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General Certificate of Education  
Advanced Subsidiary Level and Advanced Level

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**ENGLISH LANGUAGE**

**8693/11**

Paper 1 Passages for Comment

**October/November 2010**

**2 hours**

Additional Materials: Answer Booklet/Paper

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**READ THESE INSTRUCTIONS FIRST**

If you have been given an Answer Booklet, follow the instructions on the front cover of the Booklet.

Write your Centre number, candidate number and name on all the work you hand in.

Write in dark blue or black pen.

Do not use staples, paper clips, highlighters, glue or correction fluid.

Answer **two** questions.

You are reminded of the need for good English and clear presentation in your answers.

At the end of the examination, fasten all your work securely together.

The number of marks is given in brackets [ ] at the end of each question or part question.



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This document consists of **7** printed pages and **1** blank page.



## Answer two questions.

1 In the following passage, the writer senses that her outlook on life may not always be right.

- (a) Comment on the style and language of the passage. [15]
- (b) After these events, Olivia writes a letter to another friend about the writer's visit. Basing your answer closely on the material of the original extract, write the opening (between 120–150 words) of the letter. [10]

What a huge palaver<sup>1</sup> it is, going on holiday. What a wrench, leaving one's dogs, home and daughter and plunging into God knows what. But how grim it was here: the work, the ghastly dog walkies, the daily chores, the dreary, sultry weather. So I went off on the train to France. I forced myself. It may sound like nothing to you more adventurous holidaymakers, but to me, a budding agoraphobic<sup>2</sup> who hyperventilates if she has to go further than the local park, it was a mammoth breakthrough. A triumph. Until the train stopped outside Paris for nearly two hours. Then it was a big mistake. I had a connection to catch. All my fears were justified. Why had I done this? What madness. Holidays are for people who work from 8am to 8pm daily for months on end. I just lie about scribbling and diddling with dogs. My whole life is a holiday. I need never have bothered. 5 10

However, I met old friends on the train, I caught my connection by a whisker and fell asleep, emotionally drained, in my couchette, until a voice woke me. "Carcassonne," it called out. My stop. Panic stations. I grabbed my baggage and fell onto the platform, shoeless, breathless, T-shirt awry, brassiere dangling, because I had loosened it for comfort. What comfort? Why expect any? There would be none on this holiday. I crawled to the cafe, the breakfast was heaven, Olivia arrived, we collected our hire car, we drove off along the sunny road, a few carefree moments passed, but then, suddenly, uproar. The junction was alive with shouting, cursing, pointing and beeping French motorists. What could be wrong now? Our front tyre was completely flat. 15 20

If anyone had asked me, I'd have said at that point that my cup was half empty, but then a handsome, cheery young man jumped out of his car and changed our tyre for us. "Cup half full," said Olivia strictly. And it was for a few moments, until we got lost in the one-way system. Then it emptied. Round and round we went, time passed, so did the same roundabouts, until a saintly young woman led us back to the hire place for a new car. We set off again. "Cup half full," said Olivia. She did this through our holidays – a sort of behavioural therapy for me, a training in positivity, because I like to expect the absolute worst. That way, one is never disappointed. But darling Olivia was always full of hope. We would get there, the sun would shine, we probably wouldn't crash and die, this or that road might be the right one. 25 30

Perhaps Olivia was right and my philosophy of life was wrong. The path ahead is not necessarily strewn with booby traps; buckets of ordure<sup>3</sup> were not guaranteed to empty over my head. The sky stayed blue, the air was fresh, the vineyards stretched for miles, we found golden beaches and azure pools, youths apologised for blocking the pavement with their bikes and smiled pleasantly, and did not brandish knives and pitbulls.<sup>4</sup> It was all worth it again. Olivia's house was heavenly, its terrace shaded by vines, the dinky, ancient village streets were cracked and cobbled, a luscious riot of wild flowers allowed to sprout from walls, with not the slightest whiff of health and safety. What heaven to get away from the fusspot English. 35 40

At least, it was for a bit, until we tried to visit a mountain lake up a narrow, winding road, which got higher and windier, with sheer, drillion-foot drops and blind hairpin bends, and the road too narrow to turn back. What peril. I longed for health and safety. The tourists returned. This holiday was ruined. What had I just done?

