Readings Booklet

January 1998

English 30

Part B: Reading

Grade 12 Diploma Examination

Alberta
EDUCATION

January 1998

English 30 Part B: Reading
Readings Booklet
Grade 12 Diploma Examination

Description

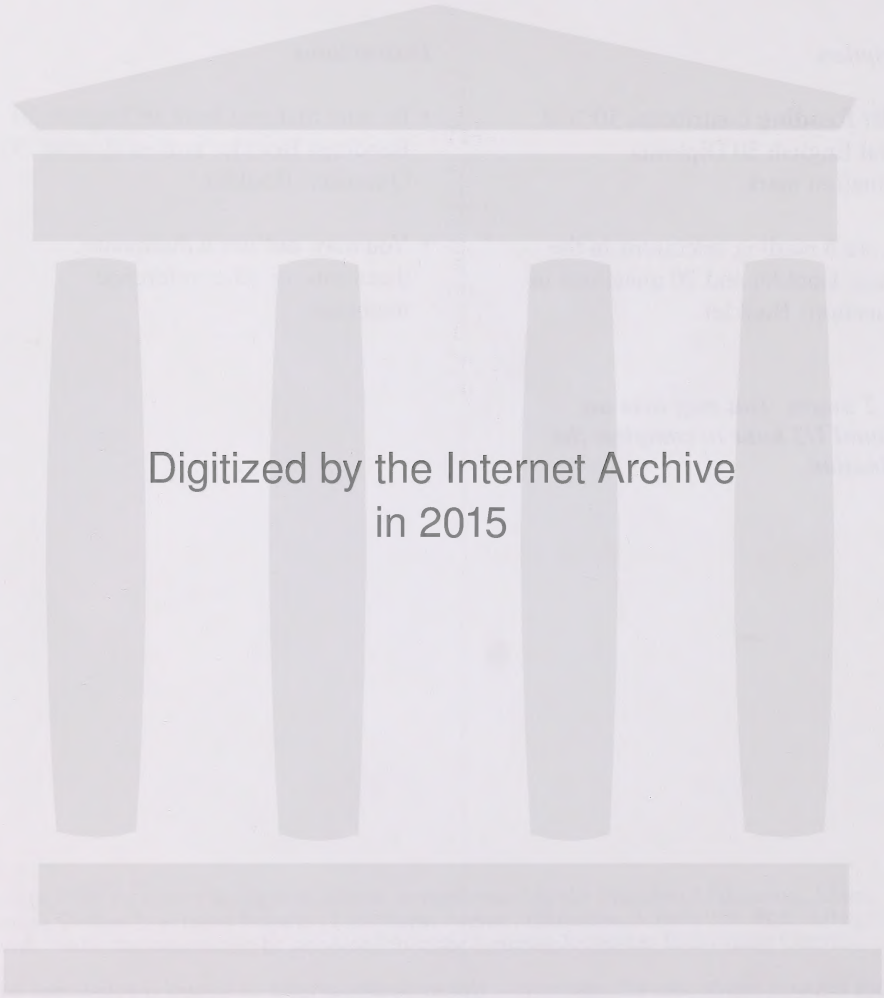
Part B: Reading contributes 50% of the total English 30 Diploma Examination mark.

There are 8 reading selections in the Readings Booklet and 70 questions in the Questions Booklet.

Time: 2 hours. You may take an additional 1/2 hour to complete the examination.

Instructions

- Be sure that you have an English 30 Readings Booklet **and** an English 30 Questions Booklet.
- You may **not** use a dictionary, thesaurus, or other reference materials.



I. Questions 1 to 7 in your Questions Booklet are based on this autobiographical essay.

THE GIRLS' ROOM

When I heard she was coming to stay with us I was pleased. At age eight I thought of "grandmother" as a generic brand. My friends had grandmothers who seemed permanently bent over cookie racks. They were a source of constant treats and sweets. They were pinchers of cheeks, huggers and kissers. My own grandmother had always lived in a distant state; I had no memory of her when she decided to join the household recently established for me by my two uncles.

But with the example of my friends' grandmothers before me, I could hardly wait to have a grandmother of my own—and the cookies would be nice too. For while my uncles provided a cuisine that ranged from tuna croquettes to Swedish meatballs, they showed no signs of baking anything more elegant than a potato.

My main concern on the day of my grandmother's arrival was: How soon would she start the cookies? I remember her arrival, my uncles flanking her as they walked down the apartment corridor. She wore a hat, a tailored navy blue suit, an ermine stole. She held, tucked under her arm, the purple leather folder that contained her work in progress, a manuscript entitled "Philosophy for Women." She was preceded by her custom-made white trunk packed with purses, necklaces, earrings, dresses and more purple-inked pages that stress "the spiritual above the material."

She was small—at 5 feet 1 inch not much taller than I was—thin and straight, with a pug nose, one brown eye (the good eye) and one blue eye (the bad eye, frosted by cataracts). Her name was "Esther in Hebrew, Edna in English, and Etka in Russian." She preferred the Russian, referring to herself as "Etka from Minsk." It was not at once apparent that she was deaf in her left ear (the bad ear) but could hear with the right (the good ear). Because her good ear happened to be on the opposite side from the good eye, anyone who spoke to her had to run around her in circles, or sway to and fro, if eye contact and audibility were to be achieved simultaneously.

