

# English Literature Admissions Test

**4501/11**

**Wednesday 4<sup>th</sup> November 2009**

**1 hour 30 minutes**

## Instructions to Candidates

**Please read this page carefully, but do not open the question paper until told to do so.**

A separate 8 page answer booklet is provided. Please check you have one.

Write your ELAT candidate number, centre number, date of birth and name in the spaces provided on the answer booklet. Please write very clearly.

You should allow at least 30 minutes for reading this question paper, making notes and preparing your answer.

At the end of the examination, you must hand in both your answer booklet and this question paper. Any rough notes or plans that you make should only be written in your answer booklet.

No texts, dictionaries or sources of reference may be brought into the examination.

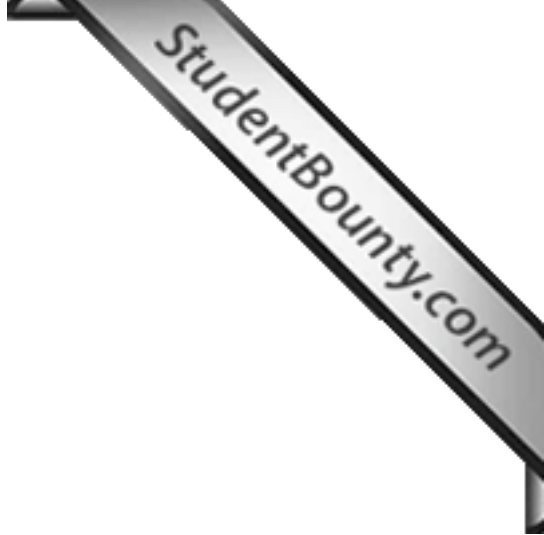


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*This paper consists of 8 printed pages and 4 blank pages.*

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*Time allowed: 1 hour 30 minutes.*

*You should spend at least 30 minutes reading and annotating the passages and in preparing your answer.*

**The following poems and extracts from longer texts are all concerned, directly or obliquely, with time, transience and mortality. They are arranged in reverse chronological order, the most recent first. Read all the material carefully, and then complete the task below. You are advised to spend at least 30 minutes in planning and preparing your essay.**

- (a) 'For Many Hours there's been an Old Couple Standing at that Window', (2005), a poem by Alice Oswald *page 4*
- (b) From the novel by Joseph Conrad, *The Secret Agent* (1907) *page 5*
- (c) 'Because I could not stop for Death', a poem by the American poet Emily Dickinson (1830-1886) *page 6*
- (d) From a short story by Charles Dickens, *Master Humphrey's Clock* (1840) *page 7*
- (e) 'On Time' (1645), a poem by John Milton *page 8*
- (f) From the play *Troilus and Cressida* (1602) by William Shakespeare *page 9*

***Task:***

**Select two or three of the passages (a) to (f) and compare and contrast them in any ways that seem interesting to you, paying particular attention to distinctive features of structure, language and style. In your introduction, indicate *briefly* what you intend to explore or illustrate through close reading of your chosen passages.**

*This task is designed to assess your responsiveness to unfamiliar literary material and your skills in close reading. Marks are not awarded for references to other texts or authors you have studied.*

- (a) 'For Many Hours there's been an Old Couple Standing at that Window', (2005), a poem by Alice Oswald

London: Faber and Faber 2005

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**(b) From the novel by Joseph Conrad, *The Secret Agent* (1907)**

'Come here,' he said in a peculiar tone, which might have been the tone of brutality, but was intimately known to Mrs. Verloc as the note of wooing.

