



9695/23

May/June 2025

2 hours



You will need: Answer booklet (enclosed)

- 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.

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

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

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Section A: Prose

Answer **one** question from this section.

KIRAN DESAI: *The Inheritance of Loss*

- 1** **Either** **(a)** ‘There is a great deal of comedy, but at heart it is a tragic novel.’
- How far and in what ways do you agree with this view of *The Inheritance of Loss*?
- Or** **(b)** Comment closely on the following passage, considering Desai’s presentation of Sai’s first experiences of Cho Oyu.

Finally, he looked up and fixed his gaze on Sai.

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She
had a fearful feeling of having entered a space so big it reached both backward and
forward.

(from Chapter 7)

Stories of Ourselves, Volume 1

- 2** **Either** (a) Discuss ways in which the writers of **two** stories explore the significance of mothers.
- Or** (b) Comment closely on the following passage from *Games at Twilight*, considering Anita Desai's presentation of Ravi leaving his hiding place.

There he sat smiling, knocking his heels against the bathtub, now and then getting up and going to the door to put his ear to the broad crack and listening for sounds of the game, the pursuer and the pursued, and then returning to his seat with the dogged determination of the true winner, a breaker of records, a champion.

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5

If you want to play, you can stand at the end of the line,' and
she put him there very firmly.

(*from* Games at Twilight)

EVELYN WAUGH: *A Handful of Dust*

- 3** **Either** **(a)** Discuss Waugh's presentation of London society in the novel.
- Or** **(b)** Comment closely on ways in which Waugh presents Tony's situation in the following passage.

Then a stranger arrived in the savannah, a half-caste prospector, one of that lonely order of men who wander for a lifetime through the forests, tracing the little streams, sifting the gravel and, ounce by ounce, filling the little leather sack of gold dust, more often than not dying of exposure and starvation with five hundred dollars' worth of gold hung round their necks.

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That is the etiquette.'

(*from Du Côté de Chez Todd*)

COLSON WHITEHEAD: *The Underground Railroad*

- 4** **Either** **(a)** Discuss ways in which Whitehead presents relationships between women in the novel.
- Or** **(b)** Comment closely on ways in which Whitehead presents Mingo in the following passage.

She apologized for her husband's absence.

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Mingo didn't need a place to put his doghouse, but surely he was on the lookout to expand his domain.

(from Indiana)

Section B: Unseen

Answer **one** question from this section.

Either

- 5 Comment closely on the following poem, considering ways in which it presents the speaker's response to the natural world.

In your answer, consider the writer's choice of language, structure and poetic methods.

The Arbour

I'll rest me in this sheltered bower¹,
And look upon the clear blue sky
That smiles upon me through the trees,
Which stand so thickly clustering by;

And view their green and glossy leaves,
All glistening in the sunshine fair;
And list² the rustling of their boughs,
So softly whispering through the air.

5

And while my ear drinks in the sound,
My winged soul shall fly away;
Reviewing long departed years
As one mild, beaming, autumn day;

10

And soaring on to future scenes,
Like hills and woods, and valleys green,
All basking in the summer's sun,
But distant still, and dimly seen.

15

Oh, list²! 'tis summer's very breath
That gently shakes the rustling trees –
But look! the snow is on the ground –
How can I think of scenes like these?

20

'Tis but the *frost* that clears the air,
And gives the sky that lovely blue;
They're smiling in a *winter's* sun,
Those evergreens of sombre hue.

And winter's chill is on my heart –
How can I dream of future bliss?
How can my spirit soar away,
Confined by such a chain as this?

25

¹*bower*: a seating area in a garden

²*list*: listen

9

Or

6 Comment closely on the presentation of More and Rich in the following passage.

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

MORE: The Dean of St Paul's offers you a post; with a house, a servant
and fifty pounds a year.

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MORE: *[Grimly]* Be a teacher.

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