



# Cambridge International AS & A Level

**LITERATURE IN ENGLISH**

**9695/02**

Paper 2 Prose and Unseen

**For examination from 2021**

SPECIMEN PAPER

**2 hours**



You must answer on the enclosed answer booklet.

You will need: Answer booklet (enclosed)

## INSTRUCTIONS

- Answer **two** questions in total:
  - Section A: answer **one** question.
  - Section B: answer **one** question.
- Follow the instructions on the front cover of the answer booklet. If you need additional answer paper, ask the invigilator for a continuation booklet.
- Dictionaries are **not** allowed.

## INFORMATION

- The total mark for this paper is 50.
- All questions are worth equal marks.

The specimen questions provided here illustrate the style of questions that will be asked in the examination. However, the set texts to be used in examinations from 2021–2023 do not appear in this specimen question paper.

Please refer to the syllabus and the specific year of the examination for details of the relevant set texts for that examination.

This document has **14** pages. Blank pages are indicated.

## Section A: Prose

Answer **one** question from this section.

CHIMAMANDA NGOZI ADICHIE: *Half of a Yellow Sun*

## Question 1

## EITHER

- (a) Discuss Adichie's presentation of Kainene, considering her significance in the novel. [25]

## OR

- (b) In what ways, and with what effects, does Adichie present Ugwu's first meeting with Olanna in the following passage? [25]

He finally looked at her as she and Master sat down at the table. Her oval face was smooth like an egg, the lush colour of rain-drenched earth, and her eyes were large and slanted and she looked like she was not supposed to be walking and talking like everyone else; she should be in a glass case like the one in Master's study, where people could admire her curvy, fleshy body, where she would be preserved untainted. Her hair was long; each of the plaits that hung down to her neck ended in a soft fuzz. She smiled easily; her teeth were the same bright white of her eyes. He did not know how long he stood staring at her until Master said, 'Ugwu usually does a lot better than this. He makes a fantastic stew.' 5

'It's quite tasteless, which is better than bad-tasting, of course,' she said, and smiled at Master before turning to Ugwu. 'I'll show you how to cook rice properly, Ugwu, without using so much oil.' 10

'Yes, mah,' Ugwu said. He had invented what he imagined was fried rice, frying the rice in groundnut oil, and had half-hoped it would send them both to the toilet in a hurry. Now, though, he wanted to cook a perfect meal, a savoury *jollof* rice or his special stew with *arigbe*, to show her how well he could cook. He delayed washing up so that the running water would not drown out her voice. When he served them tea, he took his time rearranging the biscuits on the saucer so that he could linger and listen to her, until Master said, 'That's quite all right, my good man.' Her name was Olanna. But Master said it only once; he mostly called her *nkem*, my own. They talked about the quarrel between the Sardauna and the premier of the Western Region, and then Master said something about waiting until she moved to Nsukka and how it was only a few weeks away after all. Ugwu held his breath to make sure he had heard clearly. Master was laughing now, saying, 'But we will live here together, *nkem*, and you can keep the Elias Avenue flat as well.' 15 20 25

She would move to Nsukka. She would live in this house. Ugwu walked away from the door and stared at the pot on the stove. His life would change. He would learn to cook fried rice and he would have to use less oil and he would take orders from her. He felt sad, and yet his sadness was incomplete; he felt expectant, too, an excitement he did not entirely understand. 30

That evening, he was washing Master's linen in the backyard, near the lemon tree, when he looked up from the basin of soapy water and saw her standing by the back door, watching him. At first, he was sure it was his imagination, because the people he thought the most about often appeared to him in visions. He had imaginary conversations with Anulika all the time, and, right after he touched himself at night, Nnesinachi would appear briefly with a mysterious smile on her face. But 35

'Olanna was really at the door. She was walking across the yard towards him. She had only a wrapper tied around her chest, and as she walked, he imagined that she was a yellow cashew, shapely and ripe.

