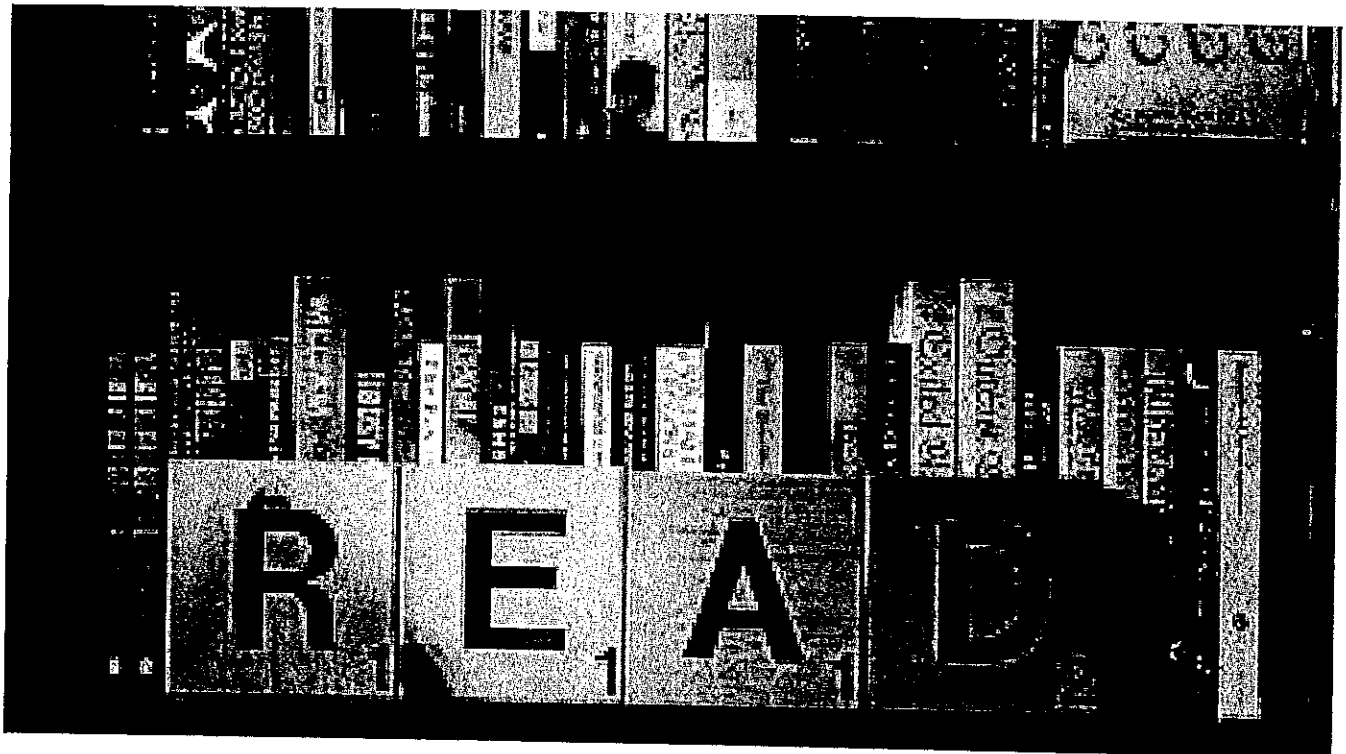
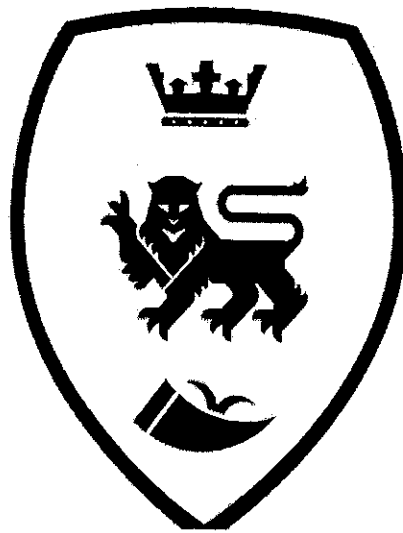


Pensby High School
English Language Paper 1
Wider Reading Anthology





How to use this anthology:

Enjoy it! Try to get into good reading habits; read one extract/story per day.

Read in an active manner:

As well as just enjoying reading the extracts and short stories, you may want to...

- **Highlight any language devices you think are effective.**
- **Consider how the way the extract is structured and how this makes you feel/ respond.**
- **Think about how the opening/ end hooks you as a reader- do they set a tone or raise any questions?**
- **Look at how the writers use a range of sentence structures- can you see any choices that you think might be conscious choices to achieve a certain effect?**
- **How are characters described or introduced?**
- **Look up words you are unfamiliar with and write them in the glossary on the next page. Perhaps you could have a go at using these in your own writing?**
- **We have included some questions that mirror the style you will get in the exam. You may want to have a go at some of these; remember to show your teacher what you have done so that you can get some feedback.**

Story openings

The Road

When he woke in the woods in the dark and the cold of the night he'd reach out to touch the child sleeping beside him. Nights dark beyond darkness and the days more gray each one than what had gone before. Like the onset of some cold glaucoma dimming away the world. His hand rose and fell softly with each precious breath. He pushed away the plastic tarpaulin and raised himself in the stinking robes and blankets and looked toward the east for any light but there was none. In the dream from which he'd wakened he had wandered in a cave where the child led him by the hand. Their light playing over the wet flowstone walls. Like pilgrims in a fable swallowed up and lost among the inward parts of some granitic beast. Deep stone flues where the water dripped and sang. Tolling in the silence the minutes of the earth and the hours and the days of it and the years without cease. Until they stood in a great stone room where lay a black and ancient lake. And on the far shore a creature that raised its dripping mouth from the rimstone pool and stared into the light with eyes dead white and sightless as the eggs of spiders. It swung its head low over the water as if to take the scent of what it could not see. Crouching there pale and naked and translucent, its alabaster bones cast up in shadow on the rocks behind it. Its bowels, its beating heart. The brain that pulsed in a dull glass bell. It swung its head from side to side and then gave out a low moan and turned and lurched away and loped soundlessly into the dark.

With the first gray light he rose and left the boy sleeping and walked out to the road and squatted and studied the country to the south. Barren, silent, godless. He thought the month was October but he wasn't sure. He hadn't kept a calendar for years. They were moving south. There'd be no surviving another winter here.

When it was light enough to use the binoculars he glassed the valley below. Everything paling away into the murk. The soft ash blowing in loose swirls over the blacktop. He studied what he could see. The segments of road down there among the dead trees. Looking for anything of color. Any movement. Any trace of standing smoke. He lowered the glasses and pulled down the cotton mask from his face and wiped his nose on the

back of his wrist and then glassed the country again. Then he just sat there holding the binoculars and watching the ashen daylight congeal over the land. He knew only that the child was his warrant. He said: If he is not the word of God God never spoke.

When he got back the boy was still asleep. He pulled the blue plastic tarp off of him and folded it and carried it out to the grocery cart and packed it and came back with their plates and some cornmeal cakes in a plastic bag and a plastic bottle of syrup. He spread the small tarp they used for a table on the ground and laid everything out and he took the pistol from his belt and laid it on the cloth and then he just sat watching the boy sleep. He'd pulled away his mask in the night and it was buried somewhere in the blankets. He watched the boy and he looked out through the trees toward the road. This was not a safe place. They could be seen from the road now it was day. The boy turned in the blankets. Then he opened his eyes. Hi, Papa, he said.

I'm right here.

I know.

An hour later they were on the road. He pushed the cart and both he and the boy carried knapsacks. In the knapsacks were essential things. In case they had to abandon the cart and make a run for it. Clamped to the handle of the cart was a chrome motorcycle mirror that he used to watch the road behind them. He shifted the pack higher on his shoulders and looked out over the wasted country. The road was empty. Below in the little valley the still gray serpentine of a river. Motionless and precise. Along the shore a burden of dead reeds. Are you okay? he said. The boy nodded. Then they set out along the blacktop in the gunmetal light, shuffling through the ash, each the other's world entire.

Task (qu 1 style): Read again the first part of the source, lines 1 to 7. List four things that you find out about where the man and the boy are.

Task (qu 2 style): Look in detail at this extract of the lines in bold. How does the writer use language here to describe the man's dream?

Task (qu 3 style): You now need to think about the whole of the source. This text is from the opening of a novel. How has the writer structured the text to interest you as a reader?

You could write about:

- what the writer focuses your attention on at the beginning
- how and why the writer changes this focus as the extract develops
- any other structural features that interest you.

Task (qu 4 style): A student who read this extract commented that 'the writer makes the setting very unsettling and uncomfortable. The entire scene almost seems like a nightmare.' To what extent do you agree? In your response, you could:

- write about your own impressions of the character
- evaluate how the writer has created these impressions
- support your opinions with quotations from the text.

I'm the King of the Castle

by Susan Hill

Three months ago, his grandmother died, and then they had moved to this house.

'I will not live there again, until it belongs to me,' his father had said. Though the old man lay upstairs, after a second stroke, and lingered, giving no trouble.

