



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

Tuesday 4 May 2004 (morning)

Mardi 4 mai 2004 (matin)

Martes 4 de mayo de 2004 (mañana)

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

- N'ouvrez pas cette épreuve avant d'y être autorisé(e).
- Rédigez 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)

So the playground was hell: Chinese burns, pinches, slaps and kicks, and horrible games. I can still hear the noise of a thick wet skipping rope slapping the ground. There'd be a big girl each end and you had to leap through without tripping. Joining in was only marginally less awful than being left out. It's said (truly) that most women forget the pain of childbirth; I think that we all forget the pain of being a child at school for the first time, the sheer ineptitude, as though you'll never learn to mark out your own space. It's doubly shaming – shaming to *remember* as well, to feel so sorry for your scabby little self back there in small people's purgatory.

My first days at school were punctuated by fierce contests in the yard, duels almost, complete with spectators, with the one girl who might have been expected to be my friend. In fact, she did become my very best friend, years later, when we went round holding hands painfully fast and giggling together hysterically, but for now she was my sworn enemy. Gail (she even had a funny name, like me) had hair in ringlets, green-hazel eyes and pale, clear, slightly olive skin stretched tight and shiny over her muscles, and she was nearly a year older than I was. She'd have won our war in any case, though, since she was so physically confident, in charge of her body even when she was five. Was she already going to dancing lessons? I don't remember. In adult life she became a teacher of physical education and modern dance herself, and even in the days of our adolescent intimacy she would sometimes win an argument by twisting my wrist. I was convinced at the start, anyway, that she was simply better at inhabiting her body than I was – not only better at face-pulling, hair-pulling, pinching, scratching and every sort of violence, but wiry and graceful, so that she made me feel like an unstrung puppet.

Once she'd thoroughly trounced me in public, Gail ignored me and held court in her own corner every playtime. She remained something of a loner, however. Other little girls might admire the ringlets and the dresses with smocking on the yokes¹, and the white socks that stayed up, but she was not allowed out to play in the square after school and everyone knew that she had to sit for hours every night while her grandmother twisted her hair in rags. What really set her apart, though – even more effectively than the vicarage² set me apart – was the fact that her mother was divorced.

Lorna Sage, *Bad Blood* (2000)

¹ smocking on the yokes: an ornamental pattern on the top section of dresses

² vicarage: the house or residence of a minister of the church

- How is the relationship between the narrator and Gail developed?
- Explore the use of descriptive detail in the passage.
- How does the style of narration contribute to meaning in the passage?
- What ideas about school life and childhood are suggested by the passage?

1. (b)

Two Hands

My father in his study sits up late,
a pencil nodding stiffly in the hand
that thirteen times between breakfast and
supper led a scalpel an intricate
5 dance. The phone has sobbed itself to sleep
but he has articles to read. I curse
tonight, at the other end of the house,
this other hand whose indecisions keep
me cursing nightly; fingers with some style
10 on paper, elsewhere none. Who would have thought
hands so alike – spade palms, blunt fingers short
in the joint – would have no more in common? All
today, remembering the one, I have watched
the other save no one, serve no one, dance
15 with this pencil. Hand, you may have your chance
to stitch a life for fingers that have stitched
new life for many. Down the *Lancet** margin
this hand moves rapidly as mine moves slow.
A spasm shakes the phone at this elbow.
20 The pencil drops: he will be out again.

Jon Stallworthy, *Root and Branch (Phoenix Living Poets)* (1976)

* *lancet*: medical journal

- Consider the appropriateness of the choice of title.
 - What impressions do we form of the speaker in the poem?
 - What is the impact of the poet’s use of metaphor and personification?
 - How does the poet use contrast to help convey meaning?
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