GCSE
ENGLISH LITERATURE

Paper 2 Modern Texts and Poetry

Friday 26 May 2017 Morning Time allowed: 2 hours 15 minutes

Materials
For this paper you must have:
- An AQA 16-page answer book.

Instructions
- Answer **one** question from **Section A**, **one** question from **Section B** and **both** questions in **Section C.**
- Write the information required on the front of your answer book.
- Use black ink or black ballpoint pen. Do **not** use pencil.
- You must **not** use a dictionary.

Information
- The marks for questions are shown in brackets.
- The maximum mark for this paper is 96.
- AO4 will be assessed in **Section A.** There are 4 marks available for AO4 in Section A in addition to 30 marks for answering the question. AO4 assesses the following skills: Use a range of vocabulary and sentence structures for clarity, purpose and effect, with accurate spelling and punctuation.
- There are 30 marks for **Section B** and 32 marks for **Section C**.

stemup.co.uk

There are no questions printed on this page

stemup.co.uk

SECTION A		Questions	Page
Modern prose or drama			
J B Priestley	*An Inspector Calls*	1–2	4
Willy Russell	*Blood Brothers*	3–4	5
Alan Bennett	*The History Boys*	5–6	6
Dennis Kelly	*DNA*	7–8	7
Simon Stephens	*The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time*	9–10	8
Shelagh Delaney	*A Taste of Honey*	11–12	9
William Golding	*Lord of the Flies*	13–14	10
AQA Anthology	*Telling Tales*	15–16	11
George Orwell	*Animal Farm*	17–18	12
Kazuo Ishiguro	*Never Let Me Go*	19–20	13
Meera Syal	*Anita and Me*	21–22	14
Stephen Kelman	*Pigeon English*	23–24	15
SECTION B			
Poetry		**Questions**	**Page**
AQA Anthology	*Poems Past and Present*		
	Love and relationships	25	17
	Power and conflict	26	19
SECTION C			
Unseen poetry		27.1	20
		27.2	21

stemup.co.uk

Section A: Modern prose or drama

Answer **one** question from this section on your chosen text.

JB Priestley: *An Inspector Calls*

EITHER

0 1 How far does Priestley present Mrs Birling as an unlikeable character?

Write about:

- what Mrs Birling says and does in the play
- how Priestley presents her by the ways he writes.

[30 marks]
AO4 [4 marks]

OR

0 2 How does Priestley use the character of the Inspector to suggest ways that society could be improved?

Write about:

- what society is shown to be like in the play and how it might be improved
- how Priestley presents society through what the Inspector says and does.

[30 marks]
AO4 [4 marks]

stemup.co.uk

Willy Russell: *Blood Brothers*

OR

0 3 How does Russell explore the effects of Mickey's and Edward's different upbringings?

Write about:

- how the boys' upbringings have different effects on their lives
- how Russell presents these effects by the ways he writes.

[30 marks]
AO4 [4 marks]

OR

0 4 What kind of mother does Russell show Mrs Johnstone to be in *Blood Brothers*?

Write about:

- what Mrs Johnstone says and does in the play
- how Russell presents Mrs Johnstone by the ways he writes.

[30 marks]
AO4 [4 marks]

Turn over for the next question

stemup.co.uk

Alan Bennett: *The History Boys*

OR

0 5 ‘Dakin is presented as the most confident of the boys in the Oxbridge class.’

How far do you agree with this view of Dakin?

Write about:

- what Dakin says and does and what others say about him in the play
- how Bennett presents Dakin by the ways he writes.

[30 marks]
AO4 [4 marks]

OR

0 6 Bennett has said about *The History Boys*, ‘It seemed to me to be about two sorts of teaching – or two teachers, anyway’.

How does Bennett present Hector and Irwin as different kinds of teacher?

Write about:

- what Hector and Irwin say and do in their work
- how Bennett presents their differences by the ways he writes.

[30 marks]
AO4 [4 marks]

stemup.co.uk

Dennis Kelly: *DNA*

OR

0 7 How far does Kelly present Leah as a morally good character in *DNA*?

Write about:

- what Leah says and does in the play
- how Kelly presents Leah throughout the play.

[30 marks]
AO4 [4 marks]

OR

0 8 What ideas about society is Kelly suggesting by calling the play *DNA*?

Write about:

- some of the different ideas about DNA in the play
- how Kelly presents these ideas by the ways he writes.

[30 marks]
AO4 [4 marks]

Turn over for the next question

stemup.co.uk

Simon Stephens: ***The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time***

OR

0 9 How does Stephens present Judy as a mother?

Write about:

- what Judy says and does in the play
- how Stephens presents Judy as a mother by the ways he writes.

[30 marks]
AO4 [4 marks]

OR

1 0 How does Stephens present Christopher facing up to new challenges in the play?

Write about:

- what Christopher says and does when he faces a new challenge
- how Stephens presents Christopher in these situations.

[30 marks]
AO4 [4 marks]

stemup.co.uk

Shelagh Delaney: *A Taste of Honey*

OR

1 1 ‘I’m an extraordinary person’ says Jo.

How far does Delaney present Jo as an extraordinary young woman?

Write about:

- what Jo says and does that could be considered extraordinary
- how Delaney presents Jo by the ways she writes.

[30 marks]
AO4 [4 marks]

OR

1 2 What ideas about happiness does Delaney explore in the play *A Taste of Honey*?

Write about:

- how Delaney uses different characters and their ideas about happiness
- how Delaney presents these ideas by the ways she writes.

[30 marks]
AO4 [4 marks]

Turn over for the next question

stemup.co.uk

William Golding: *Lord of the Flies*

OR

1 3 How does Golding present Ralph as a leader in *Lord of the Flies*?

Write about:

- what Ralph says and does as a leader
- how Golding uses Ralph to explore ideas about leadership.

[30 marks]
AO4 [4 marks]

OR

1 4 'Ralph wept for the end of innocence, the darkness of man's heart…'.

What does Golding have to say about human nature in *Lord of the Flies*?

Write about:

- how the boys behave on the island
- how Golding uses the boys' behaviour to explore ideas about human nature.

[30 marks]
AO4 [4 marks]

stemup.co.uk

AQA Anthology: *Telling Tales*

OR

1 5 How do writers present difficult relationships in 'Korea' and in **one** other story from *Telling Tales*?

Write about:

- the difficult relationships in the **two** stories
- how the writers present these relationships by the ways they write.

[30 marks]
AO4 [4 marks]

OR

1 6 How do writers present unpleasant childhood experiences in 'The Darkness Out There' and in **one** other story from *Telling Tales*?

Write about:

- the details of the unpleasant childhood experiences in the **two** stories
- how the writers present these experiences.

[30 marks]
AO4 [4 marks]

Turn over for the next question

stemup.co.uk

George Orwell: *Animal Farm*

OR

1 7 ‘Orwell creates a shocking and unexpected ending to *Animal Farm.*’

How far do you agree with this statement?

Write about:

- what happens towards the end of the novel
- how Orwell presents the ending.

[30 marks]
AO4 [4 marks]

OR

1 8 How does Orwell use the character of Snowball to explore ideas about leadership in *Animal Farm*?

Write about:

- what Snowball says and does and what happens to him
- how Orwell presents Snowball.

[30 marks]
AO4 [4 marks]

stemup.co.uk

Kazuo Ishiguro: *Never Let Me Go*

OR

1 9 How far does Ishiguro present Ruth as a selfish character in *Never Let Me Go*?

Write about:

- what Ruth says and does that could be seen as selfish
- how Ishiguro presents Ruth by the ways he writes.

[30 marks]
AO4 [4 marks]

OR

2 0 How far do you agree that Ishiguro creates 'a nightmarish vision of society' in *Never Let Me Go*?

Write about:

- what kind of society Ishiguro presents in the novel
- how Ishiguro presents this society by the ways he writes.

[30 marks]
AO4 [4 marks]

Turn over for the next question

stemup.co.uk

Meera Syal: *Anita and Me*

OR

2 1 How does Syal present Meena's relationship with her mother?

Write about:

- Meena's feelings for her mother and how Meena behaves with her
- how Syal presents this relationship by the ways she writes.

[30 marks]
AO4 [4 marks]

OR

2 2 How does Syal show that their Punjabi heritage is important to Meena's family?

Write about:

- Meena's family, their traditions, and their behaviour
- how Syal presents the family's heritage by the ways she writes.

[30 marks]
AO4 [4 marks]

stemup.co.uk

Stephen Kelman: *Pigeon English*

OR

2 3 How does Kelman present London as a violent place for young people in *Pigeon English*?

Write about:

- some of the violence featured in the novel
- how Kelman presents London as a violent place for young people.

[30 marks]
AO4 [4 marks]

OR

2 4 How does Kelman present Harrison's relationships with other teenagers in *Pigeon English*?

Write about:

- the different relationships Harrison has with other teenagers
- how Kelman presents these relationships by the ways he writes.

[30 marks]
AO4 [4 marks]

Turn over for Section B

stemup.co.uk

Section B: Poetry

Answer **one** question from this section.

AQA Anthology: Poems Past and Present

EITHER

Love and relationships

The poems you have studied are:

Lord Byron	When We Two Parted
Percy Bysshe Shelley	Love's Philosophy
Robert Browning	Porphyria's Lover
Elizabeth Barrett Browning	Sonnet 29 – 'I think of thee!'
Thomas Hardy	Neutral Tones
Maura Dooley	Letters From Yorkshire
Charlotte Mew	The Farmer's Bride
Cecil Day-Lewis	Walking Away
Charles Causley	Eden Rock
Seamus Heaney	Follower
Simon Armitage	Mother, any distance
Carol Ann Duffy	Before You Were Mine
Owen Sheers	Winter Swans
Daljit Nagra	Singh Song!
Andrew Waterhouse	Climbing My Grandfather

stemup.co.uk

2 5 Compare how poets present growing up in 'Mother, any distance' and in **one** other poem from 'Love and relationships'.

Mother, any distance

Mother, any distance greater than a single span
requires a second pair of hands.
You come to help me measure windows, pelmets, doors,
the acres of the walls, the prairies of the floors.

You at the zero-end, me with the spool of tape, recording
length, reporting metres, centimetres back to base, then leaving
up the stairs, the line still feeding out, unreeling
years between us. Anchor. Kite.

I space-walk through the empty bedrooms, climb
the ladder to the loft, to breaking point, where something
has to give;
two floors below your fingertips still pinch
the last one-hundredth of an inch ... I reach
towards a hatch that opens on an endless sky
to fall or fly.

Simon Armitage

[30 marks]

Turn over for the question on the Power and conflict cluster

stemup.co.uk

OR

Power and conflict

The poems you have studied are:

Percy Bysshe Shelley	Ozymandias
William Blake	London
William Wordsworth	Extract from, The Prelude
Robert Browning	My Last Duchess
Alfred Lord Tennyson	The Charge of the Light Brigade
Wilfred Owen	Exposure
Seamus Heaney	Storm on the Island
Ted Hughes	Bayonet Charge
Simon Armitage	Remains
Jane Weir	Poppies
Carol Ann Duffy	War Photographer
Imtiaz Dharker	Tissue
Carol Rumens	The Emigrée
John Agard	Checking Out Me History
Beatrice Garland	Kamikaze

stemup.co.uk

2 6 Compare how poets present the effects of war in 'Bayonet Charge' and in **one** other poem from 'Power and conflict'.

Bayonet Charge

Suddenly he awoke and was running – raw
In raw-seamed hot khaki, his sweat heavy,
Stumbling across a field of clods towards a green hedge
That dazzled with rifle fire, hearing
Bullets smacking the belly out of the air –
He lugged a rifle numb as a smashed arm;
The patriotic tear that had brimmed in his eye
Sweating like molten iron from the centre of his chest, –

In bewilderment then he almost stopped –
In what cold clockwork of the stars and the nations
Was he the hand pointing that second? He was running
Like a man who has jumped up in the dark and runs
Listening between his footfalls for the reason
Of his still running, and his foot hung like
Statuary in mid-stride. Then the shot-slashed furrows

Threw up a yellow hare that rolled like a flame
And crawled in a threshing circle, its mouth wide
Open silent, its eyes standing out.
He plunged past with his bayonet toward the green hedge,
King, honour, human dignity, etcetera
Dropped like luxuries in a yelling alarm
To get out of that blue crackling air
His terror's touchy dynamite.

Ted Hughes

[30 marks]

Turn over for Section C

stemup.co.uk

Section C: Unseen poetry

Answer **both** questions in this section.

Autumn

Autumn arrives
Like an experienced robber
Grabbing the green stuff
Then cunningly covering his tracks
With a deep multitude
Of colourful distractions.
And the wind,
The wind is his accomplice
Putting an air of chaos
Into the careful diversions
So branches shake
And dead leaves are suddenly blown
In the faces of inquisitive strangers.
The theft chills the world,
Changes the temper of the earth
Till the normally placid sky
Glows red with a quiet rage.

Alan Bold

2 7 . 1 In 'Autumn', how does the poet present the effects of the season of autumn?