The boy was taken up to see him.

'You must not be afraid,' his father said nervously, 'he is a very old man, now, very ill.'

'I am never afraid,' And that was no more than the truth, though his father would not have believed it.

It will be very moving, Joseph Hooper had decided, with the three generations together and one upon his deathbed, the eldest son of the eldest son of the eldest son. For, in middle age, he was acquiring a dynastic sense.

But it had not been moving. The old man had breathed noisily, and dribbled a little, and never woken. The sick room smelled sour.

'Ah well, 'Mr Hooper had said, and coughed, 'he is very ill. You know. But I am glad you have seen him.'

Why?'

'Well – because you are his only grandson. His heir, I suppose. Yes. It is only as it should be.'

The boy looked towards the bed. His skin is already dead, he thought, it is old and dry. But he saw that the bones of the eye-sockets, and the nose and jaw, showed through it, and gleamed. Everything about him, from the stubble of hair down to the folded line of sheet, was bleached and grey-ish white.

'All he looks like,' 'Edmund Hooper said, 'is one of his dead old moths.'

'That is not the way to speak! You must show respect.'

His father had led him out. Though I am only able to show respect now, he thought, to behave towards my father as I should, because he is dying, he is almost gone away from me.

Edmund Hooper, walking down the great staircase into the wood-panelled hall, thought nothing of his grandfather. But later, he remembered the moth-like whiteness of the very old skin.

Now they had moved, Joseph Hooper was master in his own house.

He said, 'I shall be away in London a good deal. I cannot live here the whole time, even in your holidays.'

'That won't be anything new, will it?

He looked away from his son's gaze, irritated. I do my best, he thought, it is not the easiest of tasks without a woman beside me.

'Ah, but we shall be looking into things,' he said,
'I shall see about getting you a friend, as well as someone to look after us in this house. Something is soon to be done.'

Edmund Hooper thought, I don't want anything to be done about it, nobody must come here, as he walked between the yew trees at the bottom of the garden.

'You had better not go into the Red Room without asking me. I shall keep the key in here.'

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'I wouldn't do any harm there, why can't I go?' 'Well - there are a good many valuable things. That is all. Really.' Joseph Hooper sighed, sitting at his desk, in the room facing the long lawn. 'And I cannot think that it will be a room to interest you much.'

For the time being, the house was to be kept as it was, until he could decide which of the furniture to be rid of, which of their own to bring.

He moved his hands uneasily about over the papers on his desk, oppressed by them, uncertain where he should begin.

Though he was accustomed to paperwork. But his father's affairs had been left in disarray, he was ashamed of the paraphernalia of death.

'Can I have the key now, then?' 'May...'

'O.K.'

'The key for the Red Room?' 'Yes.'

'Well...'

Mr. Joseph Hooper moved his hand towards the small, left-side drawer in the desk, underneath the drawer where sealing wax had always been kept. But then, said 'No, No, you had really much better be playing cricket in the sun, Edmund, something of that sort. You have been shown everything there is in the Red Room.'

'There's nobody to play cricket with.'

'Ah, well now, I shall soon be doing something about that, you shall have your friend.'

'Anyway, I don't like cricket.'

'Edmund, you will not be difficult, please, I have a good deal to do, I cannot waste time in foolish arguments.'

Hooper went out, wishing he had said nothing. He wanted nothing to be done, nobody should come here.

But he knew where to find the key.

Task: (qu 2 style) How does the writer use language to describe the old man?

Bring up the Bodies

by Hilary Mantel

Falcons

Wiltshire, September 1535

His children are falling from the sky. He watches from horseback, acres of England stretching behind him; they drop, gilt-winged, each with a blood-filled gaze. Grace Cromwell hovers in thin air. She is silent when she takes her prey, silent as she glides to his fist. But the sounds she makes then, the rustle of feathers and the creak, the sigh and ruffle of pinion, the small cluck-cluck from her throat, these are sounds of recognition, intimate, daughterly, almost disapproving. Her breast is gore-streaked and flesh clings to her claws.

Later, Henry will say, 'Your girls flew well today.' The hawk Anne Cromwell bounces on the glove of Rafe Sadler, who rides by the king in easy conversation. They are tired; the sun is declining, and they ride back to Wolf Hall with the reins slack on the necks of their mounts. Tomorrow his wife and two sisters will go out. These dead women, their bones long sunk in London clay, are now transmigrated. Weightless, they glide on the upper currents of the air. They pity no one. They answer to no one. Their lives are simple. When they look down they see nothing but their prey, and the borrowed plumes of the hunters: they see a fluttering, flinching universe, a universe filled with their dinner.

All summer has been like this, a riot of dismemberment, fur and feather flying; the beating off and the whipping in of hounds, the coddling of tired horses, the nursing, by the gentlemen, of contusions, sprains and blisters. And for a few days at least, the sun has shone on Henry. Sometime before noon, clouds scudded in from the west and rain fell in big scented drops; but the sun re-emerged with a scorching heat, and now the sky is so clear you can see into Heaven and spy on what the saints are doing.

As they dismount, handing their horses to the grooms and waiting on the king, his mind is already moving to paperwork: to dispatches from Whitehall, galloped down by the post routes that are laid wherever the court shifts. At supper with the Seymours, he will defer any stories his hosts wish to tell: to anything the king may venture, tousled and happy and amiable as he seems tonight. When the king has gone to bed, his working night will begin.

Though the day is over, Henry seems disinclined to go indoors. He stands looking about him, inhaling horse sweat, a broad, brick-red streak of sunburn across his forehead. Early in the day he lost his hat, so by custom all the hunting party were obliged to take off theirs. The king refused all offers of substitutes. As dusk steals over the woods and fields, servants will be out looking for the stir of the black plume against darkening grass, or the glint of his hunter's badge, a gold St Hubert with sapphire eyes.

Already you can feel the autumn. You know there will not be many more days like these; so let us stand, the horseboys of Wolf Hall swarming around us, Wiltshire and the western counties stretching into a haze of blue; let us stand, the king's hand on his shoulder, Henry's face earnest as he talks his way back through the landscape of the day, the green copses and rushing streams, the alders by the water's edge, the early haze that lifted by nine; the brief shower, the small wind that died and settled; the stillness, the afternoon heat.

'Sir, how are you not burned?' Rafe Sadler demands. A redhead like the king, he has turned a mottled, freckled pink, and even his eyes look sore. He, Thomas Cromwell, shrugs; he hangs an arm around Rafe's shoulders as they drift indoors. He went through the whole of Italy – the battlefield as well as the shaded arena of the counting house – without losing his London pallor. His ruffian childhood, the days on the river, the days in the fields: they left him as white as God made him. 'Cromwell has the skin of a lily,' the king pronounces. 'The only particular in which he resembles that or any other blossom.' Teasing him, they amble towards supper.

Task: (qu 2 style) : How does the writer use language to describe the bird in the opening paragraph?

Task: (qu 4 style) A student having read this said 'the writer combines violence and death with beauty and tranquillity.' to what extent do you agree?

Spies

by Michael Frayn

Where the story began, though, was where most of our projects and adventures began – at Keith's house. At the tea table, in fact – I can hear the soft clinking made by the four blue beads that weighted the lace cloth covering the tall jug of lemon barley...

No, wait. I've got that wrong. The glass beads are clinking against the glass of the jug because the cover's stirring in the breeze. We're outside, in the middle of the morning, near the chicken run at the bottom of the garden, building the transcontinental railway.

Yes, because I can hear something else, as well – the trains on the real railway, as they emerge from the cutting on to the embankment above our heads just beyond the wire fence. I can see the showers of sparks they throw up from the live rail. The jug of lemon barley isn't our tea – it's our elevenses, waiting with two biscuits each on a tray his mother has brought us out from the house, and set down on the red brick path beside us. It's as she walks away, up the red brick path, that Keith so calmly and quietly drops his bombshell.

When is this? The sun's shining as the beads clink against the jug, but I have a feeling that there's still a trace of fallen apple blossom on the earthworks for the transcontinental railway, and that his mother's worried about whether we're warm enough out there. 'You'll come inside, chaps, won't you, if you get chilly?' May still, perhaps. Why aren't we at school? Perhaps it's a Saturday or a Sunday. No, there's the feel of a weekday morning in the air; it's unmistakable, even if the season isn't.

Something that doesn't quite fit here, as so often when one tries to assemble different bits to make a whole.

Or have I got everything back to front? Had the policeman already happened before this?

It's so difficult to remember what order things occurred in – but if you can't remember that, then it's impossible to work out which led to which, and what the connection was. What I remember, when I examine my memory carefully, isn't a narrative at all. It's a collection of vivid particulars. Certain words spoken, certain objects glimpsed. Certain gestures and expressions. Certain moods, certain weathers, certain times of day and states of light. Certain individual moments, which seem to mean so much, but which mean in fact so little until the hidden links between them have been found.

