

ENGLISH A1 – HIGHER LEVEL – PAPER 1
ANGLAIS A1 – NIVEAU SUPÉRIEUR – ÉPREUVE 1
INGLÉS A1 – NIVEL SUPERIOR – PRUEBA 1

Thursday 14 November 2002 (afternoon)
Jeudi 14 novembre 2002 (après-midi)
Jueves 14 de noviembre de 2002 (tarde)

2 hours / 2 heures / 2 horas

INSTRUCTIONS TO CANDIDATES

- Do not open this examination paper until instructed to do so.
- Write a commentary on one passage only.

INSTRUCTIONS DESTINÉES AUX CANDIDATS

- Ne pas ouvrir cette épreuve avant d'y être autorisé.
- Rédiger un commentaire sur un seul des passages.

INSTRUCCIONES PARA LOS ALUMNOS

- No abra esta prueba hasta que se lo autoricen.
- Escriba un comentario sobre un solo fragmento.

Write a commentary on one of the following:

1. (a)

There were splashing noises, then he came down again. The bandage was off; with surprise I noticed that the stitches were still in.

“Didn’t they take out the stitches?”

He shook his head.

5 “But when did you leave the hospital?”

“Yesterday. The day before yesterday.”

Why the need to lie?

“Why didn’t you stay and let them take care of you?”

No response.

10 “You must keep that cut covered, otherwise it will get infected and leave you with a scar.” With a mark like a whiplash across his forehead for the rest of his life. A memento.

Who is he to me that I should nag him? Yet I held closed his open flesh, staunched the flow of his blood. How persistent the impulse to mother! As a hen that loses its chicks will take in a duckling, oblivious of the yellow fur, the flat beak, and teach it to take sand
15 baths, peck at worms.

I shook out the red tablecloth and began to cut it. “I don’t have any bandages in the house,” I said, “but this is quite clean, if you don’t mind red.” Around his head I wound a strip twice and knotted it behind. “You must go to a doctor soon, or a clinic, to have the stitches taken out. You can’t leave them in.”

20 His neck stiff as a poker. A smell coming from him, the smell that must have set the dog off: nervousness, fear.

“My head is not sore,” he said, clearing his throat, “but my arm”—he moved his shoulder gingerly—“I must rest my arm.”

“Tell me, are you running away from someone?”

25 He was silent.

“I want to speak to you seriously,” I said. “You are too young for this kind of thing. I told Bheki so and I tell you again. You must listen to me. I am an old person, I know what I am talking about. You are still children. You are throwing away your lives before you know what life can be. What are you—fifteen years old? Fifteen is too young to die.
30 Eighteen is too young. Twenty-one is too young.”

He got up, brushing the red band with his fingertips. A favor. In the age of chivalry men hacked other men to death with women’s favors fluttering on their helmets. A waste of breath to preach prudence to this boy. The instinct for battle too strong in him, driving him on. Battle: nature’s way of liquidating the weak and providing mates for the strong.
35 Return covered in glory, and you shall have your desire. Gore and glory, death and sex. And I, an old woman, crone of death, tying a favor around his head!

“Where is Bheki?” he said.

I searched his face. Had he not understood what I told him? Had he forgotten? “Sit down,” I said.

40 He sat.

I leaned across the table. “Bheki is in the ground,” I said. “He is in a box in a hole with earth heaped on top of him. He is never going to leave that hole. Never, never, never. Understand: this is not a game like football, where after you fall down you get up and go

45 on playing. The men you are playing against don't say to each other, "That one is just a child, let us shoot a child's bullet at him, a play bullet." They don't think of you as a child at all. They think of you as the enemy and they hate you quite as much as you hate them. They will have no qualms about shooting you; on the contrary, they will smile with pleasure when you fall and make another notch on their gunstocks."

50 He stared back at me as if I were striking him in the face, blow after blow. But, jaw set, lips clenched, he refused to wince. Over his eyes that smoky film.

55 "You think their discipline is poor," I said. "You are wrong. Their discipline is very good. What holds them back from exterminating every male child, every last one of you, is not compassion or fellow feeling. It is discipline, nothing else: orders from above, that can change any day. Compassion is flown out of the window. This is war. Listen to what I am saying! I know what I am talking about. You think I am trying to lure you out of the struggle. Well, that is true. That is what I am doing. I say: Wait, you are too young."

60 He shifted restlessly. Talk, talk! Talk had weighed down the generation of his grandparents and the generation of his parents. Lies, promises, blandishments, threats: they had walked stooped under the weight of all the talk. Not he. He threw off talk. Death to talk!

J. M. Coetzee, *Age of Iron* (1990)

1. (b)

The Fish in the Stone

The fish in the stone
would like to fall
back into the sea.

He is weary
5 of analysis, the small
predictable truths.
He is weary of waiting
in the open,
10 his profile stamped
by a white light.

In the ocean the silence
moves and moves

and so much is unnecessary!
Patient, he drifts
15 until the moment comes
to cast his
skeletal blossom.

The fish in the stone
knows to fail is
20 to do the living
a favor.

He knows why the ant
engineers a gangster's
funeral, garish
25 and perfectly amber.
He knows why the scientist
in secret delight
strokes the fern's
voluptuous braille.

Rita Dove, *The Yellow House on the Corner* (1989)