

# X115/101

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NATIONAL  
QUALIFICATIONS  
2008

THURSDAY, 15 MAY  
1.00 PM – 1.45 PM

ENGLISH  
INTERMEDIATE 1  
Close Reading

Answer all questions.

30 marks are allocated to this paper.

Read the passage carefully and then answer **all** the questions, **using your own words where asked to do so**.

The questions will ask you to show that:

you understand **what** the writer has said (main ideas and supporting details) (**Understanding—U**);

you can identify **how** the writer has said it (techniques of structure and style) (**Analysis—A**);

you can comment on **how well** the writer has achieved his purpose (using appropriate evidence) (**Evaluation—E**).

A code letter (U, A, E) is used alongside each question to identify its purpose for you.



*In this passage, the writer tells us about a famous Scottish mystery.*

## THE ISLAND OF LOST SOULS

Seven lumps of rock 30 miles off the west coast of Lewis, the outermost of the Outer Hebrides, the Flannan Islands have a good claim to be the most deserted place in Britain. The only inhabitants are thousands of puffins, some nesting fulmars, the “little people” of Gaelic folklore and the ghosts. But I have longed to visit the Flannans ever since, when I was a little boy, my father would scare us into delighted terror with the story of the Flannan lighthouse, one of the strangest unsolved mysteries in Scottish history.

The story goes like this: for centuries the Seven Hunters, as the local people called the islands, had preyed on shipping. Innumerable vessels had perished on the rocks, including remnants of the Spanish Armada. So the Victorians, with the spirit typical of the age, decided to build a lighthouse here, on the edge of the world.

A year after the lighthouse was lit, a steamer from Oban was sent out to relieve the three lighthouse keepers, who had been on the island, alone, for three months. As the ship approached in the morning gloom, her master could see no lights on the island. Captain Harvie sent two men scrambling up the cliff. The gate to the lighthouse enclosure was bolted, but the door of the lighthouse itself was open. Food lay uneaten on the table. Two sets of boots and oilskins had gone, but the third was still in the rack. The entries in the lighthouse log ended abruptly a week earlier, and the clocks had wound down. A chair lay on its back, but otherwise there was no sign of violence. The lamp was filled with paraffin, and the beds were neatly made. Of the three lighthouse keepers there was not a sign. The mystery remains unsolved, though many have put forward theories. For more than 30 years I had wanted to see the place for myself.

We anchored at the main island, Eilean Mor, with the lighthouse silhouetted above us through the clearing mist. Most of the steps in the side of the rock have been worn away by the sea, and all that remains of the handrail are a few rusting posts. We had to time our jump to the height of the 5 foot swell, and cling to the seaweed. We crawled up the side of the rock, 80 feet of scramble, to emerge on the top of the cliff. There a reception committee was waiting, clad in formal evening wear: several thousand tiny puffins stood and stared at us, curious, entirely without fear.

The lighthouse has been fully automated since the Seventies, when the last keepers departed, leaving the islands in perfect human isolation, save for the helicopter that lands once a year for the annual service by the Northern Lighthouse Board, and the odd rugged birdwatcher.

The sense of solitude was as penetrating as the mist. Here on the last outcrop of the Atlantic shelf, look in any direction and you see . . . nothing. Solitude brought St Flannan here in the first place. Below the lighthouse is the ruin of his “chapel”, the tiny stone bothy where this resilient hermit reputedly spent several years in the 9th century. We crawled inside; the rising wind howled through the cracks between the stones. What must it have been like for the lighthouse keepers, cooped up in a brick tube for months, battered by wind, rain and waves? That was one of the many questions asked by Superintendent Robert Muirhead, who was dispatched by the Northern Lighthouse Board in January, 1901, to try to solve the Flannan Islands mystery.

Muirhead studied the weather, the tides, and the logs of every ship in the area. He interviewed the families of the vanished men, the people of Lewis and the ocean.  
45 A man of the modern age, an engineer, Muirhead was plunged into a world of ancient superstitions.

