

[C039/SQP072]

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**HIGHER  
ENGLISH**

Time: 1 hour 30 minutes

**NATIONAL  
QUALIFICATIONS**

Paper I  
Specimen Question Paper

You should attempt all questions.

The total value of the Paper is 60 marks.

## INTERPRETATION

There are TWO passages and questions.

Read the passages carefully and then answer all the questions which follow. Use your own words whenever possible and particularly when you are instructed to do so.

You should read it to:

understand what the author is saying about childhood experience and its influence on him as a writer (Understanding—U);

analyse his choice of language, imagery and structures to recognise how they convey his point of view and contribute to the impact of the passage (Analysis—A);

evaluate how effectively he has achieved his purpose (Evaluation—E).

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 and kind of answer required.

### PASSAGE 1

*In the passage below, William McIlvanney, author of the novel “Docherty”, remembers his upbringing and considers its significance in his development as a writer.*

I remember as a boy being alone in the living-room of our council-house in Kilmarnock. I would be maybe 11 years old. I was lying in front of the coal fire with my head resting on an armchair. It was, I think, late on a winter afternoon. The window had gone black and I hadn't put the light on, enjoying the small cave of brightness and heat the fire had hewn from the dark. Perhaps I was a far traveller resting by his camp-fire.

5 Perhaps I was a knight keeping vigil for the dawn when wondrous deeds would be done. For I could be many people at that time as I still can.

I don't know how I came to be alone at that time in that place. In our house with six not unnoticeable presences, it wasn't an easy trick to be alone, even without counting the cavalcade of aunties and uncles and cousins and friends who seemed to be constantly passing through. I wonder if I had come home from school to find the

10 house empty. But that seems improbable. My mother was a ferocious carer who had an almost mystical capacity to conjure solid worries out of air that to the rest of us looked untroubled and clear. Maybe somebody else was supposed to be with me and had gone out briefly.

I don't know. I am simply aware of myself there. The moment sits separate and vivid in my memory, without explanation, like a rootless flower. Whoever I was being, traveller or knight, I must have been tired. For I fell

15 asleep.

The awakening was strange. I think I must have been aware of the noise of people entering the house, one of those slow fuses of sound that sputteringly traverses the unconscious until it ignites into waking. My consciousness and the room came into the light together. My eyes were bruised with brightness. What I saw seems in retrospect to have had the shiningness of newly minted coins, all stamped unmistakably as genuine,

20 pure metal, the undepreciable currency of my life.

What I saw in fact was pretty banal. My father had his hand on the light-switch he had just pressed. My mother was beside him. They were both laughing at what must have been my startled eyes and my wonderment at being where I was. Around them was a room made instantly out of the dark. It was a very ordinary room. But it was wonderful. How strange the biscuit barrel was where my mother kept the rent-money. How unimaginable was

25 the image of Robert Burns with the mouse, painted on glass by my uncle. How incorrigibly itself the battered sideboard became. The room was full of amazing objects. They might as well have come from Pompeii.

And at the centre of them were two marvellously familiar strangers. I saw them not just as my mother and father. I knew suddenly how dark my father was, how physical his presence. His laughter filled the room, coming from a place that was his alone. My mother looked strangely young, coming in fresh-faced from the cold and darkness, her irises swallowing her pupils as she laughed in the shocking brightness. I felt an inordinate love for them. I experienced the transformation of the ordinary into something powerfully mysterious.

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I'm convinced that that moment in the living-room at St Maurs Crescent is one of the experiences from which *Docherty* (and perhaps everything I've written) grew. It was a moment which has had many relatives. When I consider them, I realise that they have several features in common.

35 One of them is a belief in the grandeur of the everyday, where the ordinary is just the unique in hiding. As it says in *Docherty*, “messiahs are born in stables”. That being so, as a boy I kept finding Bethlehem round every corner. So many things amazed me.

There were the stories surrounding me, for a start. *Docherty*, I should think, began its gestation in the mouths of the people all around me. Our house was an incredible talking-shop. As the youngest of four, I seem to have  
40 grown up with an intense conversation going on endlessly about me as my natural habitat. By one of those casually important accidents of childhood, the youngest of us had to sleep in a fold-down bed in the living-room. Lack of space had its advantages. This meant that from a very early age, I could be involved, however marginally, in these debates, often going to sleep with the sound of disputation as a lullaby.