home on the lovely flat plains of Holloway? Why come here and terrify myself? We drive up a near perpendicular slope in a prickling sweat, with breathing difficulties, shaking, snivelling and calling out wearily for my dead mother to help me. This was it. Cup completely empty, but Olivia remained cheery. Miraculous. "Take your time," she said calmly. "Cup half full. Breathe deeply." And sure enough, we found a wide bit in which to turn round. And here I am, back home, alive. Olivia and I are still friends, the dogs and daughter survived, the house is still standing, there are no love letters on the mat, only bills. Outside, the rain continues. Why didn't I stay longer?

50

<sup>1</sup>*palaver*: fuss

<sup>2</sup>*agoraphobic*: someone with a fear of going out

<sup>3</sup>*ordure*: sewage

<sup>4</sup>*pitbulls*: fierce dogs

- 2 In this extract from a ghost story, the spirits of a deceased couple return to the house they once lived in, searching for the love they once had there. The current owners of the house are unaware of the couple's presence.
- (a) Basing your answer closely on the style and language of the original extract, write a beginning for the story (between 120–150 words). [10]
- (b) Compare the style and language of your piece with the style and language of the original extract. [15]

Whatever hour you woke there was a door shutting. From room to room they went, hand in hand, lifting here, opening there, making sure – a ghostly couple.

"Here we left it," she said. And he added, "Oh, but here too." "It's upstairs," she murmured. "And in the garden," he whispered. "Quietly," they said, "or we shall wake them."

But it wasn't that you woke us. Oh, no. "They're looking for it; they're drawing the curtain," one might say, and so read on a page or two. "Now they've found it," one would be certain, stopping the pencil on the margin. And then, tired of reading, one might rise and see for oneself, the house all empty, the doors standing open, only the wood pigeons bubbling with content and the hum of the threshing machine sounding from the farm. "What did I come in here for? What did I want to find?" My hands were empty. "Perhaps it's upstairs then?" The apples were in the loft. And so down again, the garden still as ever, only the book had slipped into the grass.

But they had found it in the drawing room. Not that one could ever see them. The windowpanes reflected apples, reflected roses; all the leaves were green in the glass. If they moved in the drawing room, the apple only turned its yellow side. Yet, the moment after, if the door was opened, spread about the floor, hung upon the walls, pendant from the ceiling – what? My hands were empty. The shadow of a thrush crossed the carpet; from the deepest wells of silence the wood pigeon drew its bubble of sound. "Safe, safe, safe," the pulse of the house beat softly. "The treasure buried; the room ...," the pulse stopped short. Oh, was that the buried treasure?

A moment later the light had faded. Out in the garden then? But the trees spun darkness for a wandering beam of sun. So fine, so rare, coolly sunk beneath the surface the beam I sought always burned behind the glass. Death was the glass; death was between us, coming to the woman first, hundreds of years ago, leaving the house, sealing all the windows; the rooms were darkened. He left it, left her, went North, went East, saw the stars turned in the Southern sky; sought the house, found it dropped beneath the Downs. "Safe, safe, safe," the pulse of the house beat gladly. "The Treasure yours."

The wind roars up the avenue. Trees stoop and bend this way and that. Moonbeams splash and spill wildly in the rain. But the beam of the lamp falls straight from the window. The candle burns stiff and still. Wandering through the house, opening the windows, whispering not to wake us, the ghostly couple seek their joy.

"Here we slept," she says. And he adds, "Kisses without number." "Waking in the morning —" "Silver between the trees —" "Upstairs —" "In the garden —" "When summer came —" "In winter snowtime —" The doors go shutting far in the distance, gently knocking like the pulse of a heart.

Nearer they come, cease at the doorway. The wind falls, the rain slides silver down the glass. Our eyes darken, we hear no steps beside us; we see no lady spread her ghostly cloak. His hands shield the lantern. "Look," he breathes. "Sound asleep. Love upon their lips."

