



OUNDLÉ

School

2020 Academic Scholarship

English

Time allowed: 2 hours

Instructions

- **Dictionaries are not allowed**
- Answer on lined paper. Clearly mark your name at the top of each sheet of paper you use.
- Answer ALL the questions in Section A. Choose ONE question from Section B. You should divide your time equally between both sections.
- You are expected to write clearly and accurately throughout each of your answers. You should leave some time towards the end of the examination to check your work carefully.
- The maximum number of marks for this paper is 60

Section A: Comprehension

You should spend 60 minutes on this section

Both the poems below are about the British Museum Reading Room in London. For much of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries the British Museum Reading Room was an important library for scholars and general readers. Read the poems carefully and then answer the questions that follow. Questions 1 and 2 are about the first poem. Questions 3 and 4 are about the second poem. Question 5 invites you to consider both poems together. You should leave yourself enough time to answer Question 5 in full detail. Support all your answers with quotations from the poems, as appropriate.

At the British Museum by Richard Aldington (1892-1962)

I turn the page and read:
'I dream of silent verses where the rhyme
Glides noiseless as an oar.'
The heavy musty air, the black desks,
The bent heads and the rustling noises 5
In the great dome
Vanish ...
And
The sun hangs in the cobalt-blue sky,
The boat drifts over the lake shallows, 10
The fishes skim like umber shades through the undulating weeds,
The oleanders drop their rosy petals on the lawns,
And the swallows dive and swirl and whistle
About the cleft battlements of Can Grande's castle ...

The British Museum Reading Room by Louis MacNeice (1907-63)

Under the hive-like dome the stooping haunted readers
Go up and down the alleys, tap the cells of knowledge –
Honey and wax, the accumulation of years –
Some on commission, some for the love of learning,
Some because they have nothing better to do 5
Or because they hope these walls of books will deaden
The drumming of the demon in their ears.

Cranks, hacks, poverty-stricken scholars,
In pince-nez,* period hats or romantic beards
And cherishing their hobby or their doom, 10
Some are too much alive and some are asleep
Hanging like bats in a world of inverted values,
Folded up in themselves in a world which is safe and silent:
This is the British Museum Reading Room.

Out on the steps in the sun the pigeons are courting, 15
Puffing their ruffs and sweeping their tails or taking
A sun-bath at their ease
And under the totem poles – the ancient terror –
Between the enormous fluted ionic columns
There seeps from heavily jowled or hawk-like foreign faces 20
The guttural sorrow of the refugees.

* *pince-nez* a style of eyeglasses popular in the nineteenth century

On 'At the British Museum'

1. What is special about the British Museum for the poet? (5 marks)
2. Comment on any two or three examples of where the poet's choice of vocabulary creates a deliberate effect. (5 marks)

On 'The British Museum Reading Room'

3. How does the poet feel about the British Museum Reading Room? (5 marks)
4. Comment on some of the effects of the poet's use of similes and metaphors in the poem. (5 marks)

On both poems

5. Compare and contrast these two poems in any way you think is interesting and appropriate. You may wish to look at:
 - the content and meaning of the poems;
 - the form and structure of the poems;
 - the use of literary techniques. (10 marks)

(Total: 30 marks)

TURN OVER

Section B: Composition

Spend about 60 minutes on this section

The following are all opening or closing sentences from a selection of different novels. Write a story or a piece of descriptive writing using ONE of these sentences as your opening or closing sentence. Credit will be given for how well your writing fits with your chosen sentence as well as for its creativity and flair. You are reminded of the importance of clear and accurate written English and of careful presentation in your answer. All questions carry equal marks.

1. I should begin at the beginning, I know that, but the trouble is that I don't know the beginning. *(30 marks)*

OR

2. At the start of every summer the small town resolutely put on powder and lipstick, dressed itself up and set out to please the strangers it attracted. *(30 marks)*

OR

3. Full moonlight drenched the city and searched it; there was not a niche left to stand in. *(30 marks)*

OR

4. If, standing alone on the back doorstep, Tom allowed himself to weep tears, they were tears of anger. *(30 marks)*

OR

5. 'So here you are!' exclaimed Mrs Vesey to the newcomer who joined the group on the lawn. *(30 marks)*

END OF QUESTIONS