HKDSE Literature in English Sample Questions for Paper 1

Section A  Prose/Drama Analysis

Answer EITHER question 1 OR question 2.

1.  MACBETH  ACT V SCENE V. – [Dunsinane. Within the castle.]

Enter, with drum and colours, MACBETH, SEYTON, and Soldiers.

Macb. Hang out our banners on the outward walls;
The cry is still, ‘They come!’ Our castle’s strength
Will laugh a siege to scorn: here let them lie,
Till famine and the ague eat them up.

5 Were they not forc’d with those that should be ours,
We might have met them dauntful, beard to beard,
And beat them backward home. What is that noise?

Sey. It is the cry of women, my good Lord.

Macb. I have almost forgot the taste of fears.

10 The time has been by senses would have cool’d
To hear a night-shriek; and my fell of hair
Would at a dismal treatise rouse, and stir,
As life were in’t. I have supp’d full with horrors:
Direness, familiar to my slaughterous thoughts,

15 Cannot once start me. Wherefore was that cry?

Sey. The Queen, my Lord, is dead.

Macb. She should have died hereafter:
There would have been a time for such a word. –
To-morrow, and to-morrow, and to-morrow,
Creeps in this petty pace from day to day,
To the last syllable of recorded time;
And all our yesterdays have lighted fools
The way to dusty death. Out, out, brief candle!

25 Life’s but a walking shadow; a poor player,
That struts and frets his hour upon the stage,
And then is heard no more: it is a tale
Told by an idiot, full of sound and fury,
Signifying nothing.

Enter a Messenger.

Mess. Gracious my Lord,

I should report that which I say I saw,
But know not how to do’t.

Macb. Well, say, sir.

35 Mess. As I did stand my watch upon the hill,
I look’d toward Birnam, and anon, methought,
The wood began to move.

Macb. Liar, and slave!
Mess.  Let me endure your wrath, if’t be not so.
40 Within this three mile may you see it coming;
    I say, a moving grove.

Macb.  If thou speak’st false,
    Upon the next tree shalt thou hang alive,
    Till famine cling thee: if thy speech by sooth,
45 I care not if thou dost for me as much. –
    I pull in resolution; and begin
    To doubt th’equivocation of the fiend,
    That lies like truth: ‘Fear not, till Birnam wood
    Do come to Dunsinane’; – and now a wood
    Comes toward Dunsinane. – Arm, arm, and out! –
    If this which he avouches does appear,
    There is nor flying hence, nor tarrying here.
    I’gin to be aweary of the sun,
    And wish th’estate o’th’world were now undone. –
50 Ring the alarum bell! – Blow, wind! come, wrack!
    At least we’ll die with harness on our back.  [Exeunt.

(i)  With close reference to the passage, describe what Macbeth’s mental state is at this moment in the play.

(ii)  Comment on the imagery in Macbeth’s speech (lines 18 to 29).

(iii)  How does Shakespeare build up dramatic tension in this scene?

2.  Another prose extract with questions to be added.
Section B Set Poetry

Answer either question 3 or question 4. Both questions carry 22 marks.

3. With reference to The Tyger and The Windhover, answer the following questions.

(i) Compare and contrast the descriptions of the wild creatures in both poems.

(ii) Discuss similarities in style between the two poems.

(iii) What is the function of the questions in poem (A)?

(A) The Tyger

Tyger! Tyger! burning bright
In the forests of the night,
What immortal hand or eye
Could frame thy fearful symmetry?

In what distant deeps or skies
Burnt the fire of thine eyes?
On what wings dare he aspire?
What the hand dare seize the fire?

And what shoulder, & what art,
Could twist the sinews of thy heart?
And when thy heart began to beat,
What dread hand? & what dread feet?

What the hammer? what the chain?
In what furnace was thy brain?
What the anvil? what dread grasp
Dare its deadly terrors clasp?

When the stars threw down their spears,
And water’d heaven with their tears,
Did he smile his work to see?
Did he who made the Lamb make thee?

Tyger! Tyger! burning bright
In the forests of the night,
What immortal hand or eye
Dare frame thy fearful symmetry?