[24 marks]

stemup.co.uk

Today

If ever there were a spring day so perfect,
so uplifted by a warm intermittent breeze

that it made you want to throw
open all the windows in the house

and unlatch the door to the canary's cage,
indeed, rip the little door from its jamb*,

a day when the cool brick paths
and the garden bursting with peonies**

seemed so etched in sunlight
that you felt like taking

a hammer to the glass paperweight
on the living room end table,

releasing the inhabitants
from their snow-covered cottage

so they could walk out,
holding hands and squinting

into this larger dome of blue and white,
well, today is just that kind of day.

Billy Collins

* jamb – the sides of a doorway or opening
** peonies – flowers

2 7 . 2 In both 'Today' and 'Autumn' the speakers describe attitudes towards the seasons.

What are the similarities and/or differences between the ways the poets present these attitudes?

[8 marks]

END OF QUESTIONS

stemup.co.uk

There are no questions printed on this page

stemup.co.uk

There are no questions printed on this page

stemup.co.uk

There are no questions printed on this page

Copyright information

For confidentiality purposes, from the November 2015 examination series, acknowledgements of third party copyright material will be published in a separate booklet rather than including them on the examination paper or support materials. This booklet is published after each examination series and is available for free download from www.aqa.org.uk after the live examination series.

Permission to reproduce all copyright material has been applied for. In some cases, efforts to contact copyright-holders may have been unsuccessful and AQA will be happy to rectify any omissions of acknowledgements. If you have any queries please contact the Copyright Team, AQA, Stag Hill House, Guildford, GU2 7XJ.

Copyright © 2017 AQA and its licensors. All rights reserved.

stemup.co.uk

Surname	StemUp Model Solution
Answer booklet	Write the question number in the left-hand margin at the start of each answer.

Question number

01

Priestley presents Mrs Birling as the most deliberately unlikeable character in the play, because she embodies everything he wanted his 1945 audience to reject: class snobbery, cold self-righteousness and a total refusal to accept responsibility. Yet she is unlikeable for a purpose. She is less a rounded individual than a symbol of an Edwardian upper class that Priestley believed must not survive into post-war Britain, and her failure to change is exactly what makes her so dangerous.

From her very first appearance Priestley shapes the audience's response. The stage direction describes her as "about fifty, a rather cold woman and her husband's social superior", so before she speaks we are told that she is emotionally frozen and obsessed with status. The phrase "social superior" is telling: even within her own marriage she ranks people by class. This is immediately dramatised when she rebukes her husband with "Arthur, you're not supposed to say such things" after he compliments the cook. The correction is trivial, but it reveals that she cares more about etiquette than warmth, and it shows Priestley mocking a class whose manners mattered more to them than people.

Her attitude to her children is equally cold. When Sheila teases Gerald about his absence the previous summer, Mrs Birling advises her that men "with important work to do" sometimes have to spend nearly all their time on business, and that Sheila will "have to get used to that, just as I had." The line hints at a loveless marriage built on duty, but instead of questioning this she wants her daughter to accept the same submissive role. Her snobbish approval of Gerald, as the son of Lady Croft, suggests that she sees the engagement as a social alliance rather than a romance. Ironically, she is also blind to Eric's drinking, insisting that he is only a

Question number

boy, which shows how little she really knows the children she patronises.

Priestley makes her most unlikeable in Act Two, when the Inspector exposes her role in Eva's death. As head of the Brumley Women's Charity Organisation she used her influence to refuse Eva help, and she defends this without remorse. She calls Eva's use of the name Birling "a piece of gross impertinence" and complains that the girl was claiming "elaborate fine feelings and scruples that were simply absurd in a girl in her position." The adjective "absurd" exposes her belief that the working class are incapable of moral feeling, while the bitter irony of a "charity" committee turning away a desperate pregnant woman reveals the hypocrisy of Edwardian philanthropy. The Inspector's blunt verdict, "And you slammed the door in her face", strips away her polite language and forces the audience to see the cruelty beneath it.

The dramatic irony of this scene is Priestley's sharpest weapon. Mrs Birling insists that the father of the child is to blame and must be made an example of, demanding that he be dealt with publicly. The audience, and Sheila, who desperately tries to stop her, realise before she does that she is condemning her own son. When the truth emerges, Eric's accusation that she has killed her own grandchild, "you killed them both", is devastating, because her rigid principles have destroyed her own family. Structurally, Priestley lets her build the trap herself, so her arrogance becomes the cause of her humiliation.

However, it could be argued that Priestley allows a flicker of sympathy. At the moment of revelation she is described as distressed, and for a brief moment her composure collapses into broken, incomplete speech, suggesting that she is capable of feeling. Some audiences might also see her as a product of her upbringing, taught from birth that the poor were beneath her, as her scornful remark "As if a

Question number

girl of that sort would ever refuse money!" suggests. Yet Priestley quickly withdraws this sympathy. Once Gerald suggests the Inspector was a hoax, she recovers her confidence, praising herself for not being taken in and dismissing her children's guilt as over-excitement. Unlike Sheila and Eric, who insist that what happened to the girl is what really matters, she learns nothing at all.

Ultimately, Priestley presents Mrs Birling as overwhelmingly unlikeable, and this is a deliberate dramatic choice. Writing in 1945, as Britain voted for a Labour government and the foundations of the welfare state, he uses her to show that the old ruling class would not change willingly. Her coldness, snobbery and denial make the audience long for the younger generation's capacity for change, and the final telephone call, announcing that a girl has just died and an inspector is on his way, suggests that people like Sybil Birling will be made to face judgement whether they accept it or not.

02 Priestley uses the Inspector as a mouthpiece for his own socialist belief that society can only be improved when people accept collective responsibility for one another. Goole exposes a selfish, class-divided Edwardian world in which the wealthy exploit the poor without consequence, and he offers a different vision: a community bound together "as members of one body". Writing in 1945 but setting the play in 1912, Priestley turns the Inspector into a warning to his post-war audience that they must not rebuild the old society.

Before the Inspector arrives, Priestley carefully shows what kind of society needs improving. Birling's long speeches to Gerald and Eric present the capitalist view that "a man has to mind his own business and look after himself and his own", and he dismisses "community and all that nonsense". Priestley undermines him

Question number

through dramatic irony: Birling declares the Titanic "unsinkable, absolutely unsinkable" and insists that the Germans do not want war. An audience who had lived through two world wars would instantly recognise him as a fool, so his views on society are discredited before the Inspector even rings the doorbell. The doorbell itself interrupts Birling mid-sentence, a structural signal that his selfish philosophy is about to be challenged.

The Inspector's arrival changes the atmosphere of the play. The stage direction states that he "creates at once an impression of massiveness, solidity and purposefulness", and the triplet of abstract nouns suggests moral weight rather than physical size. Priestley also directs that the lighting should change from "pink and intimate" to "brighter and harder", as though the rosy glow of privilege is being replaced by an interrogation lamp. The Inspector becomes a force that sees through the family's comfortable illusions, and his habit of interrupting and controlling the pace of the questioning reverses the normal class hierarchy, since a police inspector would usually defer to a wealthy former Lord Mayor.

Through the story of Eva Smith, the Inspector shows how every level of society is connected. Birling sacks her for asking for higher wages; Sheila has her dismissed from Milwards out of jealousy; Gerald uses her and discards her; Mrs Birling refuses her charity; Eric exploits her. The Inspector's technique of showing each character the photograph one at a time creates a "chain of events", and this structure itself embodies Priestley's argument that individual actions have collective consequences. When Birling says he was right to refuse the strikers, the Inspector retorts that "it's better to ask for the earth than to take it", subtly reminding the audience that the powerful already take far more than the poor ever ask for. His insistence to Birling that "public men" have "responsibilities as well as privileges" articulates a fairer model of leadership.

Question number

Priestley also uses the Inspector to show that improvement is most likely to come from the young. He tells the family "we often do on the young ones. They're more impressionable", and Sheila and Eric are the ones who change. Sheila's realisation that "these girls aren't cheap labour", but people, directly contradicts her father's view of workers as interchangeable units of profit. By contrast, the older Birlings remain unmoved, and this generational split suggests Priestley's hope that the generation who had fought in the Second World War would build a more equal Britain, which is precisely what happened with the Labour landslide of 1945 and the creation of the welfare state.

The Inspector's final speech is the climax of Priestley's message. He reminds the family that "there are millions and millions and millions of Eva Smiths and John Smiths still left with us", and the repetition turns Eva from an individual into a symbol of the entire working class. His declaration that "We are members of one body. We are responsible for each other" uses short, emphatic sentences and the inclusive pronoun "we", which seems to address the audience as much as the Birlings. The apocalyptic warning that men will be taught "in fire and blood and anguish" if they do not learn this lesson would have had a chilling resonance for an audience who knew that the First World War followed only two years after 1912.

Finally, Priestley leaves the Inspector's identity deliberately mysterious. The homophone of "Goole" and "ghoul" and his apparent foreknowledge suggest that he may be a supernatural or moral force rather than a real policeman. The final telephone call proves that the lesson cannot be escaped. In this way Priestley suggests that society will be improved only when people choose responsibility over self-interest, and he ensures that his audience leaves the theatre feeling that they, not just the Birlings, have been inspected.

Question number

03

Russell uses the separation of the twins as a kind of social experiment: two boys with identical genes, raised on opposite sides of a class divide, end up with completely different futures. Through this, he argues that it is upbringing, money and class, not nature or character, that decide a person's life, and he wants his audience in 1980s Liverpool, living through mass unemployment, to see that the tragedy of Mickey and Edward is not fate but the result of an unequal society.

Russell establishes the contrast between the two homes from the very start. Mrs Johnstone is a single mother struggling with a large family, debts and the catalogue man, while Mrs Lyons lives in a comfortable house where she can afford to pay a cleaner. The song "Easy Terms", with its image of "living on the never never", shows that the Johnstone household survives on credit, and the reason Mrs Johnstone agrees to give away a twin is simply that she cannot afford another baby. Even before the boys can speak, therefore, poverty has decided which one will grow up with security and which with constant struggle.

When the boys meet at seven, Russell dramatises their different upbringings through language. Mickey speaks in a strong Liverpool dialect, swears casually and is fascinated by his older brother Sammy, singing "I wish I was our Sammy" because Sammy seems free and grown up. Edward is polite, uses old-fashioned slang like "smashing" and "fab", and calls his mother "Mummy" rather than "Mam". The comedy of this first meeting, especially Edward's innocent delight at learning a swear word, is warm, but it also shows that each boy has absorbed the values of his home. Edward's eager offer of sweets, which he shares freely, perhaps reflects the fact that he has never had to go without, while Mickey has learnt to grab what he can in a crowded house.

Question number

Russell's most pointed comment on upbringing comes through the scene with the Policeman. After the boys throw stones, the Policeman threatens Mrs Johnstone that her son will end up in court, yet when he visits Mr Lyons he treats the same behaviour as a harmless prank and is almost apologetic. The parallel structure of the two scenes allows the audience to compare them directly, exposing how authority treats working-class and middle-class families differently. Russell suggests that institutions, not just parents, shape the boys' futures, because the middle-class child is forgiven where the working-class child is criminalised.

The effects become harsher as the boys grow up. At fourteen both are suspended, but Edward's confidence and private education give him a cushion that Mickey does not have. After the interval, Mickey's life follows the pattern of the Liverpool working class in the recession: a job in a factory, an early marriage to Linda because she is pregnant, and then redundancy. Edward, meanwhile, goes to university and returns full of carefree energy. Russell places their reunion at Christmas so that the contrast is cruel. Edward cannot understand why Mickey is no longer fun, while Mickey resents a friend who has never had to worry about money. The friendship which survived the class divide in childhood cannot survive it in adulthood, because their experiences are now completely different.

Russell shows that poverty damages Mickey psychologically as well as materially. Desperate for money, he is drawn into Sammy's robbery, is sent to prison and comes out dependent on antidepressants. His decline into silence and illness contrasts sharply with Edward's rise to become a councillor, who can even use his influence to find Mickey and Linda a house and a job. This generosity is genuine, but to Mickey it is humiliating, because it shows that Edward holds all the power.

Question number

The ending makes Russell's message explicit. When Mrs Johnstone finally reveals that the boys are twins, Mickey's anguished cry "I could have been him!" sums up the whole play: there is nothing in Edward that Mickey lacks, except the luck of being the twin who was given away. The Narrator then asks whether we should blame "superstition" or what "the English" have come to know as "class". Russell deliberately leaves the question to the audience, but the structure of the play answers it. The different upbringings, not Mrs Lyons's invented curse, are what lead to the deaths of the brothers, and Russell wants his audience to recognise that a society which offers such different lives to identical children is the real cause of the tragedy.

04 Russell presents Mrs Johnstone as a loving, warm and generous mother whose love is constantly defeated by poverty. She is not a perfect parent: she is impulsive, superstitious and unable to control her children. Yet Russell invites the audience to sympathise rather than judge, because her failures come from her circumstances, not her heart, and through her he criticises a society that forces a working-class woman to choose between her children.

From the opening, Russell frames her as a figure of tragedy. The Narrator asks whether we have heard of the "mother, so cruel" who kept one twin and gave the other away, and the play begins with the two sons dead on stage while she sings "Tell Me It's Not True". This cyclical structure means that we watch her whole story knowing how it ends, and the Narrator's harsh judgement is immediately undercut by the grief we see. Russell seems to challenge the audience to decide whether "cruel" is fair at all.

