



Student Name

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English Advanced Paper 1 - Texts and Human Experiences

Stimulus Booklet for Section I

q: 55

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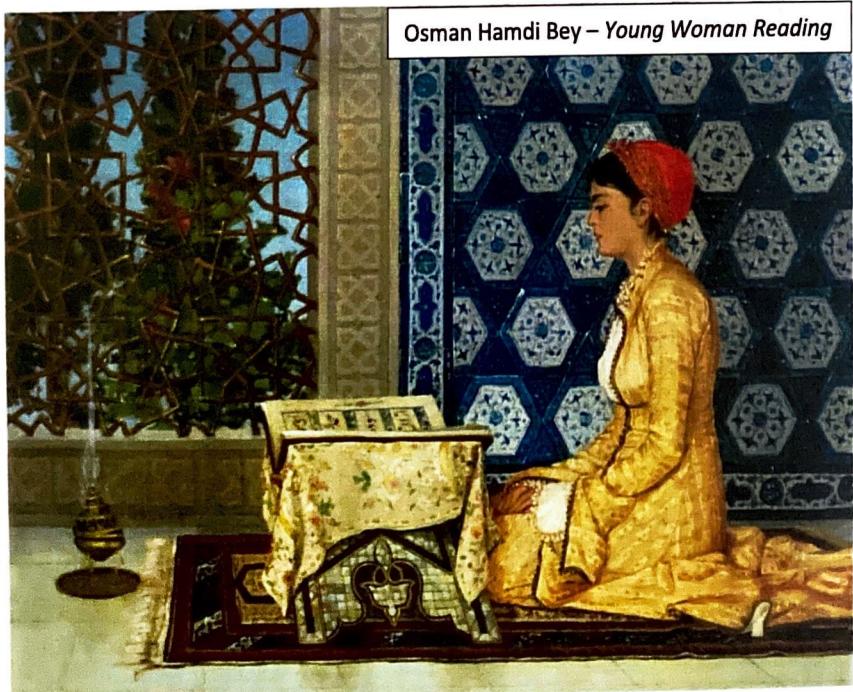
Section I

Text 1 — Painting



Thomas Wyck - *A Scholar in his Study*

Text 2 — Painting



Osman Hamdi Bey – *Young Woman Reading*

Text 3 — Poem

We Wear the Mask

WE wear the mask that grins and lies,
It hides our cheeks and shades our eyes,--
With torn and bleeding hearts we smile,
And mouth with myriad subtleties*.

Why should the world be over-wise,
In counting all our tears and sighs?
No, let them only see us, while
We wear the mask.

We smile, but, all the while, our cries
To all from tortured souls arise.
We sing, but oh the clay is vile
Beneath our feet, and long the mile;
But let the world dream otherwise,
We wear the mask!

Adapted from
PAUL LAWRENCE DUNBAR

* myriad: countless or extremely great number
subtleties: small but important details

Text 4 — Opinion blog

Why do humans create?

I've always admired our race for securing its position at the top of all life forms. Yet, while it is ruthless in evolving and outwitting extinction events, there has always been another side. Humanity, the most intelligent creature on the planet, has always projected its creativity.

When we were troglodytes, hunters and gatherers, dying at 30 to cold and starvation, we still found time to tell stories and make songs. We used the earth around us to paint on cave walls and we decorated our bodies with shells and rocks. Back then, we did not know that it would be history. We did not know whether there would be a future to witness our paintings or a future to remember our songs, but even in the harshest of winters where fires would not light, with our dying breaths we would sing in hopes that someone was listening.

I think we created because doing so gave us happiness; humans need to connect.

I suppose being gifted with such complex thoughts and emotions also burdened us with the ability to hope. It seemed futile at times, but hope was often one of the last things left when everything else was lost. Perhaps that was why Picasso continued to paint himself even as his mind was deteriorating, or why Anne so fervently kept her diary as she hid for her life. I assume, for I cannot speak on behalf of them, that in the paintings and the diary they saw a way to preserve themselves, to prove to the world that there once lived an Annelies Marie Frank and a Pablo Ruiz Picasso.

Even if we do not end up being as memorable as they do, I believe that to some extent, we create for the same reason. We stash away our love letters and carry them from house to house; our shelves line with journals that are filled with our daily irrationalities and deepest secrets; we take family photos, and before that, we would sit for hours to get portraits of ourselves to hang on dining room walls. Why? Perhaps so that someone would share our feelings and see the things we saw.

In my dad's home there was a painting that had always caught my eye. It was a watercolour of a cottage by a river lined with willows and flowers. Of all the paintings that my dad hoarded, I wondered why I stared so long at this one. It was not the only one with flowers, not the only one with a cottage nor the only one with a sparkling river. But there was something about the way that it, in all its stillness, could emanate the warmth of the sunlight; the way I could feel the breeze of the wind through the branches and hear the trickle of water down the river.

