

X115/301

NATIONAL
QUALIFICATIONS
2008

THURSDAY, 15 MAY
9.00 AM – 10.30 AM

ENGLISH
HIGHER
Close Reading—Text

There are TWO passages and questions.

Read the passages carefully and then answer all the questions, which are printed in a separate booklet.

You should read the passages to:

understand what the writers are saying about the countryside and those who campaign to protect it (**Understanding—U**);

analyse their choices of language, imagery and structures to recognise how they convey their points of view and contribute to the impact of the passage (**Analysis—A**);

evaluate how effectively they have achieved their purpose (**Evaluation—E**).



PASSAGE 1

In this extract from his book “Shades of Green”, David Sinclair looks at attitudes to the countryside and discusses to what extent it is part of “our heritage”.

RURAL MANIA

The “countryside debate” has rarely been out of the news in Britain in recent years. Reading the newspapers, watching television, listening to the radio, entering a bookshop, one could be forgiven for thinking that we still live in small peasant communities dependent upon the minutest shift in agricultural policy. Sometimes it
5 has seemed almost as if we were still in the early nineteenth century when we relied on the countryside to survive, so extensive have been the debates, so fierce the passions aroused.

One faction has cried constantly that the countryside is in mortal danger from greedy developers whose only motive is profit; another has kept on roaring that
10 farmers are killing every wild thing in sight and threatening the very soil on which we stand through overuse of machinery and chemicals; still another has been continually heard ululating over a decline in the bird population, or the loss of hedgerows, or the disappearance of marshland, or the appearance of coniferous forest.

15 Then there is the proliferation of action groups dedicated to stopping construction of roads, airports, railway lines, factories, shopping centres and houses in rural areas, while multifarious organisations have become accustomed to expending their time and energies in monitoring and reporting on the state of grassland, water, trees, moorlands, uplands, lowlands, birds’ eggs, wildflowers, badgers, historical sites and
20 countless other aspects of the landscape and its inhabitants.

It might be thought—indeed, it is widely assumed—that it must be good for the countryside to be returned to the central position it enjoyed in British life long ago. Yet there is a particularly worrying aspect of the new rural mania that suggests it might finally do the countryside more harm than good.

25 This is the identification, in the current clamour, of the countryside in general and the landscape in particular with the past—the insistence on the part of those who claim to have the best intentions of ruralism at heart that their aim is to protect what they glibly refer to as “our heritage”. This wildly over-used term is seriously misleading, not least because nobody appears ever to have asked what it means.

30 The assumption is that the landscape is our living link with our history, the visible expression of our British roots, and that if we allow it to change (“to be destroyed”, the conservationists would say), the link is broken forever. This view is palpably nonsensical. Our national identity is not defined by the landscape against which we carry on our lives. There is, in fact, no single thread that can be identified as our
35 rural heritage or tradition. Rather there is a bewildering array of different influences that have combined haphazardly through the centuries as successive invaders and immigrants and, later, successive generations, have reconstructed the landscape according to their own needs and ideas. What the conservationists seek to preserve is simply the landscape *as it is now*, in its incarnation of the early twenty-
40 first century. Far from affirming history, this approach actually denies it, for it would remove the continuous change without which history does not exist.

Where, for example, does the “traditional” landscape begin and end? If we take the period when the British Isles were born, nearly 8,000 years ago, we discover that the

conifers so hated by the conservationists today were one of the most important
45 features of the scenery; the “English” oak and the much-loved elm were later
immigrants from the warmer south. As for fauna, our “traditional” species included
reindeer, rhinoceros, bison, hippopotamus and elephant. But where are they now?

Perhaps we should do better in the search for our heritage to consider what the
countryside looked like when man first appeared in what we think of as Britain.
50 That would take us back 35,000 years, to the emergence of our ancestor *Homo*
sapiens, who found himself in an Arctic landscape of ice and tundra. The remnants
of that traditional scene can be found only in the highest mountains of Scotland; the
rest of Britain has changed beyond recognition.

Obviously, then, we must look at more recent times if we are to discover identifiable
55 traditional elements in the landscape we now see about us. Yet if we do that, further
difficulties emerge. The retreat of the last glaciation almost 11,000 years ago was
accompanied by a relatively rapid warming of the climate, which gradually
converted the open Arctic tundra into dense forest. This presented a serious
challenge to Stone Age man, who began to find that the grazing animals, which he
60 hunted for food, were disappearing as their habitat retreated before the encroaching
trees. In order to survive, he was forced to turn increasingly from hunting to
farming, with the dramatic effects on flora and fauna that remain familiar to us
today. As the quality of prehistoric tools improved, some stretches of forest were
felled to provide grazing for domesticated animals, while grasses and cereals were
65 deliberately encouraged because of their usefulness to man. Even the shape of the
countryside was changed as mining began to cut into hillsides, and in some places
soil deterioration set in as the growing populations demanded perhaps the earliest
form of intensive farming. In other words, the chief influence on the landscape of
these islands was not nature but mankind.