Where did the policeman come in the story? We watch him as he pedals slowly up the Close. His appearance has simultaneously justified all our suspicions and overtaken all our efforts, because he's coming to arrest Keith's mother... No, no- that was earlier. We're running happily and innocently up the street beside him, and he represents nothing but the hope of a little excitement out of nowhere. He cycles right past all the houses, looking at each of them in turn, goes round the turning circle at the end, cycles back down the street ... and dismounts in front of No. 12. What I remember for sure is the look on Keith's mother's face, as we run in to tell her that there's a policeman going to Auntie Dee's. For a moment all her composure's gone. She looks ill and frightened. She's throwing the front door open and not walking but running down the street...

I understand now, of course, that she and Auntie Dee and Mrs Berrill and the McAfees all lived in dread of policemen and telegraph boys, as everyone did then who had someone in the family away fighting. I've forgotten now what it had turned out to be- nothing to do with Uncle Peter, anyway. A complaint about Auntie Dee's blackout, I think. She was always rather slapdash about it.

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Once again I see that look cross Keith's mother's face, and this time I think I see something else beside the fear. Something that reminds me of the look on Keith's face, when his father's discovered some dereliction in his duties towards his bicycle or his cricket gear: a suggestion of guilt. Or is memory being overwritten by hindsight once more?

If the policeman and the look had already happened, could they by any chance have planted the first seed of an idea in Keith's mind?

I think now that most probably Keith's words came out of nowhere, that they were spontaneously created in the moment they were uttered. That they were a blind leap of pure fantasy. Or of pure intuition. Or, like so many things, of both. From those six random words, anyway, came everything that followed, brought forth simply by Keith's uttering them and by my hearing them. The rest of our lives was determined in that one brief moment as the beads clinked against the jug and Keith's mother walked away from us, through the brightness of the morning, over the last of the fallen white blossom on the red brick path, erect, composed, and invulnerable, and Keith watched her go, with the dreamy look in his eye that I remembered from the start of so many of our projects.

'My mother', he said reflectively, almost regretfully, 'is a German spy.'

Task: (qu 3 style) Consider how the author has structured this passage to show the difficulty of recalling distant memories.

I'm the King of the Castle

by Susan Hill

The cornfield was high up. He stood in the very middle of it, now, and the sun came glaring down. He could feel the sweat running over his back, and in the creases of his thighs. His face was burning. He sat down, although the stubble pricked at him, through his jeans, and looked over at the dark line of trees on the edge of Hang Wood. They seemed very close – all the individual branches were clearly outlined. The fields around him were absolutely still.

When he first saw the crow, he took no notice. There had been several crows. This one glided down into the corn on its enormous, ragged black wings. He began to be aware of it when it rose up suddenly, circled overhead, and then dived, to land not very far away from him. Kingshaw could see the feathers on his head, shining blank in between the butter-coloured corn-stalks. Then it rose, and circled, and came down again, this time not quite landing, but flapping about his head, beating its wings and making a sound like flat leather pieces being slapped together. It was the largest crow he had ever seen. As it came down for the third time, he looked up and noticed its beak, opening in a screech. The inside of its mouth was scarlet, it had small glinting eyes.

Kingshaw got up and flapped his arms. For a moment, the bird retreated a little way off, and higher up in the sky. He began to walk rather quickly back, through the path in the corn, looking ahead of him. Stupid to be scared of a rotten bird. What could a bird do? But he felt his own extreme isolation, high up in the cornfield.

For a moment, he could only hear the soft thudding of his own footsteps, and the silky sound of the corn, brushing against him. Then, there was a rush of air, as the great crow came beating down, and wheeled about his head. The beak opened and the hoarse caaw came out again and again, from inside the scarlet mouth.

Kingshaw began to run, not caring; now, if he trampled the corn, wanting to get away, down into the next field. He thought that the corn might be some kind of crow's food store, in which he was seen as an invader. Perhaps this was only the first of a whole battalion of crows, that would rise up and swoop at him. Get on to the grass then, he thought, get on to the grass, that'll be safe, it'll go away. He wondered if it had mistaken him for some hostile animal, lurking down in the corn.

His progress was very slow through the cornfield, the thick stalks bunched together and got in his way, and he had to shove them back with his arms. But he reached the gate and climbed it, and dropped on to the grass of the field on the other side. Sweat was running down his forehead and into his eyes. He looked up. The crow kept on coming. He ran.

But it wasn't easy to run down this field, either, because of the tractor ruts. He began to leap wildly from side to side of them, his legs stretched as wide as they could go, and for a short time,

it seemed that he did go faster. The crow dived again, and, as it rose, Kingshaw felt the tip of its black wing, beating against his face. He gave a sudden, dry sob. Then, his left foot caught in one of the ruts and he keeled over, going down straight forwards.

He lay with his face in the coarse grass, panting and sobbing by turns, with the sound of his own blood pumping through his ears. He felt the sun on the back of his neck, and his ankle was wrenched. But he would be able to get up. He raised his head, and wiped two fingers across his face. A streak of blood came off, from where a thistle had scratched him. He got unsteadily to his feet, taking in deep, desperate breaths of the close air. He could not see the crow.

But when he began to walk forwards again, it rose up from the grass a little way off, and began to circle and swoop. Kingshaw broke into a run, sobbing and wiping the damp mess of tears and sweat off his face with one hand. There was a blister on his ankle, rubbed raw by the sandal strap. The crow was still quite high, soaring easily, to keep pace with him. Now, he had scrambled over the third gate, and he was in the field next to the one that belonged to Warings. He could see the back of the house. He began to run much faster.

This time, he fell and lay completely winded. Through the runnels of sweat and the sticky tufts of his own hair, he could see a figure, looking down at him from one of the top windows of the house.

Then, there was a single screech, and the terrible beating of wings, and the crow swooped down and landed in the middle of his back.

Kingshaw thought that, in the end, it must have been his screaming that frightened it off, for he dared not move. He lay and closed his eyes and felt the claws of the bird, digging into his skin, through the thin shirt, and began to scream in a queer, gasping sort of way. After a moment or two, the bird rose. He had expected it to begin pecking at him with his beak, remembering terrible stories about vultures that went for living people's eyes. He could not believe in his own escape.

He scrambled up, and ran on, and this time, the crow only hovered above, though not very high up, and still following him, but silently, and no longer attempting to swoop down. Kingshaw felt his legs go weak beneath him, as he climbed the last fence, and stood in the place from which he had started out on his walk, by the edge of the copse. He looked back fearfully. The crow circled a few times, and then dived into the thick foliage of the beech trees.

Task: (qu 1 style): List four things we learn about Kingshaw in paragraph 1.

Task: (qu 2 style): How does the writer use language to describe the crow in paragraph two?

Task: (qu 3 style): Read the whole extract. How is structure used to engage the reader?

Birdsong

by Sebastian Faulks

'Quiet, isn't it?' said Stephen.

'Tolerable,' said Ellis. 'I've got a problem. I'm trying to get a working party to go out and bring back some bodies. It's pretty quiet, as you say, and we may not have a better chance.'

'So what's the problem?'

'My men wouldn't do it unless I went too. So I said I would. Then they insisted on having at least one miner with them, but the miners' CO says it's nothing to do with them and in any case they're fed up with doing our fatigues.'

Ellis's white, freckled face was agitated. He pushed the cap back from his forehead to show a puckered hairline from which the gingerish hair had started to recede.

Stephen smiled vaguely and shook his head. 'We should all go. It doesn't matter. It's only death.'

'Well, will you tell Captain Weir to get one of his sappers out with us?'

'I can ask him. Perhaps he'd like to come too, now that his arm's better.'

'Are you serious?' said Ellis crossly.

'I don't know, Ellis. There's something about you that makes me quite unsure. Get your working party ready for twelve o'clock. I'll see you in the next firebay.'

Weir laughed drily when Stephen made the suggestion.

'There'll be rum,' said Stephen. Weir's eyes opened in interest.

Then when the moment came it brought a sudden fear and unreality. They could never be prepared to look at death in the crude form that awaited them. Stephen felt, as he had done before at

moments of extreme tension, a dislocation in his sense of time. It seemed to stutter, then freeze.

At noon on the firestep in gas masks. Taste of death, smell of it, thought Stephen. Coker slashed sandbags into gloves. 'Wear these.' Firebrace and Fielding of the miners, Ellis, white like milk, Barlow, Bates, Goddard, Allen of the infantry; Weir taking rum on top of whisky, unsteady on the step of the ladder.

'What are you doing, Brennan?' 'I'm coming too.'

They tracked out towards a shellhole, the sun bright, a lark above them. Blue sky, unseen by eyes trained on turned mud. They moved low towards a mine crater where bodies had lain for weeks uncollected. 'Try to lift him.' No sound of machine guns or snipers, though their ears were braced for noise. 'Take his arms.'

