

HONG KONG EXAMINATIONS AND ASSESSMENT AUTHORITY  
HONG KONG DIPLOMA OF SECONDARY EDUCATION EXAMINATION

## SAMPLE PAPER

(Applicable to 2016 Examination)

### LITERATURE IN ENGLISH PAPER 1

#### Essay Writing

8.30 am – 11.30 am (3 hours)

Candidates must answer **THREE** questions, two from different sections in Part I and one from Part II. All answers should be written in the **DSE(A)** answer book.

*Candidates must demonstrate knowledge of ALL the genres in the syllabus, but should feel free to include references to other books and films where relevant.*

Material used in one answer should not be repeated in another.

Each question carries 33 marks.

**Part I** (30% of the subject mark)

Answer **two** questions from Part I. Each question must be from a different section.

**Section A: Novel**

***To Kill a Mockingbird***

1. How is your understanding of *To Kill a Mockingbird* influenced by the fact that the narrator is a child when the events in the novel take place?
2. Discuss what *To Kill a Mockingbird* has to say about the theme of education.

***Lord of the Flies***

3. Discuss how the description of the boys' clothing and appearance contributes to our understanding of their characters.
4. Imagine that Ralph decides to write a letter to Piggy's aunt after the events of the novel to express his sympathy and to tell her why she should be proud of her nephew. Write the letter.

**Section B: Play**

***Othello***

5. To what extent are Iago's pessimistic views about human nature confirmed by other characters' actions?
6. What is the effect of making the action involving the handkerchief such an important element of the plot?

***The Crucible***

7. "*The Crucible* presents religion as corrupt and destructive." To what extent do you agree with this statement?
8. Imagine that Reverend Hale keeps a diary. Write two entries in which he expresses how and why his thoughts and feelings change throughout the course of the events presented in the play.

**Section C: Film**

***The Painted Veil***

9. "*The Painted Veil* often exploits Western stereotypes about China; the director could have done more to challenge these stereotypes." Do you agree?
10. How are location and set design used to help to tell the story in *The Painted Veil*?

***Life of Pi***

11. How are Pi's ideas about religion and faith visually presented in *Life of Pi*?
12. How do Pi's experiences in India prepare him for the challenges he faces when he is cast adrift in the Pacific Ocean?

**Section D: Short Stories**

***Fiction: A Pocket Anthology***

13. Compare how the relationships between mothers and children are presented in any **TWO** of the short stories that you have studied.
14. Of the short stories that you have studied, which do you think have the most shocking endings? How are these endings foreshadowed? Refer to at least **TWO** stories in your answer.

**Part II** (20% of the subject mark)

Answer **one** question from this part. You must choose a question which allows you to write about the genres you have **not** covered in Part I.

15. “Maturity is the ability to understand how other people feel.” Discuss this statement with reference to any **THREE** of the set texts.
16. The idea of honour is very important in many of the set texts. Choose at least **TWO** of the set texts and discuss how characters attempt to protect their honour and with what consequences.
17. With reference to any **TWO** of the set texts that you have studied, discuss how the opening scenes establish the atmosphere for the rest of the texts.
18. “Many of the texts present beliefs and attitudes that people in the 21st century will find it difficult to relate to.” Discuss this statement with reference to any **TWO** set texts.
19. Discuss how any **TWO** of the set texts that you have studied leave themselves open to more than one interpretation.
20. What do any **TWO** of your set texts have to say about the law and justice?
21. With reference to any **TWO** of your set texts, discuss why men and women find it difficult to understand each other. What are the consequences of this?
22. Which characters from your set texts do you think are the most courageous? Why? Discuss **TWO** or **THREE** characters from different texts in your answer.