Mah? You want anything?' he asked. He knew that if he reached out and touched her face, it would feel like butter, the kind Master unwrapped from a paper packet and spread on his bread. 40

Chapter 1

TSITSI DANGAREMBGA: *Nervous Conditions*

## Question 2

## EITHER

- (a) Discuss some of the ways in which Dangarembga explores family tensions in the novel. [25]

## OR

- (b) Discuss Dangarembga's presentation of the relationship between Tambu and Nyasha in the following passage. In your answer, you should refer in detail to Dangarembga's use of language and narrative methods. [25]

'I am missing you badly,' she wrote, 'as I knew I would and told you so, but I did not want to worry you with it because I know about your guilts, and I did not want guilt over your luck to stop you enjoying it. But the fact is I am missing you and missing you badly. In many ways you are very essential to me in bridging some of the gaps in my life, and now that you are away, I feel them again. I find it more and more difficult to speak with the girls at school. I try, Tambu, but there is not much to speak of between us. They resent the fact that I do not read their romance stories and, if I do not read them, then of course I cannot talk about them. If only they knew that when I was ten my mother used to scold me very severely indeed for sneaking them down from the bookshelf. But I was ten six years ago and that is a long time to have grown out of such habits. I should, I suppose, have acquired more useful habits instead. I should have learnt to be light hearted and gay, but it's difficult, you know. Besides, I am convinced that they have other reasons for disapproving of me. They do not like my language, my English, because it is authentic and my Shona, because it is not! They think that I am a snob, that I think I am superior to them because I do not feel that I am inferior to men (if you can call the boys in my class men). And all because I beat the boys at maths! I know that I should not complain, but I very much would like to belong, Tambu, but I find I do not. I spend a lot of time reading and studying now that you are not here for us to distract each other, but I must admit I long for those distractions – it's not virtue that keeps me so busy! I think, though, that your uncle is pleased with the quieter environment and I have discovered that it is restful to have him pleased, and so these days I am doing my best not to antagonise him. You can imagine how difficult that is. Impossible, it seems. I cannot help thinking that what antagonises is the fact that I am me – hardly, I admit, the ideal daughter for a hallowed headmaster, a revered patriarch. I have asked him several times if we may come to see you (through my mother, of course – it's always best to be quiet in his presence), but he believes it will spoil you.'

This letter did cause a pang of guilt. I believed I was being irresponsible. Folding the pages away in my desk where I would see it often and be reminded to write, I resolved to reply as soon as I had a spare moment. But the pang of guilt was no more than a pang which dissolved quickly in the stream of novelty and discovery I had plunged into. No spare moment came my way, nor did I find the time to make one, before I received my cousin's next letter. This letter was of the usual kind. Bubbly and bouncy, Nyasha updated me on the mission gossip and announced that she had embarked on a diet 'to discipline my body and occupy my mind. When you come back you will find a svelte, sensuous me.'

That was one of the last letters I received from her. During the second half of the term her letters became less regular and eventually stopped altogether. Again I must confess that I did not really notice. The thirteen weeks of term galloped by

so quickly that while I was still wondering when she would write next, Babamukuru came to fetch me. Preoccupied and tense, he came alone, informing me that Nyasha was keeping to her books. There was no conversation during the ride home, no enquiries from my uncle about the lessons, the dormitories, my friends or the food, and when I asked about Maiguru and the mission, he grunted so distractedly that I gave up the attempt. I was disappointed because Nyasha's letters had led me to believe that his disposition had improved, but I did not dwell on disappointment. If not Babamukuru, there was Nyasha to turn an attentive ear to the torrent of news about the goings on at Sacred Heart that was positively bursting to be told.