The incomprehensible order through the gas mouthpiece. The arms came away softly. 'Not like that, not take his arms *away*'. On Weir's collar a large rat, trailing something red down his back. A crow disturbed, lifting its black body up suddenly, battering the air with its big wings. Coker, Barlow shaking their heads under the assault of risen flies coming up, transforming black skin of corpses into green by their absence. The roaring of Goddard's vomit made them laugh, snoring private mirth inside their masks. Goddard, releasing his mask, breathed in worse air than he had expelled. Weir's hands in double sandbags stretched out tentatively to a sapper's uniform, undressing the chest in search of a disc which he removed, bringing skin with it into his tunic pocket. Jack's recoil; even through coarse material, to the sponge of flesh. Bright and sleek on liver, a rat emerged from the abdomen; it levered and flopped fatly over the ribs, glutted with pleasure. Bit by bit on to stretchers, what flesh fell left in mud. Not men, but flies and flesh, thought Stephen. Brennan anxiously stripping a torso with no head. He clasped it with both hands, dragged legless up from the crater, his fingers vanishing into buttered green flesh. It was his brother.

When they got back to the safety of the trench Jack was angry that he and Fielding had been made to go, but Weir pointed out that there were three men from their company unburied. Goddard could not stop vomiting, though his stomach was long since empty. When he was not retching, he sat on the firestep, weeping uncontrollably. He was nineteen.

Michael Weir had a rigid smile. He told Fielding and Jack they were excused fatigues for a week, then went to Stephen's dugout in the hope of whisky.

'I wonder what my father would say, he said reflectively. 'Of course they're all "doing their bit", as he put it.' Weir swallowed and licked his lips. 'It's just that his "bit" and mine seem so different.'

Stephen watched him and shook his head fondly. 'You know what I really dreaded?' he said. 'What frightened me was the thought that one of those men was going to be alive.'

Weir laughed. 'After all that time?'

Stephen said, 'It's been known.' He had a thought. 'Where's Brennan? Did you see him when we got back?'

'No.'

Stephen went along the trench looking for him. He found him sitting quietly on the firestep near the dugout where he and half a dozen others slept.

'I'm sorry, Brennan,' he said. 'That was a terrible thing for you. You needn't have come.'

'I know. I wanted to come. I feel better now.' 'You feel *better*?'

Brennan nodded. He had a narrow head, with thick, black greasy hair on which Stephen was looking down. When he turned his face up, its features were calm.

Stephen said, 'At least wash your hands, Brennan. Get some chloride of lime on them. Take some time off if you want to. I'll tell your sergeant you're excused fatigues.'

'It's all right. I feel lucky in a way. You know last July when I fell off the firestep when the mine went up and I broke my leg? Then watching you lot go over the top. I was lucky.'

'Yes, but I'm sorry about your brother.'

'It's all right, I found him, that's the thing. I didn't let him lie there. I got him back and now he'll have a proper burial. There'll be a grave that people can see: I can come and put flowers on it when the war's over.'

Stephen was surprised by how confident Brennan was that he himself would survive. As he turned to go, Brennan began to sing softly to himself, an Irish song that he had sung on the morning when they waited to attack. His voice was a grating, persistent tenor and he knew many songs.

All night he sang for his brother, whom he had brought, home in his hands.

1984

by George Orwell

It was a bright cold day in April, and the clocks were striking thirteen. Winston Smith, his chin nuzzled into his breast in an effort to escape the vile wind, slipped quickly

through the glass doors of Victory Mansions, though not quickly enough to prevent a swirl of gritty dust from entering along with him.

The hallway smelt of boiled cabbage and old rag mats. At one end of it a coloured poster, too large for indoor display, had been tacked to the wall. It depicted simply an enormous face, more than a meter wide: the face of a man of about forty-five, with a heavy black moustache and ruggedly handsome features. Winston made for the stairs. It was no use trying the lift. Even at the best of times it was seldom working, and at present the electric current was cut off during daylight hours. It was part of the economy drive in preparation for Hate Week. The flat was seven flights up, and Winston, who was thirty-nine, and had a varicose ulcer above his right ankle, went slowly, resting several times on the way. On each landing, opposite the lift shaft, the poster with the enormous face gazed from the wall. It was one of those pictures which are so contrived that the eyes follow you about when you move. **BIG BROTHER IS WATCHING YOU**, the caption beneath it ran.

Inside the flat a fruity voice was reading out a list of figures which had something to do with the production of pig iron. The voice came from an oblong metal plaque like a dulled mirror which formed part of the surface of the right-hand wall. Winston turned a switch and the voice sank somewhat, though the words were still distinguishable. The instrument (the telescreen, it was called) could be dimmed, but there was no way of shutting it off completely. He moved over to the window: a smallish, frail figure, the meagerness of his body merely emphasized by the blue overalls which were the uniform of the Party. His hair was very fair, his face naturally sanguine, his skin roughened by coarse soap and blunt razor blades and the cold of the winter that had just ended.

Outside, even through the shut window pane, the world looked cold. Down in the street little eddies of wind were whirling dust and torn paper into spirals, and though the sun was shining and the sky a harsh blue, there seemed to be no colour in anything except the posters that were plastered everywhere. The black-moustachio'd face gazed down from every commanding corner. There was one on the house front immediately opposite. **BIG BROTHER IS WATCHING YOU**, the caption said, while the dark eyes looked deep into Winston's own. Down at street level another poster, torn at one corner, flapped fitfully in the wind, alternately covering and uncovering the single word **INGSOC**. In the far distance a helicopter skimmed down between the roofs, hovered for an instant like a blue-bottle, and darted away again with a curving

flight. It was the Police Patrol, snooping into people's windows. The patrols did not matter, however. Only the Thought Police mattered.

Behind Winston's back the voice from the telescreen was still babbling away about pig iron. The telescreen received and transmitted simultaneously. Any sound that Winston made, above the level of a very low whisper, would be picked up by it; moreover, so long as he remained within the field of vision which the metal plaque commanded, he could be seen as well as heard. There was of course no way of knowing whether you were being watched at any given moment. How often, or on what system, the Thought Police plugged in on any individual wire was guesswork. It was even conceivable that they watched everybody all the time. But at any rate they could plug in your wire whenever they wanted to. You had to live - did live, from habit that became instinct-in the assumption that every sound you made was overheard, and, except in darkness, every movement scrutinised.

Winston kept his back turned to the telescreen. It was safer; though, as he well knew, even a back can be revealing. A kilometre away the Ministry of Truth, his place of work, towered vast and white above the grimy landscape. This, he thought with a sort of vague distaste, this was London, chief city of Airstrip One, itself the third most populous of the provinces of Oceania. He tried to squeeze out some childhood memory that should tell him whether London had always been quite like this. Were there always these vistas of rotting nineteenth-century houses, their sides shored up with bunks of timber, their windows patched with cardboard and their roofs with corrugated iron, their crazy garden walls sagging in all directions? And the bombed sites where the plaster dust swirled in the air and the willow herb straggled over the heaps of rubble; and the places where the bombs had cleared a larger path and there had sprung up sordid colonies of wooden dwellings like chicken houses? But it was no use, he could not remember: nothing remained of his childhood except a series of bright-lit tableaux, occurring against no background and mostly unintelligible.

The Ministry of Truth-Minitrue, in Newspeak-was startlingly different from any other object in sight. It was an enormous pyramidal structure of glittering white concrete, soaring up, terrace after terrace, three hundred meters into the air. From where Winston stood it was just possible to read, picked out on its white face in elegant lettering, the three slogans of the Party:

WAR IS PEACE

FREEDOM IS SLAVERY

IGNORANCE IS STRENGTH.

Task (qu 2 style): How is language used to build an impression of the setting?

Task (qu 3 style): How does the writer use structure to engage the reader?

The Hobbit

by JR Tolkein

Dragons may not have much real use for all their wealth, but they know it to an ounce as a rule, especially after long possession; and Smaug was no exception. He had passed from an uneasy dream (in which a warrior, altogether insignificant in size but provided with a bitter sword and great courage, figured most unpleasantly) to a doze, and from a doze to wide waking. There was a breath of strange air in his cave. Could there be a draught from that little hole? He had never felt quite happy about it, though was so small, and now he glared at it in suspicion and wondered why he had never blocked it up. Of late he had half fancied he had caught the dim echoes of a knocking sound from far above that came down through it to his lair. He stirred and stretched forth his neck to sniff. Then he missed the cup!

Thieves! Fire! Murder! Such a thing had not happened since first he came to the Mountain! His rage passes description - the sort of rage that is only seen when rich folk that have more than they can enjoy suddenly lose something that they have long had but have never before used or wanted. His fire belched forth, the hall smoked, he shook the mountain-roots. He thrust his head in vain at the little hole, and then coiling his length together, roaring like thunder underground, he sped from his deep lair through its great door, out into the huge passages of the mountain-palace and up towards the Front Gate. To hunt the whole mountain till he had caught the thief and had torn and trampled him was his one thought. He issued from the Gate, the waters rose in fierce whistling steam, and up he soared blazing into the air and settled on the mountain-top in a spout of green and scarlet flame. The dwarves heard the awful rumour of his flight, and they crouched against the walls of the grassy terrace cringing under boulders, hoping somehow to escape the frightful eyes of the hunting dragon.

Task (qu 2 style) :How is language used to build an impression of Smaug the dragon?