Etka from Minsk had arrived not directly from Minsk, as the black-eyed ermine stole seemed to suggest, but after many moves. She entered with the draft of family scandal at her back, blown out of her daughter's home after assaults upon her dignity. She held the evidence: an empty-socketed peacock pin. My cousin, an eleven-year-old boy, had surgically plucked out the rhinestone eyes. She could not be expected to stay where such acts occurred. She had to be among "human beings," among "real people" who could understand. We seemed to

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understand. We—my two uncles and I—encircled her, studied her vandalized peacock pin and vowed that such things would never happen with "us."

She patted my head—a good sign—and asked me to sing the Israeli national anthem. I did, and she handed me a dollar. My uncles went off to their jobs, leaving me alone with my grandmother for the first time. I looked at her, expecting her to start rolling out the cookie dough. Instead she suggested: "Now maybe you could fix me some lunch?"

It wasn't supposed to be this way, I thought, as I took her order: "toasted cheese and a sliced orange." Neither was she supposed to share my pink and orange bedroom, but she did. The bedroom soon exhibited a dual character—stuffed animals on one side, a hospital bed on the other. Within the household this chamber was soon referred to as "the girls' room." The name, given by Uncle Abe, who saw no incongruity, only the affinity of sex, turned out to be apt, for what went on in the girls' room could easily have been labeled sibling rivalry if she had not been eighty and I eight. I soon found that I had acquired not a traditional grandmother but an aged kid sister.

The theft and rivalry began within days. My grandmother had given me her most cherished possession, a violet beaded bag. In return I gave her my heart-shaped "ivory" pin and matching earrings. That night she stole back the purse but insisted on keeping the pin and earrings. I turned to my uncles for mediation and ran up against unforeseen resistance. They thought my grandmother should keep the beaded bag; they didn't want to upset her.

I burned at the injustice of it and felt the heat of an uncomfortable truth: where I had once had my uncles' undivided indulgence, they were now split as my grandmother and I vied for their attention. The household, formerly geared to my little-girl needs, was rearranged to accommodate hers. I suffered serious affronts—my grandmother, in a fit of frugality, scissored all the household blankets, including what a psychiatrist would have dubbed my "security" blanket, in half. "Now," she said, her good eye gleaming, "we have twice as many." I lay under my narrow slice of blanket and stared hopelessly up at the ceiling. I thought evilly of ways of getting my grandmother out of the apartment.

Matters worsened, as more and more of my trinkets disappeared. One afternoon I came home from school to find her squeezed into my unbuttoned favorite blouse. Rouged and beribboned, she insisted that the size 3 blouse was hers. Meanwhile, I was forced to adapt to her idiosyncrasies: she covered everything black—from the dog to the telephone—with white doilies. She left saucers balanced on top of glasses. She sang nonstop. She tried to lock my dog out of the apartment.

The word that explained her behavior was "arteriosclerosis." She had

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forgotten so much that sometimes she would greet me with "You look familiar." At other times she'd ask, "What hotel is this?" My answer, shouted in her good ear, was: "We're not in a hotel! This is our apartment!" The response would be a hoot of laughter: "Then why are we in the ballroom?"

Finally we fought: arm-to-arm combat. I was shocked at her grip, steely as the bars that locked her into bed at night. Her good eye burned into mine and she said, "I'll tell." And she did. For the first time I was scolded. She had turned their love to disapproval, I thought, and how it chafed.

Eventually our rivalry mellowed into conspiracy. Within months we found we had uses for each other. I provided the lunches and secret, forbidden ice cream sundaes. She rewarded me with cold cash. She continued to take my clothes; I charged her competitive prices. I hated school; she paid me not to go. When I came home for lunch I usually stayed.

Our household endured the status quo for eight years: my uncles, my grandmother and I. Within the foursome rivalries and alliances shifted. I became my grandmother's friend and she became mine. We were the source of all the family comedy. When she said she wanted a college diploma we gave her one—with tinfoil stars and a "magna magna summa summa cum laude" inscription. We sang and performed skits. We talcum-powdered hair and wearing one of her old dresses, I would appear as her "long-lost friend." We had other themes, including a pen pal, "The Professor."

Of course, living with an elderly person had its raw aspects. When she was ill our girls' room took on the stark aura of a geriatrics ward. I imagined, to my shame, that neighbors could stare in through curtainless windows as I tended to my grandmother's most personal needs.

Yes, in these times of age segregation, with grandmothers sent off to impersonal places, I wonder if the love and the comedy weren't worth the intermittent difficulties? Certainly I learned what it might be to become old. And I took as much comfort as my grandmother did in a nightly exchange of Russian endearments—"Ya tebya lyublyu," "Ya tebya tozhe lyublyu"—"I love you," "I love you, too."

If I sold my grandmother blouses and baubles, maybe she gave me the truth in exchange. Once, when we were alone in the girls' room, she turned to me, suddenly lucid, her good eye as bright as it would ever be—a look I somehow recognized as her "real" gaze—and said, "My life passes like a dream."

