



**ENGLISH A2 – STANDARD LEVEL – PAPER 1**  
**ANGLAIS A2 – NIVEAU MOYEN – ÉPREUVE 1**  
**INGLÉS A2 – NIVEL MEDIO – PRUEBA 1**

Thursday 3 May 2001 (afternoon)  
Jeudi 3 mai 2001 (après-midi)  
Jueves 3 de mayo de 2001 (tarde)

2 hours / 2 heures / 2 horas

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**INSTRUCTIONS TO CANDIDATES**

- Do not open this examination paper until instructed to do so.
- Section A consists of two passages for comparative commentary.
- Section B consists of two passages for comparative commentary.
- Choose either Section A or Section B. Write one comparative commentary.

**INSTRUCTIONS DESTINÉES AUX CANDIDATS**

- Ne pas ouvrir cette épreuve avant d'y être autorisé.
- La section A comporte deux passages à commenter.
- La section B comporte deux passages à commenter.
- Choisissez soit la section A soit la section B. Écrire un commentaire comparatif.

**INSTRUCCIONES PARA LOS ALUMNOS**

- No abra esta prueba hasta que se lo autoricen.
- En la Sección A hay dos fragmentos para comentar.
- En la Sección B hay dos fragmentos para comentar.
- Elija la Sección A o la Sección B. Escriba un comentario comparativo.

Choose either Section A or Section B.

### SECTION A

Analyse and compare the following two texts.

Discuss the similarities and differences between the texts and their theme(s). Include comments on the ways the authors use elements such as structure, tone, images and other stylistic devices to communicate their purposes.

#### Text 1 (a)

*Joseph Conrad writes to his literary agent who is waiting for the last part of his story 'The Rescue' which has already been sold to McClure, a New York publisher...*

I am ashamed of myself. I ought to have written to you before, but the fact is I have not written anything at all. When I received your letter I was in bed – this beastly nervous trouble. Since then I've been better but have been unable to write. I sit down religiously every morning. I sit down for eight hours every day – and the sitting down is all. In the  
5 course of that working day of eight hours I write three sentences which I erase before leaving the table in despair. There's not a single word to send you. Not one! And time passes – and McClure waits – not to speak of Eternity for which I don't care a damn. Of McClure however I am afraid.

I ask myself sometimes whether I am bewitched, whether I am the victim of an evil eye?  
10 I assure you – speaking soberly and on my word of honour – that sometimes it takes all my resolution and power of self-control to refrain from butting my head against the wall. I want to howl and foam at the mouth but I daren't do it for fear of waking the baby and alarming my wife; it's no joking matter. After such crises of despair I doze for hours still half conscious that there is that story I am unable to write. Then I wake up,  
15 try again – and at last go to bed completely done-up. So the days pass and nothing is done. At night I sleep. In the morning I get up with the horror of that powerlessness I must face through a day of vain efforts.

You know how bad it is when one *feels* one's liver, or lungs. Well, I feel my brain. I am distinctly conscious of the contents of my head. My story is there in a fluid – in an  
20 evading shape. I can't get hold of it. It is all there – to bursting, yet I can't get hold of it – no more than you can grasp a handful of water.

From a letter by Joseph Conrad to Edward Garnett (March 29, 1898)

**Text 1 (b)**

How does one know that one day he will take wing, that like the humming bird he will quiver in mid-air and dazzle with iridescent sheen<sup>1</sup>? One doesn't. One hopes and prays and bashes one's head against the wall. But "it" knows. *It* can bide its time. *It* knows that all the errors, all the detours, all the failures and frustrations will be turned to account. To be born an eagle one must get accustomed to high places; to be born a writer one must learn to like privation, suffering, humiliation. Above all, one must learn to live apart. Like the sloth<sup>2</sup>, the writer clings to his limb while beneath him life surges by steady, persistent, tumultuous. When ready plop! he falls into the stream and battles for life. Is it not something like that? Or is there a fair, smiling land where at an early age the budding writer is taken aside, instructed in his art, guided by loving masters and, instead of falling thwack into mid-stream he glides like an eel<sup>3</sup> through sludge, mire and ooze?