Her song "Marilyn Monroe" shows a woman who married young, was briefly

Question number

glamorous and was then abandoned by her husband with seven children and another on the way. She is presented as still young but worn down far beyond her years. The upbeat, catchy music contrasts with the grim content of the lyrics, which mirrors her character: she is lively and optimistic, even while her life is falling apart. Her decision to give a twin to Mrs Lyons is therefore not selfishness but desperation. She knows that her house is too crowded and her debts too great, and Mrs Lyons persuades her that the child will have a better life with every comfort and his own room. Russell makes her agreement a moment of painful love, and her immediate regret is clear from how she longs to see Edward.

Russell shows that she is a loving mother in small details. She is affectionate with Mickey, teases him and lets him play freely, and when Edward visits she treats him warmly despite Mrs Lyons's instructions. Her gift of the locket, containing a picture of herself and Mickey, is a quietly heartbreaking gesture, because she cannot claim Edward as her son but wants him to keep part of her. The locket later becomes a symbol of the bond Mrs Lyons cannot break. By contrast, Mrs Lyons becomes possessive and paranoid, so Russell uses the two mothers as foils: one has money but little warmth, the other has warmth but no money.

However, Russell does not hide her faults. She cannot discipline her children, and Sammy grows up to be violent and criminal, while the Policeman's threats show how the authorities view her as an inadequate mother. She also struggles to keep up with the catalogue and the milkman, buying on credit and living "on the never never". Some members of the audience might see her as irresponsible. Yet Russell connects her failings to class: she has no husband, no money and no education, and the system offers her little help. Her superstition, shown when she is terrified by Mrs Lyons's claim that the twins will "die" if they learn the truth, also makes her vulnerable, because she has been taught to accept fate rather than challenge

Question number

it.

When the family moves to Skelmersdale, her song "Bright New Day" shows her hope that a new council house will give her children a better future. The optimism is touching, but dramatic irony makes it painful, because we know the brothers cannot escape. Later, as Mickey sinks into depression after prison, she tries to support him and Linda, but she has no power to change his situation.

The final scene presents her as a mother who finally tells the truth, but too late. She rushes into the council chamber and tells Mickey that Edward is his brother and that she could not afford to keep them both. Her confession is an act of love intended to save them, yet it provokes Mickey's despair and the shooting. Russell places her between her two dead sons as the play closes, turning her into a tragic mother whose one choice, forced by poverty, has destroyed both of them.

Ultimately, Russell shows Mrs Johnstone to be a good mother in a bad situation. She is flawed, but her generosity, humour and devotion are contrasted with the cold control of Mrs Lyons, and the audience's sympathy is meant to fall on her side. Writing in the early 1980s, when unemployment was devastating working-class Liverpool, Russell uses her to argue that it is not mothers who fail their children, but a society that leaves women like her without any real choices.

05 I largely agree that Dakin is presented as the most confident of the Oxbridge boys: he is good-looking, sexually assured and the natural leader of the group. However, Bennett suggests that his confidence is partly a performance, dependent on the admiration of others and on his ability to manipulate them. Through Dakin, Bennett explores what kind of person an exam-focused, results-driven education

Question number

produces, and he leaves the audience uneasy about whether Dakin's self-belief is a strength or a moral emptiness.

From his first scenes, Dakin is the centre of attention. The other boys look to him, and Posner is openly in love with him, singing romantic songs that are obviously directed at Dakin while Dakin remains relaxed and flattered rather than embarrassed. Dakin's relationship with Fiona, the Headmaster's secretary, adds to his status, and he reports his progress with her to Scripps with cheerful frankness. Bennett makes Dakin's confidence physical as well as verbal: he is the boy everyone, including staff, notices, and he knows it. In a school run by a Headmaster obsessed with league tables, Dakin represents the polished, assured candidate the system wants to display.

His confidence is clearest in his witty, knowing language. In one of Irwin's lessons he compares his attempts to seduce Fiona to the military campaigns of the First World War, turning history into a sexual joke. The comedy shows how quickly he has learnt Irwin's lesson that facts can be played with to create an effect. Dakin enjoys ideas as weapons, and he quickly grasps Irwin's method of taking the unexpected line in an argument. Bennett suggests that his confidence is intellectual as well as social: he is not the most scholarly of the boys, but he is the quickest to see how the game works.

However, Bennett also hints that Dakin's confidence is fragile and needs constant feeding. He is initially resistant to Irwin, but he soon becomes desperate for Irwin's approval and openly fascinated by him. He questions other characters about whether Irwin likes him, and his interest seems to come from a need to be admired by the one person who does not instantly fall for him. In this light, Dakin's assurance looks less like inner security and more like the confidence of

Question number

someone who has always been liked and cannot bear not to be.

The way Dakin uses his attractiveness is the most troubling sign of his confidence. Once he has won his place at Oxford he offers himself to Irwin as a kind of thank you, treating sex almost as a transaction. Dakin is completely in control of the scene, while Irwin, the teacher, is nervous and awkward, so Bennett reverses the usual power between pupil and teacher. This reveals Dakin's confidence at its most extreme, but also its coldness: he seems to see people as things to be won or used. Similarly, when he discovers that the Headmaster has made unwanted advances to Fiona, he uses this knowledge to blackmail the Headmaster into keeping Hector. The motive may be loyal, but the method shows a ruthless understanding of power that is unusual in a schoolboy.

Others also see through him. Mrs Lintott, the most clear-sighted character, is unimpressed by the boys' self-satisfaction, and Hector's influence makes Dakin's cleverness look shallow beside the poetry and real feeling that Posner absorbs. Scripps, his closest friend, comments on Dakin with affectionate irony, which allows the audience to see him slightly from the outside. Bennett uses Scripps's narration and his gentle distance to suggest that Dakin's charm is attractive but not entirely trustworthy.

The ending confirms the doubts. In Mrs Lintott's final account of the boys' futures, Dakin becomes a successful tax lawyer, a career that suggests wealth and cleverness but little moral purpose. His confidence has made him successful in the way Irwin taught: he knows how to argue any side and how to win. Yet he has lost the love of learning for its own sake that Hector valued. Bennett, writing in 2004 about a school in the 1980s, seems to suggest that Dakin is the product of a Thatcherite culture of results, competition and self-advancement.

Question number

Overall, Dakin is indeed the most confident of the boys, and Bennett makes him charismatic and funny. But his confidence is shown to depend on charm, sexual power and manipulation rather than real depth. Bennett invites us to admire Dakin and to question him at the same time, and through him to question an education that teaches young people how to win rather than how to live.

06 Bennett presents Hector and Irwin as embodiments of two opposing philosophies of education. Hector teaches for life, believing that literature and knowledge are valuable in themselves, while Irwin teaches for results, training the boys to impress examiners with clever, provocative arguments. Rather than simply choosing between them, Bennett dramatises the strengths and failings of both, and invites his audience to question what schools are really for in a society that measures success by league tables and Oxbridge places.

Hector is introduced as a theatrical, eccentric figure who rides a motorbike and refuses to treat lessons as preparation for exams. His General Studies classes are a chaotic mixture of poetry, songs, old films and role play, including the scene in which the boys act out a French brothel in the subjunctive. Bennett uses these comic set pieces to show that, for Hector, learning should be playful and memorable, not useful. He believes that "all knowledge is precious" whether or not it has any practical use, and he wants the boys to learn poems by heart so that they will have them for the rest of their lives. His view of education is almost spiritual: knowledge is a gift to be passed on, which is why he tells the boys to "pass it on".

The most moving presentation of Hector's teaching is his lesson with Posner on

Question number

Hardy's "Drummer Hodge". Bennett slows the pace of the play, using quiet, intimate dialogue as Hector explains that the best moments in reading come when a writer seems to express something you thought was yours alone, as if "a hand has come out and taken yours". The metaphor captures Hector's idea of literature as human connection across time. Here Hector is at his best, and the audience sees that his teaching changes how Posner understands himself.

Irwin, in contrast, is young, nervous and ambitious, brought in by a Headmaster who wants results. His methods are sharp and efficient. He teaches the boys to avoid the obvious answer, to take the unexpected angle and to treat history as a performance. He insists that truth matters no more in an exam than "thirst at a wine-tasting", a comparison which shows that, for him, the exam is a game of style rather than a search for truth. Bennett makes this attractive: the boys, especially Dakin, are excited by Irwin's cleverness, and Irwin's approach clearly works, because they win their places at Oxford and Cambridge.

Yet Bennett also makes Irwin's methods disturbing. The play is framed by scenes from Irwin's later career as a television historian and as a government adviser coaching politicians on how to present an unpopular bill. This structure shows where his teaching leads: to spin, where arguments are chosen for their effect rather than their honesty. In the lesson on the Holocaust, Irwin's detachment is challenged by the boys, especially Posner, which suggests that some subjects cannot be treated as debating exercises. Bennett also reveals that Irwin has lied about his own time at Oxford, so the teacher of clever presentation is himself a kind of fabrication.

Bennett uses other characters to comment on both teachers. Mrs Lintott, with her dry wit, reminds the audience of women's absence from the history the men

Question number

teach, and her plain, factual approach acts as a third model of teaching. The Headmaster mocks Hector's methods as unmeasurable, revealing the pressure on schools in the 1980s to produce statistics. The boys themselves often perform Hector's poems and songs to Irwin, so their lessons collide on stage and their differences are dramatised directly.

However, Bennett does not present Hector as simply good. His habit of groping the boys on his motorbike is a serious betrayal of trust, and it gives the Headmaster the excuse to remove him. The boys treat it as a joke, but a modern audience is likely to find it far more troubling. Irwin, too, is complicated by his attraction to Dakin. By giving both teachers flaws, Bennett prevents the play from becoming a simple argument.

At the end, Hector dies in the motorbike accident while Irwin survives, but in a wheelchair. Mrs Lintott's closing account of the boys' futures suggests that many of them have lived narrower lives than Hector hoped, with only Posner, the most lonely of the boys, keeping Hector's spirit of knowledge passed on. Bennett therefore presents Hector and Irwin as two incomplete halves of a good education. Irwin gives the boys success, Hector gives them something to live by, and the play suggests that a society which values only the first will lose something precious.

07 Kelly presents Leah as the character with the clearest moral conscience in DNA, the only member of the group who repeatedly questions what they are doing. However, her goodness is limited: she talks constantly about right and wrong, but when it matters she fails to act, and she finally escapes rather than confronts the evil around her. Through Leah, Kelly suggests that knowing what is right is not the same as doing it, and he asks his audience whether moral words mean

Question number

anything without moral courage.

From the opening scenes Kelly establishes Leah through her relationship with Phil. Her dialogue takes the form of long, rambling monologues, full of questions, while Phil eats and says nothing. The repeated stage direction that Phil simply eats creates both comedy and unease. Leah's anxious question "What are you thinking?" shows her desperate need for connection and a response, while Phil's silence suggests cold control. This structure makes Leah seem more human than the others: she is open, emotional and willing to reflect, whereas Phil is detached. The audience is likely to warm to her because she seems to care.

Leah's monologues also show that she thinks seriously about human nature. In one scene she talks about bonobos, the apes that share most of our DNA, and about whether humans are really any better than animals. Her ideas are intelligent and philosophical, and they raise the central question of the play: are people naturally cruel, or can they choose to be good? Yet Kelly also makes these speeches slightly self-absorbed. Leah seems to be talking to calm her own fears, and Phil's lack of reaction makes her words feel powerless. Kelly perhaps implies that thinking about morality is easy, while living by it is much harder.

Leah's moral sense becomes clearer when the group believe that Adam has been killed after their bullying ends with him falling down a shaft. She is shocked and frightened, and she questions the plan to cover it up. However, she still goes along with Phil's scheme to invent a fictional attacker and plant evidence, which leads to an innocent postman being arrested. Leah is uneasy, but she does not go to the police or the teachers. Her silence is a moral failure, and Kelly shows how fear of the group and dependence on Phil can override conscience. She remains good in feeling but weak in action.

Question number

The turning point is the discovery that Adam is alive, living rough in the hedge and clearly traumatised. Phil coldly decides that Adam must be killed to protect the group, and he orders Cathy and Brian to take him away and suffocate him. Leah protests and tries to argue, and for a moment she is the moral voice of the play, standing up to Phil when no one else will. Yet Phil silences her, and Adam is taken. The fact that Leah does not physically stop it, and that she later stays silent, is deeply troubling. Kelly places her protest at the climax so that the audience feels both her goodness and its limits.

After this, Leah is so disturbed that she withdraws from the group and eventually leaves the school. This exit can be read in two ways. On the one hand, it shows that she cannot live with what she has seen, which suggests that she still has a conscience the others have lost. On the other hand, it is an escape rather than a stand: she does not expose the truth, and Adam's death remains hidden. Her departure leaves Phil isolated in the final scene, sitting silently in the field, and it suggests that Leah was the only human warmth in his life.

