



ENGLISH A1 – STANDARD LEVEL – PAPER 1
ANGLAIS A1 – NIVEAU MOYEN – ÉPREUVE 1
INGLÉS A1 – NIVEL MEDIO – PRUEBA 1

Tuesday 2 May 2006 (morning)

Mardi 2 mai 2006 (matin)

Martes 2 de mayo de 2006 (mañana)

1 hour 30 minutes / 1 heure 30 minutes / 1 hora 30 minutos

INSTRUCTIONS TO CANDIDATES

- Do not open this examination paper until instructed to do so.
- Write a commentary on one passage only. It is not compulsory for you to respond directly to the guiding questions provided. However, you may use them if you wish.

INSTRUCTIONS DESTINÉES AUX CANDIDATS

- N'ouvrez pas cette épreuve avant d'y être autorisé(e).
- Rédigez un commentaire sur un seul des passages. Le commentaire ne doit pas nécessairement répondre aux questions d'orientation fournies. Vous pouvez toutefois les utiliser si vous le désirez.

INSTRUCCIONES PARA LOS ALUMNOS

- No abra esta prueba hasta que se lo autoricen.
- Escriba un comentario sobre un solo fragmento. No es obligatorio responder directamente a las preguntas que se ofrecen a modo de guía. Sin embargo, puede usarlas si lo desea.

Write a commentary on **one** passage only. It is not compulsory for you to respond directly to the guiding questions provided. However, you are encouraged to use them as starting points for your commentary

1. (a)

So! Did my sisters hate me? This time I know happened only once. It was the weekend and the house was empty for the whole afternoon. I went into our parents' bedroom with the same two sisters, Eva and Maria. I sat on the bed, and they went to my mother's dressing-table and took out all her things. First they painted their fingernails and waved them in the air to dry. They put
5 creams and powders on their faces, they used lipstick, they pulled hairs from their eyebrows and brushed mascara on their lashes. They told me to shut my eyes while they took off their white socks and put on stockings from my mother's drawer. Then they stood, two very beautiful women, and looked at each other. And for an hour they walked about the house, looking over their shoulders into mirrors or windowpanes, turning round and round in the centre of the drawing-room, or sitting
10 very carefully on the edge of the armchair arranging their hair. Everywhere they went I followed, looking at them all the time, just looking. "Are we not beautiful, Robert?" they would say. They knew I was shocked because these were not my sisters, these were American film stars. They were delighted with themselves. They laughed and kissed each other for now they were real women.

Later in the afternoon they went to the bathroom and washed everything off. In the bedroom
15 they put away all the pots and jars and opened the windows so Mama would not smell her own perfumes. They folded the silk stockings and suspender belts away, exactly the way they had seen her do it. They closed the windows and we went downstairs to wait for our mother to come home, and all the time I was very excited. Suddenly the beautiful women had become my sisters again, tall schoolgirls.

Then came dinner, and I was still excited. My sisters behaved as if nothing had happened. I was aware that my father was staring at me. I glanced up and he looked straight through my eyes, deep into my mind. Very slowly he put down his knife and fork, chewed and swallowed everything in his mouth and said, "Tell me, Robert, what have you been doing this afternoon?" I
20 believed he knew everything, like God. He was testing me to find out if I was worthy enough to tell the truth. So, there was no point in lying. I told him everything, the lipstick, the powders, the creams and the perfumes, the stockings from my mother's drawer, and I told him, as if this would excuse everything, how carefully these things had been put away. I even mentioned the window. At first my sisters laughed and denied what I was saying. But as I went on and on, they became silent. When I had finished my father simply said, "Thank you, Robert," and went on eating. No
30 one spoke for the rest of the meal. I dared not look in the direction of my sisters.

Ian McEwan, *The Comfort of Strangers*, Jonathan Cape, London 1981; Wolters-Noordhof, Groningen 2004, 28-9

- Comment on the speaker's relationship to his family.
- Consider how detail is used to establish the situation.
- How does the writer suggest the unreliability of appearances?
- Examine the structure of the passage.

1. (b)

Ispahan Carpet¹

Rough timber gallows on which the carpets are woven
By a silent, fallow, dark-eyed Persian family,
Fills the room, bare but for blackened pots and jars
In the cavernous hearth. A flickering fire
5 Lights on the sensuous jewelled arabesques²
Shadowing the makers of the webs.

Eight-year-old girls sit sparrows on a plank
Rope-rising with the pattern, their unsupported bird-bones
Bent like old women. Only such little fingers,
10 Following the guides of coloured wool upon the warp
Left by their aunts and sisters,
Can tie such exquisitely minute knots –
One hundred to the square centimetre, says the guide proudly –
For the most desired Tabriz or Karmenshah.

15 One hundred knots in the space of my thumb-nail,
One hundred heart-beats of a young child's growing,
One hundred hours for the space a foot will crush down.

O, eyes whose whole horizon is the carpet
And its traditional beauty! Who can unravel
20 The world's weaving?

My swollen hand is gentle on the greenstick³ shoulder
Her large eyes look back at me with a speaking darkness.

Elizabeth Burge

¹ Ispahan Carpet: type of Persian rug

² arabesques: flowing and interwoven patterns

³ greenstick: fragile and bent

- Discuss how the poet conveys the speaker's feelings about the child weavers.
- By what means does the poet evoke the atmosphere of the place?
- Examine the importance of lines 18-20.
- How does the poet's use of structure contribute to your understanding of the poem?