Jaws

The land seemed almost as dark as the water, for there was no moon. All that separated sea from shore was a long, straight stretch of beach — so white that it shone. From a house behind the grass-splotched dunes, lights cast yellow glimmers on the sand. The front door to the house opened, and a man and a woman stepped out onto the wooden porch. They stood for a moment staring at the sea, embraced quickly, and scampered down the few steps onto the sand. The man was drunk, and he stumbled on the bottom step. The woman laughed and took his hand, and together they ran to the beach.

"First a swim," said the woman, "to clear your head."

"You go ahead. I'll wait for you here."

The woman rose and walked to where the gentle surf washed over her ankles. The water was colder than the night air, for it was only mid-June. The woman called back, "You're sure you don't want to come?" But there was no answer from the sleeping man. She backed up a few steps, then ran at the water. At first her strides were long and graceful, but then a small wave crashed into her knees. She faltered, regained her footing, and flung herself over the next waist-high wave. The water was only up to her hips, so she stood, pushed the hair out of her eyes, and continued walking until the water covered her shoulders. There she began to swim — with the jerky, head-above-water stroke of the untutored.

A hundred yards offshore, the fish sensed a change in the sea's rhythm. It did not see the woman, nor yet did it smell her. Running within the length of its body were a series of thin canals, filled with mucus and dotted with nerve endings, and these nerves detected vibrations and signalled the brain. The fish turned towards shore.

The woman continued to swim away from the beach, stopping now and then to check her position by the lights shining from the house. The tide was slack, so she had not moved up or down the beach. But she was tiring, so she rested for a moment, treading water, and then started for shore.

The vibrations were stronger now, and the fish recognized prey. The sweeps of its tail quickened, thrusting the giant body forward with a speed that agitated the tiny phosphorescent animals in the water and caused them to glow, casting a mantle of sparks over the fish.

The fish closed on the woman and hurtled past, a dozen feet to the side and six feet below the surface. The woman felt only a wave of pressure that seemed to lift her up in the water and ease her down again. She stopped swimming and held her breath. Feeling nothing further, she resumed her lurching stroke.

The fish smelled her now, and the vibrations — erratic and sharp — signalled distress. The fish began to circle close to the surface. Its dorsal fin broke water, and its tail, thrashing back and forth, cut the glassy surface with a hiss. A series of tremors shook its body.

For the first time, the woman felt fear, though she did not know why. Adrenaline shot through her trunk and her limbs, generating a tingling heat and urging her to swim faster. She guessed that she was fifty yards from shore. She could see the line of white foam where the waves broke on the beach. She saw the lights in the house, and for a comforting moment she thought she saw someone pass by one of the windows.

The fish was about forty feet from the woman, off to the side, when it turned suddenly to the left, dropped entirely below the surface, and, with two quick thrusts of its tail, was upon her.

Task (qu 1 style): List four things we learn about the setting in the opening paragraph.

Task (qu 2 style): How does the writer use language to describe the shark?

Task (qu 3 style): How does the writer structure the extract to interest the reader?

Rebecca

Daphne du Maurier

Chapter 1

Last night I dreamed I went to Manderley* again. It seemed to me that I was passing through the iron gates that led to the driveway. The drive was just a narrow track now, its stony surface covered with grass and weeds. Sometimes,

when I thought I had lost it, it would appear again, beneath a fallen tree or beyond a muddy pool formed by the winter rains. The trees had thrown out new low branches which stretched across my way. I came to the house suddenly, and stood there with my heart beating fast and tears filling my eyes.

There was Manderley, our Manderley, secret and silent as it had always been, the grey stone shining in the moonlight of my dream: Time could not spoil the beauty of those walls, nor of the place itself, as it lay like a jewel in the hollow of a hand. The grass sloped down towards the sea, which was a sheet of silver lying calm under the moon, like a lake undisturbed by wind or storm. I turned again to the house, and I saw that the garden had run wild, just as the woods had done. Weeds were everywhere. But moonlight can play strange tricks with the imagination, even with a dreamer's imagination. As I stood there, I could swear that the house was not an empty shell, but lived and breathed as it had lived before. Light came from the windows, the curtains blew softly in the night air, and there, in the library, the door stood half open as we had left it, with my handkerchief on the table beside the bowl of autumn flowers.

Then a cloud came over the moon, like a dark hand across a face. The memories left me. I looked again at an empty shell, with no whisper of the past about its staring walls. Our fear and suffering were gone now. When I thought about Manderley in my waking hours I would not be bitter; I would think of it as it might have been, if I could have lived there without fear. I would remember the rose garden in summer, and the birds that sang there; tea under the trees, and the sound of the sea coming up to us from the shore below. I would think of the flowers blown from the bushes, and the Happy Valley. These things could never lose their freshness.

Task (qu 1 style): Read again the first part of the source (first 9 lines).

List four things from this part of the text about the grounds of Manderley.

Task (qu 2 style): How does the writer use language here to describe the house?

Task (qu 3 style): You now need to think about the whole of the source. This text is from the opening of a novel. How has the writer structured the text to interest you as a reader?

Task (qu 4 style): A student said: "The writer skilfully conveys the beauty of the place. It is as if you are actually there." To what extent do you agree?

Complete opening chapter:

Of Mice and Men

by John Steinbeck

A few miles south of Soledad, the Salinas River drops in close to the hillside bank and runs deep and green. The water is warm too, for it has slipped twinkling over the yellow sands in the sunlight before reaching the narrow pool. On one side of the river the golden foothill slopes curve up to the strong and rocky Gabilan Mountains, but on the valley side the water is lined with trees- willows fresh and green with every spring, carrying in their lower leaf junctures the debris of the winter's flooding; and sycamores with mottled, white, recumbent limbs and branches that arch over the pool. On the sandy bank under the trees the leaves lie deep and so crisp that a lizard makes a great skittering if he runs among them. Rabbits come out of the brush to sit on the sand in the evening, and the damp flats are covered with the night tracks of 'coons, and with the spread pads of dogs from the ranches, and with the split-wedge tracks of deer that come to drink in the dark.

There is a path through the willows and among the sycamores, a path beaten hard by boys coming down from the ranches to swim in the deep pool, and beaten hard by tramps who come wearily down from the highway in the evening to jungle-up near water. In front of the low horizontal limb of a giant sycamore there is an ash pile made by many fires; the limb is worn smooth by men who have sat on it.

Evening of a hot day started the little wind to moving among the leaves. The shade climbed up the hills toward the top. On the sand banks the rabbits sat as quietly as little gray sculptured stones. And then from the direction of the state highway came the sound of footsteps on crisp sycamore leaves. The rabbits hurried noiselessly for cover. A stilted heron labored up into the air and pounded down river. For a moment the place was lifeless, and then two men emerged from the path and came into the opening by the green pool.

They had walked in single file down the path, and even in the open one stayed behind the other. Both were dressed in denim trousers and in denim coats with brass buttons. Both wore black, shapeless hats and both carried tight blanket rolls slung over their shoulders. The first man was small and quick, dark of face, with restless eyes and sharp, strong features. Every part of him was defined: small, strong hands, slender arms, a thin and bony nose. Behind him walked his opposite, a huge man, shapeless of face, with large, pale eyes, and wide, sloping shoulders; and he walked heavily, dragging his feet a little, the way a bear drags his paws. His arms did not swing at his sides, but hung loosely.

The first man stopped short in the clearing, and the follower nearly ran over him. He took off his hat and wiped the sweat-band with his forefinger and snapped the moisture off. His huge companion dropped his blankets and flung himself down and drank from the surface of the green pool; drank with long gulps, snorting into the water like a horse. The small man stepped nervously beside him.

"Lennie!" he said sharply. "Lennie, for God' sakes don't drink so much." Lennie continued to snort into the pool. The small man leaned over and shook him by the shoulder. "Lennie. You gonna be sick like you was last night." Lennie dipped his whole head under, hat and all, and then he sat up on the bank and his hat dripped down on his blue coat and ran down his back. "That's good," he said. "You drink some, George. You take a good big drink." He smiled happily. George unslung his bindle and dropped it gently on the bank. "I ain't sure it's good water," he said. "Looks kinda scummy." Lennie dabbled his big paw in the water and wiggled his fingers so the water arose.

in little splashes; rings widened across the pool to the other side and came back again. Lennie watched them go. "Look, George. Look what I done."

George knelt beside the pool and drank from his hand with quick scoops. "Tastes all right," he admitted. "Don't really seem to be running, though. You never oughta drink water when it ain't running, Lennie," he said hopelessly. "You'd drink out of a gutter if you was thirsty." He threw a scoop of water into his face and rubbed it about with his hand, under his chin and around the back of his neck. Then he replaced his hat, pushed himself back from the river, drew up his knees and embraced them. Lennie, who had been watching, imitated George exactly. He pushed himself back, drew up his knees, embraced them, looked over to George to see whether he had it just right. He pulled his hat down a little more over his eyes, the way George's hat was.

George stared morosely at the water. The rims of his eyes were red with sun glare. He said angrily, "We could just as well of rode clear to the ranch if that bastard bus driver knew what he was talkin' about. 'Jes' a little stretch down the highway,' he says. 'Jes' a little stretch.' God damn near four miles, that's what it was!