Kelly's context helps to explain this presentation. Written for the National Theatre's Connections programme, to be performed by young people, the play explores teenage group behaviour in a world where adults are completely absent. In such a world, Leah represents the possibility of empathy and leadership through reason, but Kelly shows how easily that voice can be drowned out by fear, peer pressure and a charismatic leader. Like Piggy in Lord of the Flies, she has the right ideas but no power.

Overall, Kelly presents Leah as morally good only to a point. She is the most compassionate and reflective of the teenagers, and her protests show that she

Question number

knows what is right. Yet her failure to act against Phil makes her complicit. Kelly uses her to challenge the audience: it is not enough to be the one who feels uncomfortable, because silence allows cruelty to win.

08

By calling the play DNA, Kelly suggests that cruelty, conformity and the hunger for power may be part of what makes us human, built into us like a genetic code. Yet the title is also ironic. DNA is supposed to be the ultimate proof of truth, but in the play it becomes a tool for lies. Through these different meanings, Kelly explores a society in which people hide behind systems, groups and evidence to avoid taking moral responsibility.

The most literal use of DNA is in the plot. After the teenagers believe they have killed Adam, Phil invents a fictional attacker and plants evidence so that the police will look for someone else. The plan works too well: an innocent postman who matches the invented description is arrested because the evidence appears to link him to the crime. Kelly uses dramatic irony here, since the audience knows the truth while the adult world, never seen on stage, is fooled. DNA, a symbol of scientific certainty, is shown to be only as reliable as the people who handle it. Kelly may be criticising a society that trusts evidence and procedures more than human honesty, and in which the powerless, like the postman, become victims of those who know how to manipulate the system.

DNA also suggests the idea that behaviour is inherited and unavoidable. Leah's monologues about bonobos, the apes that share almost all of our DNA, raise the question of whether humans are just animals acting on instinct. She wonders whether people are naturally kind or naturally violent, and the action of the play seems to give a bleak answer. The group's bullying of Adam, and later Phil's

Question number

decision that Adam must be suffocated when he is found alive, suggest that cruelty comes easily. However, Kelly does not let the characters off the hook. Leah's protests show that there is always a choice, so the title may also be a challenge: if we blame our DNA, we excuse ourselves.

Another idea is that the group itself works like DNA, a self-replicating structure where everyone has a role and the pattern repeats. Kelly gives the teenagers distinct functions. John Tate rules through fear and even bans the word "dead", Phil becomes the silent strategist, Cathy grows more excited by violence, Brian becomes the terrified follower, and Jan and Mark act almost like a chorus. Their clipped, repetitive dialogue, in which one character states a fact and the other repeats it as a question, mimics the way information is copied and passed on, and it suggests mindless repetition rather than thought. When John Tate loses control, Phil takes his place, and later Cathy rises to power. The structure of the group survives even when individuals change, just as genetic code outlives any single cell.

Kelly reinforces this through the absence of adults. The play takes place in a street, a field and a wood, liminal spaces outside home and school, and no parents, teachers or police ever appear. The teenagers therefore become a microcosm of society, creating their own hierarchy and moral rules. The settings themselves suggest a world that is cut off and unsupervised, and the wood in particular, where Adam is found, has echoes of the wilderness in Lord of the Flies. Kelly implies that without moral guidance, society reverts to fear and violence.

The idea of DNA as what makes us human is also explored through the characters' fates. By the end, the experience has altered them permanently: Brian is on medication, Cathy has become violent and powerful, John Tate has found religion, and Leah has left. Phil, who planned everything, sits silently in the field and

Question number

refuses to return. These changes suggest that the event has been written into them, almost like a mutation. Kelly shows that what we do changes who we are, which challenges the idea that our nature is fixed.

Written in 2007 for the National Theatre's Connections festival for young performers, DNA reflects anxieties about youth violence, gang culture and peer pressure in modern Britain. Yet Kelly's real concern seems wider. The teenagers' willingness to sacrifice the truth and an innocent man to protect the group mirrors the way institutions and communities often protect themselves rather than face wrongdoing.

Ultimately, the title DNA works on several levels: as forensic evidence, as a symbol of inherited human nature and as a metaphor for the structure of a group. Kelly uses all three to suggest that society is built from the same building blocks as the individuals within it, and that if those individuals choose silence and self-interest, the whole society will replicate that cruelty.

09 Stephens presents Judy as a deeply flawed but loving mother: a woman who fails Christopher, abandons him, and yet is finally willing to sacrifice her own comfort for him. Rather than offering the audience an idealised maternal figure, Stephens uses Judy to challenge the expectation that mothering should come naturally and selflessly, and to show how exhausting, lonely and imperfect real parenting of a child like Christopher can be.

For most of the first half Judy is defined by her absence. Christopher tells us, as a plain fact, that his mother died of a heart attack, and the audience accepts this because Christopher, who cannot tell lies, accepts it too. This creates a powerful

Question number

dramatic irony once the truth emerges, because the "dead" mother has been alive in London all along. Stephens structures the play so that Judy is first a memory and only later a person, which encourages the audience to judge her harshly before they have heard her side. Her decision to leave her son would have seemed particularly shocking because society still tends to forgive a father who leaves far more readily than a mother.

The letters are Stephens' most effective method for presenting her. When Christopher discovers them hidden in Ed's cupboard at the end of Part One, Judy steps forward on stage and speaks them directly, so that the audience hears her voice in the present even though the words were written in the past. This staging makes her confessions intimate and raw. She recalls specific moments when she could not cope: Christopher refusing to eat, his screaming in public, and arguments that ended with both of them hurt and exhausted. She admits openly that she was not a good mother and that she thought Christopher would be better off with his father, who was more patient. The honesty of these letters complicates our response. Judy is selfish, and her affair with Roger Shears is part of the story, yet Stephens makes it clear that she was overwhelmed rather than uncaring, and that she kept writing even when no reply came.

Stephens also uses the letters to expose Ed's deception. Because Christopher learns at the same moment that his father has lied and that his mother has been writing, the audience's sympathy begins to shift towards Judy. Christopher's physical reaction, curling up and groaning, shows the damage done by both parents, and perhaps suggests that neither has managed to put his needs above their own conflict.

When Christopher arrives at her flat in Willesden, Judy's reaction is instinctive and

Question number

emotional. She is shocked and overjoyed, and she instinctively reaches out to him, as if forgetting that he cannot bear to be touched. This small moment is telling: her love is real, but she still does not fully understand him. Stephens then shows her gradually learning. She tries to get him to eat, worries about his A Level Maths exam and, crucially, listens when he insists that he must go back to Swindon to sit it. Her relationship with Roger, by contrast, deteriorates as soon as Christopher is in the flat. Roger's resentment and drunken anger show the audience the cost of Christopher's presence, and Judy's eventual decision to leave Roger and take her son home marks a turning point. For the first time she chooses Christopher over her own happiness.

The final section of the play presents a mother who is trying, rather than succeeding. Back in Swindon Judy has little money and lives with Christopher in a cramped room, and the arrangement is clearly hard. She still loses patience and still cannot read his signals perfectly. However, Stephens does not reward her with a neat resolution. Instead, he shows her persistence: she makes sure he can still sit the exam and stays beside him through through the slow rebuilding of his trust in Ed. In this way Stephens perhaps suggests that good parenting is not a fixed quality but an effort that has to be renewed every day.

It is significant that Christopher never names a diagnosis and the play never names one either. This leaves the audience to judge Judy's behaviour without a label that would excuse or condemn her, and asks them to consider how a society that expects "normal" children and "natural" mothers can leave parents like Judy isolated. Ultimately, Stephens presents Judy as a mother whose failures are painful and real, but whose return, apology and practical sacrifice show that love can be learned and expressed even after it has been badly let down.

Question number	
10	Stephens presents Christopher's new challenges as frightening, overwhelming ordeals that he meets with remarkable courage and logic. Each challenge pushes him further from the safety of his routines, and by staging the world through Christopher's senses, Stephens makes the audience experience how hard ordinary situations can be for him. In doing so, he questions society's assumptions about what counts as normal behaviour, and celebrates a boy who achieves things others would never think of as achievements. The first challenge is the death of Wellington. The play opens with the dog lying dead with a garden fork through it, an arresting and almost absurd image, and Christopher decides to investigate like Sherlock Holmes. This gives him a purpose and a structure, which is how he copes with disorder: he treats the mystery as a logical problem. However, his investigation forces him to talk to neighbours, something he finds deeply uncomfortable. His conversation with Mrs Alexander is presented with gentle dramatic irony: she is kind and chatty, while Christopher answers literally and leaves abruptly when she goes inside, so the audience sees both her good intentions and his confusion. Stephens shows that the real challenge is not the detective work but the social expectations that come with it. Christopher's most frightening challenge comes when Ed confesses, "I killed Wellington". This line transforms the play. Christopher's reaction is physical rather than verbal: he groans, curls up and cannot bear Ed's touch, and Stephens' stage directions make his panic visible to the audience. His logic then leads him to a terrifying conclusion: if his father could kill a dog, he might kill him. The audience understands that Ed is not a threat in that way, which creates a painful gap between Christopher's perception and ours, yet his reasoning is entirely consistent. Rather than collapse, he makes a decision and acts on it, choosing to find his mother in London.

Question number

The journey is presented as the climax of his courage, and here the staging becomes central. In performance, the ensemble, lighting and projected images turn the station and the train into a storm of signs, announcements and crowds. Christopher has never travelled alone, cannot cope with strangers and is overwhelmed by noise, so Stephens uses sound and movement to show the world as Christopher experiences it: fragmented, loud and threatening. He copes using methods we have seen earlier, such as counting and doing mental maths, and he hides in the luggage rack on the train because a small enclosed space feels safe. These moments are both comic and moving. The audience may laugh at how strange his solutions are, but they also recognise his bravery, especially when he climbs down onto the Underground tracks to rescue his pet rat Toby, risking his life for the one creature he trusts completely.

Stephens also uses Christopher's encounters with strangers to explore how society responds to difference. The policeman at the station, the people on the Tube and the passers-by he asks for directions are often impatient or puzzled, and their reactions show how little the world adapts to people like him. Christopher's honesty and literalness are presented as strengths rather than faults; he tells the truth and follows instructions exactly, which ironically makes him more reliable than many of the adults around him, including both his parents.

The final challenge is the A Level Maths exam. Christopher insists on returning to Swindon to sit it, even when it seems impossible, and this shows how much his sense of identity depends on achieving his goals. His triumph is followed by the play's last line, "Does that mean I can do anything?", which is both hopeful and uncertain. Christopher has faced the death of his dog, the betrayal of his father and a journey to London alone, so the audience might feel he has earned the right

Question number

to ask. Yet the question is left hanging, which perhaps reminds us that society will continue to set limits on him. Stephens then adds an appendix after the curtain call, in which Christopher explains the solution to his exam question, so the play ends on his terms, with something he loves.

Ultimately, Stephens presents Christopher facing new challenges as a hero's journey in miniature. Without naming a condition, he asks the audience to see how brave it is to step outside routine when the world feels hostile, and to question expectations of behaviour that ignore how differently people experience that world.

11 Delaney presents Jo as extraordinary largely because, in 1958, a play which placed a poor, pregnant, working-class teenager at its centre and treated her as witty, intelligent and worth listening to was itself extraordinary. Jo is not exceptional in the sense of being admirable or successful; she is often sulky, cruel and frightened. However, her sharp tongue, her refusal to accept the prejudices around her and her resilience in the face of neglect make her far more remarkable than her circumstances would suggest. I would argue that Delaney presents her as extraordinary in spirit, while also showing how ordinary her suffering is.

When Jo says "I'm an extraordinary person", the line is partly comic and partly defiant. She says it with the confidence of a teenager who wants to be noticed, and Delaney allows the audience to smile at her self-belief. Yet the claim matters because nobody else in her life tells her she is special. Helen, her mother, is careless and self-absorbed, moving them from one shabby flat to another and leaving Jo to look after herself. In this context, Jo's assertion of her own uniqueness seems less like arrogance and more like survival: if she does not value herself, no one will.

Question number

Jo's most extraordinary quality is her wit. Her exchanges with Helen are fast, insulting and frequently very funny, and Delaney uses this quick-fire dialogue to show that Jo is her mother's equal in verbal combat. She mocks Helen's vanity and drinking and punctures the pretensions of Peter, Helen's younger, wealthier lover, whose crude charm she sees through immediately. Delaney gives a working-class girl a voice that is sharp and articulate, which challenged the theatre of the time, where such characters were often servants or comic background figures. The playwright was herself only nineteen and from Salford, and Jo's voice feels authentic precisely because she is not polished.

Jo's attitudes also set her apart. Her relationship with the Boy, a black sailor, was a bold choice in a decade of open racism in Britain, and Jo seems untroubled by his colour in a way that Helen is not. Similarly, she accepts Geof, an art student who is implied to be gay at a time when homosexuality was illegal, and she lives with him without judgement, even if she sometimes teases him cruelly. Delaney presents Jo as more tolerant than the adult world around her, which arguably makes her extraordinary in the eyes of a modern audience as well as a 1950s one.