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Chapter 10

**Question 3****EITHER**

- (a) 'And those Englishmen who are not delighted to be in India – have they no excuse?'  
'None. Chuck 'em out.' (Chapter 9)

With this quotation in mind, discuss ways in which the novel presents Indian attitudes to the British in India. [25]

**OR**

- (b) In what ways, and with what effects, does Forster present the Marabar caves in the following passage? [25]

There is something unspeakable in these outposts. They are like nothing else in the world, and a glimpse of them makes the breath catch. They rise abruptly, insanely, without the proportion that is kept by the wildest hills elsewhere, they bear no relation to anything dreamt or seen. To call them 'uncanny' suggests ghosts, and they are older than all spirit. Hinduism has scratched and plastered a few rocks, but the shrines are unfrequented, as if pilgrims, who generally seek the extraordinary, had here found too much of it. Some siddhus did once settle in a cave, but they were smoked out, and even Buddha, who must have passed this way down to the Bo Tree of Gaya, shunned a renunciation more complete than his own, and has left no legend of struggle or victory in the Marabar. 5

The caves are readily described. A tunnel eight feet long, five feet high, three feet wide, leads to a circular chamber about twenty feet in diameter. This arrangement occurs again and again throughout the group of hills, and this is all, this is a Marabar cave. Having seen one such cave, having seen two, having seen three, four, fourteen, twenty-four, the visitor returns to Chandrapore uncertain whether he has had an interesting experience or a dull one or any experience at all. He finds it difficult to discuss the caves, or to keep them apart in his mind, for the pattern never varies, and no carving, not even a bees' nest or a bat, distinguishes one from another. Nothing, nothing attaches to them, and their reputation – for they have one – does not depend upon human speech. It is as if the surrounding plain or the passing birds have taken upon themselves to exclaim 'Extraordinary!' and the word has taken root in the air, and been inhaled by mankind. 10

They are dark caves. Even when they open towards the sun, very little light penetrates down the entrance tunnel into the circular chamber. There is little to see, and no eye to see it, until the visitor arrives for his five minutes, and strikes a match. Immediately another flame rises in the depths of the rock and moves towards the surface like an imprisoned spirit; the walls of the circular chamber have been most marvellously polished. The two flames approach and strive to unite, but cannot, because one of them breathes air, the other stone. A mirror inlaid with lovely colours divides the lovers, delicate stars of pink and gray interpose, exquisite nebulae, shadings fainter than the tail of a comet or the midday moon, all the evanescent life of the granite, only here visible. Fists and fingers thrust above the advancing soil – here at last is their skin, finer than any covering acquired by the animals, smoother than windless water, more voluptuous than love. The radiance increases, the flames touch one another, kiss, expire. The cave is dark again, like all the caves. 25 30 35

Only the wall of the circular chamber has been polished thus. The sides of the tunnel are left rough, they impinge as an afterthought upon the internal perfection. An entrance was necessary, so mankind made one. But elsewhere, deeper in the granite, are there certain chambers that have no entrances? Chambers never unsealed since the arrival of the gods? Local report declares that these exceed in number those that can be visited, as the dead exceed the living – four hundred of them, four thousand or million. Nothing is inside them, they were sealed up before the creation of pestilence or treasure; if mankind grew curious and excavated, nothing, nothing would be added to the sum of good or evil. One of them is rumoured within the boulder that swings on the summit of the highest of the hills; a bubbleshaped cave that has neither ceiling nor floor, and mirrors its own darkness in every direction infinitely. If the boulder falls and smashes, the cave will smash too – empty as an Easter egg. The boulder because of its hollowness sways in the wind, and even moves when a crow perches upon it; hence its name and the name of its stupendous pedestal: the Kawa Dol.

