



UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE INTERNATIONAL EXAMINATIONS
General Certificate of Education
Advanced Subsidiary Level and Advanced Level

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ENGLISH LANGUAGE

8693/11

Paper 1 Passages for Comment

October/November 2012

2 hours

Additional Materials: Answer Booklet/Paper

READ THESE INSTRUCTIONS FIRST

If you have been given an Answer Booklet, follow the instructions on the front cover of the Booklet.

Write your Centre number, candidate number and name on all the work you hand in.

Write in dark blue or black pen.

Do not use staples, paper clips, highlighters, glue or correction fluid.

Answer **two** questions.

You are reminded of the need for good English and clear presentation in your answers.

At the end of the examination, fasten all your work securely together.

The number of marks is given in brackets [] at the end of each question or part question.

x
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This document consists of **7** printed pages and **1** blank page.



Answer two questions.

- 1 The following passage describes the writer's departure from Zimbabwe to live a new life in Zealand.
- (a) Comment on the style and language of the passage. [15]
- (b) Later in her life, the writer moves away from another country she has lived in. She writes about this experience in another article. Write the opening of the article (between 120–150 words). Base your answer closely on the style and language of the original passage. [10]

Of course there were other, lesser, teenage preoccupations: leaving my best friend and my first boyfriend; missing out on the end-of-school dance. Even my 16-year-old self knew that these things were petty and selfish, but that did not stop the angry exclamation points in my diary (SO UNFAIR!!!). It was easier to concentrate on these safer, more familiar problems (problems shared by the people I saw on television and in the magazines) than on the larger concerns that I did not want to write about. 5

Mum took me shopping for warm clothes. New Zealand is cold, she told me, and we would need woolly hats and cardigans. Perhaps even a winter coat. I could not imagine a winter where you might need a coat, living where the heat melted the roads and silenced the morning birds. In preparation for exile, I tried to write descriptions of everything I saw in those last few weeks in Zimbabwe, determined to remember it all when I was living in that distant, wintry land. There was too much to write down, though, and so the diary became a list of disconnected objects, the packing list of a mad person, as if I were planning to build an ark and take all these things with me: chameleons, go-away birds, Castle lager, rock rabbits, Mazowe orange juice, msasa trees and barbecues on the verandah. 10 15

The week before we left, Mum and I both fell ill. We vomited every few minutes with depressing regularity and the house filled with a swampy miasma. I wondered, objectively, if I might be dying. Perhaps I was incapable of surviving anywhere but Zimbabwe, and these were the first withdrawal pains; worse would follow. When we got better, the world felt transparent and insubstantial. 20

We picked avocados from our tree to take with us on the journey, forgetting that airport security would confiscate them. They smelled of sunshine and had green, toad-like skins, but as they sat in our suitcases and waited for our departure they turned dim and purple as bruises. We packed as much as we could into our luggage and sewed illegal foreign currency into our clothes. I do not remember who drove us to the airport; I do not remember the drive at all. I do remember that it seemed too easy to be real. Could it really be as simple as walking through a gate, past these yawning security officers with their AK47s? I waited for shouting, footsteps, gunshots. Impostors! Deserters! I clutched my carry-on bag ("Hold it as if it isn't heavy, or they'll charge us extra"), trying to swing it casually. My shoulder creaked in its socket. 25 30

One of the officers spoke to me, and I struggled to hear him through the buzz of fear in my ears. I shook my head to clear it, and he repeated himself. 35

"*Fambai zvakonaka,*" he said, and smiled. Travel well.

The scent of the avocados drifted to me, warm and sickly. Mum poured me a polystyrene cup of water. There was a smear of pinkish lipstick on the rim that made my stomach heave.

"These are no good any more," said Mum, and abandoned the avocados in the airport bin. They released the last of their scent before disappearing. 40

We climbed onto the plane, and still no one stopped us. I waited for the announcement ("We are unable to take off because we have stowaways on board")

but it did not come. Surely Zimbabwe would not let us go without a fight? stomach burbled embarrassingly loudly.

“Mum. Mum! I need the lavatory.”

“Not again.” She sighed, stood up, let me walk down the carpeted aisle and sit on the aeroplane toilet. Perhaps this was how Zimbabwe would claim me back. I flushed and waited to be sucked out through the belly of the plane, but nothing happened. I started to be afraid. Perhaps nothing would keep us here. Perhaps the country did not care that we were going; perhaps it wanted us to go.

Perhaps this time we really were leaving after all.

From the air, the lights of Harare¹ were twinkling and festive.

“Tomorrow morning we’ll be in London,” said Mum. She had taken off her glasses and her eyes were raw.

I pressed my hand to the window and felt it cold under my palm.