Yet Delaney is careful not to make Jo a heroine. She can be spiteful, especially to Geof, whose kindness she sometimes repays with mockery. Her fear of pregnancy is expressed violently, and her cry "I don't want to be a mother. I don't want to be a woman" reveals how trapped she feels by a future she never chose. In these moments Jo seems not extraordinary but painfully ordinary: a frightened girl repeating her mother's mistakes, abandoned by a lover who promised marriage and left. Delaney's structure reinforces this cycle, since Helen and Jo each end up pregnant or abandoned in ways that echo one another.

Question number

Her insight into her own situation is perhaps what lifts her above it. When she says "I'm not frightened of the darkness outside. It's the darkness inside houses I don't like", she shows a surprising maturity. The image suggests that the real danger in her life is not the world beyond the door but the loneliness and neglect within her own home. This is a poetic, almost philosophical line from a girl who has had little education, and it is one of the moments where the claim to be extraordinary feels earned.

The ending leaves her status ambiguous. Geof has been driven away by Helen, and Helen herself leaves, apparently to find a drink, after learning that the baby may be black. Jo is left alone on stage, calmly singing a nursery rhyme as she waits for the birth. This could be read as childish naivety, but it could equally suggest a quiet strength: she is facing motherhood without the people who failed her, and she is not broken.

Overall, Delaney presents Jo as extraordinary in her humour, tolerance and resilience rather than in her achievements. Her ordinary hardships, poverty, neglect and an unplanned pregnancy, make that spirit more striking, and by giving such a character the centre of the stage, Delaney insists that a young working-class woman's life is important and worth dramatising.

12 Delaney presents happiness as something brief, fragile and usually dependent on other people: a "taste" rather than a meal. The title itself echoes the Biblical story of Jonathan, who tastes a little honey and is condemned to die for it, and this allusion suggests that in the world of the play every sweet moment carries a cost. Through Helen, Jo and Geof, Delaney explores how poverty, prejudice and loneliness in 1950s Salford make lasting happiness almost impossible, while still allowing her

Question number

characters flashes of joy that the audience can share.

Helen's idea of happiness is immediate and pleasure-seeking. She finds it in drink, in men and in the excitement of escape, and her relationship with Peter offers the promise of money, a car and a house. Her decision to marry him, leaving Jo alone at Christmas, shows that for Helen happiness is something she grabs for herself, whatever the cost to others. Delaney presents this with a mixture of comedy and criticism. Helen's direct addresses to the audience, often breaking the illusion of the stage, make her a lively, music-hall figure whom we enjoy, but her neglect of Jo means that her happiness is built on her daughter's unhappiness. When the marriage collapses and Peter throws her out, Delaney suggests that happiness based on self-interest and appearances cannot last.

Jo's happiness with the Boy is presented as tender but doomed. Their scenes together are playful and romantic: he gives her a ring, they talk about marriage, and Jo enjoys being wanted, perhaps for the first time. Delaney places these scenes alongside Helen's preparations for marriage, so that mother and daughter are briefly happy at the same moment, which creates an ironic parallel. Both relationships end badly. The Boy is a sailor who leaves for sea and never returns, and Jo is left pregnant. Delaney uses the structure of the play to show how quickly happiness turns to its opposite, and the shift between the first and second acts, from romance to abandonment, mirrors the brevity of the title's "taste".

The interracial relationship also reveals how social prejudice limits happiness. In a Britain where racist attitudes were openly expressed, Jo and the Boy's love has little chance of acceptance, and Helen's later reaction to the possibility that the baby will be black, leaving to find a drink, shows that prejudice can destroy family bonds. Delaney seems to suggest that happiness is not simply a personal matter

Question number

but is shaped by the attitudes of a whole society.

The most sustained happiness in the play is found in Act Two, in Jo's home life with Geof. Geof cooks, cleans and prepares for the baby, and the domestic scenes between them are calm, affectionate and often funny. In many ways this is the most functional family in the play, yet it is built from two outsiders: a pregnant teenager and a young man who is implied to be gay at a time when homosexuality was illegal. Delaney is arguably radical here, suggesting that happiness may come from kindness and companionship rather than from conventional marriage. However, Jo's moods swing violently, and she can be cruel to Geof, rejecting his offer of marriage and mocking his care. Her fear of motherhood, especially when he brings her a doll to practise with, shows that even this contentment is unstable.

Helen's return destroys this happiness. She drives Geof out, and his departure is presented with quiet sadness, as he quietly accepts that he is no longer wanted and slips away without a scene. Delaney therefore shows that happiness depends on other people's behaviour: Geof's goodness creates it, and Helen's selfishness ends it.

The play closes with Jo alone, singing a nursery rhyme. This final image is deliberately ambiguous. It could suggest that Jo has found a fragile, inner peace, preparing for motherhood with a childlike hope. It could also suggest that happiness for her has shrunk to a moment of song in an empty flat. The original Theatre Workshop production used live jazz between scenes, and the music's swings of mood support this idea that joy and sadness are constantly replacing each other.

Question number

Ultimately, Delaney presents happiness as real but temporary, always threatened by poverty, prejudice and the failures of the people they rely on. Her characters keep reaching for it, and perhaps her point is that the reaching, rather than the having, is what makes them human.

13

Golding presents Ralph as a decent, democratic leader whose authority rests on reason, rules and the hope of rescue, but who is ultimately too limited and too dependent on the goodwill of others to survive the savagery that grows around him. Through Ralph's rise and fall, Golding explores whether civilised leadership can hold back the darker instincts of human nature, and his answer, shaped by the Second World War, is deeply pessimistic.

From his first appearance, Ralph is presented as a natural, if accidental, leader. The "fair boy" is athletic and attractive, and Golding notes that there was "a stillness about Ralph as he sat that marked him out: there was his size, and attractive appearance; and most obscurely, yet most powerfully, there was the conch." The structure of this sentence is significant, because the conch is placed last and given the greatest power. Ralph is elected not because he has proved himself but because he looks like a leader and holds the symbol of order. The cry of "Him with the shell" shows that the boys value the appearance of authority. Golding may be suggesting that democratic societies, too, often choose leaders for superficial reasons.

At first Ralph's leadership is effective. He calls assemblies, establishes the rule that whoever holds the conch may speak, and makes the signal fire his central priority, recognising that rescue depends on it. His focus on shelters and the fire shows a sense of responsibility and long-term thinking that contrasts sharply with

Question number

Jack's obsession with hunting. Golding uses the conflict between them to dramatise two models of leadership: Ralph's democratic, rule-based approach and Jack's authoritarian one, built on fear, spectacle and the thrill of the kill. Ralph's leadership represents the liberal, parliamentary values Britain claimed to defend in the war, while Jack's choir, marching in their black cloaks, recall the uniformed obedience of fascist movements.

However, Golding also exposes Ralph's weaknesses. He depends on Piggy's intelligence, yet at first he mocks him and reveals his nickname, showing a lack of loyalty to the boy who is his most valuable adviser. As the novel progresses, Ralph increasingly struggles to think clearly, and Golding shows him losing his train of thought in assemblies, frustrated by his inability to put his ideas into words. When Jack breaks the rules, Ralph insists, "the rules are the only thing we've got!" The desperation in this line reveals both his belief in order and the fragility of that belief: rules only work if people choose to follow them, and Ralph has no way of forcing them to.

The most disturbing aspect of Golding's presentation is that Ralph himself is not immune to savagery. During the boar hunt he feels the excitement of wounding the animal, and during the frenzied dance on the night of the storm, he joins the circle that kills Simon. His later admission, "That was murder", shows his conscience, but Piggy's attempts to excuse their actions reveal how easily even good people deny their guilt. Golding suggests that the capacity for evil exists in every leader, not just in obvious tyrants like Jack.

Ralph's authority collapses as Jack's tribe grows. The theft of Piggy's glasses removes the means of making fire, and the final confrontation at Castle Rock shows that reason no longer has any power. Piggy's question, "Which is better, to

Question number

have rules and agree, or to hunt and kill?", is answered brutally when Roger releases the rock. The conch "exploded into a thousand white fragments and ceased to exist", and with it the last remnant of Ralph's democratic leadership is destroyed. Ralph is reduced to a hunted animal, and the chase across the burning island shows how completely he has lost control.

The ending is bitterly ironic. Ralph is saved by a naval officer, an adult who represents the same civilisation that is itself at war. When Ralph "wept for the end of innocence, the darkness of man's heart, and the fall through the air of the true, wise friend called Piggy", his tears show that he has gained insight but lost everything else. Through Ralph, Golding presents leadership based on reason and fairness as admirable but fragile, arguing that without a shared commitment to civilised values, even the best leader cannot hold back the darkness within human beings.

14 Golding uses the boys on the island to argue that evil is not imposed on humanity from outside but lies within every human heart, held back only by the fragile structures of civilisation. Writing after serving in the Royal Navy during the Second World War, Golding had seen what ordinary people were capable of, and he famously said that man produces evil as a bee produces honey. Lord of the Flies is his attempt to show this truth through children, whose supposed innocence makes their descent all the more shocking.

At the start of the novel, the boys' behaviour seems hopeful. The island is presented as a kind of Eden, with its lagoon, fruit and "fair" boy, and the boys respond by building a society based on assemblies and the conch. Jack himself declares, "We've got to have rules and obey them. After all, we're not savages.

Question number

We're English, and the English are best at everything." This is deeply ironic, because Jack will become the most savage of all. Golding uses this line to mock the confidence of post-war Britain that its people were naturally civilised, suggesting that national pride offers no protection against human nature.

The early chapters show the first cracks. Roger throws stones near Henry but deliberately misses, and Golding explains that "Round the squatting child was the protection of parents and school and policemen and the law. Roger's arm was conditioned by a civilization that knew nothing of him and was in ruins." This sentence is central to Golding's ideas. The impulse to hurt is already there; only the memory of adult authority restrains it, and that authority is described as "in ruins", reminding the reader of the atomic war that has stranded the boys. As the memory fades, the restraint fades with it.

Golding uses the painted mask to show how anonymity releases cruelty. When Jack paints his face, the mask becomes "a thing on its own, behind which Jack hid, liberated from shame and self-consciousness." The word "liberated" is unsettling: Golding presents savagery as a kind of freedom, which explains its appeal. The hunting chants, the ritual dances and the growing tribe show the boys losing their individual identities and becoming a group, in which responsibility is shared and therefore felt by no one. This echoes the crowds and uniforms of totalitarian regimes in the 1930s and 1940s.

The beast is Golding's key symbol for human nature. The boys fear a monster in the jungle, but Simon realises that it is something within them. In his hallucinatory conversation with the pig's head on a stick, the Lord of the Flies tells him: "Fancy thinking the Beast was something you could hunt and kill! You knew, didn't you? I'm part of you?" The name itself translates Beelzebub, a name for the

Question number

devil, so Golding gives the boys' evil a religious dimension, echoing the Fall of Man. Simon, the Christ-like figure who understands this truth, is then killed by the boys in a frenzied dance, chanting "Kill the beast! Cut his throat! Spill his blood!" The bitter irony is that in trying to kill the beast, they become it.

Piggy's death shows that human nature, once unleashed, destroys reason itself. Roger, "with a sense of delirious abandonment, leaned all his weight on the lever", and the rock smashes Piggy and the conch together. The word "delirious" suggests pleasure as much as madness, and by this point Roger, who once missed Henry on purpose, kills without hesitation. Golding presents a clear progression from restraint to cruelty, showing that evil grows when nothing checks it.

The ending widens this vision from the island to the world. The naval officer is disappointed that British boys could not "put up a better show", yet he is himself part of a war, and his cruiser is waiting offshore. Golding suggests that adult society is the boys' behaviour on a larger scale. Ralph's tears for "the end of innocence, the darkness of man's heart" express the novel's central idea: innocence was always an illusion, and the darkness was there from the beginning.

Ultimately, Golding presents human nature as fundamentally flawed. Civilisation, represented by the conch, rules and adults, can restrain this darkness for a time, but it is fragile, and when it disappears, the true nature of humanity is revealed.

15 In both 'Korea' by John McGahern and 'A Family Supper' by Kazuo Ishiguro, the most difficult relationship is between a father and a son, and in both stories the difficulty lies in what is not said. Each writer uses a first-person son who slowly uncovers something disturbing about his father, and each leaves the reader

Question number

uncertain whether love or self-interest truly governs the father's behaviour. Through these silences, both writers explore how the past, money and ideas of honour can poison the bond between generations.

In 'Korea', the relationship is presented through a shared activity. Father and son fish together for eels on the river, setting night lines and rowing in silence, and McGahern's detailed description of their physical work suggests a closeness that neither can put into words. The rhythm of the rowing and the care of the fishing make them seem like partners. However, McGahern undercuts this intimacy from the start. The father's memory of witnessing an execution in the war of his youth hangs over the story, and his account of a young prisoner shot in front of him introduces the idea that young lives can be sacrificed for causes older men believe in. This memory foreshadows the father's later plans for his own son.

The turning point comes when the son overhears his father talking with Farrell about a local boy who was killed fighting in Korea, and about the large sum of money his family received in compensation from the American government. McGahern's timing is significant: the revelation is not given to the son directly but discovered by accident, which makes it all the more devastating. The son realises that his father's encouragement to emigrate to America may be motivated by the possibility that he will be drafted and, if killed, will bring money home. The first-person perspective allows the reader to share the son's shock, while the understated narrative voice, which never states his feelings openly, makes the moment feel cold and adult. The poverty of rural Ireland in the 1950s, when emigration was common and money desperately short, helps to explain the father's thinking, but McGahern does not excuse it.