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Chapter 12

## Question 4

## EITHER

- (a) Compare ways in which **two** stories present a clash of views or values. [25]

## OR

- (b) In what ways, and with what effects, does Saki present Conradin in the following passage from *Sredni Vashtar*? [25]

Conradin shut his lips tight, but the Woman ransacked his bedroom till she found the carefully hidden key, and forthwith marched down to the shed to complete her discovery. It was a cold afternoon, and Conradin had been bidden to keep to the house. From the furthest window of the dining-room the door of the shed could just be seen beyond the corner of the shrubbery, and there Conradin stationed himself. He saw the Woman enter, and then he imagined her opening the door of the sacred hutch and peering down with her short-sighted eyes into the thick straw bed where his god lay hidden. Perhaps she would prod at the straw in her clumsy impatience. And Conradin fervently breathed his prayer for the last time. But he knew as he prayed that he did not believe. He knew that the Woman would come out presently with that pursed smile he loathed so well on her face, and that in an hour or two the gardener would carry away his wonderful god, a god no longer, but a simple brown ferret in a hutch. And he knew that the Woman would triumph always as she triumphed now, and that he would grow ever more sickly under her pestering and domineering and superior wisdom, till one day nothing would matter much more with him, and the doctor would be proved right. And in the sting and misery of his defeat, he began to chant loudly and defiantly the hymn of his threatened idol:

Sredni Vashtar went forth,  
His thoughts were red thoughts and his teeth were white. 20  
His enemies called for peace, but he brought them death.  
Sredni Vashtar the Beautiful.

And then of a sudden he stopped his chanting and drew closer to the window-pane. The door of the shed still stood ajar as it had been left, and the minutes were slipping by. They were long minutes, but they slipped by nevertheless. He watched the starlings running and flying in little parties across the lawn; he counted them over and over again, with one eye always on that swinging door. A sour-faced maid came in to lay the table for tea, and still Conradin stood and waited and watched. Hope had crept by inches into his heart, and now a look of triumph began to blaze in his eyes that had only known the wistful patience of defeat. Under his breath, with a furtive exultation, he began once again the paeon of victory and devastation. And presently his eyes were rewarded: out through that doorway came a long, low, yellow-and-brown beast, with eyes a-blink at the waning daylight, and dark wet stains around the fur of jaws and throat. Conradin dropped on his knees. The great polecat-ferret made its way down to a small brook at the foot of the garden, drank for a moment, then crossed a little plank bridge and was lost to sight in the bushes. Such was the passing of Sredni Vashtar.

'Tea is ready,' said the sour-faced maid; 'where is the mistress?'

'She went down to the shed some time ago,' said Conradin.

And while the maid went to summon her mistress to tea, Conradin fished a 40  
toasting-fork out of the sideboard drawer and proceeded to toast himself a piece of



bread. And during the toasting of it and the buttering of it with much butter and the slow enjoyment of eating it, Conradin listened to the noises and silences which fell in quick spasms beyond the dining-room door. The loud foolish screaming of the maid, the answering chorus of wondering ejaculations from the kitchen region, the scuttering footsteps and hurried embassies for outside help, and then, after a lull, the scared sobbings and the shuffling tread of those who bore a heavy burden into the house. 45

'Whoever will break it to the poor child? I couldn't for the life of me!' exclaimed a shrill voice. And while they debated the matter among themselves, Conradin made himself another piece of toast. 50

*Sredni Vashtar*

## Section B: Unseen

Answer **one** question from this section.

## EITHER

## Question 5

Comment closely on the following passage, considering its presentation of the father's relationship with his daughter.

In your answer, consider choice of language, dialogue and narrative methods. [25]

*Lee*

At first, he couldn't pick his daughter out from the crowd at the airport when he went to meet her, and he panicked, imagining all sorts of things. All he had was a rather smudged photograph to go by, showing a girl with long Janis Joplin hair framing her face, her smile wide and lopsided. He saw her finally, by the soft-drinks machine, inserting coins; no drink emerged and she kicked the machine, once, twice, three times. He should have recognized the flowing hair, but her clothes – a black man's jacket and tight red jeans – had led him to suppose it was someone older. She looked up, her forehead furrowing in doubt, when he came up. 5

"Are you my dad?" she asked in a pronounced American accent.

"Li Wen?" 10

"Yeah. But everyone calls me Lee."

