



**ENGLISH A1 – STANDARD LEVEL – PAPER 1**  
**ANGLAIS A1 – NIVEAU MOYEN – ÉPREUVE 1**  
**INGLÉS A1 – NIVEL MEDIO – PRUEBA 1**

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

1 hour 30 minutes / 1 heure 30 minutes / 1 hora 30 minutos

---

**INSTRUCTIONS TO CANDIDATES**

- Do not open this examination paper until instructed to do so.
- Write a commentary on one passage only. It is not compulsory for you to respond directly to the guiding questions provided. However, you may use them if you wish.

**INSTRUCTIONS DESTINÉES AUX CANDIDATS**

- Ne pas ouvrir cette épreuve avant d'y être autorisé.
- Rédiger un commentaire sur un seul des passages. Le commentaire ne doit pas nécessairement répondre aux questions d'orientation fournies. Vous pouvez toutefois les utiliser si vous le désirez.

**INSTRUCCIONES PARA LOS ALUMNOS**

- No abra esta prueba hasta que se lo autoricen.
- Escriba un comentario sobre un solo fragmento. No es obligatorio responder directamente a las preguntas que se ofrecen a modo de guía. Sin embargo, puede usarlas si lo desea.

*Write a commentary on one passage only. It is not compulsory for you to respond directly to the guiding questions provided. However, you are encouraged to use them as starting points for your commentary.*

1. (a)

“Cook,” remarked the captain, “there don’t seem to be any signs of life about your house of refuge.”

“No,” replied the cook. “Funny they don’t see us!”

5 A broad stretch of lowly coast lay before the eyes of the men. It was of dunes topped with dark vegetation. The roar of the surf was plain, and sometimes they could see the white lip of a wave as it spun up the beach. A tiny house was blocked out black upon the sky. Southward, the slim lighthouse lifted its little gray length.

Tide, wind, and waves were swinging the dinghy northward.

“Funny they don’t see us,” said the men.

10 The surf’s roar was here dulled, but its tone was, nevertheless, thunderous and mighty. As the boat swam over the great rollers, the men sat listening to this roar. “We’ll swamp sure,” said everybody.

It is fair to say here that there was not a life-saving station within twenty miles in either direction, but the men did not know this fact, and in consequence they made dark and opprobrious<sup>1</sup> remarks concerning the eyesight of the nation’s life-savers. Four scowling men sat in the dinghy and surpassed records in the invention of epithets.

“Funny they don’t see us.”

20 The light-heartedness of a former time had completely faded. To their sharpened minds it was easy to conjure pictures of all kinds of incompetency and blindness and, indeed, cowardice. There was the shore of the populous land, and it was bitter and bitter to them that from it came no sign.

“Well,” said the captain, ultimately, “I suppose we’ll have to make a try for ourselves. If we stay out here too long, we’ll none of us have strength left to swim after the boat swamps.”

25 And so the oiler<sup>2</sup>, who was at the oars, turned the boat straight for the shore. There was a sudden tightening of muscles. There was some thinking.

“If we don’t all get ashore—” said the captain. “If we don’t all get ashore, I suppose you fellows know where to send news of my finish?”

30 They then briefly exchanged some addresses and admonitions. As for the reflections of the men, there was a great deal of rage in them. Perchance they might be formulated thus: “If I am going to be drowned—if I am going to be drowned—if I am going to be drowned, why, in the name of the seven mad gods who rule the sea, was I allowed to come thus far and contemplate sand and trees? Was I brought here merely to have my nose dragged away as I was about to nibble the sacred cheese of life? It is preposterous. If this old ninny-woman, Fate, cannot do better than this, she should be deprived of the management of men’s fortunes. She is an old hen who knows not her intention. If she has decided to drown me, why did she not do it in the beginning and save me all this trouble? The whole affair is absurd.... But no, she cannot mean to drown me. She dare not drown me. She cannot drown me. Not after all this work.”

40 Afterward the man might have had an impulse to shake his fist at the clouds: “Just you drown me, now, and then hear what I call you!”

The billows that came at this time were more formidable. They seemed always just about to break and roll over the little boat in a turmoil of foam. There was a preparatory and long growl in the speech of them. No mind unused to the sea would  
45 have concluded that the dinghy could ascend these sheer heights in time. The shore was still afar. The oiler was a wily surfman. “Boys,” he said swiftly, “she won’t live three minutes more, and we’re too far out to swim. Shall I take her to sea again, captain?”

“Yes! Go ahead!” said the captain.

50 This oiler, by a series of quick miracles, and fast and steady oarsmanship, turned the boat in the middle of the surf and took her safely to sea again.

There was a considerable silence as the boat bumped over the furrowed sea to deeper water. Then somebody in gloom spoke: “Well, anyhow, they must have seen us from the shore by now.”

55 The gulls went in slanting flight up the wind toward the gray desolate east. A squall, marked by dingy clouds, and clouds brick-red, like smoke from a burning building, appeared from the south-east.

“What do you think of those life-saving people? Ain’t they peaches?”

Stephen Crane, *The Open Boat, A Tale of the Sea*, (1897)

<sup>1</sup> insulting

<sup>2</sup> an engine-room hand from the sunk steamer

- How is the reader’s awareness of the power of the sea built up?
- How effectively is the land contrasted with the sea?
- How is the predicament of the men in the open boat contrasted with their views of the landmen?
- What is the effect of the passage (lines 29–41: ‘As for the reflections of the men ... formulated ... what I call you’)? How is the tone of the ‘formulation’ important to the passage as a whole?

1. (b)

### A World Where News Travelled Slowly

It could take from Monday to Thursday  
and three horses. The ink was unstable,  
the characters cramped, the paper tore where it creased.  
Stained with the leather and sweat of its journey,  
5 the envelope absorbed each climatic shift,  
as well as the salt and grease of the rider  
who handed it over with a four-day chance  
that by now things were different and while the head  
had to listen, the heart could wait.

10 Semaphore was invented at a time of revolution<sup>1</sup>;  
the judgement of swing in a vertical arm.  
News travelled letter by letter, along a chain of towers,  
each built within telescopic distance of the next.  
The clattering mechanics of the six-shutter telegraph<sup>2</sup>  
15 still took three men with all their variables  
added to those of light and weather,  
to read, record and pass the message on.

Now words are faster, smaller, harder  
. . . *we're almost talking in one another's arms.*  
20 Coded and squeezed, what chance has my voice  
to reach your voice unaltered and then to leave no trace?  
Nets tighten across the sky and the sea bed.  
When London made contact with New York,  
there were such fireworks, City Hall caught light.  
25 It could have burned to the ground.

Lavinia Greenlaw, from a collection entitled *A World Where News Travelled Slowly*, (1997)

<sup>1</sup> a visual signalling system invented in 1792, during the French Revolution

<sup>2</sup> [distance writing]: here mechanical, pre-electricity and still visual

- What is the effect of the way in which the poem is ordered?
- To what effect are the physical details of the ‘message’ emphasised in the first stanza?
- How might the ‘judgement of swing in a vertical arm’ be related to a ‘time of revolution’? What does this suggest about the tone of the poem?
- Consider the impact of the second line in the last stanza and its overall importance in the unfolding of the poem.