William Blake
(B)

**The Windhover**

To Christ our Lord

I caught this morning morning's minion, kingdom of daylight's dauphin, dapple-dawn-drawn Falcon, in his riding

Of the rolling level underneath him steady air, and striding High there, how he rung upon the rein of a wimpling wing

In his ecstasy! then off, off forth on swing,

As a skate's heel sweeps smooth on a bow-bend: the hurl and gliding

Rebuffed the big wind. My heart in hiding

Stirred for a bird,—the achieve of, the mastery of the thing!

Brute beauty and valour and act, oh, air, pride, plume, here

Buckle! AND the fire that breaks from thee then, a billion Times told lovelier, more dangerous, O my chevalier!

No wonder of it: sheer plod makes plough down sillion

Shine, and blue-bleak embers, ah my dear,

Fall, gall themselves, and gash gold-vermillion.

Gerard Manley Hopkins
4. With reference to **Badger** and *Binsey Poplars*, answer the following questions.

(i) In what ways are the poems like, and unlike, each other in terms of theme?

(ii) Choose two poetic techniques in poem (A) and show how Clare uses them.

(iii) Comment on Hopkins’ use of rhyme and rhythm in poem (B).

(A) **Badger**

When midnight comes a host of dogs and men
Go out and track the badger to his den,
and put a sack within the hole, and lie
Till the old grunting badger passes by.
He comes and hears – they let the strongest loose.
The old fox hears the noise and drops the goose.
The poacher shoots and hurries from the cry,
And the old hare half wounded buzzes by.
They get a forked stick to bear him down
And clap the dogs and take him to the town,
And bait him all the day with many dogs,
And laugh and shout and fright the scampering hogs.
He runs along and bites at all he meets:
They shout and hollo down the noisy streets.

He Turns about to face the loud uproar
And drives the rebels to their very door.
The frequent stone is hurled where’er they go;
When badgers fight, then everyone’s a foe.
The dogs are clapped and urged to join the fray;
The badger turns and drives them all away.
Though scarcely half as big, demure and small,
He fights with dogs for hours and beats them all.
The heavy mastiff, savage in the fray,
Lies down and licks his feet and turns away.
The bulldog knows his match and waxes cold,
The badger grins and never leaves his hold.
He drives the crowd and follows at their heels
And bites them through – the drunkard swears and reels.

The frightened women take the boys away,
The blackguard laughs and hurries on the fray.
He tries to reach the woods, an awkward race,
But sticks and cudgels quickly stop the chase.
He turns again and drives the noisy crowd
And beats the many dogs in noises loud.
He drives away and beats them every one,
And then they loose them all and set them on.
He falls as dead and kicked by boys and men,
Then starts and grins and drives the crowd again;
Till kicked and torn and beaten out he lies
And leaves his hold and crackles, groans, and dies.

John Clare
Binsey Poplars

_felled 1879_

My aspens dear, whose airy cages quelled,
Quelled or quenched in leaves the leaping sun,
All felled, felled, are all felled;
Of a fresh and following folded rank
    Not spared, not one
That dandled a sandalled
Shadow that swam or sank
On meadow and river and wind-wandering
weed-winding bank.

O if we but knew what we do
    When we delve or hew –
Hack and rack the growing green!
    Since country is so tender
To touch, her being só slender,
That, like this sleek and seeing ball
But a prick will make no eye at all.

Where we, even where we mean
    To mend her we end her,
When we hew or delve:
After-comers cannot guess the beauty been.
Ten or twelve, only ten or twelve
    Strokes of havoc unselve
The sweet especial scene,
Rural scene, a rural scene,
Sweet especial rural scene.

Gerard Manley Hopkins
Section C Unseen Poetry

Answer EITHER question 5 OR question 6.

5. Read the poem below and answer the questions which follow it.

I Could Not Tell

I could not tell I had jumped off that bus, that bus in motion, with my child in my arms, because I did not know it. I believed my own story: I had fallen, or the bus had started up when I had one foot in the air.

I would not remember the tightening of my jaw, the rage that I’d missed my stop, the leap into the air, the clear child gazing about her in the air as I plunged to one knee on the street, scraped it, twisted it, the bus skidding to a stop, the driver jumping out, my daughter laughing Do it again.