Laura Cunningham
Contemporary British writer

II. Questions 8 to 17 in your Questions Booklet are based on this poem.

ACCIDENTS OF BIRTH

I see the terrifying spaces of the universe that enclose me, and I find myself attached to a corner of this vast expanse, without knowing why I am more in this place than in another, nor why this little time that is given me to live is assigned me at this point more than another out of all the eternity that has preceded me and out of all that will follow me. (THOUGHTS ON RELIGION, *Pascal, translated from French)*

The approach of man's life out of the past is history, and the approach of time out of the future is mystery. Their meeting is the present, and it is consciousness, the only time life is alive. The endless wonder of this meeting is what causes the mind, in its inward liberty of a frozen morning, to turn back and question and remember. The world is full of places. Why is it that I am here?—THE LONG-LEGGED HOUSE, *Wendell Berry.*

Spared by a car- or airplane-crash or
cured of malignancy, people look
around with new eyes at a newly
praiseworthy world, blinking eyes like these.

For I've been brought back again from the
fine silt, the mud where our atoms lie
down for long naps. And I've also been
pardoned miraculously for years
by the lava of chance which runs down
the world's gullies, silting us back.
Here I am, brought back, set up, not yet
happened away.

But it's not this random
life only, throwing its sensual
astonishments upside down on
the bloody membranes behind my eyeballs,
not just me being here again, old
needer, looking for someone to need,
but you, up from the clay yourself,
as luck would have it, and inching

Continued

over the same little segment of earth-
ball, in the same little eon, to
meet in a room, alive in our skins,
and the whole galaxy gaping there
and the centuries whining like gnats[1]—
you, to teach me to see it, to see
it with you, and to offer somebody
uncomprehending, impudent thanks.

William Meredith
Contemporary American poet

[1]gnats—tiny winged insects.

III. Questions 18 to 24 in your Questions Booklet are based on this essay.

DEATH OF A PINE

This essay was written by a 19th century American essayist and naturalist who lived in the New England countryside.

This afternoon, being on Fair Haven Hill, I heard the sound of a saw, and soon after from the Cliff saw two men sawing down a noble pine beneath, about forty rods[1] off. I resolved to watch it till it fell, the last of a dozen or more which were left when the forest was cut and for fifteen years have waved in solitary majesty over the sprout-land. I saw them like beavers or insects gnawing at the trunk of this noble tree, the diminutive manikins with their cross-cut saw which could scarcely span it. It towered up a hundred feet as I afterward found by measurement, one of the tallest probably in the township and straight as an arrow, but slanting a little toward the hillside, its top seen against the frozen river and the hills of Conantum. I watch closely to see when it begins to move. Now the sawers stop, and with an axe open it a little on the side toward which it leans, that it may break the faster. And now their saw goes again. Now surely it is going; it is inclined one quarter of the quadrant, and, breathless, I expect its crashing fall. But no, I was mistaken; it has not moved an inch; it stands at the same angle as at first. It is fifteen minutes yet to its fall. Still its branches wave in the wind, as if it were destined to stand for a century and the wind soughs[2] through its needles as of yore: it is still a forest tree, the most majestic tree that waves over Musketaquid. The silvery sheen of the sunlight is reflected from its needles; it still affords an inaccessible crotch for the squirrel's nest; not a lichen has forsaken its mast-like stem, its raking mast—the hill is the hulk.[3] Now, now's the moment! The manikins at its base are fleeing from their crime. They have dropped the guilty saw and axe. How slowly and majestically it starts! as if it were only swayed by a summer breeze, and would return without a sigh to its location in the air. And now it fans the hillside with its fall, and it lies down to its bed in the valley, from which it is never to rise, as softly as a feather, folding its green mantle about it like a warrior, as if, tired of standing, it embraced the earth with silent joy, returning its elements to the dust again. But hark! there you only saw, but did not hear. There now comes up a deafening crash to these rocks, advertising[4] you that even trees do not die without a groan. It rushes to embrace the earth, and mingle its

Continued

[1]forty rods—about 150 metres
[2]soughs—makes a murmuring or sighing sound
[3]hulk—the framework of a large, old ship
[4]advertising—informing, notifying

elements with dust. And now all is still once more and forever, both to eye and ear.

I went down and measured it. It was about four feet in diameter where it was sawed, about one hundred feet long. Before I had reached it the axemen had already half divested it of its branches. Its gracefully spreading top was a perfect wreck on the hillside as if it had been made of glass, and the tender cones of one year's growth upon its summit appealed in vain and too late to the mercy of the chopper. Already he has measured it with his axe, and marked off the mill-logs it will make. And the space it occupied in upper air is vacant for the next two centuries. It is lumber. He has laid waste the air. When the fish hawk in the spring revisits the banks of the Musketaquid, he will circle in vain to find his accustomed perch, and the hen-hawk will mourn for the pines lofty enough to protect her brood. A plant which it has taken two centuries to perfect, rising by slow stages into the heavens, has this afternoon ceased to exist. Its sapling top had expanded to this January thaw as the forerunner of summers to come. Why does not the village bell sound a knell? I hear no knell tolled. I see no procession of mourners in the streets, or the woodland aisles. The squirrel has leaped to another tree; the hawk has circled further off, and has now settled upon a new eyrie,[5] but the woodman is preparing to lay his axe at the root of that also.

