

X115/201

NATIONAL
QUALIFICATIONS
2007

FRIDAY, 11 MAY
1.00 PM – 2.00 PM

ENGLISH
INTERMEDIATE 2
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 as far as possible**.

The questions will ask you to show that:

you understand the main ideas and important details in the passage—in other words, **what** the writer has said (**Understanding—U**);

you can identify, using appropriate terms, the techniques the writer has used to get across these ideas—in other words, **how** he has said it (**Analysis—A**);

you can, using appropriate evidence, comment on how effective the writer has been—in other words, **how well** he has said it (**Evaluation—E**).

A code letter (U, A, E) is used alongside each question to identify its purpose for you. The number of marks attached to each question will give some indication of the length of answer required.



Come fly with me

In this passage, the writer reflects on his fascination with birds and flight.

I was going through Monken Hadley churchyard and there were lots (note scientific precision) of house martins whizzing round the church tower. House martins are dapper little chaps, navy blue with white, and they are one of the sights of the summer: doing things like whizzing round church steeples and catching flies in their beaks. Later in the
5 season the young ones take up whizzing themselves, trying to get the hang of this flying business. So I paused on my journey to spend a few moments gazing at the whirligig of martins. It was nothing special, nothing exceptional, and it was very good indeed. Note this: one of the greatest pleasures of birdwatching is the quiet enjoyment of the absolutely ordinary.

10 And then it happened. Bam!

Gone.

From the tail of my eye, I saw what I took to be a kestrel. I turned my head to watch it as it climbed, and I waited for it to go into its hover, according to time-honoured kestrel custom. But it did nothing of the kind. It turned itself into an anchor. Or a
15 thunderbolt.

No kestrel this: it crashed into the crowd of martins, and almost as swiftly vanished. I think it got one, but I can't swear to it, it was all so fast.

It was a hobby-hawk. Perhaps the most dashing falcon of them all: slim, elegant and deadly fast. Not rare as rare-bird-addicts reckon things: they come to Britain in
20 reasonable numbers every summer to breed. The sight of a hobby-hawk makes no headlines in the birdwatching world. It was just a wonderful and wholly unexpected sight of a wonderful and wholly unexpected bird. It was a moment of perfect drama.

Birdwatching is a state of being, not an activity. It doesn't depend on place, on equipment, on specific purpose, like, say, fishing. It is not a matter of organic
25 trainspotting; it is about life and it is about living. It is a matter of keeping the eyes and ears and mind open. It is not a matter of obsession, not at all. It is just quiet enjoyment.

Flight is the dream of every human being. When we are lucky, we do, quite literally, dream about flying. They are the best of all dreams—you are free, you are miraculous.

The desire to fly is part of the condition of being human. That's why most of the
30 non-confrontational sports are about flying, or at least the defiance of gravity. Gymnastics is about the power of the human body to fly unaided; so is the high jump and the long jump. The throwing events—discus, shot-put and hammer—are about making something else fly: a war on gravity.

Golf always seems to me a trivial game, but every one of its legion of addicts will tell you
35 that it all comes back to the pure joy of a clean strike at the ball: making it defy gravity. Making it climb like a towering snipe. Making it soar like an eagle, at least in the mind of the striker, as it reaches the top of its long, graceful parabola.

Think about it: all these sports are done for the joy of flying. Skating is a victory over friction, and it feels like victory over gravity; it feels like flying. Its antithesis is
40 weightlifting: a huge and brutal event, the idea of which is to beat gravity. All the horsey events come back to the idea of flight: of getting off the ground, of escaping human limitations by joining up with another species and finding flight. For every rider, every horse has wings.

And birds fly in all kinds of ways: the brisk purpose of a sparrow, the airy detachment of
45 the seagull, the dramatic power of the hawk. Some birds specialise in flying very fast;
others in flying very slow. Great hunters such as the barn owl work on the edge of the
stall all the time. Kestrels are very good at flying without moving at all. Some birds are
not so great at flying. Pheasants just about get off the ground into a safe place in a tree
for a night. They are poor flyers, but they are unquestionably better than us humans.

50 And flight attracts our eyes, lifts our heart with joy and envy. Flight, to us earthbound
creatures, is a form of magic—one of the great powers attributed to decent wizards and
witches throughout history is the ability to fly, from the persecuted sorcerers of the Dark
Ages to the players of the game of quidditch.

