

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

ENGLISH LANGUAGE

8693/01

Paper 1 Passages for Comment

May/June 2006

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.

Answer two questions.

- 1 In the passage below the writer describes a childhood memory of wandering around her father's jewellery shop one evening.
- (a) Comment on the style and language of the passage. [15]
- (b) The writer also describes another room in her house. Basing your answer closely on the style of the extract, write the opening description (between 120 and 150 words). [10]

A quite different world opens before me when I only just push at the heavy door that separates the shop from our apartment.

It is a door entirely covered with tin. Instead of a latch it has a big key that is always in the lock. In the dark rear shop, into which I tumble first, I grope along the walls as though I were blind. Thick yellow sheets of paper rustle underfoot. 5

Wrapped-up wall clocks rest on the floor here. Until they are hung on walls, they do not move; they lie quiet and soundless, as if buried alive. But the stuffy air of the dark chamber seems swollen with the voices that seep in from the shop. The voices crowd against the high wooden wall and recoil from it again. I stand behind it as in a prison, and listen to what is being said. I want to make out whose voice is talking. 10
And if I catch mother's voice, I am content.

But wait! Is her voice quiet, calm, or, God forbid, angry? Mother's voice will give me warning, tell me whether to go into the shop or not.

Her high tones encourage me. I touch the curtain of the last door, which leads to the shop. I become dizzy at once because of the mirrors and glass. All the clocks are being wound in my ears. The shop is full of glitter on every side. The flashing of silver and gold blinds me like fire; it is reflected in the mirrors, roams over the glass drawers. It dazzles my eyes. 15

Two large gas chandeliers burn high up under the ceiling, humming loudly; the sound becomes a moan of pain. Fire spatters from the close-netted caps on the burners that barely hold back the sparks. 20

There are two high walls entirely lined from top to bottom with glass cupboards. The cupboards reach up to the ceiling and are so solidly built that they seem to have grown into it. Their glass doors slide easily back and forth. Through the glass one can clearly see all the objects on display, almost touch them with one's hand. 25

On the shelves are goblets, wineglasses, sugar bowls, saucers, braided baskets, milk and water pitchers, fruit bowls. Everything shines and glitters with a newly polished look. Whenever I move, all the objects run after me in reflection. The fire of the lamps and the light of the silver cross each other. Now the silver drowns in a flash of the lamplight, now it re-emerges with an even sharper glitter. 30

On the opposite wall there is another glass cupboard. Behind its panes are objects not of silver but of white metal, and their gleam is much more modest, and quieter.

In the center of the shop, on three sides, there rise, as if from the floor itself, three inner walls – long counters with drawers. They divide the shop into two sections. 35
All laid out with glass, full of gold objects, they glitter like magical arks. Little stones of all colors, framed in gold rings, earrings, brooches, bracelets, flicker there like lighted matches.

In this air full of fire it is quite impossible to see that the floor is dark. At the front, at the very feet of the customers, entire silver services shine through the glass. 40
And so even the customers' black shoes glitter and catch reflections along with the silver.

The third wall is dim even by day. Overgrown with long hanging clocks, it looks like a forest of dark trees. There are wall clocks of various sizes. Some have big, squat cases with thick hanging chains supporting heavy copper weights. Other wall clocks have narrower, slimmer bodies. Their chains are lighter, more movable, with smaller weights attached. In the bellies of all of them pointed pendulums dangle like swords, swinging restlessly back and forth.

Among the large wall clocks smaller ones are hiding, and even tiny ones; one can see only the white dials, their round moon faces. They have no wooden bellies, and their chain legs move in the open, before everyone's eyes, up and down. 50

The whole wall of clocks sighs and breathes heavily. From each box come smothered groans, as though at every moment someone were being killed on the dark wall.

- 2 The passage below takes a comic look at patriotism. It is set in a fictional place called Lake Wobegon in America and describes a local custom known as 'The Living Flag', an annual ceremony organized by shop owner Herman Hochstetter to celebrate the end of World War II.

- (a) Comment on the style and language of the passage. [10]
- (b) As part of his autobiography, Herman writes a chapter outlining his achievement in creating a ceremony and why it began to go wrong. Basing your answer closely on the material of the extract, write the opening to the chapter (between 120 and 150 words). [10]

On patriotic days, flags flew all over; there were flags on the tall poles, flags on the short, flags in the brackets on the pillars and the porches, and if you were flagless you could expect to hear from Herman. His hairy arm around your shoulder, his poochlike face close to yours, he would say how proud he was that so many people were proud of their country, leaving you to see the obvious, that you were a gap in the ranks. 5

In June 1944, the day after D-Day, a salesman from Fisher Hat called on Herman and offered a good deal on red and blue baseball caps. 'Do you have white also?' Herman asked. The salesman thought that white caps could be had for the same wonderful price. Herman ordered two hundred red, two hundred white, and one hundred blue. By the end of the year, he still had four hundred and eighty-six caps. The inspiration of the Living Flag was born from that overstock. 10

On June 14, 1945, a month after V-E Day, a good crowd assembled in front of the Central Building in response to Herman's ad in the paper:

Honor 'AMERICA' June 14 at 4 p.m. Be proud of "Our Land & People". Be part of the "Living Flag". Don't let it be said that Lake Wobegon was "Too Busy". Be on time. 4 p.m. "Sharp". 15

His wife Louise handed out the caps, and Herman stood on a stepladder and told the people where to stand. He lined up the reds and whites into stripes, then got the blues into their square. Mr. Hanson climbed up on the roof of the Central Building and took a photograph, they sang the national anthem, and then the Living Flag dispersed. The photograph appeared in the paper the next week. Herman kept the caps. 20 25