There is a Shona proverb: “The strength of a fish is in the water.” I did not know much about fish, living as I did far from any coast, and my experience was limited to bitter Kariba Dam bream² or the battered overgrown fish fingers that we ate with chips, but I could imagine myself flopping and gasping on foreign ground, breathing impossible air, as stranded and desperate as if I had been transported to the moon. I kept my diaries full of memories and my rambling lists of all the things I planned to remember.

I knew I’d write about Zimbabwe one day. I did not realise, though, that the writing would be a search for that part of myself I had left behind – and that I would never quite find it again.

¹ *Harare*: capital of Zimbabwe

² *bream*: freshwater fish

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2 The following passage describes the singer and film actor Frank Sinatra in 1965, at the height of his fame.

- (a) Comment on the style and language of the passage.
- (b) Later that evening Sinatra writes his thoughts and feelings in his personal journal. Write the opening of the diary entry (between 120–150 words). Base your answer closely on the material of the original passage. [10]

Frank Sinatra, holding a glass of whisky in one hand and a cigarette in the other, stood in a dark corner of the bar between two attractive but fading blonde women who sat waiting for him to say something. But he said nothing; he had been silent during much of the evening, except now in this private club in Beverly Hills he seemed even more distant, staring out through the smoke and semi-darkness into a large room beyond the bar where dozens of young couples sat huddled around small tables or twisted in the center of the floor to the clamorous clang of folk-rock music blaring from the stereo. The two blondes knew, as did Sinatra's four male friends who stood nearby, that it was a bad idea to force conversation upon him when he was in this mood of sullen silence, a mood that had hardly been uncommon during this first week of November, a month before his fiftieth birthday. 5

Sinatra had been working in a film that he now disliked, could not wait to finish; he was tired of all the publicity attached to his dating the twenty-year-old actress, who was not in sight tonight; he was angry that a CBS television documentary of his life, to be shown in two weeks, was reportedly prying into his privacy, even speculating on his possible friendship with Mafia leaders; he was worried about his starring role in an hour-long NBC show entitled *Sinatra – A Man and His Music*, which would require that he sing eighteen songs with a voice that at this particular moment, just a few nights before the taping was to begin, was weak and sore and uncertain. Sinatra was ill. He was the victim of an ailment so common that most people would consider it trivial. But when it gets to Sinatra it can plunge him into a state of anguish, deep depression, panic, even rage. Frank Sinatra had a cold. 15

Sinatra with a cold is Picasso without paint, Ferrari without fuel – only worse. For the common cold robs Sinatra of that uninsurable jewel, his voice, cutting into the core of his confidence, and it affects not only his own psyche but also seems to cause a kind of psychosomatic nasal drip within dozens of people who work for him, drink with him, love him, depend on him for their own welfare and stability. 20

For Frank Sinatra was now involved with many things involving many people – his own film company, his record company, his private airline, his missile-parts firm, his real-estate holdings across the nation, his personal staff of seventy-five – which are only a portion of the power he is and has come to represent. He seemed now to be also the embodiment of the fully liberated male, perhaps the only one in America, the man who can do anything he wants, anything, can do it because he has money, the energy, and no apparent guilt. In an age when the very young seem to be taking over, protesting and picketing and demanding change, Frank Sinatra survives as a national phenomenon, one of the few products to withstand the test of time. He is the champ who made the big comeback, the man who had everything, lost it, then got it back, letting nothing stand in his way, doing what few men can do: he uprooted his life, left his family, broke with everything that was familiar, learning in the process that one way to hold a woman is not to hold her. Now he has the affection of Nancy and Ava and Mia¹, the fine female produce of three generations, and still has the adoration of his children, the freedom of a bachelor, he does not feel old, he makes old men feel young, makes them think that if Frank Sinatra can do it, it can be done; not that they could do it, but it is still nice for other men to know, at fifty, that it can be done. 30 35 40 45

But now, standing at this bar in Beverly Hills, Sinatra had a cold, and continued to drink quietly and he seemed miles away in his private world, not even reacting when suddenly the stereo in the other room switched to a Sinatra song, "In the Wee Small Hours of the Morning . . ."

The two blondes, who seemed to be in their middle thirties, were preened and polished, their matured bodies softly molded within tight dark suits. They sat, legs crossed, perched on the high bar stools. They listened to the music. Then one of them pulled out a cigarette and Sinatra quickly placed his gold lighter under it and she held his hand, looked at his fingers: they were stubby and raw, and the little fingers protruded, being so stiff from arthritis that he could barely bend them.