Take a basic urban moment—a traffic jam, a train becalmed. A sigh, a look away from
55 the road or the newspaper, out of the window. A skein of geese in the sky; probably,
almost certainly, “just” Canada geese. Too far away to hear them honking to each other,
urgent instructions to keep the formation tight and to help the leader out with the hard
work. A daily sight, a common sight, an ordinary sight. But just for one
second—perhaps even two—you are let off the day’s hassles. At least that is the case if
60 you take the trouble to look up. It will probably be the most inspiring thing you will see
all day. The day is the better for those birds.

And so we look to birds for a deep-seated kind of joy. It goes back to the dawn of
humankind: ever since humans first walked upright, they were able to turn their eyes to
the heavens and observe the birds. The birds have something we can never have. But
65 merely by existing—by flying before us—they add to the daily joys of existence. Birds
are about hope.

Adapted from *How to be a Bad Birdwatcher* by Simon Barnes

QUESTIONS

Marks Code

- | | | |
|---|---|-----|
| 1. Explain what is odd or ironic about the expression “note scientific precision” (lines 1–2). | 2 | A |
| 2. “It was nothing special, nothing exceptional, and it was very good indeed.” (line 7). | | |
| (a) What is surprising about this statement? | 1 | A |
| (b) Show how the writer continues this idea in the next sentence (lines 8–9). | 2 | U/A |
| 3. Identify two techniques used in lines 10 and 11 which help to convey the idea of speed described in the next two paragraphs (lines 12–17). | 2 | A |
| 4. (a) What is the author suggesting about the bird when he says “It turned itself into an anchor” (line 14)? | 1 | U/A |
| (b) Why is the comparison of the bird to a “thunderbolt” (line 15) an effective image or metaphor? | 2 | E |
| 5. Explain with clear reference to the whole sentence why the writer uses a colon in line 19. | 2 | A |
| 6. “The sight of a hobby-hawk makes no headlines in the birdwatching world” (lines 20–21). Explain in your own words what is meant by “makes no headlines”. | 1 | U |
| 7. Write down the word from later in the paragraph which continues the idea introduced by “trainspotting” (line 25). | 1 | U |
| 8. In what way does the author’s use of “quite literally” (line 27) help to make his meaning clear? | 1 | U/A |
| 9. (a) What does “trivial” (line 34) tell us about the writer’s attitude to golf? | 1 | U |
| (b) Explain how an expression later in this sentence makes it clear that the author is aware that others do not share his opinion. | 2 | U/A |
| (c) Why are the comparisons the writer uses in the rest of this paragraph appropriate? | 2 | A/E |
| 10. The writer mentions a variety of sports between lines 29 and 43. What challenge does he think these activities have in common? | 1 | U |
| 11. The writer refers to equestrianism (“horsey events”, line 41), as related to the pursuit of flight. What is the difference between this and all the other sports he mentions? Answer in your own words . | 1 | U |
| 12. Why is it appropriate to introduce the paragraph consisting of lines 44 to 49 with the expression “And birds fly in all kinds of ways”? | 2 | A/E |
| 13. The writer refers to “wizards and witches throughout history” (lines 51–52). Explain by referring to either word choice or structure how the rest of the sentence continues this idea. | 2 | U/A |
| 14. What do the writer’s examples of “a basic urban moment” (line 54) have in common? | 1 | U |
| 15. What is the effect of the inverted commas round “just” in line 56? | 1 | A |
| 16. Explain fully why the last paragraph (lines 62–66) provides an appropriate or effective conclusion to the passage. | 2 | E |

[END OF QUESTION PAPER]

Total (30)

[Open out for Questions]

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Close Reading Text – Extract is taken from *How to be a Bad Birdwatcher* by Simon Barnes ISBN 190409595X. Published by Short Books Ltd. Reproduced by kind permission of Short Books Ltd.

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FRIDAY, 11 MAY
2.20 PM – 3.50 PM

ENGLISH
INTERMEDIATE 2
Critical Essay

Answer **two** questions.

Each question must be taken from a different section.

Each question is worth 25 marks.



Answer TWO questions from this paper.

Each question must be chosen from a different Section (A–E). You are not allowed to choose two questions from the same Section.

In all Sections you may use Scottish texts.

