



UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE INTERNATIONAL EXAMINATIONS
International General Certificate of Secondary Education

LITERATURE (ENGLISH)

0486/32

Paper 3 Unseen

May/June 2012

1 hour 15 minutes

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

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

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

Both questions in this paper carry equal marks.



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



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

EITHER

- 1 Read carefully the following poem in which the poet remembers his young son falling into some nettles. (Nettles are plants which sting if you touch them.) The sting from the nettles causes painful blisters on the boy's skin.

How does the poet convey his strong feelings about the incident to you?

To help you answer this question you might consider:

- how the poet describes the nettles
- how he reacts to his son's pain
- his thoughts and feelings at the end of the poem when the nettles re-grow.

Nettles

My son aged three fell in the nettle bed¹.
'Bed' seemed a curious name for those green spears,
That regiment of spite behind the shed:
It was no place for rest. With sobs and tears
The boy came seeking comfort and I saw
White blisters beaded on his tender skin.
We soothed him till his pain was not so raw.
At last he offered us a watery grin,
And then I took my billhook², honed³ the blade
And went outside and slashed in fury with it
Till not a nettle in that fierce parade
Stood upright any more. And then I lit
A funeral pyre to burn the fallen dead,
But in two weeks the busy sun and rain
Had called up tall recruits behind the shed:
My son would often feel sharp wounds again.

¹ *nettle bed*: the area in the garden where the nettles grow

² *billhook*: implement for pruning plants

³ *honed*: sharpened

OR

- 2 Read carefully the following passage from a novel about the American Civil War of the nineteenth century. In it a young man (called ‘the youth’) is about to go into battle for the first time.

How does the writer vividly convey the youth’s observations and feelings to you?

To help you answer this question you might consider:

- the tension as the soldiers prepare to fight
- how the youth feels before the battle
- how the writing shows his changing feelings during the battle.

There were moments of waiting. The youth thought of the village street at home before the arrival of the circus parade on a day in the spring. He remembered how he had stood, a small, thrilling boy, prepared to follow the dingy lady upon the white horse, or the band in its faded chariot. He saw the yellow road, the lines of expectant people, and the sober houses. A thousand details of color and form surged in his mind.

Someone cried, ‘Here they come!’

There was rustling and muttering among the men. They displayed a feverish desire to have every possible cartridge ready to their hands. The boxes were pulled around into various positions, and adjusted with great care. It was as if seven hundred new bonnets were being tried on.

The tall soldier, having prepared his rifle, produced a red handkerchief of some kind. He was engaged in knitting it about his throat with exquisite attention to its position, when the cry was repeated up and down the line in a muffled roar of sound.

‘Here they come! Here they come!’ Gun locks clicked.

Across the smoke-infested fields came a brown swarm of running men who were giving shrill yells. They came on, stooping and swinging their rifles at all angles. A flag, tilted forward, sped near the front.

As he caught sight of them the youth was momentarily startled by a thought that perhaps his gun was not loaded. He stood trying to rally his faltering intellect so that he might recollect the moment when he had loaded, but he could not.

A hatless general pulled his dripping horse to a stand near the colonel of the 304th¹. He shook his fist in the other’s face. ‘You’ve got to hold ’em back!’ he shouted, savagely; ‘you’ve got to hold ’em back!’

In his agitation the colonel began to stammer. ‘A-all r-right, General, all right, by Gawd!² We-we’ll do our – we-we’ll d-d-do – do our best, General.’ The general made a passionate gesture and galloped away. The colonel, perchance³ to relieve his feelings, began to scold like a wet parrot. The youth, turning swiftly to make sure that the rear was unmolested, saw the commander regarding his men in a highly resentful manner, as if he regretted above everything his association with them.

The man at the youth’s elbow was mumbling, as if to himself: ‘Oh, we’re in for it now! oh, we’re in for it now!’

The captain of the company had been pacing excitedly to and fro in the rear. He coaxed in schoolmistress fashion, as to a congregation of boys with primers.⁴ His talk was an endless repetition. ‘Reserve your fire, boys – don’t shoot till I tell you – save your fire – wait till they get close up – don’t be damned fools –’

Perspiration streamed down the youth’s face, which was soiled like that of a weeping urchin. He frequently, with a nervous movement, wiped his eyes with his coat sleeve. His mouth was still a little ways open.

He got the one glance at the foe-swarming field in front of him, and instantly ceased to debate the question of his piece⁵ being loaded. Before he was ready to begin – before he had announced to himself that he was about to fight – he threw the obedient, well-balanced rifle into position and fired a first wild shot. Directly he was

working at his weapon like an automatic affair.

He suddenly lost concern for himself, and forgot to look at a menacing fate. He became not a man but a member. He felt that something of which he was a part – a regiment, an army, a cause, or a country – was in a crisis. He was welded into a common personality which was dominated by a single desire. For some moments he could not flee no more than a little finger can commit a revolution from a hand.

If he had thought the regiment was about to be annihilated perhaps he could have amputated himself from it. But its noise gave him assurance. The regiment was like a firework that, once ignited, proceeds superior to circumstances until its blazing vitality fades. It wheezed and banged with a mighty power. He pictured the ground before it as strewn with the discomfited.⁶

There was a consciousness always of the presence of his comrades about him. He felt the subtle battle brotherhood more potent even than the cause for which they were fighting. It was a mysterious fraternity born of the smoke and danger of death.

¹ *304th*: an army regiment

² *Gawd*: God

³ *perchance*: possibly

⁴ *primers*: textbooks

⁵ *piece*: rifle

⁶ *discomfited*: injured or wounded

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Copyright Acknowledgements:

Question 1

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