Didn't wanta stop at the ranch gate, that's what. Too God damn lazy to pull up. Wonder he isn't too damn good to stop in Soledad at all. Kicks us out and says 'Jes' a little stretch down the road.' I bet it was more than four miles. Damn hot day."

Lennie looked timidly over to him. "George?"

"Yeah, what ya want?"

"Where we goin', George?"

The little man jerked down the brim of his hat and scowled over at Lennie. "So you forgot that awready, did you? I gotta tell you again, do I? Jesus Christ, you're a crazy bastard!"

"I forgot," Lennie said softly. "I tried not to forget. Honest to God I did, George."

"O.K.- O.K. I'll tell ya again. I ain't got nothing to do. Might jus' as well spen' all my time tellin' you things and then you forget 'em, and I tell you again."

"Tried and tried," said Lennie, "but it didn't do no good. I remember about the rabbits, George."

"The hell with the rabbits. That's all you ever can remember is them rabbits. O.K.! Now you listen and this time you got to remember so we don't get in no trouble. You remember settin' in that gutter on Howard Street and watchin' that blackboard?"

Lennie's face broke into a delighted smile. "Why sure, George. I remember that... but... what'd we do then? I remember some girls come by and you says... you says..."

"The hell with what I says. You remember about us goin' in to Murray and Ready's, and they give us work cards and bus tickets?"

"Oh, sure, George. I remember that now." His hands went quickly into his side coat pockets. He said gently, "George... I ain't got mine.

I musta lost it." He looked down at the ground in despair.

"You never had none, you crazy bastard. I got both of 'em here. Think I'd let you carry your own work card?"

Lennie grinned with relief. "I... I thought I put it in my side pocket." His hand went into the pocket again.

George looked sharply at him. "What'd you take outa that pocket?" "Ain't a thing in my pocket," Lennie said cleverly.

"I know there ain't. You got it in your hand. What you got in your hand- hidin' it?"

"I ain't got nothin', George. Honest."

"Come on, give it here."

Lennie held his closed hand away from George's direction. "It's only a mouse, George."

"A mouse? A live mouse?"

"Uh-uh. Jus' a dead mouse, George. I didn't kill it. Honest! I found it. I found it dead."
"Give it here!" said George. "Aw, leave me have it, George."

"Give it here!"

Lennie's closed hand slowly obeyed. George took the mouse and threw it across the pool to the other side, among the brush. "What you want of a dead mouse, anyways?"

"I could pet it with my thumb while we walked along," said Lennie.

"Well, you ain't petting no mice while you walk with me. You remember where we're goin' now?"

Lennie looked startled and then in embarrassment hid his face against his knees. "I forgot again."

"Jesus Christ," George said resignedly. "Well- look, we're gonna work on a ranch like the one we come from up north."

"Up north?"

"In Weed."

"Oh, sure. I remember. In Weed."

"That ranch we're goin' to is right down there about a quarter mile.

We're gonna go in an' see the boss. Now, look- I'll give him the work tickets, but you ain't gonna say a word. You jus' stand there and don't say nothing. If he finds out what a crazy bastard you are, we won't get no job, but if he sees ya work before he hears ya talk, we're set. Ya got that?"

"Sure, George. Sure I got it."

"O.K. Now when we go in to see the boss, what you gonna do?" "I... I..." Lennie thought. His face grew tight with thought.

"I... ain't gonna say nothin'. Jus' gonna stan' there."

"Good boy. That's swell. You say that over two, three times so you sure won't forget it."

Lennie droned to himself softly, "I ain't gonna say nothin'... I ain't gonna say nothin'... I ain't gonna say nothin'."

"O.K.," said George. "An' you ain't gonna do no bad things like you done in Weed, neither."

Lennie looked puzzled. "Like I done in Weed?"

"Oh, so ya forgot that too, did ya? Well, I ain't gonna remind ya, fear ya do it again." A light of understanding broke on Lennie's face. "They run us outa Weed," he exploded triumphantly.

"Run us out, hell," said George disgustedly. "We run. They was lookin' for us, but they didn't catch us."

Lennie giggled happily. "I didn't forget that, you bet."

George lay back on the sand and crossed his hands under his head, and Lennie imitated him, raising his head to see whether he was doing it right. "God, you're a lot of trouble," said George. "I could get along so easy and so nice if I didn't have you on my tail. I could live so easy and maybe have a girl."

For a moment Lennie lay quiet, and then he said hopefully, "We gonna work on a ranch, George."

"Awright. You got that. But we're gonna sleep here because I got a reason."

The day was going fast now. Only the tops of the Gabilan Mountains flamed with the light of the sun that had gone from the valley. A water snake slipped along on the pool, its head held up like a little periscope. The reeds jerked slightly in the current. Far off toward the highway a man shouted something, and another man shouted back. The sycamore limbs rustled under a little wind that died immediately.

"George- why ain't we goin' on to the ranch and get some supper? They got supper at the ranch."

George rolled on his side. "No reason at all for you. I like it here. Tomorra we're gonna go to work. I seen thrashin' machines on the way down. That means we'll be buckin' grain bags, bustin' a gut. Tonight I'm gonna lay right here and look up. I like it."

Lennie got up on his knees and looked down at George. "Ain't we gonna have no supper?"

"Sure we are, if you gather up some dead willow sticks. I got three cans of beans in my bindle. You get a fire ready. I'll give you a match when you get the sticks together. Then we'll heat the beans and have supper."

Lennie said, "I like beans with ketchup."

"Well, we ain't got no ketchup. You go get wood. An' don't you fool around. It'll be dark before long."

Lennie lumbered to his feet and disappeared in the brush. George lay where he was and whistled softly to himself. There were sounds of splashings down the river in the direction Lennie had taken. George stopped whistling and listened. "Poor bastard," he said softly, and then went on whistling again.

In a moment Lennie came crashing back through the brush. He carried one small willow stick in his hand. George sat up. "Awright," he said brusquely. "Gi'me that mouse!"

But Lennie made an elaborate pantomime of innocence. "What mouse, George? I ain't got no mouse."

George held out his hand. "Come on. Give it to me. You ain't puttin' nothing over." Lennie hesitated, backed away, looked wildly at the brush line as though he contemplated running for his freedom. George said coldly, "You gonna give me that mouse or do I have to sock you?"

"Give you what, George?"

"You know God damn well what. I want that mouse."

Lennie reluctantly reached into his pocket. His voice broke a little. "I don't know why I can't keep it. It ain't nobody's mouse. I didn't steal it. I found it lyin' right beside the road."

George's hand remained outstretched imperiously. Slowly, like a terrier who doesn't want to bring a ball to its master, Lennie approached, drew back, approached again. George snapped his fingers sharply, and at the sound Lennie laid the mouse in his hand.

"I wasn't doin' nothing bad with it, George. Jus' strokin' it."

George stood up and threw the mouse as far as he could into the darkening brush, and then he stepped to the pool and washed his hands. "You crazy fool. Don't you think I could see your feet was wet where you went across the river to get it?" He heard Lennie's whimpering cry and wheeled about. "Blubberin' like a baby! Jesus Christ! A big guy like you." Lennie's lip quivered and tears started in his eyes. "Aw, Lennie!" George put his hand on Lennie's shoulder. "I ain't takin' it away jus' for meanness. That mouse ain't fresh, Lennie; and besides, you've broke it pettin' it. You get another mouse that's fresh and I'll let you keep it a little while."

Lennie sat down on the ground and hung his head dejectedly. "I don't know where there is no other mouse. I remember a lady used to give 'em to me- ever' one she got. But that lady ain't here."

George scoffed. "Lady, huh? Don't even remember who that lady was. That was your own Aunt Clara. An' she stopped givin' 'em to ya. You always killed 'em."

Lennie looked sadly up at him. "They was so little," he said, apologetically. "I'd pet 'em, and pretty soon they bit my fingers and I pinched their heads a little and then they was dead- because they was so little."

"I wisht we'd get the rabbits pretty soon, George. They ain't so little."

"The hell with the rabbits. An' you ain't to be trusted with no live mice. Your Aunt Clara give you a rubber mouse and you wouldn't have nothing to do with it."

"It wasn't no good to pet," said Lennie.

The flame of the sunset lifted from the mountaintops and dusk came into the valley, and a half darkness came in among the willows and the sycamores. A big carp rose to the surface of the pool, gulped air and then sank mysteriously into the dark water again, leaving widening rings on the water. Overhead the leaves whisked again and little puffs of willow cotton blew down and landed on the pool's surface.

"You gonna get that wood?" George demanded. "There's plenty right up against the back of that sycamore. Floodwater wood. Now you get it."

Lennie went behind the tree and brought out a litter of dried leaves and twigs. He threw them in a heap on the old ash pile and went back for more and more. It was almost night now. A dove's wings whistled over the water. George walked to the fire pile and lighted the dry leaves. The flame cracked up among the twigs and fell to work.

George undid his bindle and brought out three cans of beans. He stood them about the fire, close in against the blaze, but not quite touching the flame.

"There's enough beans for four men," George said.

Lennie watched him from over the fire. He said patiently, "I like 'em with ketchup."