Write the number of each question in the margin of your answer booklet and begin each essay on a fresh page.

You should spend about 45 minutes on each essay.

The following will be assessed:

- **the relevance of your essays to the questions you have chosen**
- **your knowledge and understanding of key elements, central concerns and significant details of the chosen texts**
- **your explanation of ways in which aspects of structure/style/language contribute to the meaning/effect/impact of the chosen texts**
- **your evaluation of the effectiveness of the chosen texts, supported by detailed and relevant evidence**
- **the quality and technical accuracy of your writing.**

Each question is worth 25 marks. The total for this paper is 50 marks.

SECTION A—DRAMA

Answers to questions in this section should refer to the text and to such relevant features as: characterisation, key scene(s), structure, climax, theme, plot, conflict, setting . . .

1. Choose a play which portrays a strong relationship between two of the main characters. Describe the nature of the relationship and explain how the relationship influences the fate of the two characters concerned.
2. Choose a play in which there is a highly emotional scene. Show how this scene increases your understanding of the characters involved and how it is important in the unfolding of the plot of the play.
3. Choose a play which has, as a central concern, an issue which is of importance in today's society. State what the issue is and show how the playwright's handling of the plot and characters increases your understanding of the issue.

SECTION B—PROSE

Answers to questions in this section should refer to the text and to such relevant features as: characterisation, setting, language, key incident(s), climax/turning point, plot, structure, narrative technique, theme, ideas, description . . .

4. Choose a novel **or** short story in which **two** of the main characters have a disagreement which is important to the outcome of the novel or short story.
Identify the reasons for the disagreement and go on to show how the effects of the disagreement have an impact on the rest of the novel or short story.
5. Choose a prose text (fiction or non-fiction) in which a society **or** a person **or** a culture **or** a setting is effectively portrayed.
Show how the writer's presentation of the subject makes an impact on you, and helps you to understand the subject in greater depth.
6. Choose a novel **or** short story which has a striking opening.
Show how the opening is effective in introducing the character(s) **and/or** the atmosphere **and/or** the setting.

SECTION C—POETRY

Answers to questions in this section should refer to the text and to such relevant features as: word choice, tone, imagery, structure, content, rhythm, theme, sound, ideas . . .

7. Choose a poem which seems to be about an ordinary everyday experience but which actually makes a deeper comment about life.
Explain what the poem is about and go on to show how the techniques used by the poet help to make the ideas memorable.
8. Choose a poem which creates pity or sympathy in you.
Show how the feelings of pity or sympathy are brought into focus by the use of poetic techniques.
9. Choose a poem which describes a scene or incident vividly.
Briefly state what is being described and then go on to show how the poetic techniques used make the description vivid.

[Turn over

SECTION D—FILM AND TV DRAMA

Answers to questions in this section should refer to the text and to such relevant features as: use of camera, key sequence, characterisation, mise-en-scène, editing, setting, music/sound effects, plot, dialogue . . .

10. Choose a film or TV drama* which creates suspense or tension either in a particular scene **or** throughout the whole film or TV drama.

Show how the suspense or tension is created and how it affects your enjoyment of the film or TV drama* as a whole.

11. Choose a film or TV drama* which deals with crime **or** espionage **or** detection.

Show how the film or TV drama* captures and holds your interest by its choice of content and use of media techniques.

12. Choose a film or TV drama* which depends to some extent on humour to make an impact.

Briefly state what you consider to be the humorous aspects of the film or TV drama* and go on to show how the film or programme makers use various techniques to create the humour.

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

SECTION E—LANGUAGE

Answers to questions in this section should refer to the text and to such relevant features as: register, accent, dialect, slang, jargon, vocabulary, tone, abbreviation . . .

13. Consider the aspects of language which make advertising effective.

Choose two advertisements which you feel vary in their effectiveness. By looking closely at each advertisement explain why you felt that one was more effective than the other.

14. Consider the language of two groups of people who are different in some significant way. For example, they may be from different generations or different places.

By looking at examples of the language of each group, describe the differences between the two, and discuss the advantages **and/or** disadvantages which might arise from the different ways of using language.

15. Consider a modern means of communication such as e-mailing or text-messaging.

By referring to specific examples show what are the advantages and disadvantages of the method of communication which you have chosen.

[END OF QUESTION PAPER]