In 'A Family Supper', Ishiguro also builds tension around a son returning to a father

Question number

whose motives are hidden. The narrator has come back to Tokyo after time in California, and the relationship is strained by an earlier conflict and by the death of his mother, which is linked to the opening line, "Fugu is a fish caught off the Pacific shores of Japan." By beginning with the poisonous fish, Ishiguro creates an atmosphere of quiet threat that hangs over every exchange. The father's formal, clipped speech and the long pauses between them show a relationship governed by duty and pride rather than affection.

Ishiguro's father is shaped by traditional ideas of honour. His business has collapsed, and he speaks with admiration of his former partner Watanabe, who killed his family and then himself, describing him as a man of principle. In the context of post-war Japan, where older generations clung to codes of honour while the young looked to the West, this admiration is chilling. It suggests that the father may be considering a similar end for his own family, and this possibility turns the supper itself into a moment of terrible suspense. When the father serves the fish and the narrator asks what it is, the vague reply that it is just fish leaves the reader wondering whether this meal is a form of reconciliation or a plan for death.

Both writers therefore present difficult relationships through ambiguity. McGahern's son realises a painful truth but responds with silence, keeping his knowledge to himself and continuing to work beside his father, as though their relationship has become a kind of unspoken bargain. Ishiguro's ending is even more open: the meal passes, the conversation turns to whether the son will remain in Japan, and the reader is left uncertain whether the danger was ever real. In both stories, the son is forced to see his father as a stranger.

Ultimately, McGahern and Ishiguro show that the relationship between fathers and

Question number

sons can be damaged by history, economics and pride. Each father is shaped by a past the son did not share, a war in Ireland or the values of traditional Japan, and each story suggests that the gap between generations can become so wide that even love may not bridge it.

16 In 'The Darkness Out There' by Penelope Lively and 'Korea' by John McGahern, unpleasant childhood experiences take the form of a sudden, shattering discovery about adults. In both stories a young person begins in innocence and is forced, through what an older person reveals, to confront cruelty and self-interest in someone they had trusted. Both writers suggest that the end of childhood comes not through age but through knowledge, and that the darkness young people fear is less frightening than the darkness hidden in ordinary adults.

Lively's story opens in apparent safety. Sandra walks through a summer landscape full of flowers and sunshine, and the third-person narrative, closely following her thoughts, shows a girl preoccupied with her appearance, her future and boys. The only threat seems to be Packer's End, the wood where a German plane crashed during the war and around which local children tell frightening stories. Lively uses the wood as a symbol of the unknown: Sandra hurries past it, imagining something lurking there. This creates a false expectation for the reader, because the true horror of the story will come not from the wood but from the cosy cottage of the old woman she has come to help.

Mrs Rutter is first presented as harmless and welcoming. She chats warmly, offers food and praises the young volunteers, and her friendly, colloquial dialogue makes her seem like a stereotype of a kindly old widow. Sandra's opinion of Kerry, by contrast, is dismissive at first; she sees him as awkward and unattractive. Lively

Question number

thus establishes Sandra's judgements as superficial, so that the revelation will overturn them all.

The unpleasant experience comes when Mrs Rutter tells her story. During the war, she and her sister Edie found the German airman injured in the wreckage at Packer's End, and rather than help him, they left him there to die. What makes this so disturbing is not only the act itself but the matter-of-fact, even satisfied way she recounts it, without any sign of remorse. Lively uses dialogue to let Mrs Rutter condemn herself; the reader hears her justify herself through wartime hatred of the enemy, but the casual tone shows how cruelty can become normal. The shift in the children's reactions is crucial. Kerry, whom Sandra had dismissed, reacts with angry disgust and storms out, while Sandra is left shaken. Her realisation that the darkness she feared is in people rather than places marks the end of her innocence. Lively, writing decades after the Second World War, perhaps also suggests that the war's cruelty did not end in 1945 but lived on in the attitudes of those who survived it.

In 'Korea', the unpleasant experience is similarly tied to the discovery of what an adult is capable of, but here it is the young narrator's own father. The story is overshadowed from the start by the father's memory of witnessing an execution in the war of his youth, including the death of a young prisoner. This memory introduces the idea that young lives can be sacrificed by older men, and it disturbs the son even before he understands why. McGahern then presents a period of apparent closeness, as father and son fish for eels on the river, their shared work and silence suggesting a bond.

The son's unpleasant experience comes when he overhears his father talking to Farrell about a local boy who was killed fighting in Korea, and the money his

Question number

family received from the American government. He realises that his father's encouragement to emigrate might be driven by the hope that he too will be drafted, and that his death would bring money home. McGahern's first-person narration is understated, which makes the moment more painful: the son does not cry out or confront his father, but quietly understands that he is valued for what he might be worth. The poverty of 1950s rural Ireland, where emigration was common, gives this a bitter realism.

Both writers end with a young person who has lost faith in an adult. Sandra's discovery is shared with Kerry, and she gains a new respect for him, so her experience brings a painful kind of growth. McGahern's son, however, is left alone with his knowledge, keeping silent and continuing beside his father as though nothing has changed. Ultimately, both stories present unpleasant childhood experiences as moments of revelation, in which the young see the moral darkness of the adult world and can never return to the innocence they had before.

17 Orwell's ending is undeniably shocking, but I would argue that it is not truly unexpected. The final image of pigs and men who can no longer be told apart is horrifying precisely because the whole novella has been leading us towards it. Orwell constructs the ending as the logical completion of a corrupted revolution, so that the reader's shock is less surprise than the painful recognition of something we should have seen coming, which is exactly the warning he wanted to give readers in 1945.

The final chapter opens with the bland phrase "Years passed", and Orwell immediately tells us that few animals remember the Rebellion. Boxer is dead, Old Major is forgotten, and Clover is old. This sense of time erasing memory is crucial:

Question number

the pigs' power rests on the animals being unable to compare the present with the past. Benjamin, the only one who claims to remember everything, insists that life has always been and will always be bad. Orwell uses this cynical voice to suggest that the animals' hopes have been ground down so slowly that, for them, the ending may not feel like a sudden betrayal at all.

The first genuine shock is visual. Squealer appears walking on his hind legs, and then Napoleon emerges from the farmhouse upright, carrying "a whip in his trotter". The whip is a deliberate echo of Mr Jones, and Orwell makes the reader see the tyrant the animals overthrew in chapter 2 standing in the farmyard again. The sheep, who have been trained to drown out debate, now bleat "Four legs good, two legs better!", a tiny alteration which shows how easily propaganda can reverse a revolution's founding principle while sounding exactly the same. For the reader this is shocking, but it is also the culmination of a long pattern: the milk and apples in chapter 3, the beds, the whisky and the trading with humans have all prepared us.

The same is true of the Seven Commandments. When Clover asks Benjamin to read the barn wall, there is only one commandment left: "ALL ANIMALS ARE EQUAL BUT SOME ANIMALS ARE MORE EQUAL THAN OTHERS". The paradox is absurd, almost comic, and its logical nonsense exposes the way totalitarian regimes empty language of meaning. Yet this, too, is the end point of a gradual process. Each earlier commandment was quietly amended with a few extra words, such as "with sheets" or "without cause", so the final rewriting is shocking in its brazenness rather than unexpected in its direction.

Orwell then moves the climax inside the farmhouse, and structurally the animals are now outsiders looking in through a window, as they were never meant to be.

Question number

Mr Pilkington praises the pigs for working their animals harder and feeding them less than any farm in the county, and his joke, "If you have your lower animals to contend with, we have our lower classes!", reveals that pigs and humans now share the same exploitative ideology. Napoleon announces that the farm will return to its old name, Manor Farm. This cyclical structure is perhaps the bleakest point of all: the revolution has not merely failed, it has brought the animals back to exactly where they began.

The quarrel over the cards, when Napoleon and Pilkington each play an ace of spades, adds a final twist that may be unexpected for a first-time reader. Orwell later explained that this was meant to reflect the Teheran Conference of 1943, where Stalin met Churchill and Roosevelt, and he predicted that such alliances between rival powers would not last. The detail suggests that those in power are united only by greed and will cheat each other as readily as they cheat the workers.

The famous last sentence brings everything together: "The creatures outside looked from pig to man, and from man to pig, and from pig to man again; but already it was impossible to say which was which." The repetition and the chiasmus of "pig to man, and from man to pig" mimic the animals' eyes moving back and forth in confusion, and the adverb "already" implies that the transformation was complete long before anyone noticed it. Orwell, writing as a democratic socialist who had seen the Russian Revolution decay into Stalin's dictatorship, wants his reader to feel shock, but he does not want them to feel surprised. The ending is shocking because it is so inevitable: a warning that any revolution which allows power to go unchecked will end by recreating the tyranny it was meant to destroy.

Question number	
18	Orwell uses Snowball to explore a troubling question about leadership: is an intelligent, idealistic leader enough to protect a revolution? Snowball is the most attractive of the pigs, brave, inventive and genuinely committed to Animalism, yet Orwell presents him as a leader who fails because he relies on argument rather than force, and who is ultimately more useful to Napoleon as an absent enemy than he ever was as a rival. Through him, Orwell shows how power is seized and kept in a totalitarian state. From the beginning, Orwell sets Snowball against Napoleon. Snowball is described as "a more vivacious pig than Napoleon, quicker in speech and more inventive", whereas Napoleon has "a reputation for getting his own way". The contrast suggests two models of leadership: one based on ideas and persuasion, the other on will and control. Tellingly, Orwell adds that Snowball was not thought to have "the same depth of character", which hints that the animals, and perhaps the reader, may be dazzled by his energy without trusting it. This mirrors the historical rivalry between Trotsky, the brilliant orator and organiser of the Red Army, and Stalin, the quieter bureaucrat who controlled the party machine. Snowball's early actions show leadership as education and organisation. He paints the Seven Commandments on the barn wall and, when the less intelligent animals struggle, reduces them to the maxim "Four legs good, two legs bad". He sets up committees, such as the Egg Production Committee and the Whiter Wool Movement, and Orwell's gently comic tone here suggests idealism that is well meant but slightly absurd. The Wild Comrades' Re-education Committee fails completely, which hints that Snowball's faith in theory exceeds his grasp of reality. Even so, his aim is that every animal should be able to think, a sharp contrast with Napoleon, who takes the puppies away to "educate" them privately into a secret police.

Question number

Snowball's courage is clearest at the Battle of the Cowshed. Orwell tells us he had studied an old book of Julius Caesar's campaigns, and his strategy defeats Jones. He leads the charge, is wounded, and is awarded "Animal Hero, First Class". Napoleon, significantly, is absent from the narrative of the battle. However, Orwell complicates this heroism. When Boxer grieves for the stable lad he thinks he has killed, Snowball replies, "War is war. The only good human being is a dead one." This brutal pragmatism shows that even the idealistic leader is willing to accept violence for the cause, and it reminds us that Trotsky himself had led the Red Army with ruthlessness. Similarly, Snowball does not object when the pigs keep the milk and apples for themselves, since Orwell notes that all the pigs, "even Snowball and Napoleon", agreed. The corruption of the revolution therefore begins with the whole ruling class, not just one villain.

The windmill debate is the turning point. Snowball's vision of electricity, heated stalls and a shorter working week is a utopian dream of progress, echoing Trotsky's commitment to industrialisation and spreading revolution abroad, as Snowball wants to send pigeons to stir up rebellion on other farms. His speech wins over the animals, and here Orwell reveals the weakness of leadership by persuasion: Napoleon simply utters a strange, high-pitched whimper, and nine enormous dogs chase Snowball off the farm. Orwell's description of Snowball racing across the pasture, slipping through a hole in the hedge, is swift and undignified. Eloquence, the scene suggests, is powerless against violence.

After his exile Snowball becomes even more important to Napoleon. Squealer rewrites history so that Snowball was a traitor in league with Jones, and he is blamed for every misfortune, including the collapse of the windmill. Animals are forced to confess to plotting with him and are executed. Snowball becomes a

Question number

scapegoat, a figure for the propaganda image of Trotsky after his exile in 1929, and Orwell shows that a dictator needs an invisible enemy to justify fear and obedience. Napoleon even adopts the windmill plan as his own, proving that the conflict was never really about ideas but about power.

Ultimately, Orwell does not present Snowball as a lost hero who would have saved the farm. He is braver and more principled than Napoleon, yet he accepts pig privilege and shows a capacity for ruthlessness. Through him, Orwell suggests that idealistic leadership is fragile, that history is written by those who win, and that a revolution which concentrates power in a small elite will betray its people whoever leads it.

19 Ishiguro certainly presents Ruth as selfish for much of Never Let Me Go: she lies, manipulates and deliberately keeps Kathy and Tommy apart. Yet I would argue that he presents her selfishness as a symptom rather than simply a flaw. Ruth's need to control, to pretend and to be admired grows out of a system that denies the clones any future, and by the end Ishiguro allows her a moment of genuine selflessness which complicates any simple judgement.