**END OF PAPER**

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LITERATURE IN ENGLISH PAPER 1 (Essay Writing)

(Applicable to 2016 Examination)

MARKING SCHEME

A. **General**

Each question carries 33 content marks. The marks are to be allotted as follows:

<b>Unsatisfactory</b>	Inadequate, rudimentary organisation and/or knowledge of the text shown; only partially relevant content.	1 – 6
<b>Elementary</b>	Only partly adequate. Errors of fact likely. Sometimes inaccurate reference to the text. Shows knowledge of text but cannot always tailor it to question.	7 – 13
<b>Acceptable</b>	Answers the question at a fairly superficial level with evidence of insight. Largely relevant facts; adequate and mostly accurate.	14 – 20
<b>Good</b>	Coping easily with the topic and showing some depth of understanding, with meaningful reference to the text.	21 – 27
<b>Excellent</b>	A well-developed answer showing a full and intelligent grasp of the topic, with arguments well-supported by reference to the text.	28 – 33

- B.
- (i) In general, if the candidate only answers one out of two parts of what is required, the candidate should automatically be moved down one category.
  - (ii) Markers should note that their task is to allocate a mark following the detailed guidelines on the basis of CONTENT, taking into account how effectively the candidate has communicated the answer. Markers should give marks for what candidates have written and not deduct marks for what they have not written.
  - (iii) Each answer must be considered on its own merits. The points mentioned in the Marking Scheme are not exclusive. Other points and other acceptable interpretations in an answer must be given equal consideration. THE MARKING SCHEME IS FOR REFERENCE ONLY AND IS NOT INTENDED TO BE EXHAUSTIVE.
  - (iv) With regard to effective communication, markers will NOT be expected to look at a candidate's work from the point of view of language accuracy by underlining spelling mistakes, wrong verb tenses and similar grammatical errors. Instead, emphasising the ability to communicate effectively will mean rewarding those candidates who can answer coherently, lay out an explanation in a manner that is logical and easy to follow, and argue a case or give an opinion in a rational and lucid fashion.
  - (v) The mark for an answer in note form which fulfils the requirements of a certain grade should be moved one category lower.
  - (vi) The quality of handwriting should not affect marking, except when it is so poor that it is illegible.

**Part I**

**Section A: Novel**

***To Kill a Mockingbird***

1. Although the novel is narrated by an adult Jean Louise Finch recollecting her childhood experiences, most of the time we see the events in the novel through the eyes of an innocent and at times naive child, and these events are all the more shocking for being presented from a child's perspective. Scout, who has a childlike belief in moral certainties, is too young to understand the causes of the prejudice in her community. Through the course of the novel we see her gradually maturing as a result of her experiences, coming to terms with the realisation that society is not always just and that people whom she respects can be morally flawed, and that the world is more complex than she imagined as a child. Despite – or perhaps because of - her youth, Scout is able to understand what many adults in Maycomb fail to see and to point out what adults dare not admit – that convicting an innocent man because of his race is wrong. By using the voice of a child who has not been tainted by her community's prejudices, Harper Lee is able to offer a powerful critique of racial discrimination.
2. A good approach would be to contrast the formal education which Scout receives at school with the informal education she receives from her father and from her wider experiences. Scout is quickly disillusioned by school. Her teacher is narrow-minded and insensitive, reprimanding her for learning to read outside of school and failing to understand Maycomb society. The reader is given the impression that formal schooling preserves and promotes discrimination rather than encouraging children to think for themselves and challenge their community's prejudices. Scout learns much more from her father, and an essential part of her education is learning to see the world from other people's perspectives. For example, she is ordered to read to Mrs. Dubose so as to make her understand that a woman she had only seen as cruel and vindictive was in fact an example of courage, battling against morphine addiction. Atticus avoids patronising his children and does not conceal unpleasant realities from them. Aunt Alexandra offers a different perspective on education, as she is eager to teach Scout to be ladylike and to be aware of her social background. Whereas Atticus is most concerned about encouraging his children to understand and be compassionate towards other people, Aunt Alexandra seems to believe that the main goal of education is to preserve good 'breeding' and to be socially respectable. Harper Lee is more sympathetic with Atticus' approach to education than with Aunt Alexandra's.

*Lord of the Flies*

3. A good starting-point might be to contrast Ralph's and Jack's clothes and grooming and their attitude towards these. Ralph is constantly self-conscious about his increasingly dishevelled state, and often entertains thoughts such as wishing that he had clean clothes or a toothbrush or worrying about his sweatiness or unkempt hair. In contrast, Jack eagerly abandons the trappings of civilised dress and grooming, choosing to go naked and paint himself like a 'savage'. This reflects Ralph's preoccupation with 'decency' and his increasingly ineffectual attempts to maintain civilised behaviour among the boys, as well as Jack's rejection of civilised values in favour of the liberating possibilities offered by savagery.

