
WORLD LITERATURE

0408/02

Paper 2: Unseen

May/June 2015

1 hour 15 minutes

No Additional Materials are required.

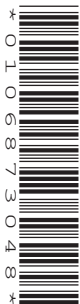
READ THESE INSTRUCTIONS FIRST

An answer booklet is provided inside this question paper. You should follow the instructions on the front cover of the answer booklet. If you need additional answer paper ask the invigilator for a continuation booklet.

Answer **either** Question 1 **or** Question 2.

You are advised to spend about 20 minutes reading the question paper and planning your answer.

Both questions in this paper carry equal marks.



This document consists of **5** printed pages, **3** blank pages and **1** insert.

Answer **either** Question 1 **or** Question 2.

EITHER

- 1 Read carefully the poem on the opposite page. It describes a group of schoolchildren moving along the street.

Explore how the poet conveys to you his fascination with the group of children.

To help you answer, you might consider:

- the images the poet uses to describe the children
- the ways he portrays the group moving apart and coming together
- the impact of the poem's structure on you.

The Schoolchildren

Like leaves startled by a gust of wind
they peel away from the tight-knit group,
one child, two, another, more,
taking flight, ruffling up the street,
blown into it, propelled into merging,
unravelling the throng,
then seeking it again, and falling into place.
Magnetism drives them apart, then pulls them together,
spilling them into the street,
then dragging them back again. Strange
how they take shape, becoming themselves.
As though consciousness demands pursuit.
They are sought out, touched, gathered in.
Nothing happens, till they face
an obstacle, one by one.
Two or three have made it,
two or three more begin to pull away,
until energy becomes infectious
and their 'crocodile'¹ dissolves,
reassembles,
and they cross the road in line. A wisp
is left behind, an enveloping tenderness,
summoning the stragglers, making them realise
the others have gone, the group
is over there now. All
as easy as a breeze,
softly, like a pattern
they come together once again
and are still.

¹ *crocodile*: line of schoolchildren walking in pairs

OR

2 Read carefully the following extract from a short story.

Armelle, the woman in the story, lives with her husband (Pascal) and their three children (Jean, Charlène and the baby). She is trying to find the time to write a story while looking after her family.

How does the writer vividly convey Armelle's difficulties as she tries to write her story?

To help you answer, you might consider:

- how the writer portrays Armelle's everyday life
- how the writer conveys Armelle's determination to write her story
- what you find striking about the style of the passage.

Okay. Let's get things properly organized. Yes. The list. As usual.
Armelle tears a page out from her notebook. Someone's gone off with my pencil again.

*dry-cleaner's
Medical bump¹
parents' evening—Charlène
appointment paediatrician
water flowers
cleaning stuff
frozen food order*

She gets back from the dry-cleaner's. Crosses that off. She fills in the medical expenses claim form. Jean had flu then asthma. She sticks the stamps on the form. Must get Pascal to sign it and send it off to his firm's insurance.

Parents' evening. Five o'clock sharp. She can drop the baby off at the playgroup.

There's another thing—not on the list, in her head— always being shelved, always back on the table that will have to get done one day, her wild dream of writing the finest story in the world.

Yes, everyone knows. *The Finest Story in the World* goes back nearly a century. For Kipling² it was the story of the writer who tries to tell the finest story in the world but who abandons his project when the bank clerk holding the key to the story falls in love with the young salesgirl taken on by the tobacconist. And loses all interest in the story.

Woman, then, is an obstacle to writing.

But there are women who write.

She writes.

When she gets a spare minute. When everything is sparkling. When the final of the Cupwinner's Cup is live on television and she can forget that she lives with a man who needs a sympathetic listener in the evenings. After a good dinner.

Armelle starts cooking. She starts writing. The osso bucco³ bubbles gently then turns to cinders. She opens all the windows, puts the charred pan in to soak. Gets out a tin of sausages with lentils, meal-in-a-minute. No way is a burnt dinner going to mean the end of the finest story in the world. She's going to get this story written. Just as soon as she's scrawled an affectionate invitation to Aunt Josiane to come for the weekend—poor Aunt Josiane, lonely and depressed.

*vacuum bag
tax payment
clear chest of drawers
shorten curtains*

She's writing.

She's writing in her notebooks. She writes while the baby's asleep. She writes between bouts of anxiety — has he vomited his bottle? That little spot on his cheek that she noticed just now, could it be the first symptom of some infectious illness? Why is he so quiet? She runs to check if he's still breathing.

She's writing. She's not writing. Charlène is whining, nobody likes me. Charlène is complaining that she's fat and ugly. Don't be so silly. Look at yourself in the mirror. I got D in my end of term test. Ooh! that's rather different. Charlène resolves to give up chocolate eclairs and to go through her homework in future with her mother.

go through homework
sort out winter clothes
ironing
senior citizens' club visit
press-studs, 50 cm velcro tape
fruit vegetables
subscription TV magazine

Jean wants to have his friends round one Saturday evening. For a mega rock and rap session. She shudders. Chin up, others have been in the same boat. Listen Jean, we'll see. Just now I have to write. And it's time for your basketball training.

Write? says Jean. Write to who? Nobody writes any more. What for, with mobiles....

She's not writing. She is writing. In between she decides that the kids can use the garage and make sandwiches in the kitchen on condition that ... But what's the point in having conditions when the promises are bound to be broken, recriminations inevitable ... Don't let Jean get on at you advises Pascal, retreating to the safety of his study. This from a man who has never been able to say no to his son.

From a man who has a study.

A room of one's own. How can she sort out a refuge for herself in a house of modest proportions in which the children all have their own room and Dad has a study?

There is no bar on writing the finest story in the world on the kitchen table. Nor on thinking about questions of syntax whilst stirring the tomato sauce with a wooden spoon.

Baby's gums are sore. Can she imagine writing the finest story in the world with her right hand, whilst rocking a baby with teeth coming through in the crook of her left arm?

I hate to disturb you, says Pascal, I don't suppose by any chance you've seen ...

Have I seen, haven't I seen, what can I say (the missing folder, the watch that Pascal takes off and puts down in a different place every night, the credit card that he is quite sure he put away in its case). See nothing, say nothing, hear nothing, keeping her head down, she writes. Ever since she was a kid she's dreamed of being a writer. Without ever telling her parents, they would have shrugged their shoulders, where does she get these funny ideas. Her mother would have added that girls need only

Yes: spin wool and keep house.

Peace at last. Then the telephone.

Elsa, her best friend from way back.

¹ *bumph*: paperwork, forms (slang)

² *Kipling*: Rudyard Kipling, a famous author

³ *osso bucco*: stew

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