Even as a child at Hailsham, Ruth needs to be at the centre. She invents the secret guard to protect Miss Geraldine and decides who may join, using the game to build a little court around herself. The episode of the pencil case is revealing: Ruth hints that it was a secret present from Miss Geraldine, and Kathy, who suspects it came from the Sales, gently exposes the lie by mentioning the Exchange register. What is striking is Kathy's reaction. She feels guilty and spends time making it up to Ruth. Ishiguro filters Ruth through Kathy's first-person narration, so we see Ruth's selfishness alongside Kathy's loyalty, and the reader

Question number

may sense that Ruth's lies come from a craving for specialness in a place where no child has parents to make them feel special.

At the Cottages Ruth's behaviour becomes more obviously self-serving. She copies the mannerisms of the veteran couples, which Kathy points out were copied from television, and she distances herself from Hailsham to impress Chrissie and Rodney. Ishiguro presents her as performing an adult identity she cannot really have. More painfully, she uses her relationship with Tommy to hurt Kathy. Kathy's narration, with its careful hedging, its admissions that memory may be unreliable and its habit of revisiting events, makes us aware that this is a partial account, but the pattern is consistent: Ruth humiliates Tommy over his animal drawings by implying that Kathy laughs at them, and she warns Kathy that Tommy would never want her because of the boys she has slept with. These are calculated cruelties designed to keep the people she loves under her control.

The Norfolk trip shows a different side. Ruth hopes to see her "possible", the woman who might be her original, working in a smart office like the one in a magazine advert she has always dreamed of. When the woman turns out not to be a match, Ruth's anger erupts: "We're modelled from trash." Here her selfishness looks more like despair. Her dream of an office job is one of the few hopes she has allowed herself, and Ishiguro shows that its collapse leaves her lashing out because she has no other way to process the truth. A reader might judge this as self-pity, yet it is also one of the clearest moments where a clone voices the system's contempt for them.

Ishiguro's structure is crucial to how far we condemn Ruth. In Part Three she is weak after her first donation, and on the trip to see the stranded boat she confesses to Kathy and Tommy that she kept them apart deliberately, and she

Question number

gives them Madame's address so that they can apply for a deferral. She admits that it should have been the two of them all along. This apology is presented without melodrama, in Kathy's understated voice, which makes it more moving. Ruth is trying to give them the future she cannot have, and the act is entirely unselfish. Of course, Miss Emily later reveals that deferrals never existed, so Ruth's gift is also tragically empty. Shortly afterwards she "completes" on her second donation, the euphemism stripping her death of any dignity.

Contextually, Ishiguro wrote the novel in the years after Dolly the sheep was cloned in 1996, when cloning raised urgent ethical fears. Rather than focusing on science, he explores what makes the clones human, and Ruth's flaws are part of that answer. Her jealousy, insecurity and need to be loved are ordinary human weaknesses. If the Hailsham guardians were trying to prove the clones had souls through their art, Ruth's very selfishness proves it too.

Overall, Ishiguro presents Ruth as selfish to a significant extent, especially at the Cottages, but he does not present her as a villain. Through Kathy's forgiving narration and Ruth's final confession, he suggests that her selfishness is the defensive reaction of a young woman denied a future, and that her final act of generosity reveals the capacity for love that the society around her refuses to recognise.

20 I largely agree that Ishiguro creates a nightmarish vision of society in Never Let Me Go, but its horror is not the loud, violent nightmare of conventional science fiction. Instead, Ishiguro presents a society that has calmly accepted the farming of human beings for their organs, and the most disturbing feature is how ordinary it all seems, both to the wider public and to the clones themselves. The nightmare

Question number

lies in its quietness.

The novel opens with Kathy's calm, conversational voice: "My name is Kathy H. I'm thirty-one years old, and I've been a carer now for over eleven years." The tone is almost like a job interview, and the missing surname immediately hints that something is wrong. Words such as "carer", "donor" and "donations" sound gentle and even charitable, and the deaths of donors are described as "completing". Ishiguro uses this euphemistic language to show how a society disguises atrocity as routine. The reader slowly realises that these terms describe young people being harvested until they die, and the gap between Kathy's appealing, friendly narration and what is actually happening is deeply unsettling.

Hailsham itself appears idyllic, with its art lessons, Sales and Exchanges, yet Ishiguro scatters clues that something is wrong. The guardians speak of the importance of keeping healthy and of smoking being especially wrong for the students, and Madame recoils from the children as if they were spiders. Miss Lucy finally tells them that they have been "told and not told", and that their futures have already been decided. Ishiguro deliberately delays the full revelation, so the reader experiences the same slow dawning that the children do. The woods behind Hailsham, about which the students tell horror stories of a boy who ran away and was found dead, act as a metaphor for the terrifying future beyond the boundary, and for the way fear keeps them obedient without the need for fences.

The wider society is perhaps the most nightmarish element, because it is largely invisible. The "normals" appear only briefly: the woman in the office at Norfolk, the people who pass by without noticing. The clones' terror of them, and Madame's reaction, show how the clones are regarded as less than human. At the end, Miss Emily reveals that Hailsham was an experiment to show that the students had

Question number

souls, and she explains that the public wanted the cures but preferred not to think about where the organs came from. Ishiguro suggests that the true horror lies not in science but in human willingness to look away. The scandal over the scientist Morningdale, which shuts down progressive schools like Hailsham, shows that this society would rather keep clones in worse conditions than face uncomfortable questions.

The characters' different responses deepen the nightmare. Ruth's outburst that they are "modelled from trash" reveals the self-loathing the system instils. Tommy's screaming fit in the field after learning the deferral rumour is false is the novel's rawest expression of rage, but it is short-lived. No one runs away or rebels. Kathy accepts her role as a carer, then as a future donor, and this acceptance is perhaps the most chilling aspect: the society has been so successful that its victims police themselves.

However, Ishiguro does not present a world without light. Kathy's love for Tommy and Ruth, her treasured cassette with the song "Never Let Me Go", Tommy's imaginative animals and the friendships formed at Hailsham all show the clones' humanity. These moments of tenderness make the society more nightmarish by contrast, because they prove what is being destroyed. Madame's memory of watching Kathy dance to the song, and seeing a world that is efficient but "harsh" and "cruel", shows that even those who run the system recognise its inhumanity.

Contextually, Ishiguro wrote the novel after the cloning of Dolly the sheep in 1996, but he sets it in an alternative England of the late 1990s rather than the future. This choice resists the label of science fiction and makes the dystopia feel close and plausible. The final scene in Norfolk, where Kathy stands at a fence covered in rubbish and imagines Tommy appearing, ends with her turning back to the car to

Question number

drive "to wherever it was I was supposed to be". The passive phrase sums up the society perfectly. Ishiguro's vision is nightmarish precisely because it is so quiet, so reasonable and so accepted, and he wants his readers to ask what injustices their own society tolerates by choosing not to look.

21 Syal presents Meena's relationship with her mother as loving but frequently strained, shaped by the gap between a girl desperate to belong in an English mining village and a mother who holds tightly to her Punjabi values. Because the novel is a bildungsroman, the relationship is not fixed: Syal traces Meena's journey from resentment and rebellion towards a mature understanding of the sacrifices her mother has made, so that by the end the relationship becomes one of the clearest measures of how much Meena has grown up.

Syal establishes the tension through Meena's narrative voice from the opening line: "I'm not really a liar, I just learned very early on that those of us deprived of history need to organise our own mythology." The adult narrator looks back with wry humour at a child who tells stories and bends the truth, and much of this lying is directed at her parents. Early episodes, such as Meena taking sweets from the local shop and inventing excuses, show her testing her mother's moral authority. Her mother's response is strict and principled, and the reader senses that, for her, honesty and good behaviour are part of what it means to be a respectable Indian family in a hostile place. The comedy of Meena's excuses is balanced by her guilt, showing that she still craves her mother's approval.

A key source of Meena's feelings is the contrast between herself and her mother. Her mother is graceful, beautiful and elegant in her saris, and Meena notices that the people of Tollington admire her. Meena, by contrast, sees herself as clumsy,

Question number

loud and unfeminine. Syal uses first-person commentary to show a mixture of pride and inadequacy: Meena wants to be like her mother but also feels she can never live up to her. This makes her rebellion partly a defence, since if she cannot be the perfect Indian daughter, she will instead try to be one of the Tollington girls.

Anita becomes the focus of this conflict. Meena's mother distrusts Anita and her family, and Meena experiences this as unfair snobbery. Syal lets the reader see what Meena cannot yet see: Anita is manipulative and cruel, and her mother's instincts are sound. The dramatic irony created by the older narrator looking back on her younger self allows Syal to present the mother's caution sympathetically even when Meena resents it. The clash also reflects a wider cultural contrast. Meena's mother has clear ideas about how a girl should behave, while the freedoms of Anita's world, with its boys, its swearing and its lack of supervision, seem thrilling to Meena. Syal uses this to explore the pressure on second-generation children caught between two sets of values.

The birth of Meena's brother Sunil marks a turning point. Her mother is exhausted and unwell, and Meena feels jealous and pushed aside, which she expresses through bad behaviour. Yet Syal also allows Meena to glimpse her mother as a vulnerable woman rather than simply an authority figure. The arrival of Nanima from India eases the strain: Nanima cares for the baby and gives Meena the attention she craves, and through her grandmother's stories Meena begins to understand where her mother comes from. Syal suggests that it is through the wider family, a source of strength in their Punjabi culture, that Meena learns to see her mother more clearly.

Meena's accident, when she breaks her leg falling from a horse, deepens this shift.

Question number

In hospital she sees her parents' worry and devotion, and the reflective tone of these chapters reveals a growing appreciation. Syal also shows how racism shapes their bond. When Meena witnesses the hostility of Sam Lowbridge and others towards Indian people, she begins to understand why her mother is protective. Writing about the late 1960s and early 1970s, when anti-immigrant feeling was openly expressed in Britain, Syal shows that the mother's strictness is partly a response to living as an outsider in a community that does not always welcome her.

By the end of the novel, when Meena passes the eleven-plus and the family leave Tollington, the relationship has matured. The narrative voice becomes more measured, and Meena recognises that her mother has given up the comfort of her own family and status in India to build a life for her children. Syal therefore presents the relationship as one of misunderstanding gradually giving way to respect. Through Meena's honest and often funny narration, she suggests that growing up involves learning to see one's parents as people, and that Meena's acceptance of her mother is bound up with her acceptance of her own Indian identity.

22 Syal shows that Punjabi heritage is not simply a set of customs for Meena's family but the foundation of their identity, their dignity and their survival in Tollington. For her parents it is a source of strength in a village where they are visible outsiders, while for Meena it is at first something embarrassing to be hidden. The novel traces her journey from rejecting that heritage to embracing it, and in doing so Syal celebrates the importance of knowing where you come from.

Syal presents the family's heritage most vividly through the gatherings of the

Question number

"aunties" and "uncles", the other Punjabi families who are not blood relatives but are treated as extended family. At these evenings there is food, gossip, laughter and music, and Meena's father sings with such feeling that the songs seem to carry the listeners back to India. Syal's descriptions are warm and sensuous, full of colour and noise, in deliberate contrast to the grey, cramped terraces of the mining village. These evenings show that, for the adults, shared language and culture recreate a sense of home and belonging. Meena often observes them with the restless humour of a child, but the adult narrator's affectionate tone suggests that she now values what she once took for granted.

The family's heritage is also bound up with history and loss. Meena learns about the violence of Partition in 1947 through family stories, and these accounts of bloodshed and displacement give their quiet dignity in England a deeper meaning. Syal uses these stories to suggest that the family's attachment to their culture is not nostalgia but a way of holding on to what has already been taken from them once. Their respectability, their emphasis on education and their high expectations for Meena are part of the same inheritance. Her mother, a teacher from a cultured family, and her father, a thoughtful and dignified man, both see learning as a way of protecting their children.

Meena's response to this heritage is the main source of conflict and humour. She longs for fish fingers instead of her mother's cooking and wants to be like the Tollington girls, and she is often embarrassed by her family's difference. Syal's comic first-person narration exposes the absurdity of some of these cultural clashes, but it also reveals Meena's pain at belonging fully to neither world. Her friendship with Anita represents the pull of white working-class English culture, and her desire to fit in leads her to reject the language and traditions her parents value. The adult narrator's ironic distance allows the reader to see that what

Question number

Meena dismisses is precious.

The arrival of Nanima is the turning point. Nanima speaks almost no English, yet she becomes Meena's closest companion, and Meena begins to speak Punjabi with her with new confidence. Syal presents language here as a means of connection rather than a barrier: through Punjabi, Meena gains access to Nanima's stories of India, her strength and her humour. Nanima is earthy, funny and fearless, and she challenges Meena's assumption that Indian culture is old-fashioned or shameful. Through her, Meena discovers that her heritage offers her a history of her own, answering the novel's opening idea that those "deprived of history" must invent their own mythology.