Some claimed that the men had been devoured by sea monsters, or spirited away by the angry spirit of Flannan. The poet Wilfred Wilson Gibson whipped up controversy by writing a ghostly poem imagining that the men had turned into  
50 three great black birds, and plunged into the sea. Newspapers luridly speculated that the men had fallen out, or been driven to madness and suicide by solitude, or the demon drink; it was rumoured that one man had murdered the other two, and then hurled himself from the cliff-top. The sailors and fishermen talked of the  
55 “Fist of God”, the freak wave of ancient maritime legend, a rogue wall of water that rises suddenly out of the sea and pulls down ships and men, only to vanish again.

Several aspects of the incident did not (and do not) add up. The superintendent dismissed the notion that the three men had been blown off the island by a mighty gust of wind, pointing out that since the wind was westerly that night, this would  
60 have forced them up to the island and away from the cliffs. About 100 feet above sea-level, safety railings had been wrenched out of shape. Muirhead reckoned a boulder must have crashed down from the ledge above, but the sight of the ironwork—“displaced and twisted in a manner difficult to believe unless actually seen”—spooked even him. Why had one of the men left the lighthouse building  
65 in his shirtsleeves? If some catastrophe had befallen the men, who had had time to bolt the entrance gate to the lighthouse? Above all, if the men had drowned, the prevailing tides should have swept the bodies towards the Hebrides. Despite an intensive search, no body was found.

We stood on the crumbling steps leading down to the north landing. Here the  
70 wind was so strong that it was easy to imagine a man being swept to his death from here; but three? Was there some tragic collision between new technology and ancient beliefs? Or was there a rational explanation? Muirhead concluded “that an unexpectedly large roller had come up on the Island, and swept them away with resistless force”.

75 He was probably right. Recent satellite research has shown that rogue waves of immense height are a more frequent occurrence than previously believed, scientific fact rather than maritime folklore.

Ben Macintyre in *The Times Magazine*, 21st January, 2006 (slightly adapted)

## QUESTIONS

Marks Code

1. Explain why “the Flannan Islands have a good claim to be the most deserted place in Britain” (lines 2–3).  
Use **your own words** as far as possible. 2 U
2. What is surprising about the expression “delighted terror” (line 5)? 1 A
3. Why is the word “preyed” (line 9) appropriate here? 2 A
4. Look at lines 15–21, and explain **in your own words** what the “mystery” was. 2 U
5. Look at lines 24–27.  
Explain why any **one** example of the writer’s **word choice** effectively makes it clear that the climb up to the lighthouse was a difficult one. 2 E
6. Look at the words “formal evening wear” (line 28).  
Explain why this expression may seem **either** surprising **or** appropriate here. 2 A
7. Choose an expression from lines 30–33, and show how it helps us to understand the meaning of “rugged” as it is used here. 2 U
8. The writer tells us: “The sense of solitude was as penetrating as the mist” (line 34).  
(i) What does the writer mean by a “sense of solitude”? 1 U  
(ii) Why is this an effective comparison or simile? 2 E
9. Why does the writer use inverted commas round “chapel” (line 36)? 1 A
10. Show how **one** example of the writer’s **word choice** in lines 38–40 effectively conveys the hardships of the lighthouse keepers’ lives. 2 E
11. What do lines 43–44 tell us about the way Muirhead approached his task? 1 U
12. Look at the sentence “A man of the modern age, an engineer, Muirhead was plunged into a world of ancient superstitions” (lines 45–46).  
How does one feature of the **imagery** help to suggest something about Muirhead’s task? 2 A
13. Write down an expression from the next paragraph which continues the idea introduced by “superstitions” (line 46). 1 U
14. Show how the meaning of “luridly speculated” (line 50) is made clear in the rest of the paragraph. 2 A
15. Look at lines 57–68.  
Identify **two** of the “aspects” of the events which “do not . . . add up”.  
Use **your own words** as far as possible. 2 U
16. Identify one feature of **sentence structure** in lines 69–72 which is appropriate for this story of mystery. 1 A
17. Explain why any feature of the final paragraph (lines 75–77) helps to make these sentences a satisfying conclusion to the passage. 2 E