H.D. Thoreau

[5]eyrie—nest or stronghold in a high place

IV. Questions 25 to 36 in your Questions Booklet are based on this excerpt from a play.

from HENRY IV, Part 2, Act IV, scenes i, ii

CHARACTERS:

LORD MOWBRAY—opposing KING HENRY
LORD HASTINGS —opposing KING HENRY
ARCHBISHOP OF YORK
EARL OF WESTMORELAND—advisor of KING HENRY
PRINCE JOHN OF LANCASTER—son of KING HENRY

The ARCHBISHOP OF YORK *is leading a rebellion against* KING HENRY IV, *first Lancastrian King of England (1399 to 1413). Just prior to this scene, during a period of truce,* WESTMORELAND *met with the rebels to demand an explanation for the rebellion and to offer to take their grievances to* LANCASTER, *who will hear them on behalf of the* KING. WESTMORELAND *has just left the stage as the scene begins.*

MOWBRAY: There is a thing within my bosom tells me
That no conditions of our peace can stand.
HASTINGS: Fear you not that. If we can make our peace
Upon such large terms and so absolute
As our conditions shall consist upon,
Our peace shall stand as firm as rocky mountains.
MOWBRAY: Yea, but our valuation shall be such
That every slight and false-derivèd cause,
Yea, every idle, nice, and wanton reason
Shall to the king taste of this action,
That, were our royal faiths martyrs in love,
We shall be winnowed[1] with so rough a wind
That even our corn shall seem as light as chaff
And good from bad find no partition.
ARCHBISHOP: No, no, my lord. Note this. The King is weary
Of dainty and such picking grievances.
For he hath found to end one doubt by death
Revives two greater in the heirs of life,
And therefore will he wipe his tables clean

Continued

[1]winnowed—the light chaff, or hull, of grain can be separated from the kernel when the grain is lifted into the air and the chaff blown away in the wind. This process is called winnowing.

And keep no tell-tale to his memory
That may repeat and history his loss
To new remembrance. For full well he knows
He cannot so precisely weed this land
As his misdoubts present occasion.
His foes are so enrooted with his friends
That, plucking to unfix an enemy,
He doth unfasten so and shake a friend.
So that this land, like an offensive wife
That hath enraged him on to offer strokes,
As he is striking, holds his infant up
And hangs resolved correction in the arm
That was upreared to execution.

HASTINGS: Besides, the king hath wasted all his rods
On late offenders, that he now doth lack
The very instruments of chastisement.
So that his power, like to a fangless lion,
May offer, but not hold.

ARCHBISHOP: Tis very true.
And therefore be assured, my good lord marshal,
If we do now make our atonement well,
Our peace will, like a broken limb united,
Grow stronger for the breaking.

MOWBRAY: Be it so.
Here is returned my Lord of Westmoreland.

(Enter WESTMORELAND.*)*

WESTMORELAND: The prince is here at hand. Pleaseth your lordship
To meet his grace just distance[2] 'tween our armies.

MOWBRAY: Your grace of York, in God's name then, set forward.

ARCHBISHOP: Before, and greet his grace, my lord; we come.

(*Enter* PRINCE JOHN OF LANCASTER *and his army.)*

LANCASTER: You are well encountered here, my cousin Mowbray.
Good day to you, gentle lord archbishop.
And so to you, Lord Hastings, and to all.
My Lord of York, it better showed with you
When that your flock, assembled by the bell,
Encircled you to hear with reverence
Your exposition on the holy text
Than now to see you here an iron man,

Continued

[2]just distance—half way

Cheering a rout of rebels with your drum,
Turning the word to sword and life to death.
That man that sits within a monarch's heart
And ripens in the sunshine of his favor,
Would he abuse the countenance of the king,
Alack, what mischiefs might he set abroach
In shadow of such greatness. With you, lord bishop,
It is even so. Who hath not heard it spoken
How deep you were within the books of God?
To us the speaker in His parliament,
To us the imagined voice of God himself,
The very opener and intelligencer
Between the grace, the sanctities of heaven
And our dull workings. O, who shall believe
But you misuse the reverence of your place,
Employ the countenance and grace of heaven,
As a false favorite doth his prince's name,
In deeds dishonorable? You have ta'en up,
Under the counterfeited zeal of God,
The subjects of His substitute, my father,
And both against the peace of heaven and him
Have here upswarmed them.

ARCHBISHOP: Good my Lord of Lancaster,
I am not here against your father's peace,
But, as I told my Lord of Westmoreland,
The time misordered doth, in common sense,
Crowd us and crush us to this monstrous form,
To hold our safety up. I sent your grace
The parcels and particulars of our grief,
The which hath been with scorn shoved from the court,
Whereon this Hydra[3] son of war is born,
Whose dangerous eyes may well be charmed asleep
With grant of our most just and right desires,
And true obedience, of this madness cured,
Stoop tamely to the foot of majesty.