Text 4 is continued on page 5

Text 4 (continued)

Nonetheless, I believe my attachment to this one painting gave me another answer as to why humans need to create. We perceive on a level so deep that is unlike any other creature. We give emotions to colours, see life in nature, and find companionship in animals and machinery. Life and earth fill us with such strong emotion that we long to express it. And so, I think that this painting: this cottage with the flowers, trees and a river, overwhelmed someone with such warmth and serenity that they had to recreate that moment for others to see.

We will continue to create. Just as the troglodytes did, just as Picasso and Anne did, and just as the anonymous artist who painted a cottage amongst flowers and trees did. Just as they immortalised themselves on cave walls, paper, and canvas, we will preserve our existence through technologies that do not erode. We will continue to write about our joys and miseries through blogs and we will share our memories through photos that we carry in jeans pockets. All for the same reason we did so centuries ago: creating connects us to the past, our emotions and to others. The world around us will be immortalised through words and pictures, so that, one day, when our memories become stories retold by our children, there will be evidence that yes, at some point in time, *we did exist*.

TIFFANY WENG

Text 5 — Prose fiction extract

Autumn was once my favourite season. I used to revel in the brilliant reds and oranges which brought me the sense of contentment I so longed for. Now it just represents the miserable period that is yet to befall me, when the weight of my actions bury deeper into my soul, a terrifying reminder of all that I have lost, who I once was.

Even now, as I watch my daughter pink cheeked, push herself on the swing, I am berated with glimpses of unhappy faces and unseeing eyes. Her presence helps tether me to this world.

When I was her age, I desperately wanted to create a time machine. I would spend hours drawing plans for a brilliant metal cylinder lined with neon buttons and fluffy walls. With this time machine, I sought to travel back to meet the friendly dinosaurs I had seen on TV. This time machine was to be powered by cardboard boxes, sticky tape and love as I could see no use for hard science or mechanics. After all, what is stronger than the will of the innocent child who believes that the world will provide them with everything?

I often think about my time machine, often just to laugh at myself. Sometimes, however, when I have spent too much time alone with my torments, I think I would like that time machine. I long for the ability to wind back the years, take a step back to a simpler landscape. Perhaps I can be a speck of stardust observing the primitive stages of the earth's development, watching as the universe unravels itself to create its grand masterpiece - and stop it.

But then Amelie would never have been born. I wouldn't be sitting here, watching as she pushes herself on the swingset, exerting her newfound independence. I feel a desperate urge to grab her, swaddle her in blankets and never let her see the gruesome face of the world. An impossible task, I know. Before long, she will grapple with slippery truths of existence, with the stain of us ... there is no stopping it.

MEGAN POLLARD
From *Wasted Eden*

Text 6 — Nonfiction extract

WITH the time and energy we spend in making failure a certainty we might have certain success. A nonsensical paradox?

Suppose a man had an appointment a hundred miles north of his home, and that if he kept it, he would be sure of having health, much happiness, fair prosperity, for the rest of his life. He has just time enough to get there, just enough fuel in his car. He drives out, but decides that it would be more fun to go twenty-five miles south before starting out in earnest.

That is nonsense! Yes, isn't it? The fuel had nothing to do with it; time had no preference as to how it would be spent; the road ran north as well as south, yet he missed his appointment.

Now, if that man told us that, after all, he had quite enjoyed the drive in the wrong direction, that in some ways he found it pleasanter to drive with no objective than to try to keep a date, that he had had a touching glimpse of his old home by driving south, should we praise him for being properly philosophical about having lost his opportunity?

No, we should think he had acted like an imbecile. Even if he had missed his appointment by getting into a daydream in which he drove automatically past a road sign or two, we should still not absolve him. Or if he had arrived too late from having lost his way when he might have looked up his route on a good map and failed to do so before starting, we might commiserate with him, but we should indict him for bad judgment.

Yet when it comes to going straight to the appointments, we make with ourselves and our own fulfillment we all act very much like the hero of this silly fable: we drive the wrong way. We fail where we might have succeeded by spending the same power and time.

Failure indicates that energy has been poured into the wrong channel. It takes energy to fail.

Now this is something which we seldom see at once. Because we commonly think of failure as the conventional opposite of success, we continue to make false antitheses of the qualities which attend success and failure. Success is bracing, active, alert; so the typical attitude of failure, we believe, must be lethargy, inertia, a supine position.

When failure comes about through devoting precious hours to time-killing pursuits, we can all see that energy is being diverted from its proper channel. But there are ways of killing time which do not look like dissipation. They can seem, on the contrary, like conscientious and dutiful hard work, they often draw praise and approval from onlookers, and arouse a sense of complacency in us.

It is only by looking more closely, by discovering that this work gets us nowhere, that it both tires us and leaves us unsatisfied, that we see here again energy is being devoted to the pursuit of failure.

DOROTHEA BRANDE

Adapted from 'Why Do We Fail?' in *Wake up and Live!*