It might also be worth considering whether the boys always conform to the stereotypical expectations readers might have about them based upon their appearance. For example, Ralph is at first introduced as strong and attractive, with a "golden body" and a figure that "might make a boxer" but is ultimately weak and vacillating. Piggy is at first presented as short, very fat, dressed in a "greasy windbreaker" and "thick spectacles", but despite being the object of bullying from the other boys he becomes a voice of reason and ultimately Ralph thinks of him as his "true, wise friend".

For much of the novel, Golding describes the boys as they see themselves and each other; it is only at the end of the novel when the naval officer arrives on the island that they are presented to us through the eyes of an adult. This allows Golding to abruptly shift focus, shocking readers by reminding them that the atrocities that have taken place on the island have been carried out by 'little boys'.

4. This question requires candidates to show their knowledge of Piggy's role in the story but also to show an understanding of Ralph's perspective. Particularly good answers might try to imitate Ralph's style as well as incorporating quotations from the novel, and would try to convey Ralph's feelings of shame and grief at having failed to show Piggy respect and at having failed to protect him from the savages. Ralph might comment on Piggy's loyalty, his good advice and his belief in 'civilised' values, for example mentioning how Piggy suggested using the conch as a means of keeping order at meetings and how Piggy supported his attempts to build shelters and to maintain a signal fire. He might mention that Piggy died courageously, confronting the savages and sacrificing his life in an attempt to uphold the principles of justice and democracy represented by the conch.

Throughout the novel, we never find out Piggy's real name. However, in a letter of condolence it is unlikely that Ralph would be so insensitive as to refer to Piggy by his nickname; expressions such as 'your nephew' would be more appropriate.

**Section B: Play**

*Othello*

5. Many characters in the play behave in ways that support this statement. Indeed, Iago's success in manipulating people depends upon him having a very good understanding of how people think and of their weaknesses, and many of the characters in the play are deeply flawed in ways that provide Iago with easy targets for his plotting.

Roderigo is vain and naive, convinced that he can buy Desdemona's affection; Cassio is naive and suggestible, easily coaxed into getting drunk, into appealing for Desdemona's help and into boasting about his mistress. Most importantly, Iago realises that Othello is a man who can be controlled by passion rather than reason and whose judgment will give way to jealous rage if he is manipulated carefully enough.

Iago also expresses cynical views about the sincerity of Desdemona's love for Othello, but as he does so in order to manipulate Roderigo and Othello we cannot take his comments at face value. Perhaps the best example of Iago's cynicism being proved wrong is his belief that he can manipulate his wife into acting as an unwitting accomplice and that out of self interest she will not expose him. Iago is horrified to discover that his wife is braver and more principled than he had believed when she stands up to him and reveals his guilt at the end of the play.

6. Students should avoid simply telling the story by reciting a list of events involving the handkerchief, and should instead consider what it symbolises. The handkerchief is at one level, as Iago suggests, a "trifle, light as air" suggesting how easily Othello can be manipulated by trivialities, and thus how gullible and rash he is. However, it is also invested with several layers of symbolism. As a white sheet it is a symbol of chastity while the red strawberries on it may be interpreted as symbolising a virgin's blood shed on her wedding night. It is ominously dyed with mummy made from virgin's hearts, thus foreshadowing its part in the chaste Desdemona's death; Othello's revelation that the handkerchief is enchanted also possibly belies his earlier denial that he used witchcraft in order to win Desdemona's love.

For both Desdemona and Othello, the handkerchief symbolises their marriage: Desdemona attaches great sentimental value to it as her "first remembrance from the Moor" before Othello explains its symbolism, while Othello warns her that "to lose it or give it away were such perdition as nothing else could match." Much could be made of Othello telling Desdemona that her "napkin" is "too little" and telling her to "let it alone" after she drops it while trying to use it to comfort him; once Othello's jealousy has been provoked, Desdemona's love which is symbolized by the handkerchief is no longer enough to reassure her husband.

