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Cambridge Assessment International Education

Cambridge International AS & A Level

LITERATURE IN ENGLISH **9695/21**

Paper 2 Prose and Unseen **October/November 2025**

2 hours

0173662375

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.

This document has **12** pages. Any blank pages are indicated.

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Section A: Prose

Answer **one** question from this section.

KIRAN DESAI: *The Inheritance of Loss*

1 **Either** **(a)** Discuss Desai's presentation of Jemubhai and his role in the novel.

Or **(b)** Comment closely on Desai's presentation of Biju's experience in the following passage.

Szechuan wings and French fries, just $3.00.

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'She wants the Marlboro man with a PhD.'

(*from* Chapter 10)

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Stories of Ourselves, Volume 1

2 **Either** **(a)** Discuss ways in which the writers of **two** stories present life in rural areas.

Or **(b)** Comment closely on the following passage from *The Yellow Wallpaper*, considering Charlotte Perkins Gilman's presentation of the narrator's attitude to her husband, John.

I don't know why I should write this. I don't want to.
I don't feel able.
And I know John would think it absurd. But I *must* say what I feel and think in some way – it is such a relief!
But the effort is getting to be greater than the relief.
Half the time now I am awfully lazy, and lie down ever so much. John says I mustn't lose my strength, and has me take cod-liver oil and lots of tonics and things, to say nothing of ale and wine and rare meat.
Dear John! He loves me very dearly, and hates to have me sick. I tried to have a real earnest reasonable talk with him the other day, and tell him how I wished he would let me go and make a visit to Cousin Henry and Julia.
But he said I wasn't able to go, nor able to stand it after I got there; and I did not make out a very good case for myself, for I was crying before I had finished.
It is getting to be a great effort for me to think straight. Just this nervous weakness, I suppose.
And dear John gathered me up in his arms, and just carried me upstairs and laid me on the bed, and sat by me and read to me till he tired my head.
He said I was his darling and his comfort and all he had, and that I must take care of myself for his sake, and keep well.
He says no one but myself can help me out of it, that I must use my will and self-control and not let my silly fancies run away with me.
There's one comfort, the baby is well and happy, and does not have to occupy this nursery with the horrid wall paper.
If we had not used it that blessed child would have! What a fortunate escape! Why, I wouldn't have a child of mine, an impressionable little thing, live in such a room for worlds.
I never thought of it before, but it is lucky that John kept me here, after all. I can stand it so much easier than a baby, you see.
Of course I never mention it to them any more – I am too wise – but I keep watch of it all the same.
There are things in that paper that nobody knows but me, or ever will.
Behind that outside pattern the dim shapes get clearer every day.
It is always the same shape, only very numerous.
And it is like a woman stooping down and creeping about behind that pattern. I don't like it a bit. I wonder – I begin to think – I wish John would take me away from here!

It is so hard to talk with John about my case, because he is so wise, and because he loves me so.

(*from* The Yellow Wallpaper)

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EVELYN WAUGH: *A Handful of Dust*

3 **Either** **(a)** 'In *A Handful of Dust*, Waugh turns dreadful situations into social comedy.'

How far and in what ways do you agree with this view of the novel?

Or **(b)** Comment closely on Waugh's presentation of the bedrooms of Hetton in the following passage.

[...] the bedrooms with their brass bedsteads, each with a frieze of Gothic text, each named from Malory, Yseult, Elaine, Mordred and Merlin, Gawaine and Bedivere, Lancelot, Perceval, Tristram, Galahad, his own dressing room, Morgan le Fay, and Brenda's Guinevere, where the bed stood on a dais, the walls hung with tapestry, the fireplace like a tomb of the thirteenth century, from whose bay window one could count, on days of exceptional clearness, the spires of six churches – all these things with which he had grown up were a source of constant delight and exultation to Tony; things of tender memory and proud possession.

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some shelves of books, *Bevis*, *Woodwork at Home*, *Conjuring for All*, *The Young Visiters*, *The Law of Landlord and Tenant*, *Farewell to Arms*.

(*from* English Gothic – 1, Part 1)

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COLSON WHITEHEAD: *The Underground Railroad*

4 **Either** **(a)** Discuss the presentation and importance of North Carolina in the novel.

Or **(b)** Comment closely on the following passage, considering ways in which Whitehead presents Caesar and Cora escaping in Fletcher's cart.

On the silent road Caesar and Cora nestled among Fletcher's crates.

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When she next opened her eyes, it was dark.

(*from* Georgia)

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Section B: Unseen

Answer **one** question from this section.

Either

5 Comment closely on the following poem, considering ways in which the poet presents the relationship between the friends.

In your answer, consider the writer's choice of language, structure and poetic methods.

Walk

I walked last night with my old friend

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For those who had no wish to know.

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TURN OVER FOR QUESTION 6.

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Or

6 Comment closely on the presentation of the discussion between Siward and Malcolm, the king, in the following extract.

In your answer, consider the writer's choice of language, dialogue and dramatic methods.

[MALCOLM *on the throne*]

SIWARD: You told me she was dead.

MALCOLM: Did I?

SIWARD: You told me she went mad and died.

MALCOLM: Mmm.

SIWARD: You told me the tyrant had lost the support of the chiefs and he had no son and his queen had died of madness and so there would be no resistance to you but on the other hand we were likely to see a swift and general acceptance of your rule and the chance to establish a new and peaceful order.

That's what you said.

MALCOLM: Yes.

SIWARD: Well – she's not dead.

MALCOLM: So it would seem.

SIWARD: Not even sick.

MALCOLM: No.

SIWARD: You lied to me.

MALCOLM: Siward – there's a small thing I ought to say if you don't mind – and I'm not trying to avoid your general point, but there's an important clarification I must make before we go any further. In Scotland to call me a liar is really unacceptable – if – here in the great hall for example – a man were to call me a liar that would – essentially – demand a violent response – a statement like that being – as it would be – a matter of honour – and so usually the way we manage this sort of thing in Scotland is by being careful not only not to tell lies – but also to be very very careful about the way we hear and understand words. So for example – if a person in Scotland says 'It seems a person has died' we tend to hear that word 'seems' – 'seems' – and of course that word makes a difference. Isn't that infuriating? It's silly and of course it means that every discussion is fraught and people have to pussyfoot around when obviously one simply wants to cut through the nonsense and describe the facts of the world as they are – but there it is – that's how things are – and so – before we go any further – I suppose what I'm asking you – Siward is – really – and this is just for clarification – are you calling me a liar?

SIWARD: No.

MALCOLM: Well, that's a relief.

SIWARD: I understood that the Queen was dead.

MALCOLM: It turns out that was a mistaken understanding.

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SIWARD: It would seem so.

MALCOLM: Mmm.

…

Of course the whole thing would be easier if she were dead. *45*

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