

Mock Paper

ENGLISH LITERATURE (SPECIFICATION A) LITA3

Unit 3 Reading for Meaning

2 hours 30 minutes

Please read this advice carefully before you turn to the material.

3. Reading.

- Here are the materials taken from the prescribed area for study, **Love Through the Ages**. You will be using this material to answer the two questions on the page opposite.

- Read all **four** pieces (A, B, C and D) and their introductions several times in the light of the questions set. Your reading should be close and careful.

4. Wider Reading

The questions test your wider reading in the prescribed area for study, **Love Through the Ages**. In your answers, you should take every opportunity to refer to your wider reading.

Answer both questions

1 Read the two poems (Extract A and B) carefully. They were written at different times by different writers.

Basing your answer on the poems and, where appropriate, your wider reading in the poetry of love, compare the ways the two poets have used poetic form, structure and language to express their thoughts and ideas.

(40 marks)

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2 Write a comparison of the ways Henry James and Edward Albee present aspects of married life and love. You should consider:

- the ways the writers' choices of form, structure and language shape your responses to these extracts

- how your wider reading in the literature of love has contributed to your understanding and interpretation of the extracts.

(40 marks)

The Reading

Extract A

Elizabeth Barrett Browning (1806-1861) lived for several years as an invalid.

She then met and fell in love with Robert Browning, who was already married at the time of their meeting. They later married in secret and spent the rest of their married life in Italy. Rather than declining into an isolated death as an invalid, in this poem, the poet embraces the joys of married life on earth with her lover.

XXIII. "Is it indeed so? If I lay here dead..."

by Elizabeth Barrett Browning (1850)

Is it indeed so? If I lay here dead,

Wouldst thou miss any life in losing mine?

And would the sun for thee more coldly shine

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Because of grave-damps falling round my head?
I marvelled, my Belovèd, when I read
Thy thought so in the letter. I am thine---
But . . . *so* much to thee? Can I pour thy wine
While my hands tremble? Then my soul, instead
Of dreams of death, resumes life's lower range.
Then love me, Love! look on me---breathe on me!
As brighter ladies do not count it strange,
For love, to give up acres and degree,
I yield the grave for thy sake, and exchange
My near sweet view of Heaven, for earth with thee!

Extract B

Vicki Feaver was born in Nottingham in 1943 and has won many awards for her poetry. Her metaphors compel the reader; in particular, she employs classical myth in order to shed light on the female condition in dramatic monologues such as 'Medusa' and 'Circe'. This poem appears to materialize out of nowhere like a crack in the wall.

'The Crack', Vicki Feaver

cut right through the house –
a thick wiggly line
you could poke a finger into,
a deep gash seeping

fine black dust.

It didn't appear overnight.

For a long time

it was such a fine line

we went up and down stairs

oblivious of the stresses

that were splitting

our walls and ceilings apart.

And even when it thickened

and darkened, we went on

not seeing, or seeing

but believing the crack

would heal itself,

if dry earth was to blame,

a winter of rain

would seal its edges.

You didn't tell me

That you heard at night

its faint stirrings

like something alive.

And I didn't tell you –

until the crack

had opened so wide

that if we'd moved in our sleep

to reach for each other

we'd have fallen through.

Extract C

Henry James, *The Portrait of a Lady* (1881)

Henry James, (1843-1916) was an American writer, regarded as one of the key figures of 19th-century literary realism. James spent the last 40 years of his life in England, becoming a British subject in 1915, one year before his death. He is primarily known for the series of novels in which he portrays the encounter of Americans with Europe and Europeans. His method of writing from the point of view of a character within a tale allows him to explore issues related to consciousness and perception, and his style in later works has been compared to impressionist painting. This extract marks the point in the novel where Isabel Archer sees clearly that her husband does not love her. It comes as a dark realisation.

It was as if he had had the evil eye; as if his presence were a blight and his favour a misfortune. Was the fault in himself, or only in the deep mistrust she had conceived for him? This mistrust was the clearest result of their short married life; a gulf had opened between them over which they looked at each other with eyes that were on either side a declaration of the deception suffered. It was a strange opposition, of the like of which she had never dreamed—an opposition in which the vital principle of the one was a thing of contempt to the other. It was not her fault—she had practised no deception; she had only admired and believed. She had taken all the first steps in the purest confidence, and then she had suddenly found the infinite vista of a multiplied life to be a dark, narrow alley, with a dead wall at the end. Instead of leading to the high places of happiness, from which the world would seem to lie below one, so that one could look down with a sense of exaltation and advantage, and judge and choose and pity, it led rather downward and earthward, into realms of restriction and depression, where the sound of other lives, easier and freer, was heard as from above, and served to deepen the feeling of failure. It was her deep distrust of her husband— this was what darkened the world. That is a sentiment easily indicated, but not so easily explained, and so composite in its character that much time and

still more suffering had been needed to bring it to its actual perfection. Suffering, with Isabel, was an active condition; it was not a chill, a stupor, a despair; it was a passion of thought, of speculation, of response to every pressure. She flattered herself, however, that she had kept her failing faith to herself—that no one suspected it but Osmond. Oh, he knew it, and there were times when she thought that he enjoyed it. It had come gradually—it was not till the first year of her marriage had closed that she took the alarm. Then the shadows began to gather; it was as if Osmond deliberately, almost malignantly, had put the lights out one by one. The dusk at first was vague and thin, and she could still see her way in it. But it steadily increased, and if here and there it had occasionally lifted, there were certain corners of her life that were impenetrably black. These shadows were not an emanation from her own mind; she was very sure of that; she had done her best to be just and temperate, to see only the truth. They were a part of her husband's very presence. They were not his misdeeds, his turpitudes; she accused him of nothing—that is, of but one thing, which was not a crime. She knew of no wrong that he had done; he was not violent, he was not cruel; she simply believed that he hated her. That was all she accused him of, and the miserable part of it was precisely that it was not a crime, for against a crime she might have found redress. He had discovered that she was so different, that she was not what he had believed she would prove to be.

Extract D

Edward Albee, from *Who's Afraid of*

***Virginia Woolf?* (1962)**

Edward Albee (born 1928) is an American playwright. His works are considered well-crafted, often unsympathetic examinations of the modern condition. This play, set in a small town American university campus, this play dissects two marriages. George and Martha are playing games with the younger couple, Nick and Honey. Here George takes centre stage, with Honey and Nick as his audience. Honey begins to grasp the full meaning of the tale he tells.

GEORGE: How They Got Married. Well, how they got married is this...the mouse got all puffed up one day and she went over to Blondie's house, and she stuck out her puff and she said...look at me.

HONEY: (*white...on her feet*) I...don't...like this.

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NICK: *(to George)* Stop it!

GEORGE: Look at me...I'm all puffed up. Oh my goodness, said Blondie.

HONEY: *(as from a distance)*...and so they were married.

GEORGE: ...and so they were married...

HONEY: ...And then...

GEORGE: ...and then.

HONEY: *(hysteria)* WHAT? And then, WHAT?

NICK: NO! no!

GEORGE: *(as if to a baby)* and then the puff went *away*...Like magic...pouf!

NICK: *(almost sick)* Jesus God.

HONEY: ...the puff went away...

GEORGE: ...pouf

NICK: Honey...I didn't mean to...honestly, I didn't mean to...

HONEY: You...you told them.

(Grabbing at her belly) Ohhhh nooooo.

NICK: Honey...baby...I'm sorry...I didn't mean to.

GEORGE: *(abruptly and with some disgust)* And that's how you play Get the Guests.