5 She started forward at once, as if she were still a loyal woman bound to that man by an unbroken contract. Her right hand skimmed slightly the end of the table, and when she had passed on towards the sofa the carving knife had vanished without the slightest sound from the side of the dish. Mr. Verloc heard the creaky plank in the floor, and was content. He waited. Mrs. Verloc was coming. As if the homeless soul of Stevie had flown for shelter straight to the breast of his sister, guardian, and protector, the resemblance of her face with that of her brother grew at every step, even to the droop of the lower lip, even to the slight divergence of the eyes. But Mr. Verloc did not see that. He was lying on his back and staring upwards. He saw partly on the ceiling and partly on the wall the moving shadow of an arm with a clenched hand holding a carving knife. It flickered up and down. Its movements were leisurely. They were leisurely enough for Mr. Verloc to recognize the limb and the weapon.

15 They were leisurely enough for him to take in the full meaning of the portent, and to taste the flavour of death rising in his gorge. His wife had gone raving mad—murdering mad. They were leisurely enough for the first paralyzing effect of this discovery to pass away before a resolute determination to come out victorious from the ghastly struggle with that armed lunatic. They were leisurely enough for Mr. Verloc to elaborate a plan of  
20 defence involving a dash behind the table, and the felling of the woman to the ground with a heavy wooden chair. But they were not leisurely enough to allow Mr. Verloc the time to move either hand or foot. The knife was already planted in his breast. It met no resistance on its way. Hazard has such accuracies. Into that plunging blow, delivered over the side of the couch, Mrs. Verloc had put all the inheritance of her immemorial  
25 and obscure descent, the simple ferocity of the age of caverns, and the unbalanced nervous fury of the age of bar-rooms. Mr. Verloc, the Secret Agent, turning slightly on his side with the force of the blow, expired without stirring a limb, in the muttered sound of the word "Don't" by way of protest.

30 Mrs. Verloc had let go the knife, and her extraordinary resemblance to her late brother had faded, had become very ordinary now. She drew a deep breath, the first easy breath since Chief Inspector Heat had exhibited to her the labelled piece of Stevie's overcoat. She leaned forward on her folded arms over the side of the sofa. She adopted that easy attitude not in order to watch or gloat over the body of Mr. Verloc, but because of the undulatory and swinging movements of the parlour, which for some time behaved  
35 as though it were at sea in a tempest. She was giddy but calm. She had become a free woman with a perfection of freedom which left her nothing to desire and absolutely nothing to do, since Stevie's urgent claim on her devotion no longer existed. Mrs. Verloc, who thought in images, was not troubled now by visions, because she did not think at all. And she did not move. She was a woman enjoying her complete  
40 irresponsibility and endless leisure, almost in the manner of a corpse. She did not move, she did not think. Neither did the mortal envelope of the late Mr. Verloc reposing on the sofa.

(c) 'Because I could not stop for Death', a poem by the American poet Emily Dickinson (1830-1886)

Because I could not stop for Death  
He kindly stopped for me;  
The carriage held but just ourselves  
And Immortality.

5 We slowly drove, he knew no haste,  
And I had put away  
My labor, and my leisure too,  
For his civility.

10 We passed the school, where children strove  
At recess, in the ring;  
We passed the fields of gazing grain,  
We passed the setting sun.

15 Or rather, he passed us;  
The dews grew quivering and chill,  
For only gossamer my gown,  
My tippet only tulle.

20 We paused before a house that seemed  
A swelling of the ground;  
The roof was scarcely visible,  
The cornice but a mound.

Since then 'tis centuries, and yet each  
Feels shorter than the day  
I first surmised the horses' heads  
Were toward eternity.

**(d) From a short story by Charles Dickens, *Master Humphrey's Clock* (1840)**

Well, well, - all these sorrows are past. My glancing at them may not be without its use, for it may help in some measure to explain why I have all my life been attached to the inanimate objects that people my chamber, and how I have come to look upon them rather in the light of old and constant friends, than as mere chairs and tables which a little money could replace at will.

Chief and first among all these is my Clock, - my old, cheerful, companionable Clock. How can I ever convey to others an idea of the comfort and consolation that this old Clock has been for years to me!