Stooping, holding their silver lamp above us, long they look and deeply. Long they pause. The wind drives straightly; the flame stoops slightly. Wild beams of moonlight cross both floor and wall, and, meeting, stain the faces bent; the faces

“Safe, safe, safe,” the heart of the house beats proudly. “Long years —  
sighs. “Again you found me.” “Here,” she murmurs, “sleeping; in the garden reading,  
laughing, rolling apples in the loft. Here we left our treasure —” Stooping, their light  
lifts the lids upon my eyes. “Safe! safe! safe!” the pulse of the house beats wildly.  
Waking, I cry, “Oh, is this your buried treasure? The light in the heart.”

3 The speech below was delivered by George Bush, former president of the US, in the wake of the devastation caused to New Orleans by a hurricane in 2005.

- (a) Comment on the style and language of the passage.
- (b) Write the opening of a speech (between 120–150 words) in which the same leader addresses the nation about a real or imaginary disaster elsewhere in the world, basing it closely on the style and language of the original passage. [10]

Good evening. I am speaking to you from the city of New Orleans – nearly empty, still partly underwater and waiting for life and hope to return. Eastward from Lake Pontchartrain, across the Mississippi coast, to Alabama and into Florida, millions of lives were changed in a day by a cruel and wasteful storm.

In the aftermath, we have seen fellow citizens left stunned and uprooted, searching for loved ones, and grieving for the dead and looking for meaning in a tragedy that seems so blind and random. 5

We have also witnessed the kind of desperation no citizen of this great and generous nation should ever have to know – fellow Americans calling out for food and water, vulnerable people left at the mercy of criminals who had no mercy, and the bodies of the dead lying uncovered and untended in the street. 10

These days of sorrow and outrage have also been marked by acts of courage and kindness that make all Americans proud. Coast Guard and other personnel rescued tens of thousands of people from flooded neighborhoods.

Religious congregations and families have welcomed strangers as brothers and sisters and neighbors. In the community of Chalmette, when two men tried to break into a home, the owner invited them to stay and took in fifteen other people who had no place to go. 15

At Tulane Hospital for Children, doctors and nurses did not eat for days so patients could have food, and eventually carried the patients on their backs up eight flights of stairs to helicopters. Many first responders were victims themselves – wounded healers, with a sense of duty greater than their own suffering. 20

When I met Steve Scott of the Biloxi Fire Department, he and his colleagues were conducting a house-to-house search for survivors. Steve told me this: “I lost my house, and I lost my cars, but I still got my family, and I still got my spirit.” 25

Across the Gulf Coast, among people who have lost much and suffered much and given to the limit of their power, we are seeing that same spirit: a core of strength that survives all hurt, a faith in God no storm can take away and a powerful American determination to clear the ruins and build better than before.

Tonight so many victims of the hurricane and the flood are far from home and friends and familiar things. You need to know that our whole nation cares about you, and in the journey ahead you are not alone. To all who carry a burden of loss, I extend the deepest sympathy of our country. 30

To every person who has served and sacrificed in this emergency, I offer the gratitude of our country. And tonight I also offer this pledge of the American people: throughout the area hit by the hurricane, we will do what it takes. We will stay as long as it takes to help citizens rebuild their communities and their lives. And all who question the future of the Crescent City need to know: there is no way to imagine America without New Orleans, and this great city will rise again. 35

The work of rescue is largely finished. The work of recovery is moving forward. In nearly all of Mississippi, electric power has been restored. Trade is starting to return to the Port of New Orleans, and agricultural shipments are moving down the Mississippi River. 40

In the life of this nation, we have often been reminded that nature is an awesome force and that all life is fragile. We are the heirs of men and women who lived through those first terrible winters at Jamestown and Plymouth, who rebuilt Chicago after a great fire, and San Francisco after a great earthquake, who reclaimed the prairie from the dust bowl of the 1930s.

Every time, the people of this land have come back from fire, flood, and storm to build anew – and to build better than what we had before. Americans have never left our destiny to the whims of nature, and we will not start now. 50

These trials have also reminded us that we are often stronger than we know with the help of grace and one another. They remind us of a hope beyond all pain and death – a God who welcomes the lost to a house not made with hands.

And they remind us that we are tied together in this life, in this nation, and that the despair of any touches us all. 55

I know that when you sit on the steps of a porch where a home once stood or sleep on a cot in a crowded shelter, it is hard to imagine a bright future. But that future will come.

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