To this continuing seminar on life and the strange nature of it came many visiting speakers. Our house often felt  
45 to me like a throughway for talk. Relatives and friends were always dropping in. They brought news of local doings, bizarre attitudes, memorable remarks made under pressure, anecdotes of wild behaviour. Most of it was delivered and received with a calmness that astonished me. I vaguely sensed, early on, the richness they were casually living among, rather as if a traveller should come upon the Incas using pure gold as kitchen utensils. The substance that would be *Docherty* was beginning to glint for me in fragments of talk and caught  
50 glimpses of living.

Cognate to my awareness of the rich and largely uncommemorated life around me was a fascination with language. Given my background, I was lucky to be in a house where books were part of the practical furniture, not there as ornaments but to be read and talked about. My mother was the source of the activity. My sister and my two brothers had established reading as a family tradition by the time I was old enough to join in. Only my  
55 father, someone—it has always seemed to me—educated spectacularly below his abilities, was never to be comfortable with books. His presence on the edges of our immersion in reading became, I think, in some way formative for me. I wanted him somehow to be included in the words.

Love of reading led naturally, it seemed at the time, to efforts at writing. If books were not the most sought-after domestic adjuncts in our housing scheme (depraved orgies of poetry-reading behind closed curtains), the desire  
60 to actually write poetry could have been construed as proof of mental aberration. But this was my next move, one I effected without being ostracised by my peers because, perhaps, I was also very good at football. Having successfully undergone my masculine rites of passage in the West of Scotland, I could indulge in a little limp-wristed scribbling.

Here again the family situation helped. No one—least of all my father (despite being uninterested in books)—  
65 ever questioned the validity of the time I spent arranging words on pieces of paper. I took such tolerance for granted. It was only much later I realised how different it might have been for a working-class boy with ambitions to write. A woman writer-friend told me some years ago of a man she knew who came from a background similar to my own. He was bedevilled by a longing to write plays, much to the embarrassment of his relatives. On one occasion an older brother beat him up severely in an attempt to bring him to his senses and to  
70 get him to stop inflicting shame upon the family. Such an attitude had been unimaginable to me in my boyhood.

## PASSAGE 2

*In this passage, writer and actor Alan Bennett reflects on the ways in which books and parents influenced his childhood and career.*

You should read it to:

understand Alan Bennett's view of the relationship between the world of books and real life (Understanding—U);

analyse how he has conveyed this point of view, using humour and tone (Analysis—A);

evaluate the effectiveness of the passage by comparison with the previous one by McIlvanney (Evaluation—E).

“What you want to be,” Mam said to my brother and me, “is gentleman farmers. They earn up to £10 a week.” This was in Leeds some time in the early years of the war, when my father, a butcher at Armley Lodge Road Co-op, was getting £6 a week and they thought themselves not badly off. So it's not the modesty of my mother's aspirations that seems surprising now but the direction. Why gentleman farmers? And the answer, of course,  
5 was books.

I had read quite a few story-books by this time, as I had learned to read quite early by dint, it seemed to me, of staring over my brother's shoulder at the comic he was reading until suddenly it made sense. Though I liked reading (and showed off at it), it was soon borne in upon me that the world of books was only distantly related to the world in which I lived. The families I read about were not like our family (no family ever quite was). These families had dogs and gardens and lived in country towns equipped with thatched cottages and mill-streams, where the children had adventures, saved lives, caught villains, and found treasures before coming home, tired but happy, to eat sumptuous teas off chequered tablecloths in low-beamed parlours presided over by comfortable pipe-smoking fathers and gentle aproned mothers, who were invariably referred to as Mummy and Daddy.

15 In an effort to bring this fabulous world closer to my own, more threadbare, existence, I tried as a first step substituting "Mummy" and "Daddy" for my usual "Mam" and "Dad", but was pretty sharply discouraged. My father was hot on anything smacking of social pretension; there had even been an argument at the font because my aunties had wanted my brother given two Christian names instead of plain one.

20 Had it been only stories that didn't measure up to the world it wouldn't have been so bad. But it wasn't only fiction that was fiction. Fact too was fiction, as textbooks seemed to bear no more relation to the real world than did the story-books. At school or in my *Boy's Book of the Universe* I read of the minor wonders of nature,—the sticklebacks that haunted the most ordinary pond, the newts and toads said to lurk under every stone, and the dragon-flies that flitted over the dappled surface. Not, so far as I could see, in Leeds. There were owls in hollow trees, so the nature books said, but I saw no owls and hollow trees were in short supply too. It was only in the frog-spawn department that nature actually lined up with the text. Even in Leeds there was that, jamjars of which I duly fetched home to stand beside great wilting bunches of bluebells on the backyard window-sill. But the tadpoles never seemed to graduate to the full-blown frogs the literature predicted, invariably giving up the ghost as soon as they reached the two-legged stage when, unbeknownst to Mam, they would have to be flushed secretly down the lav.