It is associated with my earliest recollections. It stood upon the staircase at home (I call it home still mechanically), nigh sixty years ago. I like it for that; but it is not on that account, nor because it is a quaint old thing in a huge oaken case curiously and richly carved, that I prize it as I do. I incline to it as if it were alive, and could understand and give me back the love I bear it. And what other thing that has not life could cheer me as it does? what other thing that has not life (I will not say how few things that have) could have proved the same patient, true, untiring friend? How often have I sat in the long winter evenings feeling such society in its cricket-voice, that raising my eyes from my book and looking gratefully towards it, the face reddened by the glow of the shining fire has seemed to relax from its staid expression and to regard me kindly! how often in the summer twilight, when my thoughts have wandered back to a melancholy past, have its regular whisperings recalled them to the calm and peaceful present! how often in the dead tranquillity of night has its bell broken the oppressive silence, and seemed to give me assurance that the old clock was still a faithful watcher at my chamber-door! My easy-chair, my desk, my ancient furniture, my very books, I can scarcely bring myself to love even these last like my old clock.

It stands in a snug corner, midway between the fireside and a low arched door leading to my bedroom. Its fame is diffused so extensively throughout the neighbourhood, that I have often the satisfaction of hearing the publican, or the baker, and sometimes even the parish-clerk, petitioning my housekeeper (of whom I shall have much to say by-and-by) to inform him the exact time by Master Humphrey's clock. My barber, to whom I have referred, would sooner believe it than the sun.

(e) 'On Time' (1645), a poem by John Milton

Fly envious *Time*, till thou run out thy race.  
Call on the lazy leaden-stepping hours,  
Whose speed is but the heavy Plummets pace;  
And glut thy self with what thy womb devours,  
5 Which is no more than what is false and vain,  
And meerly mortal dross;  
So little is our loss,  
So little is thy gain.  
For when as each thing bad thou hast entomb'd,  
10 And last of all, thy greedy self consum'd,  
Then long Eternity shall greet our bliss  
With an individual kiss;  
And Joy shall overtake us as a flood,  
When every thing that is sincerely good  
15 And perfectly divine,  
With Truth, and Peace, and Love shall ever shine  
About the supreme Throne  
When once our heav'nly guided soul shall clime,  
Then all this Earthy grosnes quit,  
20 Attir'd with Stars, we shall for ever sit,  
Triumphing over Death, and Chance, and thee O Time.



(f) **From the play *Troilus and Cressida* (1602) by William Shakespeare****Achilles:** What, are my deeds forgot?**Ulysses:** Time hath, my lord, a wallet at his back,  
Wherein he puts alms for oblivion,  
A great-siz'd monster of ingratitude.

- 5 Those scraps are good deeds past, which are devour'd  
As fast as they are made, forgot as soon  
As done. Perseverance, dear my lord,  
Keeps honour bright; to have done is to hang  
Quite out of fashion, like a rusty mail
- 10 In monumental mock'ry. Take the instant way,  
For honour travels in a strait so narrow,  
Where one but goes abreast. Keep then the path,  
For emulation hath a thousand sons  
That one by one pursue. If you give way,
- 15 Or hedge aside from the direct forthright,  
Like to an ent'red tide, they all rush by  
And leave you hindmost;  
Or like a gallant horse fall'n in first rank,  
Lie there for pavement to the abject rear,
- 20 O'errun and trampled on. Then what they do in present,  
Though less than yours in past, must o'ertop yours;  
For Time is like a fashionable host  
That slightly shakes his parting guest by th' hand,  
And with his arms outstretch'd as he would fly,
- 25 Grasps in the comer. The welcome ever smiles,  
And farewell goes out sighing. Let not virtue seek  
Remuneration for the thing it was;  
For beauty, wit,  
High birth, vigour of bone, desert in service,
- 30 Love, friendship, charity, are subjects all  
To envious and calumniating Time.  
One touch of nature makes the whole world kin,  
That all with one consent praise new-born gawds,  
Though they are made and moulded of things past,
- 35 And give to dust, that is a little gilt,  
More laud than gilt o'erdusted.  
The present eye praises the present object.

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