MOWBRAY: If not, we ready are to try our fortunes
To the last man.

Continued

[3]Hydra—a nine-headed monster slain by Hercules, fulfilling one of his twelve labours. Since for each head that he cut off, two new heads sprang up, he finished the task with fire.

HASTINGS: And though we here fall down,
We have supplies to second our attempt.
If they miscarry, theirs shall second them,
And so success of mischief shall be born
And heir from heir shall hold this quarrel up
Whiles England shall have generation.
LANCASTER: You are too shallow, Hastings, much too shallow,
To sound the bottom of the after-times.
WESTMORELAND: Pleaseth your grace to answer them directly
How far forth you do like their articles.
LANCASTER: I like them all, and do allow them well,
And swear here, by the honor of my blood,
My father's purposes have been mistook,
And some about him have too lavishly
Wrested his meaning and authority.
My lord, these griefs shall be with speed redressed,
Upon my soul, they shall. If this may please you,
Discharge your powers unto their several counties,
As we will ours. And here between the armies
Let's drink together friendly and embrace,
That all their eyes may bear those tokens home
Of our restorèd love and amity.
ARCHBISHOP: I take your princely word for these redresses.
LANCASTER: I give it you, and will maintain my word.
And thereupon I drink unto your grace.
HASTINGS: Go, captain, and deliver to the army
This news of peace. Let them have pay, and part.
I know it will well please them. Hie thee, captain.
(Exit Officer.)
ARCHBISHOP: To you, my noble Lord of Westmoreland.
WESTMORELAND: I pledge your grace, and, if you knew what pains
I have bestowed to breed this present peace,
You would drink freely. But my love to ye
Shall show itself more openly hereafter.
ARCHBISHOP: I do not doubt you.
WESTMORELAND: I am glad of it.
Health to my lord and gentle cousin, Mowbray.

Continued

MOWBRAY: You wish me health in very happy season,
For I am, on the sudden, something ill.
ARCHBISHOP: Against ill chances men are ever merry,
But heaviness foreruns the good event.
WESTMORELAND: Therefore be merry, coz, since sudden sorrow
Serves to say thus, "Some good thing comes to-morrow."
ARCHBISHOP: Believe me, I am passing light in spirit.
MOWBRAY: So much the worse, if your own rule be true.
(Shouts within.)
LANCASTER: The word of peace is rendered. Hark, how they shout!
MOWBRAY: This had been cheerful after victory.
ARCHBISHOP: A peace is of the nature of a conquest,
For then both parties nobly are subdued,
And neither party loser.
LANCASTER: Go, my lord,
And let our army be dischargèd too.
(Exit WESTMORELAND.*)*
And, good my lord, so please you, let our trains
March by us, that we may peruse the men
We should have coped withal.
ARCHBISHOP: Go, good Lord Hastings,
And, ere they be dismissed, let them march by.
(Exit HASTINGS.*)*
LANCASTER: I trust, lords, we shall lie to-night together.
(Enter WESTMORELAND.*)*
Now cousin, wherefore stands our army still?
WESTMORELAND: The leaders, having charge from you to stand,
Will not go off until they hear you speak.
LANCASTER: They know their duties.
(Enter HASTINGS.*)*
HASTINGS: My lord, our army is dispersed already.
Like youthful steers unyoked,[4] they take their courses
East, west, north, south, or, like a school broke up,
Each hurries toward his home and sporting-place.
WESTMORELAND: Good tidings, my Lord Hastings, for the which
I do arrest thee, traitor, of high treason.
And you, lord archbishop, and you, Lord Mowbray,
Of capital treason I attach you both.

Continued

[4]steers unyoked—oxen unfastened from the crossbars that hold them together as a team when they are being used for work

MOWBRAY: Is this proceeding just and honorable?
WESTMORELAND: Is your assembly so?
ARCHBISHOP: Will you thus break your faith?
LANCASTER: I pawned thee none.
I promised you redress of these same grievances
Whereof you did complain, which, by mine honor,
I will perform with a most Christian care.
But for you, rebels, look to taste the due
Meet for rebellion and such acts as yours.
Most shallowly did you these arms commence,
Fondly[5] brought here and foolishly sent hence.
Strike up our drums, pursue the scattered stray.
God, and not we, hath safely fought to-day.
Some guard these traitors to the block of death,
Treason's true bed and yielder up of breath. *(Exeunt.)*

William Shakespeare

[5]Fondly—foolishly

V. Questions 37 to 42 in your Questions Booklet are based on this poem.

RAILROAD SWITCHING YARD [1]

These tracks cohabit
in prosperous darkness
like silver eels
over which the diesels
ease their one-eyed hulls and stunted thunders
till the cars jolt and lock
or shudder and scrape free
exchanging origins for destinations.

Shunted on sidings
hauled across town through stopped traffic
left in the rain for days
the boxcars, coalcars, gondolas, tankers
and sometimes a bright caboose
remind us that horizons are not fixed.