30 This sense of deprivation, fully developed by the time I was seven or eight, sometimes came down to particular words. I had read in many stories, beginning I suppose with *Babes in the Wood*, how the childish hero and heroine, lost in the forest, had nevertheless spent a cosy night bedded down on *pine needles*. I had never come across these delightfully accommodating features and wondered where they were to be found. Could one come across them in Leeds? It was not short on parks after all—Gott's Park, Roundhay Park—surely one of them would have pine needles.

40 And then there was *sward*, a word that was always cropping up in *Robin Hood*. It was what tournaments and duels were invariably fought on. But what was sward? "Grass" said my teacher, Miss Timpson, shortly; but I knew it couldn't be. Grass was the wiry, sooty stuff that covered the Ree in Moorfield Road where we played at night after school. That was not sward. So once, hearing of some woods in Bramley, a few miles from where we lived, I went off on the trail of sward, maybe hoping to come across pine needles in the process. I trailed out past the rhubarb fields at Hill Top, over Stanningly Road then down into the valley that runs up from Kirkstall Abbey. But all I found were the same mouldy old trees and stringy grass that we had at Armley.

45 Sticklebacks, owls, hollow trees, pine needles and sward—they were what you read about in books; books which were borrowed from Armley Junior Library, and an institution more intended to discourage children from reading could not have been designed. It was presided over by a fierce British Legion commissionaire, a relic of the Boer War, who with his medals and walrus moustache was the image of Hindenberg as pictured on German stamps in my brother's album.

50 The few books we actually owned were, in fact, largely reference books, bought by subscription through magazines: *Enquire Within*, *What Everybody Wants to Know* and, with its illustrations of a specimen man and woman (minus private parts), *Everybody's Home Doctor*. Mam, admittedly, sometimes sought her own particular brand of genteel escape—sagas of couples who had thrown up everything to start a small-holding (gentleman-farmers in the making).

55 My parents always felt that had they been educated, had they been "real readers", their lives and indeed their characters would have been different. They imagined books would make them less shy and (always an ambition) able to "mix". Quiet and never particularly gregarious, they cherished a lifelong longing to "branch out", with books somehow the key to it. This unsatisfied dream they have bequeathed to me, so that without any conscious intention I find I am often including in plays or films a scene where a character shows a desire to enter a prestigious world dominated by books. As for me, while I'm not baffled by books, I can't see how anyone can love them ("He loved books"). I can't see how anyone can "love literature". What does that mean? Of course  
60 one advantage to being a gentleman farmer is that you seldom have to grapple with such questions.

Questions on Passage 1

*Marks*

- (a) Drawing your information from the second paragraph (lines 7–12), give in your own words a reason why it was unusual for the author, as a boy, to be alone in the house. 1 U
- (b) (i) Show how in lines 13–15 the author reinforces the significance of the moment described in the previous paragraphs.  
In your answer you should refer to one of the following: sentence structure; imagery; word choice; tense. 2 A
- (ii) Choose one of the extended images contained in lines 16–20 and show how effective you find it in describing the boy’s awakening. 2 E
- (iii) “What I saw in fact was pretty banal.” (line 21)  
Explain how lines 21–24 (“My father . . . was wonderful.”) help you to arrive at the meaning of “banal”. 2 U
- (c) (i) By referring to specific words and phrases, explain fully the part lines 32–34 play in the structure of the passage as a whole. 3 A
- (ii) Explain how lines 35–37 help you to arrive at the meaning of “the ordinary is just the unique in hiding” (line 35). 2 U
- (d) (i) From lines 38–43, give one feature of the author’s home life which ensured that he encountered a wide variety of language. 1 U
- (ii) In your own words, explain why the boy was “astonished” (line 47). 1 U
- (iii) In lines 44–50, the author uses imagery to convey the special contribution made by his home to his future career.  
By referring to one, or more than one, example, show how effective you find his use of this technique. 2 A/E
- (e) (i) What is the tone of “If books were not the most sought-after domestic adjuncts in our housing-scheme . . .” (lines 58–59)? 1 A
- (ii) From the rest of the sentence select a feature of sentence structure or word choice which contributes to that tone and explain how it does so. 2 A
- (f) To what extent do you find the anecdote related in lines 66–70 (“It was only . . . in my boyhood”) a suitable conclusion to this passage?  
Justify your view by referring to the whole passage. 4 E  
(23)
- (g) Drawing your information from line 38 to the end of the passage, write a paragraph in which you summarise the main factors which had a positive influence on William McIlvanney’s development as a writer.  
Use your own words as far as possible. (6) U