PASSAGE 2

In the second passage, the journalist Richard Morrison responds to criticism of a Government plan to allow a million new houses to be built in southeast England.

PULLING UP THE DRAWBRIDGE

The English middle classes are rarely more hypocritical than when waxing
indignant about “the threat to the countryside”. What anguishes them usually
turns out to be the threat to their own pleasure or to the value of their property.
And I write those sentences with the heavy heart of a class traitor, for I am a
5 middle-class, middle-aged property owner who has smugly watched his own house
soar in value as more and more young househunters desperately chase fewer and
fewer properties. I am inordinately proud of my view across the green belt (from
an upstairs window admittedly, because of the motorway flyover in between). And
I intend to spend the weekend rambling across the rural England I have loved since
10 boyhood.

The most cherished credo of the English middle classes is that the verdant hills and
dales of the Home Counties should remain forever sacrosanct, and that the
Government’s “Stalinist” decision to impose a million extra houses on southeast
England is the most hideous threat to our way of life since the Luftwaffe made its
15 energetic contribution to British town and country planning in 1940. Thousands

of green acres will be choked by concrete, as rapacious housebuilders devour whole landscapes. England's cherished green belts—the 14 great rings of protected fields that have stopped our major cities from sprawling outward for more than half a century—will be swept away.

20 Yet if you sweep away the apoplectic froth and the self-interested posturing and look at the reality, the “threat to the countryside” recedes dramatically. Yes, we do occupy a crowded little island. But what makes it seem crowded is that 98 per cent of us live on 7 per cent of the land. Britain is still overwhelmingly green. Just 11 per cent of our nation is classified as urban.

25 Moreover, planners reckon that as much as a quarter of the green belt around London is wasteland, largely devoid of landscape beauty. So why not use it to relieve the intolerable pressure on affordable housing in the capital? Because that would contravene the long-held myth that green belts are vital “lungs” for cities. Well, lungs they might be. But they benefit chiefly those who live in nice houses
30 inside the green belts (not least by keeping their property values sky-high); and then those who live in nice houses in the leafy outer suburbs; and not at all the people who need the fresh air most: those on inner-city estates.

The green-belt protectionists claim to be saving unspoilt countryside from the rampant advance of bulldozers. Exactly what unspoilt countryside do they imagine
35 they are saving? Primordial forest, unchanged since Boadicea thrashed the Romans? Hogwash. The English have been making and remaking their landscape for millennia to suit the needs of each passing generation.

These protectionists are fond of deriding any housebuilding targets set by the Government as monstrous, Soviet-style diktats. Good grief, what on earth do they
40 imagine that the planning laws protecting green belts and agricultural land are, if not Government interventions that have had a huge, and often disastrous, impact not just on the property market, but on employment, on transport, on public services and on economic growth?

And, of course, on homelessness. Every time a bunch of middle-class homeowners
45 fights off the “intrusion” of a new housing estate into their cherished landscape, they make it more difficult for the young and the poor to find somewhere to live in reasonable proximity to where they can find work. This is the 21st-century equivalent of pulling up the drawbridge after one's own family and friends are safely inside the castle.

[END OF TEXT]

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Passage 1—Adapted extract taken from *Shades of Green* by David Sinclair. ISBN 0 586 08708 7. Published by Grafton Books (Harper Collins). Permission is being sought from Harper Collins Publishers.

Passage 2—Article is adapted from *Yes, I will let Mr Prescott build in my backyard* by Richard Morrison taken from *The Times*, 30 April 2004. Published by The Times. Reproduced by permission of The Times.

X115/302

NATIONAL
QUALIFICATIONS
2008

THURSDAY, 15 MAY
9.00 AM – 10.30 AM

ENGLISH
HIGHER
Close Reading–Questions

Answer all questions. **Use your own words whenever possible and particularly when you are instructed to do so.**

50 marks are allocated to this paper.

A code letter (U, A, E) is used alongside each question to give some indication of the skills being assessed. The number of marks attached to each question will give some indication of the length of answer required.



