



# **Cambridge International AS & A Level**

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**LITERATURE IN ENGLISH**

**9695/21**

Paper 2 Prose and Unseen

**May/June 2025**

**2 hours**



You must answer on the enclosed answer booklet.

You will need: Answer booklet (enclosed)

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## **INSTRUCTIONS**

- Answer **two** questions in total:  
Section A: answer **one** question.  
Section B: answer **one** question.
- Follow the instructions on the front cover of the answer booklet. If you need additional answer paper, ask the invigilator for a continuation booklet.
- Dictionaries are **not** allowed.

## **INFORMATION**

- The total mark for this paper is 50.
- All questions are worth equal marks.

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This document has **12** pages. Any blank pages are indicated.

**Section A: Prose**

Answer **one** question from this section.

**KIRAN DESAI: *The Inheritance of Loss***

**1 Either** (a) Discuss Desai's presentation of the relationship between the Cook and Biju.  
**Or** (b) Comment closely on the following passage, considering Desai's presentation of Gyan's home and Sai's response.

Crows' nests of electrical wiring hung from the corners of the structure, split into sections that disappeared into windows barred with thin jail grill.

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She stood staring at the chickens, unsure of what to do.

(from Chapter 40)

**TURN OVER FOR QUESTION 2.**

**Stories of Ourselves, Volume 1**

**2 Either** (a) Discuss ways in which the writers of **two** stories present characters' responses to threat or danger.

**Or** (b) Comment closely on the following passage from *The Son's Veto*, considering ways in which Thomas Hardy presents the developing relationship between Mr Twycott and Sophy.

He looked up at her. He had hardly ever observed her before, though he had been frequently conscious of her soft presence in the room. What a kitten-like, flexuous, tender creature she was! She was the only one of the servants with whom he came into immediate and continuous relation. What should he do if Sophy were gone? 5

Sophy did not go, but one of the others did, and things went on quietly again.

When Mr Twycott, the vicar, was ill, Sophy brought up his meals to him, and she had no sooner left the room one day than he heard a noise on the stairs. She had slipped down with the tray, and so twisted her foot that she could not stand. The village surgeon was called in; the vicar got better, but Sophy was incapacitated for a long time; and she was informed that she must never again walk much or engage in any occupation which required her to stand long on her feet. As soon as she was comparatively well she spoke to him alone. Since she was forbidden to walk and bustle about, and, indeed, could not do so, it became her duty to leave. She could very well work at something sitting down, and she had an aunt a seamstress. 10

The parson had been very greatly moved by what she had suffered on his account, and he exclaimed, 'No Sophy; lame or not lame, I cannot let you go. You must never leave me again!' 15

He came close to her, and, though she could never exactly tell how it happened, she became conscious of his lips upon her cheek. He then asked her to marry him. Sophy did not exactly love him, but she had a respect for him which almost amounted to veneration. Even if she had wished to get away from him she hardly dared refuse a personage so reverend and august in her eyes, and she assented forthwith to be his wife. 20

Thus it happened that one fine morning, when the doors of the church were naturally open for ventilation, and the singing birds fluttered in and alighted on the tie-beams of the roof, there was a marriage-service at the communion-rails, which hardly a soul knew of. The parson and a neighbouring curate had entered at one door, and Sophy at another, followed by two necessary persons, whereupon in a short time there emerged a newly-made husband and wife. 25

Mr Twycott knew perfectly well that he had committed social suicide by this step, despite Sophy's spotless character, and he had taken his measures accordingly. An exchange of livings had been arranged with an acquaintance who was incumbent of a church in the south of London, and as soon as possible the couple removed thither, abandoning their pretty country home, with trees and shrubs and glebe, for a narrow, dusty house in a long, straight street, and their fine peal of bells for the wretchedest one-tongued clangour that ever tortured mortal ears. It was all on her account. They were, however, away from every one who had known her former position; and also under less observation from without than they would have had to put up with in any country parish. 30

Sophy the woman was as charming a partner as a man could possess, though Sophy the lady had her deficiencies. She showed a natural aptitude for little domestic refinements, so far as related to things and manners; but in what is called culture she was less intuitive. She had now been married more than fourteen years, and her husband had taken much trouble with her education; but she still held confused ideas on the use of 'was' and 'were', which did not beget a respect for her among 35

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the few acquaintances she made. Her great grief in this relation was that her only child, on whose education no expense had been and would be spared, was now old enough to perceive the deficiencies in his mother, and not only to see them but to feel irritated at their existence.

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(*from The Son's Veto*)

**EVELYN WAUGH: *A Handful of Dust***

**3 Either** (a) Discuss some of the ways in which Waugh presents London and London life in the novel.

**Or** (b) Comment closely on Waugh's presentation of Tony and Brenda in the following passage.

All over England people were waking up, queasy and despondent.

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Why doesn't Sylvia want Rupert to get the letter?'

(from English Gothic – 1, Part 1)

**COLSON WHITEHEAD: *The Underground Railroad***

4 Either (a) Discuss ways in which Whitehead presents abolitionists in the novel.  
Or (b) Comment closely on the following passage, considering ways in which Whitehead presents Cora's visit to the doctor.

The doctor's offices were on the tenth floor of the Griffin.

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chairs were full.

The

(from South Carolina)

**Section B: Unseen**

Answer **one** question from this section.

**Either**

**5** Comment closely on the presentation of Mattie in the following extract.

In your answer, consider the writer's choice of language, dialogue and dramatic methods.

*[The boys have taken luggage upstairs, leaving the radio below.]*

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E J: [Firmly] Not now, Toussant.

Or

6 Comment closely on the presentation of the sight-seeing tour in the following passage.

In your answer, consider the writer's choice of language, dialogue and narrative methods.

They drove through blue Isfahan, past domes and minarets, and tourist shops in the Avenue Chaharbagh, and blue mosaic on surfaces everywhere, and blue taxi-cabs.

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three hundred and seventy-five rials.

The tour was costing

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