Questions on Passage 2

*Marks*

- (h) Give two reasons why the writer's mother suggested that he should become a "gentleman-farmer". You should refer to lines 1–5 and lines 50–52 in your answer. 2 U
- (i) (i) Explain briefly in your own words the writer's view about "the world of books" (line 8) and his own life. 2 U  
(ii) By referring fully to lines 15–18, explain how the writer develops this view in a humorous way. 4 U/A
- (j) (i) "Fact too was fiction . . ." (line 20)  
Show how lines 19–21 help you to arrive at the meaning of this statement. 2 U  
(ii) By referring to any part of lines 21–29, show briefly how the writer develops in a humorous way his idea that "Fact too was fiction". 2 U/A
- (k) Look again at lines 30–42 ("This sense of deprivation . . . we had at Armley.")  
Show how effective you find this section of the passage.  
You should refer to ideas and tone in your answer. 4 E/A
- (l) (i) Explain in your own words the "unsatisfied dream" (line 56) of the writer's parents and the part that books played in it. You should refer to lines 53–56 in your answer. 2 U  
(ii) By referring to lines 56–59 ("This unsatisfied . . . does that mean?"), explain how his parents' feelings about books have affected the writer and his work. 3 U  
(21)

Question on both Passages

- (m) Which passage do you find more interesting?  
Compare the two passages in terms of their main ideas and such stylistic features as point of view, tone, imagery, structure . . . (10) E/A

Total (60)

[END OF QUESTION PAPER]

[C039/SQP072]

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HIGHER  
ENGLISH

Time: 1 hour 30 minutes

NATIONAL  
QUALIFICATIONS

Paper II

Specimen Question Paper

There are **two parts** to this paper and you should attempt both parts.

Part 1 (Textual Analysis) is worth 30 marks.

In Part 2 (Critical Essay), you should attempt **one** question only, taken from any of the Sections A–D.

Your answer to Part 2 should begin on a fresh page.

Each question in Part 2 is worth 30 marks.

NB You must not use, in Part 2 of this paper, the same text(s) as you have used in your Specialist Study.

PART 1 (TEXTUAL ANALYSIS)

You should spend approximately 45 minutes on this part of the paper.

*WAITING ROOM*

5 She waits neatly, bone-china thin,  
in a room tight with memories,  
claustrophobic with possessions,  
rendered down from eighty years,  
eight Homes and Gardens rooms.

10 She waits graciously, bearing  
the graffiti of age. She drizzles  
sherry into fine glasses, tea  
into what is left  
of wide-brimmed wedding china.

15 With the top of her mind  
she is eager to skim off news  
of the family, who married whom  
and when. Names elude her. Tormented,  
she tries to trap them on her tongue.

20 She waits defiantly, fumbling  
to light a cigarette, veins  
snaking across her hands  
like unravelled knitting. A man's face,  
preoccupied by youth, looks on.

25 We leave her, the stick a third leg,  
waiting to obey the gong,  
(Saturday, boiled eggs for tea)  
waiting for the rain to stop,  
waiting for winter, waiting.

Moira Andrew



*Analysis*

- (a) By referring to the language of line 1, state what initial impression of the woman is conveyed. 2
- (b) What do lines 2–10 reveal to you about the woman’s past circumstances?  
Show how the language of these lines leads you to make three deductions about her past. 6
- (c) (i) Stanza three (lines 11–15) reveals aspects of the woman’s personality. Suggest three characteristics of her personality. 3  
(ii) Go on to explain how effectively you think aspects of her personality are conveyed. You should refer to such techniques as word choice, sentence structure, imagery, sound . . . 3
- (d) From an examination of the language of lines 16–19 (“She waits defiantly . . . like unravelled knitting.”), show how sympathy is elicited for the old woman. 3
- (e) “A man’s face,  
preoccupied by youth, looks on.” (lines 19–20)  
Comment on the significance of these lines in the context of the whole poem. 3

*Appreciation*

- (f) Comment on the significance for you of the idea of “waiting” in the whole poem. In your answer you should consider the poet’s treatment of the idea and your reactions to it. 10

Total Marks (30)

[Turn over for PART 2—CRITICAL ESSAY

## PART 2—CRITICAL ESSAY

Attempt ONE question only, taken from any of the Sections A to D.

In all Sections you may use Scottish texts.

You should spend about 45 minutes on this part of the paper.

Begin your answer on a fresh page.