Questions on Passage 1

Marks Code

1. Read lines 1–7.
Explain in your own words why the writer seems surprised that there is so much coverage of the “countryside debate”. (line 1) 2 U
2. (a) Show how the word choice **and** sentence structure in lines 8–14 emphasise the strong feelings of those who feel the countryside is under threat. 4 A
(b) Show how the writer’s use of language in lines 15–20 conveys his disapproval of the “action groups”. 2 A
3. Read lines 21–29.
(a) By referring to specific words or phrases, show how lines 21–24 perform a linking function at this stage in the writer’s argument. 2 U
(b) Referring to lines 25–29, explain in your own words what the writer believes to be a “particularly worrying aspect of the new rural mania” (line 23). 2 U
4. “This view is palpably nonsensical.” (lines 32–33)
(a) Explain, using your own words as far as possible, what “this view” is. Refer to lines 30–32 in your answer. 2 U
(b) Give in your own words **one** of the writer’s reasons in lines 33–38 (“... ideas.”) for believing that the view is “palpably nonsensical”. 2 U
(c) Show how the writer’s use of language in lines 38–41 reinforces his criticism of the conservationists’ ideas. 2 A
5. Read lines 42–53.
Give, in your own words as far as possible, any **three** reasons why it is difficult to define the “traditional” British landscape. 3 U
6. “This presented a serious challenge to Stone Age man . . .” (lines 58–59)
(a) Explain in your own words what the “challenge” was. Refer to lines 54–61 (“... trees.”) in your answer. 2 U
(b) Explain in your own words how Stone Age man responded to the challenge. Refer to lines 61–69 in your answer. 2 U
- (25)

Questions on Passage 2

Marks Code

7. (a) By referring to lines 1–3, explain in your own words why the writer believes that the English middle classes are being “hypocritical”. 2 U
(b) Show how the writer’s use of language in lines 4–10 creates a self-mocking tone. 2 A
8. Show how the writer’s use of language in lines 11–19 emphasises the extreme nature of the English middle classes’ view of the threat to the countryside. In your answer you should refer to specific language features such as: imagery, word choice, register . . . 4 A
9. Show how the writer’s sentence structure **or** word choice in lines 20–24 emphasises his view that the threat to the countryside is much less serious than the English middle classes suggest. 2 A
10. (a) According to lines 25–27, why does the writer believe “a quarter of the green belt around London” should be used for housing? 2 U
(b) How does the writer’s use of language in lines 27 (“Because . . .”)–32 cast doubt on the belief that green belts benefit everyone? 2 A
11. In lines 33–43 the writer criticises two further arguments put forward by the “green-belt protectionists”.
Choose **either** the argument discussed in lines 33–37 **or** the argument discussed in lines 38–43, and answer **both** of the following questions on the paragraph you have chosen.
(a) Explain why, in the writer’s opinion, the green-belt protectionists’ argument is flawed. 2 U
(b) How effective do you find the writer’s use of language in conveying his attitude to their argument? 2 A/E
12. How effective do you find lines 44–49 as a conclusion to the writer’s attack on the attitudes of “middle-class homeowners”? 2 E
(20)

Question on both Passages

13. In Passage 1 David Sinclair refers to the claims of conservationists as “palpably nonsensical” and in Passage 2 Richard Morrison states that their views are “hogwash”. Which writer is more successful in convincing you that these conservationists’ claims are seriously flawed?
Justify your choice by referring to the **ideas and/or style** of **both passages**. 5 E
(5)

Total (50)

[END OF QUESTION PAPER]

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X115/303

NATIONAL
QUALIFICATIONS
2008

THURSDAY, 15 MAY
10.50 AM – 12.20 PM

ENGLISH
HIGHER
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, and the extent to which you sustain an appropriate line of thought
- your knowledge and understanding of key elements, central concerns and significant details of the chosen texts, supported by detailed and relevant evidence
- your understanding, as appropriate to the questions chosen, of how relevant aspects of structure/style/language contribute to the meaning/effect/impact of the chosen texts, supported by detailed and relevant evidence
- your evaluation, as appropriate to the questions chosen, of the effectiveness of the chosen texts, supported by detailed and relevant evidence
- the quality of your written expression and the technical accuracy of your writing.

SECTION A—DRAMA

Answers to questions on drama should address relevantly the central concern(s)/theme(s) of the text and be supported by reference to appropriate dramatic techniques such as: conflict, characterisation, key scene(s), dialogue, climax, exposition, dénouement, structure, plot, setting, aspects of staging (such as lighting, music, stage set, stage directions . . .), soliloquy, monologue . . .

1. Choose a play in which a central character is heroic yet vulnerable.
Show how the dramatist makes you aware of both qualities and discuss how they affect your response to the character's fate in the play as a whole.
2. Choose a play which explores the theme of love in difficult circumstances.
Explain how the dramatist introduces the theme and discuss how in the course of the play he/she prepares you for the resolution of the drama.
3. Choose from a play a scene in which an important truth is revealed.
Briefly explain what the important truth is and assess the significance of its revelation to your understanding of theme or character.
4. Choose a play in which a character has to exist in a hostile environment.
Briefly describe the environment and discuss the extent to which it influences your response to the character's behaviour and to the outcome of the play.

SECTION B—PROSE

Prose Fiction

Answers to questions on prose fiction should address relevantly the central concern(s)/theme(s) of the text(s) and be supported by reference to appropriate techniques of prose fiction such as: characterisation, setting, key incident(s), narrative technique, symbolism, structure, climax, plot, atmosphere, dialogue, imagery . . .