I had time unending for such vagaries<sup>4</sup> in the course of my daily routine; like poplars that sprung up beside me as I laboured in thought, as I walked the streets for inspiration, or as I put my head on the pillow to drown myself in sleep. What a wonderful life, the literary life! I would sometimes say to myself. Meaning this in-between realm crowded with interlacing, intertwining boughs, branches, leaves, stickers, suckers and what not. The mild activity associated with my "work" not only failed to drain my energy but stimulated it. I was forever buzzing, buzzing. If now and then I complained of exhaustion it was from not being able to write, never from writing too much.

From the autobiographical novel *Plexus* by Henry Miller (1963)

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<sup>1</sup> sheen: brightness

<sup>2</sup> sloth: mammal that lives in trees and moves very slowly, also a synonym for idleness

<sup>3</sup> an eel: a long, snake-like fish found in the mud of a river bed

<sup>4</sup> vagaries: strange ideas

**SECTION B**

Analyse and compare the following two texts.

Discuss the similarities and differences between the texts and their theme(s). Include comments on the ways the authors use elements such as structure, tone, images and other stylistic devices to communicate their purposes.

**Text 2 (a)**

**Daddy, what did you do in the war against pollution?**

Of course you can always try to change the subject.

But one answer you can't give is that you weren't in it. Because in this war, there are no 4Fs<sup>1</sup> and no conscientious objectors. No deferments for married men or teenagers. And no exemptions for women.

So like it or not we're all in this one. But as the war heats up, millions of us stay coolly uninvolved. We have lots of alibis:

What can one person do?

It's up to "them" to do something about pollution – not me.

Besides, average people don't pollute. It's the corporations, institutions and municipalities.

The fact is that companies and governments are made up of people. It's people who make decisions and do things that foul up our water, land

and air. And that goes for businessmen, government officials, housewives or homeowners.

What can one person do for the cause? Lots of things – maybe more than you think. Like cleaning your spark plugs<sup>2</sup> every 1000 miles, using detergents in the recommended amounts, by upgrading incinerators to reduce smoke emissions, by proposing and supporting better waste treatment plants in your town. Yes, and throwing litter in a basket instead of in the street.

Above all, let's stop shifting the blame. People start pollution. People can stop it. When enough Americans realize this we'll have a fighting chance in the war against pollution.

**Keep America Beautiful**

**People start pollution. People can stop it.**

advertisement (1995)

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<sup>1</sup> 4Fs: conditions under which one could avoid being drafted (made to join the army)  
<sup>2</sup> spark plugs: they produce the electric spark to fire the gases in a combustion engine.

**Text 2 (b)**

**Stay Cool**

One of the few certainties about global warming is that the costs of severely reducing emissions of greenhouse gases now would be huge. The world relies on carbon-based fuels for 90% of its energy needs. A quick, enforced switch to non-polluting alternatives would savagely cut people's living standards. In developing countries reliant on fossil-fuelled economic growth to lift them out of poverty, the pain would be acute. Why should people make such a sacrifice for a problem whose extent and cost are so uncertain? There are more pressing environmental concerns such as urban smog, the spread of disease and inadequate sanitation in poor countries. Unlike global warming, these cause enormous suffering for millions of people now. And it would cost less to alleviate or even eliminate them than to reduce sharply the world's output of greenhouse gases.

This does not mean that the world governments should do nothing about the possibility, however remote, of climatic catastrophe. Many policies that would reduce greenhouse emissions are desirable on their own terms. For example, most state subsidies for energy industries should be scrapped on grounds of economic efficiency. That would lead to less coal being burned (the coal industry is often heavily subsidised) and to higher electricity prices, encouraging conservation. Policies designed to deal with one environmental problem may not necessarily help with others, however. Scrubbing sulphur dioxide out of power-station emissions reduces acid rain, but it may enhance warming; sulphur compounds in the atmosphere cool the earth.

Besides encouraging energy efficiency, governments should also continue to finance research into the science of climate change, and in how to reduce the costs of non-polluting fuels. Such actions could pay dividends if more drastic measures to counter global warming ever became necessary. Other than that, however, patience should be the watchword. Within a couple of decades, scientists should have a firmer grip on the influences on climate.

Greens will no doubt continue to paint their scary pictures of the future. What, they will ask, if climate change were to lead to half the world starving to death in 50 years time? The best answer is that anything can happen in half a century: even an invasion of aliens, say. On present evidence, though, any huge catastrophe looks highly improbable. There is still time to bask in the sun.

from an editorial in the magazine *The Economist* (1995)

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