They wear insignia like veterans
of our ancient war with space
and bring to our windows and backyard gates
contagious distances
in the names of towns whose legendary ways
died into history
before the engineers
in their puffed hats and coveralls
had learned to roll their first Bull Durham.[2]

George Amabile
Contemporary Canadian poet

[1]Railroad Switching Yard—the system of railroad tracks in central stations where the rail cars are reassembled for loading, unloading, waiting, or proceeding
[2]Bull Durham—a brand of tobacco; therefore, cigarette

VI. Questions 43 to 53 in your Questions Booklet are based on this excerpt from a short story.

from WINTER WIND

The narrator, a school girl, has been staying in town with her Aunt Madge and her grandmother during a winter storm. Preceding this excerpt, the narrator contrasted the happy complacency of Aunt Madge's marriage with her grandmother's angry renunciation of happiness in marrying someone other than the man she loved.

This turned out to be a wild heavy storm, lasting a week. But on the third afternoon, sitting in school, I looked out and saw that the wind had apparently died, there was no snow blowing any more, there was even a break in the clouds. I thought at once, and with relief, that I would be able to go home that night. Home always looked a great deal better, after a couple of nights at my grandmother's. It was a place where I did not have to watch too closely what I said and did. My mother objected to things, but in a way I had the upper hand of her. After all, it was I who heated tubs of water on the stove and hauled the washing machine from the porch and did the washing, once a week; I who scrubbed the floor, and with an ill grace made her endless cups of tea. So I could [swear] when I emptied the dustpan into the stove and some dirt went on the lid; I could say that I meant to have lovers and use birth control and never have any children (actually I wanted to make an enviable marriage, both safe and passionate, and I had pictured the nightgown I would wear when my lover-husband came to visit me for the first time in the maternity ward); I could say that there was nothing wrong with writing about sex in books and also that there was no such thing as a dirty word. The loud argumentative scandalous person I was at home had not much more to do with my real self than the discreet unrevealing person I was in my grandmother's house, but judging both as roles it can be seen that the first had more scope. I did not get tired of it so easily, in fact I did not get tired of it at all.

And comfort palls. The ironed sheets, the lovely eiderdown, the jasmine soap. I would give it all up for the moment in order to be able to drop my coat where I chose, leave the room without having to say where I was going, read with my feet in the oven, if I liked.

After school I went around to my grandmother's house to tell them I was going home. By this time the wind had begun to blow again. I knew the roads would be drifted, the storm was not really over. But I wanted more than ever to go home. When I opened the door and smelled the pies baking—winter apples—and heard the two old voices greet me (Aunt Madge would always call out, "Now,

Continued

whoever can *this* be?" as she had done when I was a little girl), I thought that I could not bear any more of it—the tidiness, the courtesies, the waiting. All their time was waiting time. Wait for the mail, wait for supper, wait for bed. You might imagine that my mother's time was waiting time, but it was not. Lying on the couch, sick and crippled, she was still full of outrageous plans and fantasies, demands that could not be met, fights that could be picked; she kept herself going. At home there was always confusion and necessity. Eggs to be cleaned, wood to be brought in, the fire to be kept going, food to be prepared, mess to be cleaned away. I was always hurrying and remembering and forgetting, and then I would sit down after supper in the middle of everything, waiting for the dishwater to heat on the stove, and get lost in my library book.

There was a difference too in books read at home and at my grandmother's. At my grandmother's, books could not quite get out. Some atmosphere of the place pushed them back, contained them, dimmed them. There was not room. At home, in spite of all that was going on, there was room for everything.

"I won't be here for supper," I said. "I'm going home."

I had taken off my things and sat down to have tea. My grandmother was making it.

"You can't ever set out in this," she said confidently. "Are you worrying about the work? Are you afraid they can't get on without you?"

"No, but I better get home. It's not blowing hard. The plows have been out."

"On the highway, maybe. I never heard yet of a plow getting down your road."

The place where we lived, like so much else, was a mistake.

"She's afraid of my pie crust, that's what it is," cried Aunt Madge in mock distress. "She's just plain running away from my pie."

"That may be it," I said.

"You eat a piece before you go. It won't take long to cool."

"She isn't going," my grandmother said, still lightly. "She isn't walking out into that storm."

"It isn't a *storm*," I said, looking for help towards the window, which showed solid white.

My grandmother put her cup down, rattling it on the saucer. "All right. Go then. Just go. Go if you want to. Go and get frozen to death."

I had never heard my grandmother lose control before. I had never imagined that she could. It seems strange to me now, but the fact is that I had never heard anything like plain hurt or anger in her voice, or seen it on her face. Everything had been indirect, calmly expressed. Her judgments had seemed remote, full of traditional authority, not personal. The abdication here was what amazed me.

Continued

There were tears in her voice, and when I looked at her there were tears in her eyes and then pouring down her face. She was weeping, she was furious and weeping.

"Never mind then. You just go. Go and get yourself frozen to death like what happened to poor Susie Heferman."

"Oh, dear," said Aunt Madge. "That's true. That's true."

"Poor Susan living all alone," my grandmother said, addressing me as if that were my fault.

"It was out on our old line,[1] dear," said Aunt Madge comfortingly. "You wouldn't know who we mean. Susie Heferman that was married to Gershom Bell. Mrs. Gershom Bell. Susie Heferman to us. We went to school with her."