Clumsily he hugged her and she accepted it with a sort of grudging nonchalance. She kept looking at him with a certain measured surprise – they hadn't met in eight years, he remembered, not since his ex-wife, having won custody of their eight-year-old child, had taken the first plane out to California and never come back. He'd heard that she'd got a job at a refugee centre, helping displaced Asians settle in their new country. Three weeks ago she had drowned accidentally in a friend's swimming pool in LA, hence Li Wen's return. To be with her kith and kin, as his mother had sonorously put it. He had had great difficulty persuading his mother to stay away that night; he needed, he said, to be alone when he met Li Wen. "Is that a newfangled Western concept or what?" his mother had demanded. She had never understood that one sometimes needed a modicum of privacy, a moment to take stock; everything had to be done As Family. 15

He picked up Li Wen's luggage, all three small pieces of it – "Oh, just my favourite shirts and a couple of records" – while she swung her own tennis racket carelessly and walked ahead of him. Her step was jaunty, light-footed; it was almost like cat-walking. She was as tall as he and he was five foot nine. She was sixteen. 20

"Hey," Lee said, when he caught up with her, "it's kind of hot here, isn't it?"

"Don't you remember anything about our country?"

He dumped the luggage in the back of the car.

"My country?" Lee said, as if not sure what he meant. "Oh. Yeah. Some. Not much. Not the humidity." 30

“You won’t need that jacket here.”

She looked down at him, flicking an infinitesimal speck of dust off the lapel, and an odd reflective look came over her face; he was to recognize it well; it was the look which signified she was back in LA in her mind. 35

“I guess not,” she said.

In the car, she made straight for the radio, her hair swashing over the gears. Backing out, he didn’t pay attention to her restless flicking of channels, her sarcastic exclamations of, “Oh my God” and “Can this be real?”

“Man, is that all the radio there is? M.O.R and Bach?” She sounded flabbergasted. 40

“We don’t believe in being swamped by the media here,” he said in amusement.

“Hey – stop,” she commanded. Her tone was imperative.

“Why?” They were near the exit of the car park.

“I gotta get my Walkman<sup>1</sup> out from the back. I can’t listen to this junk. Kenny Rogers –” She rolled her eyes. 45

“Do you have to listen to anything right now?”

Lee said intensely, “I need the music, man.”

He was about to say, No, annoyed, then relented. So he stopped the car and she was out and back in a flash; now she sat contentedly, legs tucked under her, swivelling her head round in curiosity at things which caught her attention along the road. She played the music loud and he could hear it above the noise of the traffic; in a way, it was a relief not to have to talk and he was almost apprehensive when she finally turned the thing off. 50

“So what do you do?” she said, prepared to be amused again. He told her he was a deejay.

“Gross out, man,” she said; her tone was midway between being tickled and patronizing. 55

“What?”

“Forget it,” she said soothingly.

<sup>1</sup>*Walkman* – a personal music device

OR

## Question 6

Discuss the presentation of the storm and its effects in the following poem.

In your answer, consider choice of language, imagery and structure.

[25]

*An African Thunderstorm*

From the west  
 Clouds come hurrying with the wind  
 Turning sharply  
 Here and there  
 Like a plague of locusts 5  
 Whirling,  
 Tossing up things on its tail  
 Like a madman chasing nothing.

Pregnant clouds  
 Ride stately on its back, 10  
 Gathering to perch on hills  
 Like sinister dark wings;  
 The wind whistles by  
 And trees bend to let it pass.

In the village 15  
 Screams of delighted children,  
 Toss and turn  
 In the din of the whirling wind,  
 Women,  
 Babies clinging on their backs 20  
 Dart about  
 In and out  
 Madly;  
 The wind whistles by  
 Whilst trees bend to let it pass. 25

Clothes wave like tattered flags  
 Flying off  
 To expose dangling breasts  
 As jagged blinding flashes  
 Rumble, tremble and crack 30  
 Amidst the smell of fired smoke  
 And the pelting march of the storm.



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