

# Anglo-Chinese School (Independent)



FINAL EXAMINATION 2023  
YEAR 3 (INTEGRATED PROGRAMME)  
LANGUAGE ARTS  
PAPER 2

Friday

29 September 2023

1 hour 30 minutes

## INSTRUCTIONS TO CANDIDATES

Write your answer using a black or blue pen on the separate answer paper provided.

If you use more than one sheet of paper, fasten the sheets together.

Write your index number in the spaces provided on the writing paper.

You are required to attempt one question from each section. One of the questions attempted **must be an essay question and the other must be a key passage analysis**. You are recommended to spend no more than 45 minutes on each question.

Start each section on a fresh sheet of paper and indicate the question number clearly on the answer script.

## INFORMATION FOR CANDIDATES

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



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This Question Paper consists of 5 printed pages.

[Turn over

## Section A

### Answer Question 1 or 2.

#### Short Stories: Hook and Eye

1. Setting often helps readers to better understand the story. With reference to **two stories** you have studied in *Hook and Eye*, discuss how settings help the writers convey their message.

(NB: You are not allowed to use material found in Question 2.)

[25]

### OR

2. Read the following passage from Identity by Latha carefully and answer the questions that follow.

Her glance fell on her 13-year-old daughter, Suba, standing in front of the mirror and painstakingly applying dark red lipstick. She couldn't stop herself from thinking that she had not touched lipstick till she had started working. "Suba, what are you doing? Where do you think you are going?"

- 5 "To the movies with friends."

"Do you call what you're wearing a dress? Might as well go out in your underwear. Your skirt is short enough."

Glaring at her mother in anger, Suba threw her comb down onto the dressing table. "Mum, do you know how truly narrow-minded you are?"

- 10 "Why are you screaming? Girls should be refined and sedate. Had I spoken to my mother like this, she would have thrashed me."

"If I were like you, people would also tease me as a country bumpkin from India. This is the latest style and fashion."

"Fashion, my foot! If you want to go out, change into more decent clothes."

- 15 Awakened from his sleep by the shouting, her husband's harsh voice interrupted their argument. "What's all the fuss here?"

"Just look at your daughter. She wants to go out dressed like this!"

- 20 "Why? You want her to also be like you, to swaddle herself in a sari wherever she goes? Different occasions demand different styles of dressing. How would you know anyway? Let her dress the way she likes."

Without allowing her mother any time to react, Suba quickly left the room.

- 25 Such endorsement from a husband who had frowned when she had donned jeans in the initial days after her arrival from India. *I like to see you in a sari, with your long hair dressed in a single plait. Don't forget that I married a girl from India because I like my wife to be conservative and feminine.*

His words echoed in her mind.

"Look here," he said, "you don't know about today's kids. It's good to be strict, but if you are too hard, they will become rebellious and ignore you totally. The situation here is totally different from India. You read the papers..."

- 30 Ignoring her husband, she glanced at the wall clock. It was 4pm. She had to go to the salon. Even as she rushed to change her dress, she wondered if the salon was really necessary. What was the point of wasting her time and money and dressing up? She would be at the wedding only for a short while, and soon after the thaali was tied around the bride's neck, she would hurriedly have a bite and return home. Was it really  
35 necessary to waste four hours for a one-hour 'show'?

- She thought about the weddings she had attended back home in India. What riotous fun! Everyone would be bubbling over with excitement and happiness. She recalled with longing the joy she had had with her friends, teasing the bride and groom at each wedding, giggling like small girls. She had no such intimate friends here. Anyway,  
40 weddings in Singapore were no fun.

- a. Identify which part of the story the passage is taken from, and with reference to it, discuss your impression of the protagonist.
- b. With reference to **this story and another** that you have studied in *Hook and Eye*, discuss the significance of the endings.

[25]

## Section B

### Answer Question 3 or 4.

#### Anthology of Poems: Poetry Moves

3. With close and detailed reference to **two poems** that you have studied, discuss how literary techniques are effectively used to explore longing and / or loss.

(NB: You are not allowed to use material found in Question 4.)

[25]

OR

4. Read the following poem, The Merlion, carefully and answer the questions that follow.

#### **The Merlion**

- “I wish it had paws,” you said,  
“It's quite grotesque the way it is,  
you know, limbless; can you  
imagine it writhing in the water,  
5 like some post-Chernobyl nightmare?  
I mean, how does it move? Like a  
torpedo? Or does it shoulder itself  
against the currents, gnashing with frustration,  
its furious mane bleached  
10 the colour of a drowned sun?  
But take a second look at it,  
how it is poised so terrestrially,  
marooned on this rough shore,  
as if unsure of its rightful  
15 harbour. Could it be that,  
having taken to this unaccustomed limpidity,  
it has decided to abandon the seaweed-haunted  
depths for land? Perhaps it is even ashamed  
(But what a bold front!)  
20 to have been a creature of the sea; look at how  
it tries to purge itself of its aquatic ancestry,  
in this ceaseless torrent of denial, draining  
the body of rivers of histories, lymphatic memories.  
What a riddle, this lesser brother of the Sphinx.  
25 What sibling polarity, how its sister's lips are sealed  
with self-knowledge and how its own jaws  
clamp open in self-doubt, still  
surprised after all these years.”
- “Yet...what brand new sun can dry  
30 the iridescent slime from the scales  
and what fresh rain wash the sting of salt  
from those chalk-blind eyes?”

A pause.

“And why does it keep spewing that way?”

35 I mean, you know, I mean..."

"I know exactly what you mean," I said,  
Eyeing the blond highlights in your black hair  
And your blue lenses the shadow of a foreign sky.  
"It spews continually if only to ruffle  
40 its own reflection in the water; such reminders  
will only scare a creature so eager to reinvent itself."

Another pause.

"Yes," you finally replied, in that acquired accent of yours,  
"Well, yes, but I still do wish it had paws."

Alfian Sa'at

- a. With reference to this poem, analyse how the Merlion is presented.
- b. With reference to this poem and **another one** studied in the anthology, discuss the use of irony.

[25]

**End of Paper**