¹ *Nancy and Ava and Mia*: Sinatra's daughter, his ex-wife and his partner at the time

- 3 The following passage from a story describes a world in which a young girl relies on her dog's companionship.
- (a) Comment on the style and language of the passage.
- (b) Continue the passage (between 120–150 words), although you do not have to bring the story to a close. Base your answer closely on the style and language of the original passage. [10]

“Ninety-eight – ninety-nine – one hundred.” Gloria withdrew her chubby little forearm from before her eyes and stood for a moment, wrinkling her nose and blinking in the sunlight. Then, trying to watch in all directions at once, she withdrew a few cautious steps from the tree against which she had been leaning.

She craned her neck to investigate the possibilities of a clump of bushes to the right and then withdrew farther to obtain a better angle for viewing its dark recesses. The quiet was profound except for the incessant buzzing of insects and the occasional chirrup of some hardy bird, braving the midday sun.

Gloria pouted, “I bet he went inside the house, and I’ve told him a million times that that’s not fair.”

With tiny lips pressed together tightly and a severe frown crinkling her forehead, she moved determinedly toward the two-storey building up past the driveway.

Too late she heard the rustling sound behind her, followed by the distinctive and rhythmic clump-clump of Robbie’s metal feet. She whirled about to see her triumphant companion emerge from hiding and make for the home-tree at full speed.

Gloria shrieked in dismay. “Wait, Robbie! That wasn’t fair, Robbie! You promised you wouldn’t run until I found you.” Her little feet could make no headway at all against Robbie’s giant strides. Then, within ten feet of the goal, Robbie’s pace slowed suddenly to the merest of crawls, and Gloria, with one final burst of wild speed, dashed pantingly past him to touch the welcome bark of home-tree first.

Gleefully, she turned on the faithful Robbie, and with the basest of ingratitude, rewarded him for his sacrifice by taunting him cruelly for a lack of running ability.

“Robbie can’t run,” she shouted at the top of her eight-year-old voice. “I can beat him any day. I can beat him any day.” She chanted the words in a shrill rhythm.

Robbie didn’t answer, of course not in words. He pantomimed running instead, inching away until Gloria found herself running after him as he dodged her narrowly, forcing her to veer in helpless circles, little arms outstretched and fanning at the air.

“Robbie,” she squealed, “stand still!” – And the laughter was forced out of her in breathless jerks.

Until he turned suddenly and caught her up, whirling her round, so that for her the world fell away for a moment with a blue emptiness beneath, and green trees stretching hungrily downward toward the void. Then she was down in the grass again, leaning against Robbie’s leg and still holding a hard, metal finger.

After a while, her breath returned. She pushed uselessly at her disheveled hair in vague imitation of one of her mother’s gestures and twisted to see if her dress were torn.

She slapped her hand against Robbie’s torso, “Bad boy! I’ll spank you!”

And Robbie cowered, holding his hands over his face so that she had to add, “No, I won’t, Robbie. I won’t spank you. But anyway, it’s my turn to hide now because you’ve got longer legs and you promised not to run till I found you.”

Robbie nodded his head – a small paralleliped¹ with rounded edges and corners attached to a similar but much larger paralleliped that served as torso by means of a short, flexible stalk – and obediently faced the tree. A thin, metal film descended over his glowing eyes and from within his body came a steady, resonant ticking.

“Don’t peek now – and don’t skip any numbers,” warned Gloria, and scurried for

With unvarying regularity, seconds were ticked off, and at the hundredth, went the eyelids, and the glowing red of Robbie's eyes swept the prospect. They rested for a moment on a bit of colorful gingham cloth that protruded from behind a boulder. He advanced a few steps and convinced himself that it was Gloria who squatted behind it.

Slowly, remaining always between Gloria and home-tree, he advanced on the hiding place, and when Gloria was plainly in sight and could no longer even theorize to herself that she was not seen, he extended one arm toward her, slapping the other against his leg so that it rang again. Gloria emerged sulkily.

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"You peeked!" she exclaimed, with gross unfairness. "Besides I'm tired of playing hide-and-seek. I want a ride."

But Robbie was hurt at the unjust accusation, so he seated himself carefully and shook his head ponderously from side to side.

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Gloria changed her tone to one of gentle coaxing immediately, "Come on, Robbie. I didn't mean it about the peeking. Give me a ride."

Robbie was not to be won over so easily, though. He gazed stubbornly at the sky, and shook his head even more emphatically.

¹ *parallelopiped*: a 3D geometrical shape (formed of parallelograms)

Copyright Acknowledgements:

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- Question 2 © Gay Talese; *Frank Sinatra has a Cold*; Esquire; April 1966; http://www.esquire.com/features/ESQ1003-OCT_SINATRA_rev_.
- Question 3 © http://www.4shared.com/get/184639178/489d2970/Asimov_Isaac_-_I_Robot_.html;jsessionid=D5F2E0C5A2D609E0597CB13F095E03DD.dc210.

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