In the flush of victory, people were happy to do as they were told and stand in place, but in 1946 and 1947, dissension cropped up in the ranks: people complained about the heat and about Herman – what gave him the idea he could order them around? 'People! Please! I need your attention! You blue people, keep your hats on! Please! Stripe number 4, you're sagging! You reds, you're up here! We got too many white people, we need more red ones! Let's do this without talking, people! I can't get you straight if you keep moving around! Some of you are not paying attention! Everybody shut up! Please!' 30

One cause of resentment was the fact that none of them got to see the flag they were in; the picture in the paper was black and white. Only Herman and Mr. Hanson got to see the real Flag, and some boys too short to be needed down below. People wanted a chance to go up to the roof and witness the spectacle for themselves. 35

'How can you go up there if you're supposed to be down here?' Herman said. 'You go up to look, you got nothing to look at. Isn't it enough to know that you're doing your part?' 40

On Flag Day, 1949, just as Herman said, 'That's it! Hold it now!' one of the men made a break for it – dashed up four flights of stairs to the roof and leaned over and had a long look. Even with the hole he had left behind, it was a magnificent sight. The Living Flag filled the street below. A perfect Flag! The reds so brilliant! He couldn't take his eyes off it. 'Get down here! We need a picture!' Herman yelled up at him. 'Unbelievable! I can't describe it!' he said. 45

So then everyone had to have a look. 'No!' Herman said, but they took a vote and it was unanimous. One by one, members of the Living Flag went up to the roof and admired it. It was marvellous! It brought tears to the eyes, it made one reflect on this great country and on Lake Wobegon's place in it. One wanted to stand up there all afternoon and just drink it in. So, as the first hour passed, and only forty of the five hundred had been to the top, the others got more and more restless. 'Hurry up! Quit dawdling! You've seen it! Get down here and give someone else a chance!' Herman sent people up in groups of four, and then ten, but after two hours, the Living Flag became the Sitting Flag and then began to erode, as the members who had had a look thought about heading home to supper, which infuriated the ones who hadn't. 'Ten more minutes!' Herman cried, but ten minutes became twenty and thirty, and people snuck off and the Flag that remained for the last viewer was a Flag shot through by cannon fire. 50 55

- 3 In the passage below the writer describes how the ship he was travelling on was affected by the weather.
- (a) You have been asked to contribute an article to a travel magazine. Basing your answer closely on the style and structure of the passage, write the opening (between 120 and 150 words) of the article about another journey by a different means of transport. [10]
- (b) Compare the style and structure of your piece with those of the original extract. [15]

They laid the tables in our saloon for dinner. We sat tightly packed at benches. There were three or four small children who were fed at the table. Two ragged servants cooked and served a very bad dinner. The captain collected the money. Presently he passed round a list of those to whom he had given cabins. I was not among them, nor was the American missionary nor any of the Greeks. We should have slipped him a tip with our tickets, I learned later. About a dozen of us were left without accommodation. Six wise men laid themselves out full length on the saloon benches immediately after dinner and established their claim for the night. The rest of us sat on our luggage on the deck. There were no seats or deck-chairs. Luckily it was a fine night, warm, unclouded, and windless. I spread an overcoat on the deck, placed a canvas grip under my head as a pillow and composed myself for sleep. The missionary found two little wooden chairs and sat stiff backed, wrapped in a rug, with his feet up supporting a book of Bible-stories on his knees. As we got up steam, brilliant showers of wood sparks rose from the funnel; soon after midnight we sailed into the lake; a gentle murmur of singing came from the bows. In a few minutes I was asleep. 5 10 15

I woke up suddenly an hour later and found myself shivering with cold. I stood up to put on my overcoat and immediately found myself thrown against the rail. At the same moment I saw the missionary's two chairs tip over sideways and him sprawl on the deck. A large pile of hand luggage upset and slid towards the side. There was a tinkle of broken china from the captain's quarters. All this coincided with a torrential downpour of rain and a tearing wind. It was followed in a second or two by a blaze of lightning and shattering detonation. A chatter of alarm went up from the lower deck, and various protests of disturbed livestock. In the half-minute which it took us to collect our luggage and get into the saloon we were saturated with rain. And here we were in scarcely better conditions, for the windows, when raised, proved not to be of glass, but of wire gauze. The wind tore through them, water poured in and slopped from side to side. Women passengers came up squealing from their cabins below, with colourless, queasy faces. The saloon became intolerably overcrowded. We sat as we had at dinner, packed in rows round the two tables. The wind was so strong that it was impossible, single-handed, to open the door. Those who were ill – the American missionary was the first to go under – were obliged to remain in their places. The shriek of the wind was so loud that conversation was impossible; we just clung there, pitched and thrown, now out of our seats, now on top of one another; occasionally someone would fall asleep and wake up instantly with his head thumped hard against table or wall. It needed constant muscular effort to avoid injury. Vile retchings occurred on every side. Women whimpered at their husbands for support. The children yelled. We were all of us dripping and shivering. At last everyone grew quieter as alarm subsided and desperation took its place. They sat there, rigid and glum, gazing straight before them or supporting their heads in their hands until, a little before dawn, the wind dropped and rain ceased beating in; then 20 25 30 35 40

some of them fell asleep, and others slunk back to their cabins. I went out on deck. It was still extremely cold, and the little boat bobbed and wallowed hopelessly in a heavy sea, but the storm was clearly over. Soon a green and silver dawn broke over the lake; it was misty all round us, and the orange sparks from the funnel were just visible against the whiter sky. The two stewards emerged with chattering teeth and attempted to set things in order in the saloon, dragging out rolls of sodden matting and swabbing up the water-logged floor. Huddled groups on the lower deck began to disintegrate and a few cocks crowed; there was a clatter of breakfast cups and a welcome smell of coffee.

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