"And Gershom died last year and both her daughters are married and away," my grandmother said, wiping her eyes and her nose with a fresh handkerchief from her sleeve, composing herself somewhat, but not ceasing to look at me angrily. "Poor Susan had to go out by herself to milk the cows. She would keep on her cows and go on by herself. She went out last night and she should have tied the clothesline to the door but she didn't, and on the way back she lost her path, and they found her this noon."

"Alex Beattie phoned us," Aunt Madge said. "He was one of the ones found her. He was upset."

"Was she dead?" I said foolishly.

"They cannot thaw you back to life," my grandmother said, "after you have been lying in a snowbank overnight in this weather." She had stopped crying.

"And think of poor Susie there just trying to get from the stable to the house," Aunt Madge said. "She shouldn't have hung on to her cows. She thought she could manage. And she had the bad leg. I bet that give out on her."

"That's terrible," I said. "I won't go home."

"You go if you like," my grandmother said at once.

"No. I'll stay."

"You never know what can happen to a person," said Aunt Madge. She wept too, but more naturally than my grandmother. With her it was just a comfortable bit of leakage round the eyes, it seemed to do good. "Who would have thought that would be the end of Susie, she was more my age than your grandmother's and what a girl for dances, she used to say she'd ride twenty miles in an open cutter for a good dance. We traded dresses once, we did it for a joke. If we had ever known then what would happen now!"

"Nobody knows. What would be the use of it?" my grandmother said.

Continued

[1]out on our old line—along a stretch of countryside previously identified by surveyor's lines or roadways; where they used to live

I ate a large supper. No more mention was made of Susie Heferman.

I understand various things now, though my understanding them is not of much use to anybody. I understand that Aunt Madge could feel sympathy for my mother because Aunt Madge must have seen my mother, even before her illness, as an afflicted person. Anything that was exceptional she could see, simply, as affliction. But my grandmother would have to see an example. My grandmother had schooled herself, watched herself, learned what to do and say; she had understood the importance of acceptance, had yearned for it, had achieved it, had known there was a possibility of not achieving it. Aunt Madge had never known that. My grandmother could feel endangered by my mother, could perhaps even understand—at some level she would always have to deny—those efforts of my mother's that she so successfully, and never quite openly, ridiculed and blamed.

I understand that my grandmother wept angrily for Susie Heferman and also for herself, that she knew how I longed for home, and why. She knew and did not understand how this had happened or how it could have been different or how she herself, once so baffled and struggling, had become another old woman whom people deceived and placated and were anxious to get away from.

Alice Munro
Contemporary Canadian writer

VII. Questions 54 to 62 in your Questions Booklet are based on this excerpt from a play.

from CANDLE IN THE WIND

The time is unspecified. The play is set in an unspecified international setting.

CHARACTERS:

ALEX CORIEL—40, a mathematician who spent three years fighting in war, nine years in prison, and five years in exile

PHILIP RADAGISE—40, head of a university biocybernetics laboratory, dealing with control processes in biological systems (for example, inducing relaxation and feelings of euphoria to control stress in humans; the methods could be used to control human behaviour)

ALEX *returns to freedom, convinced that his suffering has taught him something valuable.*

ALEX: Phil! You remember the way I was before the war? A human bombshell!
PHILIP: Yes, Yes! That's why I have faith in you!
ALEX (*Sadly*): Now you are like that . . . How astonishing. We've completely switched characters. We've switched our views on life.
PHILIP: You're going to throw yourself into science like a lion, I have no doubt about it! You are going to work with me. You'll repeat my career, only even more rapidly. Only stop shoving your prison sentence into everyone's face. Even the university rector mentioned you recently. Everyone will be glad to see you back! As for those who're not glad—just keep out of their way!! You're a brilliant mathematician. The raging wind of cybernetics is filling our sails and driving us forward!! Our ship is moving full speed ahead! Before it's too late—grasp the rope and climb on board, old pal! (*Stretches out his hands to him.*) Life is a struggle!!
ALEX (*Does not take* PHILIP's *hands, but embraces him*): Wonderful, my old friend, wonderful. I am grateful to you. And I am so happy that you have come to be like this. And what you propose excites me, of course: our old university! The path of glory under the same roof that saw our youth . . . But if you could answer just one question for me . . . one question . . . *What for*?
PHILIP: You mean . . . how do you mean—what for? What is science for in general?
ALEX: Yes. *What* is science *for*?

Continued

PHILIP: You must be pulling my leg? Where is the problem? It's all so elementary! Well, first of all, it's devilishly interesting! It's supremely enjoyable, surely you . . .

ALEX: Well then? Is it just for yourself? Out of egotism?

PHILIP: But wasn't all the material wealth created by humanity created through science?

ALEX: But that's not an answer either. What do we want wealth for? Does wealth better a man? I haven't noticed it.

PHILIP: You've really seized on a word I used! Well, not wealth, but all the material goods we possess on our planet, our entire civilization, our entire culture—everything was created by science, everything!! What is there to argue about?

ALEX: We can argue about the fact that when we boast about the quantity of material goods we collectively produce, no one mentions what their production costs us. The answer is frightening: our entire human intellect down to the last fraction is devoted to the production of material goods! All our spiritual forces down to the last drop! No, I'm wrong, there is still something left to enable us to crush one another.