*The Crucible*

7. The Salem community's unquestioning acceptance of religious beliefs is easily manipulated by people such as Abigail and Thomas Putnam who know that by crying 'witch' they will be able to get revenge against their enemies. The people of Salem do not dare to challenge the authority of the church elders and judges who send their neighbours to their deaths, but it is debatable whether this acquiescence is due to their faith or a fear that if they condemn the trials they will also be accused.

In Reverend Parris we see a religious leader who is selfish, greedy, dishonest and corrupt. Danforth, because of his naive faith that God will not allow injustice, fails to examine the evidence presented to him critically and washes his hands of his responsibility for the people that he condemns by claiming to be merely an instrument of God's will. However, while Miller presents the leaders of the church as corrupt, he does not condemn religion entirely: religious belief also gives Rebecca Nurse the courage and determination to face her death fearlessly rather than giving a false confession, and Elizabeth's religious faith enables her to forgive her husband and offer him some comfort before his death.

8. This creative response question gives students an opportunity to show their understanding of a complex character whose beliefs are challenged by the events in the play. The most able students might attempt to write in the style of Reverend Hale, using 17th century language, as well as working quotations from the play into their writing. At the beginning of the play, Hale is self-confident and convinced of the justice of his work as a witch-hunter. When we discover that Hale is visiting the accused women without the authorisation of the court, it is suggested that he has doubts about their guilt. However, he is not prepared to condemn the trials because he has faith that ultimately God will not allow innocent people to be condemned as witches.

When Hale condemns the proceedings and storms out of the court in Act Three, and when he returns to urge people to save themselves by confessing even though he is convinced that they are innocent, we see that he has made a complete transition from being a zealous witch-hunter to being utterly disillusioned and ashamed to have innocent blood on his hands. A sensible approach would be to write two entries contrasting Hale's beliefs and feelings at the beginning and the end of the events in the play.



## Section C: Film

### *The Painted Veil*

9. As the film's principal characters are Westerners, the film shows how Westerners in the 1920s saw China. However, it does so without always endorsing these views. The townsfolk of Mei Tan Fu are presented as superstitious, suspicious of and hostile towards foreign interference and irrationally clinging to beliefs and practices that put their lives at risks such as insisting on burying their dead near the river although this contaminates the town's water supply. It could be argued that this is a crude stereotype and that the primary function of Mei Tan Fu is to provide a hostile, alien environment which creates an ordeal that Kitty must go through in order to achieve personal growth, and which allows Walter to demonstrate his superior scientific knowledge and decisiveness in order to become a sort of saviour of the benighted Chinese.

However, the film is careful to contrast the superstition and backwardness of the people of Mei Tan Fu with the sophistication and progressive vision of other Chinese characters, showing that Walter with his arrogant manner, lack of clinical experience and broken Chinese is completely out of his depth without the support of the Chinese doctor in Mei Tan Fu and of the nationalist officer Colonel Yu. The film also makes it clear that the hostility of the Chinese to Westerners is rooted in their experiences of colonial oppression such as the shooting of Chinese strikers or the convent's alleged practice of buying children. Similarly, Waddington expresses disapproval of Kitty's unconcealed discomfort at 'superstitious' behaviour such as Te-Ming performing a purification ritual, and his observation that "she has lost three children and a husband to the cholera so you can hardly blame her" invites Kitty to put what Te-Ming is doing into context and to empathise with her. It is up to the candidate to decide to what extent these features of the film make up for its use of Chinese stereotypes.

10. The film makes use of a large number of locations and sets, and students will only have time to discuss a few of these in their answer. A sensible approach might be to consider how location and set design mirror the changes in Kitty and Walter's relationship or Kitty's feelings of entrapment.

The establishing shots in the film show Kitty and Walter in a remote, rural Chinese setting surrounded by mountains which can be seen as symbolising their feelings of isolation. In later scenes in the film as Kitty and Walter reach a reconciliation and fall in love, beautiful and brightly-lit location shots of Chinese scenery contribute to the more positive atmosphere.