### SECTION A—DRAMA

1. Choose a play in which a character is forced to compromise or refuses to compromise.  
Explain briefly how the situation comes about and go on to discuss how you think the character's decision affects the ideas and the outcome of the play.  
In your answer you must refer closely to the text and to at least two of: key scene(s), theme, climax, characterisation or any other appropriate feature.
2. Choose a play whose opening scene seems to you to be particularly amusing or menacing.  
Discuss how effectively the opening scene prepares you for the rest of the play.  
In your answer you must refer closely to the text and to at least two of: exposition, mood, setting, conflict, dialogue, theme or any other appropriate feature.
3. "I am . . . more sinned against than sinning."  
Discuss to what extent you find this an accurate description of a Shakespearean tragic hero or heroine.  
In your answer you must refer closely to the text and to at least two of: theme, characterisation, relationships, soliloquy, key scene(s), conflict or any other appropriate feature.
4. Choose a play in which tension is deliberately created towards the end.  
Explain how the tension is created and go on to discuss how the tension adds to your appreciation of the ending of the play.  
In your answer you must refer closely to the text and to at least two of: conflict, climax, dialogue, structure or any other appropriate feature.

## SECTION B—PROSE

5. Choose a novel in which a character's personality appears to change.  
Outline the nature of the change (or the apparent change) and go on to discuss how this illuminates for you the theme(s) of the text.  
In your answer you must refer closely to the text and to at least two of: key incident(s), structure, narrative stance, contrast or any other appropriate feature.
6. Choose a novel in which symbolism plays an important part.  
Discuss how effectively the symbolism adds to your understanding and appreciation of the characterisation or the ideas in the novel.  
In your answer you must refer closely to the text and to at least two of: symbolism, characterisation, theme, setting, structure or any other appropriate feature.
7. Choose a novel or short story in which one character's loyalty or disloyalty to another proves to be decisive.  
Explain how this arises and go on to discuss why you think it is important to the text as a whole.  
In your answer you must refer closely to the text and to at least two of: key incident(s), characterisation, structure, narrative stance, tone or any other appropriate feature.
8. Choose a novel or a work of non-fiction whose setting contributes significantly to the overall impact of the text.  
Discuss the importance of the setting to your understanding and appreciation of the main concerns or issues of the text.  
In your answer you must refer closely to the text and to at least two of: setting, theme, style, symbolism or any other appropriate feature.

## SECTION C—POETRY

9. Choose a poet whose work has impressed you in terms of both style and content.  
Referring to at least two poems, explain what you admire about the poet's work.  
In your answer you must refer closely to the text and to at least two of: theme, poetic form, imagery, word-choice or any other appropriate feature.
10. Choose a poem which forces you to face up to an unpleasant truth.  
Show how the poet achieves this effect.  
In your answer you must refer closely to the text and to at least two of: theme, word-choice, imagery, sound or any other appropriate feature.
11. Choose a poem which you think could be described as a love poem.  
Discuss how successfully the poet conveys the emotions in the poem.  
In your answer you must refer closely to the text and to at least two of: imagery, symbolism, poetic form, rhyme, rhythm or any other appropriate feature.
12. Choose a dramatic monologue which reveals a particularly admirable or particularly unpleasant character.  
Show how the poem leads you to form this opinion.  
In your answer you must refer closely to the text and to at least two of: poetic form, tone, setting, sound, word-choice or any other appropriate feature.

SECTION D—MASS MEDIA

13. Choose a film which leads you into the mind of a complex or subtle character.  
Explain how the character is created in this film.  
In your answer you must refer closely to the text and to at least two of: casting, dialogue, editing, use of camera, clothing, lighting or any other appropriate feature.
14. Choose a film which has something important to say to you about a serious social issue.  
Explain how the film conveys the importance of the subject.  
In your answer you must refer closely to the text and to at least two of: genre, theme, use of stars, setting, plot, key sequences or any other appropriate feature.
15. Isolation, rejection, confrontation, loneliness are major themes that are explored in many TV dramas.  
By referring to one TV drama, discuss how one of these themes is dealt with in a way which you found meaningful.  
In your answer you must refer closely to the text and to at least two of: theme, plot, use of camera, lighting, objects, colour, sound track or any other appropriate feature.
16. Many memorable TV dramas leave the viewer with a powerful impression of a person, a place, or an era.  
Describe how a TV drama succeeded in creating such an impression for you.  
In your answer you must refer closely to the text and to at least two of: genre, casting, colour, music, clothing, dialogue, properties or any other appropriate feature.

[END OF QUESTION PAPER]