PHILIP: You've clamped onto me like a tick. After all, the twentieth century without science wouldn't be the twentieth century any more. Science is its soul!

ALEX: Or do you mean its soullessness?

PHILIP: You shouldn't have doubts about it, but instead go down on your knees before it! You should worship science!

ALEX: "Oh, great science!" That's the same as saying, "Oh, we great minds!" or even more precisely, "Oh, great me!" People have worshiped fire, the moon, and wooden idols—but I'm afraid that worshiping an idol is not so pitiful as worshiping oneself.

PHILIP: You developed into a real obscurantist during your time in the desert! You mean we should worship dear little God? What's the point of this stupid, purposeless argument about whether to develop science or not? As if that depended on us! That's the same as asking whether we should continue to revolve around the sun or stop for a rest. It's something that's above our heads. At a time when you have to decide about your own future—whether you're going to make yourself go on reciting Pythagoras's theorem to school kids or maybe work as a waiter in a restaurant? I like very much to go to restaurants, it's my favorite form of relaxation, but I prefer to sit at the table. Nobody will pay you a penny for your philosophy. You have to earn

Continued

something, don't you? This entire city spends its time making ducats![1] The entire country spends its time making ducats! There is nothing alive that can survive without ducats!

ALEX: Surely you don't mean . . . for the sake of ducats?

PHILIP: Nonsense! We live for science, we breathe science, but if in the process the money just gushes out, it's a pleasant sensation, believe me! But surely I don't have to try to prove to *you* that science is the light, the meaning, and the interest of life for people such as ourselves? To run through the second half of the twentieth century with the relay baton which Newton, Maxwell, and Einstein have held and then at the finish line to hand it on to the twenty-first century?

ALEX (*His head droops*): Philip! I have the feeling that we will not need to hand on the relay baton . . .

PHILIP: Nuclear war you mean? That's a phenomenon that unfortunately doesn't depend on scientists.

ALEX: It ought to depend on them more than on anyone else!

Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn
20th century Russian writer
Winner of the Nobel Prize for Literature

[1]ducats—coins formerly used in several European countries

VIII. Questions 63 to 70 in your Questions Booklet are based on this excerpt from an essay.

from THE LESSONS OF HISTORY

Democracy is the most difficult of all forms of government, since it requires the widest spread of intelligence, and we forgot to make ourselves intelligent when we made ourselves sovereign. Education has spread, but intelligence is perpetually retarded by the fertility of the simple. A cynic remarked that "you mustn't enthrone ignorance just because there is so much of it." However, ignorance is not long enthroned, for it lends itself to manipulation by the forces that mold public opinion. It may be true, as Lincoln supposed, that "you can't fool all the people all the time," but you can fool enough of them to rule a large country.

Is democracy responsible for the current debasement of art? The debasement, of course, is not unquestioned; it is a matter of subjective judgment; and those of us who shudder at its excesses—its meaningless blotches of color, its collages of debris, its Babels[1] of cacophony[2]—are doubtless imprisoned in our past and dull to the courage of experiment. The producers of such nonsense are appealing not to the general public—which scorns them as lunatics, degenerates, or charlatans—but to gullible middle-class purchasers who are hypnotized by auctioneers and are thrilled by the new, however deformed. Democracy is responsible for this collapse only in the sense that it has not been able to develop standards and tastes to replace those with which aristocracies once kept the imagination and individualism of artists within the bounds of intelligible communication, the illumination of life, and the harmony of parts in a logical sequence and a coherent whole. If art now seems to lose itself in *bizarreries*, this is not only because it is vulgarized by mass suggestion or domination, but also because it has exhausted the possibilities of old schools and forms, and flounders for a time in the search for new patterns and styles, new rules and disciplines.

All deductions having been made, democracy has done less harm, and more good, than any other form of government. It gave to human existence a zest and camaraderie that outweighed its pitfalls and defects. It gave to thought and science and enterprise the freedom essential to their operation and growth. It broke down the walls of privilege and class, and in each generation it raised up ability from every rank and place. Under its stimulus Athens and Rome became

Continued

[1]Babels—In the Bible, Babel is the city in which Noah's descendants attempted to build a tower to reach to heaven. They were punished by God and prevented from finishing the tower when all the builders were suddenly caused to speak in different languages, so that they could not understand one another. Therefore, any impossibly high tower or impracticable scheme.

[2]cacophony—harsh, jarring, discordant sounds

the most creative cities in history, and America in two centuries has provided abundance for an unprecedentedly large proportion of its population. Democracy has now dedicated itself resolutely to the spread and lengthening of education, and to the maintenance of public health. If equality of educational opportunity can be established, democracy will be real and justified. For this is the vital truth beneath its catchwords: that though men cannot be equal, their access to education and opportunity can be made more nearly equal. The rights of man are not rights to office and power, but the rights of entry into every avenue that may nourish and test a man's fitness for office and power. A right is not a gift of God or nature but a privilege which it is good for the group that the individual should have.

Will and *Ariel Durant*
20th century American historians

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English 30: Part B

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