I have never done it again. I have been very careful. I have kept an eye on that nice young mother who suddenly threw herself off the moving vehicle onto the stopped street, her life in her hands, her life’s life in her hands.

Sharon Olds

(i) Contrast the feelings of the mother and daughter towards what happened.

(ii) What effects do the line endings in the second stanza create?

(iii) Who is the speaker of the poem talking to?

(iv) What does ‘her life’s life in her hands’ (line 20) mean?
6. Read the poem below and answer the questions which follow it.

**Learning the Bicycle**
_for Heather_

The older children pedal past
Stable as little gyros*, spinning hard
To supper, bath, and bed, until at last
We also quit, silent and tired
Beside the darkening yard where trees
Now shadow up instead of down.
Their predictable lengths can only tease*
Her as, head lowered, she walks her bike alone
Somewhere between her wanting to ride
And her certainty she will always fall.
Tomorrow, though I will run behind,
Arms out to capture her, she’ll tilt* then balance wide
Of my reach, till distance makes her small,
Smaller, beyond the place I stop and know,
That to teach her I had to follow
And when she learned I had to let her go.

Wyatt Prunty

* gyros – something that moves but remains balanced
* tease – make fun of
* tilt – lean to one side

(i) What does the poet come to understand as a result of helping his daughter to learn to ride a bicycle?

(ii) How does the little girl feel (lines 8-10)?

(iii) What poetic techniques are used in lines 1-5 and what is their effect?
HKDSE Literature in English Sample Questions for Paper 2

PART I

Section A: Prose

Sample 1: THINGS FALL APART

(i) Imagine that Mr Brown returns to Umuofia shortly after the events which take place in Part Three of the novel. After hearing all about what has happened, he goes to see Mr Smith. Write a dialogue between them.

(ii) Who do you sympathize with more, Mr Brown or Mr Smith? Give reasons.

Sample 2: REBECCA

Imagine the ghost of Rebecca returns to watch the second Mrs. de Winter’s days at Manderley. Write down some of Rebecca’s thoughts.

Sample 3: SILAS MARNER

Near the time of Eppie’s wedding, Silas visits The Rainbow for an evening drink. The conversation turns to the best way of bringing up children. Silas explains his views and one or two other people respond. Write the conversation.

Section B: Film

Sample 4: IN THE HEAT OF THE NIGHT

In the set film, what is presented as being more significant: the individual or the group?

How successfully do the filmmakers convey a sense of place in In the Heat of the Night?
Section C: Short fiction

Sample 5: THE OXFORD BOOK OF ENGLISH SHORT STORIES

‘A lack of emotion in the main characters is the cause of what happens in the stories.’ Do you agree with this statement? Refer to two of the following stories in your answer:

A Mere Interlude
The Destructors
The Waterfall

The theme of social class is common to the short stories. How do the writers express this theme and how important do you think it is?

In the stories each of the following four characters suffer in some way. Compare how they suffer and say which character you feel deserves the most sympathy. Give reasons for your choice.

Charles (A Mere Interlude)
John (Solid Objects)
Mr. Thomas (The Destructors)
Johnson (Dream Cargoes)

Section D: Drama

Sample 6: MACBETH

Suppose that, a few days before she dies, Lady Macbeth has a dream that disturbs her greatly.

(i) Imagine that you are lady Macbeth. In your diary, describe what happened in the dream.

(ii) Why did you (the candidate) think Lady Macbeth would have such a dream? What does it tell us about her?

Sample 7: TWELFTH NIGHT

One critic says that the play shows us a ‘party-time world where sadness inevitably emerges’. How far do you agree with this assessment?
Part II

Answer ONE question from this part. You must write about those texts in the syllabus which you have not covered in Part I.

Sample 8:
Discuss how the characters in *Muriel’s Wedding* and *Song of Solomon* reach a greater level of understanding.

Sample 9:
Discuss the different treatments of murder in *Macbeth*, *In the Heat of the Night* and *Lamb to the Slaughter*. Do the murders in the texts provoke different reactions in the reader?

Sample 10:
Compare the ways in which Shakespeare and Ridley Scott create atmosphere in their respective works.

Sample 11:
The idea of regret is common to the prose, film, drama, and some of the short fiction. Choose two of the above genres and describe how regret manifests itself. What effect does it have on the characters?