

OLYMPIADS SCHOOL/ENGLISH IB/TOPS/MACS/HOMEWORK 17

NAME: _____ GRADE: ____ CLASS: _____

Read the following selections and answer the questions that follows.

SELECTION 1/4

SOON AFTER MY MOTHER and I came to Irvine, my father registered me for school. He had told me that Canada was a good country, that the government cared about the people, that school was free and children had to go until they were sixteen, unlike China when he was a boy where only the rich could afford to stay in school. Something else seemed to prey on his mind. "You need a new name for school, Su-Jen, a Canadian name," he finally said. When he saw that I didn't understand, he crouched down, putting his arm around my shoulders. "The principal of the school said so. We must listen to him. Don't worry, you will always be Su-Jen inside. Later we'll go and see Hardware Store Uncle. He will help us." My father was talking about the man with the apron who sipped coffee at our lunch counter late in the morning.

Mr. Swackhammer was the tallest man I'd ever seen, with wa-

1. Check all the points that are true based on the selection that you have just read.

The narrator, as a child, had not received formal education in Canada when she arrived in Irvine.	
The narrator, as a child, felt that the Canadian government was caring.	
The narrator's father felt that the Canadian government was caring.	
The narrator would soon have two names.	

2. Do you have two names? If so, try to find out the meaning of your two names. If not, write down the meaning of the one name that you have.

Name 1 and its meaning:

Name 2 and its meaning (if relevant):

SELECTION 2/4

tery blue eyes and a thick thatch of pale yellow hair, and hands so massive that when he picked up a cup and saucer, they looked like something from a child's toy china set. My father made a point of introducing my mother and me, later telling us what a nice man he was, always willing to help.

Swackhammers' was only next door, but my mother made me put on my coat against the cold. When my father and I entered the store, Mr. Swackhammer was at the back, unpacking a box. He looked up and started to walk toward us while we waited at the front between the cash counter and a shelf stacked with pots and pans. He grinned at me, reached into his pocket, and gave me a candy. My father hesitated before he spoke, struggling with the foreign sounds, trying to make Mr. Swackhammer understand that I needed a Canadian name for school.

Mr. Swackhammer nodded and listened with an expression of deep concentration. When my father finished, he said, "Call your daughter *An-nee*, Annie, after Annie Oakley." His voice boomed in the quiet shop.

"Annee Oaklee?" asked my father. "Who is she?" Mr. Swackhammer bent over slightly to catch his words.

"She was a very famous person," said Mr. Swackhammer. "In a Wild West show. Knew how to shoot a gun. Bang! Bang!"

"Oh?" said my father politely.

"There's a movie of her. *Annie Get Your Gun*. Best movie I ever saw, starring Betty Hutton. Here, I'll write the name on a piece of paper." He took a stub of pencil from behind his ear and searched the nearby counter for paper. "A good name," he said, handing the scrap to my father. "A good name for your daughter."

At the restaurant, my father explained to me and my mother what Mr. Swackhammer had said. He made me practise saying my new name. "An-nee, An-nee ...," I repeated.

"Sounds like a Chinese name," my mother said.

My father wrote my new name and my Chinese one in alphabet letters on a clean sheet of paper. "Remember, *lo fons* put their family name last," he said. "Not like us. For us, the family name is so important, we put it first." I printed *Su-Jen Annie Chou* over and over, saying the name of each letter out loud. When I looked

3. What clues in the text suggest that Mr. Swackhammer is approachable? Check the relevant points.

He kept a child's toy china set.	
He stopped unpacking a box and walked towards the narrator's family.	
He gave the narrator a candy.	
He seemed distracted when the narrator's father spoke to him.	
He seemed very interested and attentive when the narrator's father spoke to him.	
His voice boomed in the quiet shop.	

SELECTION 3/4

up and returned my mother's smile, she kissed the top of my head.

Several years later I saw a picture of Betty Hutton in her cow-girl regalia. It seemed strange, a small, dark Chinese girl named after someone so tall, so very blonde and blue-eyed like Mr. Swackhammer himself.

Alexander Chiddie Public School was the only elementary school in Irvine. It sat at the top of a hill like a hat perched on a head. Constructed only a few years before our arrival, it was a flat-roofed, red brick building with clear shiny windows, surrounded by parklike grounds. Flowing at the bottom of the hill was Willow Creek, a meandering stream with clumps of sumac growing up the bank and willow trees along the edge, their graceful branches bending over and grazing the water. Large elms, maples, and a few red pines dotted the hillside.

The school was named after Alexander Chiddie, the first principal in Irvine. Hanging in the foyer, under pictures of the Queen and Prince Philip, was his portrait, a dark oil painting with a heavy gilded frame. Although his lips pressed down and his head thrust out from a tight-fitting white collar, there was something unthreatening, almost welcoming about him. He seemed to offer everyone who entered his warning and blessing.

Both my parents walked me to school on my first day. My mother made me wear extra sweaters under my coat and put on the thick boots that my father had bought at Reids' Five and Dime, a pair of ugly, brown rubber overshoes that buckled up past the ankles. Unlike the wide streets of Chinatown where the sidewalks were cleared of snow, the sidewalks in Irvine had large drifts along the side spilling on to the road. I wanted to run up and down along the ridge of snow, but my father held my hand and I knew he would not let me play. We walked up Main Street and continued through town to the bridge that crossed Willow Creek below the school. My mother seemed to hesitate, and glanced nervously at me before stepping on the bridge. As we started on the asphalt path that wound up the hill on the other

4. For each of the words in the table, find a word/phrase in the box that has the same meaning that the word has in the passage.