5. Choose a **novel** which explores the cruelty of human nature.
Show how the writer explores this theme and discuss how its exploration enhances your appreciation of the novel as a whole.
6. Choose a **novel** in which a confrontation between two characters is of central importance in the text.
Explain the circumstances of the confrontation and discuss its importance to your understanding of the novel as a whole.
7. Choose **two short stories** which you appreciated because of the surprising nature of their endings.
Compare the techniques used in creating these surprising endings and discuss which ending you feel is more successful as a conclusion.
8. Choose a **novel** or **short story** which is set during a period of social or political change.
Discuss how important the writer's evocation of the period is to your appreciation of the text as a whole.

Prose Non-fiction

Answers to questions on prose non-fiction should address relevantly the central concern(s)/theme(s) of the text and be supported by reference to appropriate techniques of prose non-fiction such as: ideas, use of evidence, selection of detail, point of view, stance, setting, anecdote, narrative voice, style, language, structure, organisation of material . . .

9. Choose a **non-fiction text** which you consider inspiring or provocative.
Explain how the writer's presentation of his/her subject has such an impact on you.
10. Choose a piece of **travel writing** which offers surprising or amusing insights into a particular country or culture.
Explain briefly what you learn about the country or culture and in greater detail discuss the techniques the writer uses to surprise or amuse you.
11. Choose a **non-fiction text** in which you consider the writer's stance on a particular issue to be ambiguous.
Show how the writer's presentation of this issue illustrates the ambiguity of her/his stance.

[Turn over

SECTION C—POETRY

Answers to questions on poetry should address relevantly the central concern(s)/theme(s) of the text(s) and be supported by reference to appropriate poetic techniques such as: imagery, verse form, structure, mood, tone, sound, rhythm, rhyme, characterisation, contrast, setting, symbolism, word choice . . .

12. Choose a poem which deals with conflict or danger or death.
Show how the poet creates an appropriate mood for the subject matter and go on to discuss how effectively she/he uses this mood to enhance your understanding of the central idea of the poem.
13. Choose a poem which is strongly linked to a specific location.
Show how the poet captures the essence of the location and exploits this to explore an important theme.
14. Choose **two** poems which explore human relationships.
By referring to both poems, discuss which you consider to be the more convincing portrayal of a relationship.
15. Choose a poem in which the speaker's personality is gradually revealed.
Show how, through the content and language of the poem, aspects of the character gradually emerge.

SECTION D—FILM AND TV DRAMA

Answers to questions on film and TV drama should address relevantly the central concern(s)/theme(s) of the text(s) and be supported by reference to appropriate techniques of film and TV drama such as: key sequence(s), characterisation, conflict, structure, plot, dialogue, editing/montage, sound/soundtrack, aspects of mise-en-scène (such as lighting, colour, use of camera, costume, props . . .), mood, setting, casting, exploitation of genre . . .

16. Choose a **film** or **TV drama*** in which a particular sequence is crucial to your understanding of an important theme.

By referring to the sequence and to the text as a whole, show why you consider the sequence to be so important to your understanding of the theme.

17. Choose a **film** or **TV drama*** which presents a life-affirming story.

By referring to key elements of the text, show how the story has such an effect.

18. Choose a **film** or **TV drama*** in which intense feelings have tragic consequences.

Show to what extent the film or programme makers' presentation of these feelings and their consequences is successful in engaging you with the text.

19. Choose a **film** or **TV drama*** in which a complex character is revealed.

Show how the film or programme makers reveal the complexity and discuss to what extent this aspect of the character contributes to your response to the text.

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

[Turn over

SECTION E—LANGUAGE

Answers to questions on language should address relevantly the central concern(s) of the language research/study and be supported by reference to appropriate language concepts such as: register, jargon, tone, vocabulary, word choice, technical terminology, presentation, illustration, accent, grammar, idiom, slang, dialect, structure, point of view, orthography, abbreviation . . .

- 20.** Consider uses of language designed to interest you in a social or commercial or political campaign.
Identify aspects of language which you feel are intended to influence you and evaluate their success in raising your awareness of the subject of the campaign.
- 21.** Consider the spoken language of a clearly defined group of people.
Identify features which differentiate this language from standard usage and assess the extent to which these features have useful functions within the group.
- 22.** Consider the language of newspaper reporting on such subjects as fashion, celebrities, reality TV, soap stars. . .
Identify some of the characteristics of this language and discuss to what extent it is effective in communicating with its target audience.
- 23.** Consider the language (written and/or symbolic) associated with the use of e-mails or text messaging or instant messaging.
Describe some of the conventions associated with any one of these and discuss to what extent these conventions lead to more effective communication.

[END OF QUESTION PAPER]

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