"Well, we ain't got any," George exploded. "Whatever we ain't got, that's what you want. God a'mighty, if I was alone I could live so easy. I could go get a job an' work, an' no trouble. No mess at all, and when the end of the month come I could take my fifty bucks and go into town and get whatever I want. Why, I could stay in a cat house all night. I could eat any place I want, hotel or any place, and order any damn thing I could think of. An' I could do all that every damn month. Get a gallon of whisky, or set in a pool room and play cards or shoot pool." Lennie knelt and looked over the fire at the angry George. And Lennie's face was drawn with terror. "An' whatta I got," George went on furiously. "I got you! You can't keep a job and you lose me ever' job I get. Jus' keep me shovin' all over the country all the time. An' that ain't the worst. You get in trouble. You do bad things and I got to get you out." His voice rose nearly to a shout. "You crazy son-of-a-bitch. You keep me in hot water all the time."

He took on the elaborate manner of little girls when they are mimicking one another. "Jus' wanted to feel that girl's dress- jus' wanted to pet it like it was a mouse- Well, how the hell did she know you jus' wanted to feel her dress? She jerks back and you hold on like it was a mouse. She yells and we got to hide in a irrigation ditch all day with guys lookin' for us, and we got to sneak out in the dark and get outa the country. All the time somethin' like that- all the time. I wisht I could put you in a cage with about a million mice an' let you have fun." His anger left him suddenly. He looked across the fire at Lennie's anguished face, and then he looked ashamedly at the flames.

It was quite dark now, but the fire lighted the trunks of the trees and the curving branches overhead. Lennie crawled slowly and cautiously around the fire until he was close to George. He sat back on his heels. George turned the bean cans so that another side faced the fire. He pretended to be unaware of Lennie so close beside him.

"George," very softly. No answer. "George!"

"Whatta you want?"

"I was only foolin', George. I don't want no ketchup. I wouldn't eat no ketchup if it was right here beside me."

"If it was here, you could have some."

"But I wouldn't eat none, George. I'd leave it all for you. You could cover your beans with it and I wouldn't touch none of it." George still stared morosely at the fire. "When I think of the swell time I could have without you, I go nuts. I never get no peace." Lennie still knelt. He looked off into the darkness across the river.

"George, you want I should go away and leave you alone?" "Where the hell could you go?"

"Well, I could. I could go off in the hills there. Some place I'd find a cave."

"Yeah? How'd you eat? You ain't got sense enough to find nothing to eat."

"I'd find things, George. I don't need no nice food with ketchup. I'd lay out in the sun and nobody'd hurt me. An' if I foun' a mouse, I could keep it. Nobody'd take it away from me."

George looked quickly and searchingly at him. "I been mean, ain't I?"

"If you don't want me I can go off in the hills an' find a cave. I can go away any time."

"No- look! I was jus' foolin', Lennie. 'Cause I want you to stay with me. Trouble with mice is you always kill 'em." He paused. "Tell you what I'll do, Lennie. First chance I get I'll give you a pup. Maybe you wouldn't kill it. That'd be better than mice. And you could pet it harder."

Lennie avoided the bait. He had sensed his advantage. "If you don't want me, you only jus' got to say so, and I'll go off in those hills right there- right up in those hills and live by myself. An' I won't get no mice stole from me."

George said, "I want you to stay with me, Lennie. Jesus somebody'd shoot you for a coyote if you was by yourself. with me. Your Aunt Clara wouldn't like you running off by even if she is dead."

Lennie spoke craftily, "Tell me- like you done before."

"Tell you what?"

"About the rabbits."

George snapped, "You ain't gonna put nothing over on me." Lennie pleaded, "Come on, George. Tell me. Please, George. Like you done before."

"You get a kick outa that, don't you? Awright, I'll tell you, and then we'll eat our supper...." George's voice became deeper. He repeated his words rhythmically as though he had said them many times before. "Guys like us, that work on ranches, are the loneliest guys in the world. They got no fambly. They don't belong no place. They come to a ranch an' work up a stake and then they go into town and blow their stake, and the first thing you know they're poundin' their tail on some other ranch. They ain't got nothing to look ahead to."

Lennie was delighted. "That's it- that's it. Now tell how it is with us."

George went on. "With us it ain't like that. We got a future. We got somebody to talk to that gives a damn about us. We don't have to sit in no bar room blowin' in our jack jus' because we got no place else to go. If them other guys gets in jail they can rot for all anybody gives a damn. But not us."

Lennie broke in. "But not us! An' why? Because... because I got you to look after me, and you got me to look after you, and that's why." He laughed delightedly. "Go on now, George!"

"You got it by heart. You can do it yourself."

"No, you. I forget some a' the things. Tell about how it's gonna be."

"O.K. Someday- we're gonna get the jack together and we're gonna have a little house and a couple of acres an' a cow and some pigs and-"

"An' live off the fatta the lan'," Lennie shouted. "An' have rabbits. Go on, George! Tell about what we're gonna have in the garden and about the rabbits in the cages and about the rain in the winter and the stove, and how thick the cream is on the milk like you can hardly cut it. Tell about that, George."

"Why'n't you do it yourself? You know all of it."

"No... you tell it. It ain't the same if I tell it. Go on... George. How I get to tend the rabbits."

"Well," said George, "we'll have a big vegetable patch and a rabbit hutch and chickens. And when it rains in the winter, we'll just say the hell with goin' to work, and we'll build up a fire in the stove and set around it an' listen to the rain comin' down on the roof- Nuts!" He took out his pocket knife. "I ain't got time for no more." He drove his knife through the top of one of the bean cans, sawed out the top and passed the can to Lennie. Then he opened a second can. From his side pocket he brought out two spoons and passed one of them to Lennie.

They sat by the fire and filled their mouths with beans and chewed mightily. A few beans slipped out of the side of Lennie's mouth. George gestured with his spoon. "What you gonna say tomorrow when the boss asks you questions?"

Lennie stopped chewing and swallowed. His face was concentrated. "I... I ain't gonna... say a word."

"Good boy! That's fine, Lennie! Maybe you're gettin' better. When we get the coupla acres I can let you tend the rabbits all right. 'Specially if you remember as good as that."

Lennie choked with pride. "I can remember," he said.

George motioned with his spoon again. "Look, Lennie. I want you to look around here. You can remember this place, can't you? The ranch is about a quarter mile up that way. Just follow the river?"

"Sure," said Lennie. "I can remember this. Didn't I remember about not gonna say a word?"

"Course you did. Well, look. Lennie- if you jus' happen to get in trouble like you always done before, I want you to come right here an' hide in the brush."

"Hide in the brush," said Lennie slowly.

"Hide in the brush till I come for you. Can you remember that?" "Sure I can, George. Hide in the brush till you come."

"But you ain't gonna get in no trouble, because if you do, I won't let you tend the rabbits." He threw his empty bean can off into the brush.

"I won't get in no trouble, George. I ain't gonna say a word."

"O.K. Bring your bindle over here by the fire. It's gonna be nice sleepin' here. Lookin' up, and the leaves. Don't build up no more fire. We'll let her die down."

They made their beds on the sand, and as the blaze dropped from the fire the sphere of light grew smaller; the curling branches disappeared and only a faint glimmer showed where the tree trunks were. From the darkness Lennie called, "George- you asleep?"

"No. Whatta you want?"

"Let's have different color rabbits, George."

"Sure we will," George said sleepily. "Red and blue and green rabbits, Lennie. Millions of 'em."

"Furry ones, George, like I seen in the fair in Sacramento." "Sure, furry ones."

"Cause I can jus' as well go away, George, an' live in a cave." "You can jus' as well go to hell," said George.

"Shut up now." The red light dimmed on the coals. Up the hill from the river a coyote yammered, and a dog answered from the other side of the stream. The sycamore leaves whispered in a little night breeze.

Task: (Question 2 style) How does the author use language to convey ideas about George and Lennie?

Task: (Question 3 style) How does the writer use structure to engage the reader?

Task: (Question 4 style) A student who read this claimed 'the writer creates an ominous feeling to this opening and makes us feel somewhat on edge'. To what extent do you agree?

Complete short story

Lullaby

by Elizabeth Berridge

She had never been quite sure about it, but he was convinced.

'It's a great idea, a marvellous idea,' he said, 'but of course if you don't want to come out with me when I'm on leave, just say so.'

So she had given in. She always did. Life with him was precarious; always had been. She had sudden terrible fears of him leaving her. Suddenly walking from the room, out of the house, knowing he had gone on to some other life and needed no one. 'It's being in the air so much, doing so much flying,' she thought. 'It must do something to you.' Hanging on to a cloud and never coming down – only of course you fell through a cloud.

When they had the child it was better, for a time. Then the juggling began. She could keep them both spinning equably, dexterously, for a time; father and son, son and father, but then her hand would become tired, the trick fail. This was such a time, so she said yes, and they went to friend of his who had cashed in on the pre-war vanity of people who wanted their voices recorded.

'Only a few left,' he said. Wistfully he looked over the wax discs. 'Still, it was fun while it lasted.– Did I tell you the story of the man who was too nervous to propose on the spot?'

'Yes,' he was told.