The design of Kitty's London home is opulent but dimly lit with heavy drapes, suggesting her wealthy background and her feeling of being trapped by her family. On moving to Shanghai, Kitty is unable to hide her disappointment on entering Walter's modestly furnished apartment, expressing surprise that he doesn't own a piano. The interior of the house in Mei Tan Fu is bare and squalid, its oppressiveness being reinforced by minimal lighting. The transition from opulence to squalor could be seen as reflecting Kitty's increasing feelings of disappointment and despair. On several occasions Kitty is shown through a barred window, framed by a doorway or shot from the other side of a screen or curtain, further suggesting her feelings of entrapment and detachment. However, in a later scene shot in the house in Mei Tan Fu, the room is dressed with simple furniture and domestic items and is lit by several oil lamps, reinforcing the warmer atmosphere as Kitty and Walter begin to admit their failings and become reconciled to each other.

### Life of Pi

11. A summary of Pi's ideas about religion and faith would not be sufficient to answer this question. Rather, it is necessary to look closely at scenes in which his religious ideas are presented and comment on how the use of cinematic elements such as setting, mise en scène, cinematography, and lighting contributes to the audience's impression of Pi's beliefs. For example, Pi's interest in religion is first presented when we are shown his childhood experiences of listening to a story about Krishna told by his mother and then reading the same story under his bed covers by torchlight. A close up shot of his eyes shows his sense of wonder and the camera zooms in to the panel in the comic in which Krishna is shown opening his mouth to reveal the universe, which then becomes animated, suggesting how the story has come alive in Pi's imagination. In a later scene when Pi is adrift on the Pacific and surrenders himself to God's will, he is shot from above against the background of an ocean lit by the golden light of early morning and so completely still that it reflects the clouds and it is impossible to distinguish sea from sky. In these and other scenes, religious experience is presented with beautiful images, suggesting that Pi is drawn to religion and faith by their beauty and their capacity to give him feelings of wonder and transcendence.
12. In answering this question, students should be careful to remember that Pi offers two conflicting accounts of what happens after the *Tsimtsum* sinks. While in India, Pi has learnt about animal behaviour, about how cruelty and aggression are part of survival, and about how animals can be trained. He has also learnt practical survival skills such as swimming. However, it would be inadequate only to discuss how Pi's experiences as a zookeeper's son prepare him for the challenge of surviving adrift with a tiger without acknowledging that this may be a fiction that Pi has created to cope with feelings of trauma and guilt. Pi's survival depends on much more than the practical skills that he has learnt in India; the faith that he has developed in India is at least as important as it stops him from giving in to despair. Also, if we choose to believe Pi's more prosaic later account of his experiences on the lifeboat, then we might consider how Pi's religious experiences in India have given him the ability to use his imagination in order to create a story that has made it possible for him to remain sane.

### Section D: Short Stories

#### *Fiction: A Pocket Anthology*

13. Many of the short stories deal with relationships between mothers and children. Often these relationships are fraught with tension and misunderstandings and are central to the narratives. As the question asks *how* the relationships are *presented*, a good answer would focus on how style and elements of narrative technique such as the narrator's point of view and reliability contribute to the presentation of the relationships.
14. In approaching this question, it would be advisable to distinguish between 'shocking' and 'unexpected' endings. We can anticipate that something dreadful is going to happen in a story and yet it can still have the power to shock and disturb us. For example, the violent ending of *The Lottery* is chilling even though on a second reading of the story we realise that there are many clues that would lead us to expect that something violent is going to happen. It is also worth considering how techniques such as foreshadowing and suspense interact: readers can be given a sense of foreboding as they are made aware that something shocking is going to happen but they do not know exactly what form this shocking event will take.

### Part II

As there is a large number of texts to choose from for this section of the paper the questions are very open and it is not possible to give anything more than very general guidance in how to handle such questions. Students should not feel that they have to agree with explicit or implicit assumptions in the questions. For example, while question 15 might lead to a straightforward discussion of examples of characters showing empathy, it might be more interesting to challenge the statement by arguing that immature characters can understand how other people feel but still be indifferent to their feelings, or only concerned about how their feelings can be manipulated. Where questions use two closely related terms – for example “beliefs and attitudes” in Question 18 or “law and justice” in Question 20, students should be careful to distinguish between these terms; for example there are many instances in the set texts of the law being used in an unjust way, or of justice being served outside of the mechanisms of the law.