**Total (30)**

[END OF QUESTION PAPER]

**[Open out for Questions]**

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Article is adapted from *The Island of Lost Souls: Flannan Mysteries* on page 38-41 by Ben Macintyre. Published by The Times. Reproduced by permission of The Times.

# X115/102

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NATIONAL  
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2008

THURSDAY, 15 MAY  
2.05 PM – 2.50 PM

ENGLISH  
INTERMEDIATE 1  
Critical Essay

Answer **one** question only.

Each question is worth 25 marks.



Answer ONE question only, taken from any of the Sections A to E.

In all Sections you may use Scottish texts.

Write the number of the question in the margin of your answer booklet.

The following will be assessed:

- the relevance of your essay to the question you have chosen
- your understanding of the main points of the text(s) through some reference to the relevant areas of content
- your explanation of the ways in which aspects of structure/style/language contribute to the meaning/effect/impact of the chosen text(s)
- your personal reaction to the content or style of the text(s) supported by some textual reference
- the quality and technical accuracy of your writing.

Each question is worth 25 marks.

### SECTION A—DRAMA

*Answers to questions in this section should refer to such relevant features as: conflict, character, key scene(s), theme, plot . . .*

1. Choose a play in which there is an important relationship between two of the characters.  
Identify the relationship and go on to show how it develops and why, in your opinion, it is important in the play as a whole.
2. Choose a play which deals with an unpleasant aspect of life.  
Show how the unpleasant aspect of life affects one or more of the characters in the play and say whether you sympathise with the character(s) or not.

### SECTION B—PROSE

*Answers to questions in this section should refer to such relevant features as: content, character, theme, imagery . . .*

3. Choose a novel **or** short story which has an important turning point.  
Say how the turning point was reached and go on to show how it affects the characters and the ending of the story.
4. Choose a novel **or** a short story **or** a piece of non-fiction which deals with a topic **or** a character **or** a place which interests you.  
Describe the topic **or** the character **or** the place and show how the writer makes it interesting for you.



## SECTION C—POETRY

*Answers to questions in this section should refer to such relevant features as: content, word choice, theme, imagery, sound . . .*

5. Choose a poem about a person who has to face difficulties or problems.  
Say what the poem is about and show how the writer uses particular words and phrases to help you to sympathise with the person.
6. Choose a poem which creates an exciting **or** dramatic **or** sad atmosphere.  
Say what the poem is about and go on to show what particular words or phrases help to create the atmosphere.

## SECTION D—FILM AND TV DRAMA

*Answers to questions in this section should refer to such relevant features as: character, use of camera, key sequence(s), editing, sound/music, plot, setting . . .*

7. Choose a film with an opening sequence which captures your interest.  
Say what interests you in the sequence and show how the sequence made a good beginning to the film as a whole.
8. Choose a film **or** TV drama\* which deals with at least one important relationship.  
Describe the relationship and show how the film or programme makers use the techniques of film or TV drama to keep you interested in the relationship.

\*“TV drama” includes a single play, a series or a serial.

## SECTION E—LANGUAGE

*Answers to questions in this section should refer to such relevant features as: vocabulary, accent, dialect, tone, abbreviation, register . . .*

9. Consider the language used in TV programmes targeted at young people.  
Identify some ways in which the language is different from the language used in other television programmes. Why do you think this language is attractive to young people?
10. Consider the language used in advertisements related to some aspect of daily life such as food or drink or leisure pursuits or holidays.  
By referring to specific examples say why you think some aspects of the language used are successful in persuading you to buy the product.

[END OF QUESTION PAPER]

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