'Oh.' He was obviously disappointed, 'Well, what are you going to do?'

It was explained.

'Why, that's wonderful' he exclaimed. 'That's – come on, let's hear you.'

They tried it out that evening and sat listening in the next room. The child was in his cot, but was talking to himself in a queer half-language

of his own. He sang a little, chuckled and made astonished noises. Then the record was started.

'Go to sleep, darling,' came his mother's voice from the black box. There was a pause, then 'Hush now, bye-byes.' The baby stopped murmuring and settled down. Then the voice said: 'Everything's all right, Mama's here.' The child seemed to be asleep, but they let the record run to the end. 'It won't disturb him,' she whispered, and gazed as the voice sang, a little self-consciously spinning from under the needle. 'What's to be done with the baby son –'

A little breathlessly the record stopped, clicked. The next room was silent.

'There!' he said triumphant. 'That's all right, isn't it? He only needs to hear your voice and off he goes.' She smiled. It did seem a good idea.

'Come on,' he said, 'let's go.'

They did it once or twice after that, until he had to return to his station. But he couldn't forget it. 'You must make one for me,' he wrote. But somehow she never did. She hated her voice spinning off the black disc; she felt as if her whole being was caught beneath the sharp needle, dragged round like a piece of fluff in the shining grooves.

When he next came on leave he said: 'Sanders tells me we positively must see that film at the Empire. It's tremendous.'

'The Empire?' she said. 'It's a long way.'

He looked at her with the peculiarly blank expression he assumed when he was determined to do something in the face of any obstacle.

'We've got the record,' he said. 'We'll be home by ten if we go early.'

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So that evening she put the baby to bed earlier, and they set the record off as they went out of the door. In the hall, he stopped suddenly and caught her in his arms. 'You're sure you feel all right about leaving him, darling?' he asked. 'I'm a selfish brute.'

She laughed. Her fear was always there, but it must not spoil his evening, and the idea of him being worried somehow strengthened her.

'He'll be all right,' she said firmly. 'Don't worry.' Together they walked down the road. 'What a wind!' she said.

Back in the nursery the wind in a sudden gust shifted aside the blackout curtain they had always meant to fix. The house stood on a corner and took the full force of any storm.

'More of a gale,' he said.

The nightlight, usually unwavering in its saucer, flickered unsteadily; a tiny edge of the curtain was blown across and remained a little above it. From his cot the baby watched the flame grow bright. He chuckled and sang to himself. Then his mother's voice came gently. 'Go to sleep, darling.' He turned over and put his thumb in his mouth. But the brightness still fascinated him; he wanted

to tell his mother about it. 'Hush now, bye-byes.' Obediently he closed his eyes. A sudden intensity of light swept across his eyelids; the curtains were blazing. He opened his mouth to scream with sudden inexplicable fear, but across the lighted room came the trusted voice that was with him

all day, 'You're quite all right. Mama's here.' He looked about, where was she?

He didn't like it. The wind rushed round the corner and swept the fire across to the chest of drawers – cottonwool, picture-books. The baby was standing in his cot now, gripping the rail and shaking, his eyes wide and black with fear, almost islanded by flame and across the room came the lullaby... 'we'll put him away for a rainy day...'

As they got off the bus, she gripped his arm. The journey had passed in silence, but now it was as if she lay beneath the sharp needle, caught in the spinning grooves.

'Did you hum that song we made up for the baby just then?' Her voice was edged, and he looked at her, startled.

'No,' he said, 'I could have sworn you were singing it.'

For a moment they looked at one another. Then: 'Taxi!' he shouted. 'Taxi!'

Task: (Question 2 style) How does the author use language to present the relationship between the couple?

Task: (Question 3 style) How does the writer use structure to engage the reader?

Question 5 example questions:

Section B: Writing

You are advised to spend about 45 minutes on this section.

Write in full sentences.

You are reminded of the need to plan your answer.

You should leave enough time to check your work at the end.



5. Write a description of a surfing beach, as suggested by this picture.

OR: Write the opening of a story set around the sea.

Challenge 1: can you mirror the style of any of the examples you've read?

Challenge 2: can you use description, action and dialogue to convey a sense of character? Look at how this is done by Steinbeck in the opening of 'Of Mice and Men'?

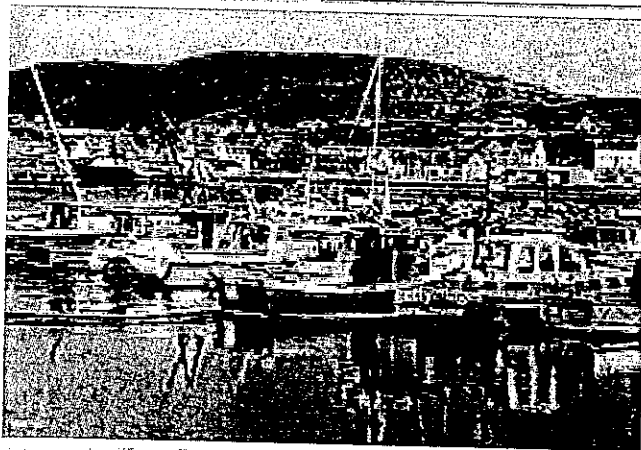
Section B: Writing

You are advised to spend about 45 minutes on this section.

Write in full sentences.

You are reminded of the need to plan your answer.

You should leave enough time to check your work at the end.



5. Write a description of a fishing harbour, as suggested by this picture.

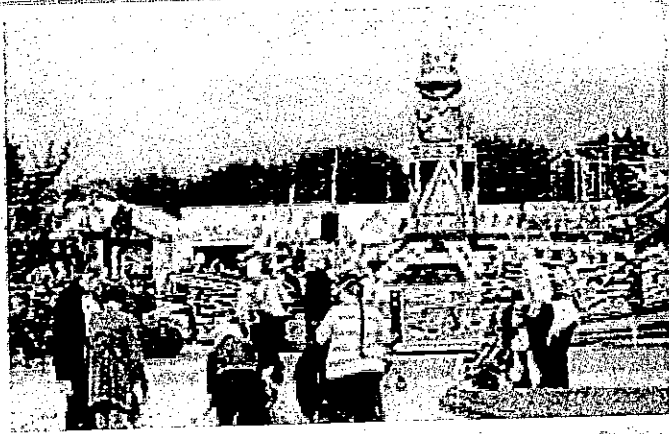
OR: Write the opening of a story with a title of 'The boat'

Challenge: can you use any new vocabulary from the extracts you've read?

Section B: Writing

You are advised to spend about 45 minutes on this section.
Write in full sentences.

You are reminded of the need to plan your answer.
You should leave enough time to check your work at the end.



5. Write a description of a busy fair ground, as suggested by this picture.

OR: Write a short story entitled 'The fun of the fair'

Challenge: can you mirror the style of 'The Road' by opening in a way that leaves the relationship ambiguous- then go on to reveal it later?

Section B: Writing

You are advised to spend about 45 minutes on this section.
Write in full sentences.

You are reminded of the need to plan your answer.
You should leave enough time to check your work at the end.



5. Write a description of a busy train station, as suggested by this picture.

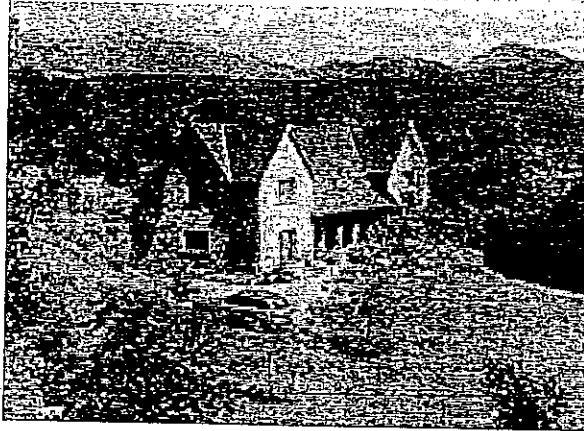
OR:

Write a short story entitled 'Arrival'

Challenge: Look at an extract and how they use punctuation for effect- could you try doing this in your short story?

Section B: Writing

You are advised to spend about 45 minutes on this section.
Write in full sentences.
You are reminded of the need to plan your answer.
You should leave enough time to check your work at the end.



5. Write a description of a remote house, as suggested by this picture.

OR: Write the opening of a story set in a remote location.

Challenge: can you use paragraphs for effect?

Where else can you find top tips/ ideas for revision?

A great free course on writing to describe:



A collection of short stories to read:



A revision video on writing to describe:



Structure

Whole text

What is the text about? Who or what does it focus on?

What happens at the beginning of the text? Does it set the scene? How does it open? Is it in the middle of something happening? Do you notice one technique being used at the beginning to hook you in?

Initially

Shifts

Where do you notice a change in the text? Does it move from one person's perspective to another? Does it flashback or forward in time?

Ending

What is happening at the end of the text? How do you feel? Do you feel relief or more anxious- what has caused this? Is something from the beginning of the text repeated at the end? Does it have a cyclical structure?

Repetition

Are words or phrases repeated through the text? Is a metaphor, simile or image repeated? Is there an idea that is repeated?