Covered thinly with gold		Metallic	Dangerous	Brushing	Eating	
Entrance	Set	Winding	Office	Stuck	Shot	Floating

i. Perched	
ii. Meandering	
iii. Grazing	
iv. Foyer	
v. Gilded	
vi. Thrust	

5. What simile does the narrator use to describe her elementary school?
- It sat on the top of a hill like a hat perched on a head.
 - It was a flat-roofed, red brick building.
 - At the bottom of the hill was a meandering stream.
 - There were graceful branches bending over and grazing the water.
 - None of the above.
6. Circle the words/phrases (taken from the selection) that tell us that the portrait of Alexander Chiddie present him as an approachable person?

dark oil painting

heavy gilded frame

tight-fitting white collar

unthreatening

almost welcoming

blessing

SELECTION 4/4

side, she stopped again and turned around to stare at the icy creek with its cracks of melting water.

"You must be careful by the river, Su-Jen. Always hold the rail when you are on the bridge," she admonished, pointing to the iron railing, the muscles in her face tense. "And don't go near the water. Su-Jen, are you listening?" I nodded my head solemnly, and knew she was thinking about my water fate.

My father said nothing, but carefully led me around some patches of ice on the path while my mother followed close behind. The trees on the hillside were bare against the grey sky.

We entered the building and my father took us down an empty hall. It seemed endless, with ceilings high above us. In the school office a woman was sitting behind a large desk. She smiled at my father and spoke loudly to him. A man in a suit came out of a smaller office and shook my father's hand; he nodded at my mother. Both my parents seemed to shrink as they looked at this man who was so friendly. In appearance he wasn't unlike the other *lo fons* who came into the Dragon Café, the ones my father and Uncle Yat joked about, their large noses, pale complexions, and watery eyes. It was strange to see my father so meek, almost fearful.

I had never gone to school before and I was excited to learn how to read and write and to speak English. If we had stayed in Hong Kong I would have started school earlier, but my mother said there was no point in paying for just a few months. The man explained to my father that it was Friday and school was almost over for the week, that it would be better if I came back on Monday and he would take me to my Grade One class. All the way home, my mother told me how lucky I was. She said it was the most beautiful school she had ever seen. My father told me that I would have to study hard and to respect all my teachers and obey the man who was the principal of the school.

That evening Reverend MacDougall, who drank coffee every morning at the counter with Mr. Swackhammer, suggested that his daughter, Jean, walk me to school so that my mother would not have to take time away from the restaurant. According to my father, because Jean and her family believed in Jesus Christ, I

5. For each of the words in the table, find a word/phrase in the box that has the same meaning that the word has in the passage.

River	Deferential	Seriously	Obediently	Quiet
	Advised	Valley	Reprimanded	

i. Creek	
ii. Admonished	
iii. Solemnly	
iv. Meek	

7. Why does the narrator's father suddenly seem "so meek, almost fearful"?
- He is thinking about his daughter's water fate.
 - A woman sitting behind the front desk speaks loudly to him.
 - The man in the suit who shakes his hand does not look different from the other Caucasians who come to the Dragon Café.
 - He does not have a large nose, pale complexion, and watery eyes.
 - None of the above.

WRITING

Useful Phrases for Informal Letters

Phrases

The words and expressions below are often used when writing to friends and relatives. Using them will help you write in an informal style and will also help you organize your letter into clear paragraphs.

Starting your letter (Paragraph 1)

Thanks for your letter.

Lovely to hear from you.

How are you?

How are things?
Hope you're well.

Commenting on something (Paragraph 1)

I'm sorry to hear/learn ...
I'm so pleased to hear ...
It's great to hear ...
What wonderful news about ...

Moving the topic on (Paragraph 2)

Anyway, the reason I'm writing ...
I thought I'd write to tell/ask you
Anyway, I was wondering ...

Ending your letter (Paragraph 3)

Well, that's all for now
Write back soon
Looking forward to hearing from you again
All the best
Best wishes
See you soon
Take care
Yours
Love
Lots of love

INFORMAL LETTER-WRITING FORMAT

Your address

Write your address (but NOT your name) on separate lines in the top right-hand corner

The date

Write the date below your address

Dear _____,

The person you are writing to. Always begin 'Dear' and always use a name, NEVER begin 'Dear friend'.

- Introduction
- Main parts
- Main parts
- Concluding comment

Use separate paragraphs to begin your letter and for different ideas.

Best Wishes,

Alanna

End your letter with an informal sign off phrase; Yours, Best Wishes or Love (to family and close friends; usually the opposite sex if a friend).

PRACTICE

Write a letter to a friend or a relative with whom you have not met for a very long time.

Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4
There are more than three formatting errors.	There are two formatting errors.	There is one formatting error.	Follows the format precisely.
There is only one paragraph. The letter is too short.	There are only two paragraphs.	There are three paragraphs.	There are at least four paragraphs.
The tone and content may be inappropriate.	There may be errors in usage. There may be slippages in tone.	Word choice expresses affection and sincerity.	Word choice expresses affection and sincerity. The letter feels authentic.

THE END