of conduct money and two months' wages in advance, from which he was expected to buy clothes and a hammock from the Purser. Frequently a man taken by the Press Gang would be offered the chance to volunteer and so receive this bounty. He would then be entered on the ship's muster book as 'V' instead of 'P' for 'pressed'. Volunteers in fact made up the backbone of the Navy. 'Better one volunteer than three pressed men' was an expression used widely at the time. Joining the navy was also a way to escape from the threat of the debtors' prison. The navy would protect any man from his creditors if his debt was less than £20.

The Impress Service sent out press gangs of 8 to 12 men, with an officer, to locate anyone between 18 and 55 with sea experience (often interpreted very broadly), and try to convince them to join the navy. Frequently the age limits were ignored. Very few could be persuaded, so they were forced (pressed) into Navy service. Some of the techniques used to secure crews for the King's ships were: knocking unconscious, threatening with sword, pistol and musket, and plying with alcohol.

When a press gang found a volunteer, they were offered the "King's Shilling", a bounty for joining. Some men would join, get the bounty, then escape to do it all over again. Others would find a shilling slipped in their pocket and find someone saying that they had taken the King's Shilling and therefore were under contract to serve in the military. Others would find a shilling at the bottom of their tankard of ale and, since they were in possession of the King's shilling, they were in the military. This led some landlords to use glass bottom tankards.

Being one of the gangers was perhaps the only sure fire way of not being pressed. The Gang was sent out and roamed the surrounding countryside in search of suitable recruits. The members of the gang were paid money for travel, (3 pence per mile for officers, one penny for men), and money for men pressed: anything up to ten shillings. The scope for corruption was large; many men would bribe their way out of the gang's clutches. For a prosperous man a £10 bribe to the press gang was a small price to pay for his continued liberty.

Avoidance of the Press Gang was a practised art form and gangers were unlikely to pick up many men by storming around a town, flaming brands in hand. Sometimes there were near riots, and running battles were frequently fought between the Press Gang and locals, often trying to retrieve a man captured by the Gang. Local mayors were often hostile and some threatened to throw Press Gang officers into prison. The civil authorities on shore would often do everything in their power to disrupt the operations of the Press Gang.

In fact, most men, especially the best seamen, were obtained afloat. It was legal to target seamen from merchant ships, on inward bound voyages, but not on outgoing ones. Enough men had to be left to navigate the ship. Some smart captains found ways to gain seamen from merchant ships and get rid of troublemakers and malcontents. They would board a merchant ship at sea and press the best seamen, replacing them with the worst men they had on their war ships. As long as men were replaced, this was legal.

Note: Britain was at war with France for most of the years 1793-1815.



## TEXT Y

**Life on board a man-of-war**

The vast majority of the crew lived amongst the guns on cramped, dark and dank gun decks. Hundreds of men (over 800 on *HMS Victory*) lived side by side in all conditions. The only light on the lower decks was from lanterns or from open gun ports – which at sea were kept tightly shut to keep the decks watertight and dry. At night each man slung his hammock. Each man was allowed 21 inches of space for his hammock – set by the spreader bar at the head and feet. In the morning, the crew would be awakened with the call to ‘lash up and stow’ their hammocks, clearing space for the day’s work. Hammocks were rolled tightly and stowed around the weather deck in the netting above the bulwarks. Canvas covers kept the hammocks dry.

Hammocks provided a crude form of liferaft – if a man went overboard he could be thrown a rolled hammock to keep himself afloat. If a man died, he would be sewn into his hammock and then tipped over the side, weighted down with a shot ball.

Discipline on the lower decks was strictly enforced. Even small misdemeanours were rewarded with what, today, seem particularly harsh penalties. Discipline was based on the fear of the consequences if an order was not carried out immediately and exactly. For answering back a man might be ‘gagged’ – an iron bar lashed across his mouth. For minor offences he could be ‘put in irons’ – locked into ankle shackles on an exposed deck, open to all weathers.

Flogging was commonplace – with offenders being lashed across an upturned grating on the quarter deck with the *cat o’ nine tails* (a length of rope unravelled and plaited into nine strands). Even a few lashes were enough to open the skin to the bone below – some men died having been sentenced to hundreds of lashes. The entire ship’s company was mustered to witness punishment being carried out – as a lesson to all.

Serious offenders were executed – by being hanged at the yardarm at 8.00am. A noose would be placed around the offender’s head and then his shipmates would pull sharply on the rope to sway his body up to the foremast yard arm – the *yard arm dance*. There it would remain for an hour before the body was taken down, wrapped in its hammock and buried at sea.

There was a galley for cooking food, but at sea most food was eaten cold. The galley stove was only lit in calm weather. The crew ate at tables folded down between the guns in groups of 8 to 12 men known as a ‘mess’. These groups became ‘mess-mates’. They took it in turns to collect the food for the mess and carry it back to their mess-mates.

As water rapidly became stagnant, there was a daily ration of 8 pints (one gallon) of beer per man, and in addition  $\frac{1}{2}$  pint of rum, served as  $\frac{1}{4}$  pint twice a day, mixed with three parts water – known as grog. Grog made the water drinkable and the food taste better! On four days a week each man received two pounds of salt pork or salt beef, and on the other three, (very hard) cheese and oatmeal. In addition there was a daily ration of a loaf of bread or one pound of biscuit. Weevils and maggots infested the biscuits – men were advised to eat biscuit with their eyes closed so that they did not see the soft bits! Despite the poor condition of food, many seamen would still have eaten better and more than they would have at home where agriculture was struggling to feed an increasing population.

Fires were not allowed, so there was no smoking. Tobacco could be chewed and spat out into a tub. The deck had to be frequently scrubbed, on hands and knees. Tattooing was one way of passing the time at sea. It was done with a needle and then ink or ash was rubbed into the wounds to make it permanent. The favourites were the names of ships and sweethearts. After years at sea some of the sailors ended up nearly covered in tattoos.