Racism makes the family's heritage both more vulnerable and more important. Syal sets the novel in the late 1960s and early 1970s, a period when anti-immigrant rhetoric was common in Britain, and she shows the increasing hostility towards Indian people in the area, most shockingly when Sam Lowbridge and his friends are linked to a violent attack on an Indian man. Sam's open racism forces Meena to recognise that she will never be accepted on Anita's terms. In contrast, the family respond to prejudice with pride and restraint, drawing strength from their community. Syal suggests that their heritage gives them a dignity that the hostile world around them cannot destroy.

By the end, Meena has learned to value who she is. As she leaves Tollington for grammar school, she no longer wishes to be someone else, and the novel's reflective conclusion shows her accepting both her Indian and her English identities. Syal, who grew up in a similar Punjabi family in a Black Country village, uses Meena's story to show that heritage provides love, belonging and resilience. The family's culture is important because it gives them a home within themselves,

Question number

even in a place that is not always willing to make them feel at home.

23 Kelman presents London as a place where violence is so woven into young people's lives that it has become normal, almost invisible to those who live with it. By filtering this world through the eyes of Harrison Opoku, an eleven-year-old newly arrived from Ghana, he makes the brutality all the more shocking, because Harrison's innocence and enthusiasm keep colliding with a reality that he does not fully understand. Kelman's purpose is to show how an urban environment can destroy childhood itself.

The novel begins with violence. A boy has been stabbed to death outside a fast-food shop, and Harrison describes the scene and the blood on the pavement with wide-eyed curiosity rather than horror. This matter-of-fact tone is unsettling: Harrison's narration treats the murder almost as an exciting puzzle, and he and his friend Dean decide to investigate like detectives on television. Kelman uses this childish framing to highlight how desensitised young people have become, and how a death can become a spectacle. The killing echoes the real murder of ten-year-old Damilola Taylor in Peckham in 2000, a case that shocked Britain and raised urgent questions about knife crime and the safety of children on inner-city estates.

Harrison's first-person voice is the key method through which Kelman presents violence. His Ghanaian English and playground slang, with words like "asweh" and "hutious", create a voice that is funny, energetic and full of wonder. He is delighted by small things: his trainers, Haribo sweets, being the fastest runner in his year. This optimism makes the violence around him stand out starkly, because the reader recognises dangers that Harrison misreads or brushes aside. Kelman creates dramatic irony throughout, as we understand that his amateur

Question number

"investigation" is putting him in real danger long before he does.

The Dell Farm Crew embody the violence of the estate. They are only teenagers, yet they rule through fear, carrying weapons, robbing people and pressuring younger children to prove themselves. Harrison is both frightened of them and drawn to them, and his descriptions show how gangs offer status and protection in a place where children feel unsafe. The tests and dares the Crew set reveal how violence is passed down from older boys to younger ones as a kind of initiation. The contrast between Harrison's gentle, innocent language and the threatening, aggressive speech of the gang members emphasises how quickly a child can be pulled into a culture of intimidation.

Violence also appears in more casual forms at school and on the street. Fights break out regularly, insults turn into threats, and Harrison seems to accept these as part of everyday life. Kelman suggests that the line between ordinary teenage aggression and lethal violence is dangerously thin. Harrison's sister Lydia and her friends show how girls, too, are drawn into the Crew's world, and the pressure on Lydia demonstrates that no young person in the community is free from its influence.

The pigeon chapters offer a different perspective. Written in a lyrical, almost spiritual voice, they present the pigeon as a guardian who watches over Harrison and comments on human behaviour. These interludes contrast with the noise and fear of the estate, creating moments of calm that underline how little protection Harrison really has. The pigeon's tenderness also reminds the reader of what is at stake: a vulnerable child in a city that does not look after its young.

Kelman's structure builds steadily towards tragedy. As Harrison gets closer to the

Question number

truth about the murder, the threats from the Crew become more direct, and the novel ends with Harrison himself being stabbed. The ending is devastating precisely because his voice has been so full of life. Kelman forces the reader to see that the opening murder was not a one-off but part of a cycle that has now claimed another child. Harrison's perspective as an immigrant also matters here, since he came to London hoping for a better life, and the city's violence betrays that hope.

Ultimately, Kelman presents London as a place where violence is a constant threat for young people, especially those who are poor, vulnerable or new. Through Harrison's naive but loveable narration, he exposes how this violence erodes childhood innocence, and he challenges readers to recognise that such deaths are not inevitable but the result of a society that has failed to protect its children.

24 Kelman presents Harrison's relationships with other teenagers as a mixture of genuine warmth and constant danger. Harrison is eager to be liked and to belong, and he approaches friendship, love and rivalry with an openness that marks him out from those around him. Through these relationships, Kelman explores how the pressures of a violent inner-city environment shape young people, and how Harrison's innocence, his greatest strength, also leaves him dangerously exposed.

Harrison's friendship with Dean is the warmest and most stable relationship in the novel. Together they play detective after the murder, gathering "evidence" and watching suspects with the seriousness of television investigators. Kelman presents their partnership with gentle comedy: Dean confidently explains the tricks of police work, and Harrison believes him completely. Their dialogue shows a childhood friendship based on imagination and shared excitement, a reminder of how young

Question number

they really are. Yet the game is also deadly serious, since their investigation leads them closer to the Dell Farm Crew. Kelman uses the friendship to show children trying to make sense of adult violence through play.

His relationship with Poppy is presented with similar tenderness. Harrison is clearly smitten, and his narration of their moments together is full of shy delight and boasting. Kelman captures the excitement of a first crush through Harrison's breathless, exaggerated language, and the innocence of the relationship contrasts sharply with the more sexualised and aggressive behaviour of the older teenagers around him. Poppy represents a kind of normal childhood that the estate threatens to take away.

By contrast, his relationship with Jordan is more competitive and unstable. Jordan is boastful and quick to insult, and he and Harrison swing between friendship and rivalry. Kelman uses Jordan's harsher, more aggressive language to contrast with Harrison's sweetness, showing how many boys on the estate perform toughness to survive. Harrison's desire to impress Jordan and others is also seen in his obsession with trainers and status. He even draws stripes on his trainers with a marker pen so they look like a famous brand, a detail which is both funny and poignant, revealing how much he wants to fit in and how little money his family has.

The most threatening relationships are with the Dell Farm Crew. X-Fire and Killa hold power over younger children through fear, and Harrison is drawn into their orbit, partly because he wants respect and partly because there is no easy way to refuse them. Kelman presents these encounters with growing tension. The Crew speak in threatening street slang, while Harrison's narration often misinterprets their intentions or treats them as exciting rather than frightening. This gap between what Harrison understands and what the reader sees creates dramatic

Question number

irony and a mounting sense of dread. The Crew's tests and their attempts to recruit him show how teenage gang culture feeds on the need for belonging.

Harrison's sister Lydia and her friends, including the intimidating Miquita, give a glimpse of older teenage girls caught up in the same world. Miquita is tough and streetwise, and her connection to the Crew shows how relationships between teenagers on the estate are tangled up with loyalty, fear and violence. Lydia's attempts to protect Harrison, while also being pressured herself, suggest that even sibling relationships are strained by this environment.

Kelman's use of Harrison's distinctive voice is vital in presenting all these relationships. His Ghanaian expressions and playground slang, such as "asweh" and "hutious", mark him as an outsider who is still learning the codes of London teenage life. He applies the values of home, where respect and community matter, to a place where these can be exploited. His naivety makes him lovable but also unaware of how quickly rivalry can turn lethal.

Kelman wrote the novel partly in response to the killing of Damilola Taylor, a young Nigerian boy, in Peckham in 2000, and the ending, in which Harrison is stabbed, shows the tragic consequences of the teenage world he has tried so hard to enter. Through Harrison's relationships, Kelman suggests that young people's need for friendship and acceptance is universal, but that in a violent environment, without adults who can protect them, even these natural desires can become dangerous. Harrison's innocence, which makes his friendships so touching, is precisely what this world cannot allow to survive.

25 Both Simon Armitage and Cecil Day-Lewis present growing up as a necessary but

Question number

painful separation, a moment when the bond between parent and child is stretched until it must either hold or break. In "Mother, any distance" the son is the speaker, poised on the edge of independence, while in "Walking Away" the father looks back on his son's first steps away from him. Together, the poems suggest that growing up is not something a child does alone: it is a shared process in which love is measured by how far a parent is willing to let go.

Armitage uses the extended metaphor of the tape measure to make the invisible distance between mother and son tangible. The opening line, "Mother, any distance greater than a single span / requires a second pair of hands", sounds practical, yet it quietly admits that the speaker still needs his mother at the very moment he is moving into a home of his own. Day-Lewis, by contrast, presents distance through the cosmic simile "like a satellite / Wrenched from its orbit, go drifting away". The violent verb "Wrenched" suggests that, for the parent, a child's first independence feels like a sudden loss of gravity, whereas Armitage's tape "unreeling / years between us" makes growing up gradual and measurable. In both poems, however, physical distance becomes a symbol of emotional change.

The poets also explore how the child and the parent feel about this change. Armitage's hyperbolic "the acres of the walls, the prairies of the floors" captures the excitement and slight intimidation of a young man facing adult life: his new house seems as vast and open as a frontier. Day-Lewis focuses instead on the vulnerability of the child, describing "the pathos of a half-fledged thing set free / Into a wilderness". The image of a young bird not yet ready to fly shows the father's protective anxiety, and "wilderness" contrasts sharply with Armitage's hopeful "prairies". Perhaps this reflects perspective: the child sees possibility, while the parent sees danger.

Question number

Both poems use images of connection that are on the point of snapping. The minor sentence "Anchor. Kite." is one of the most striking moments in Armitage's poem. The mother is the "Anchor", stable and grounding, while the son is the "Kite", free but still tethered. The full stops isolate the two roles, perhaps suggesting that each is becoming separate. Day-Lewis offers a similar natural image when his son is "Like a winged seed loosened from its parent stem". The word "loosened" is gentler than "Wrenched", and it implies that separation is part of nature's design, the "give-and-take" which allows new life to grow. Where Armitage's image is man-made and slightly fragile, Day-Lewis's suggests that growing up is inevitable and natural.

Structurally, the two poems build towards a moment of release. Armitage's poem resembles a sonnet that has been stretched beyond its usual fourteen lines, as if the form itself is reaching "to breaking point, where something / has to give". The enjambment across these lines mimics the tension in the tape, and the short line "has to give;" creates a pause where the reader, like the son, hangs between two lives. The poem ends with an open choice: "a hatch that opens on an endless sky / to fall or fly." The rhyme of "sky" and "fly" offers hope, yet the alternative "fall" keeps the ending ambiguous: independence brings risk as well as freedom. Day-Lewis's ending is reflective rather than suspended. The father admits that "none" of his partings "so / Gnaws at my mind still", and the verb "Gnaws" conveys a persistent, almost physical ache eighteen years later. His final lines resolve this pain into wisdom: "How selfhood begins with a walking away, / And love is proved in the letting go."

These endings reveal the poets' different purposes. Armitage, writing in the early 1990s as a young man himself, presents growing up from the inside, with the mother's "fingertips still pinch / the last one-hundredth of an inch", a tender

Question number

detail which suggests she cannot quite let go, even if he must. Day-Lewis, writing about his son Sean, offers the older generation's perspective, and his reference to what "God alone could perfectly show" gives the experience a spiritual dimension, as if letting go of a child is a kind of sacrifice. Ultimately, both poets suggest that growing up redefines love rather than ending it: Armitage's son reaches outward while still connected, and Day-Lewis's father learns that the truest proof of love is allowing a child to walk away.

26 Both Ted Hughes and Wilfred Owen present war as a force that strips soldiers of their humanity and exposes the patriotic ideals used to send them into battle as hollow. In "Bayonet Charge" the effect of war is sudden terror in a single moment of attack, while in "Exposure" it is the slow, freezing despair of men who are waiting for something to happen. Despite this difference in pace, both poets use the natural world and a shift in focus away from glory to reveal that the real enemy is the experience of war itself.

The poems open in very different ways, which shapes how the effects of war are felt. Hughes throws the reader straight into chaos: "Suddenly he awoke and was running". The adverb "Suddenly" and the present participle "running" suggest that the soldier has no time to think, as if he has been jolted from a dream into a nightmare. Owen, by contrast, begins with stillness and pain: "Our brains ache, in the merciless iced east winds that knive us". The collective pronoun "Our" makes his poem a shared testimony from the trenches, whereas Hughes's third person "he" presents an anonymous soldier who could be any man. Owen's personification of the wind as a weapon that "knive us" suggests that nature attacks the men more cruelly than the enemy, a central idea in his poem.

Question number

Both poets show how war dehumanises soldiers through violent, unsettling imagery. Hughes's soldier "lugged a rifle numb as a smashed arm", a simile which makes the weapon feel like a useless part of his own injured body, and the "patriotic tear" is now "Sweating like molten iron from the centre of his chest". The emotion that may have made him enlist has been transformed into something heavy, industrial and painful. Owen's men suffer a quieter but equally disturbing transformation. The frost causes "Shrivelling many hands, and puckering foreheads crisp", and by the end the burial party pause over "half-known faces", and "All their eyes are ice". The soldiers are being turned into objects by the cold, just as Hughes's soldier becomes a part of the machinery of war.

Nature is central to both poems, but it is presented differently. In "Bayonet Charge" it is the innocent victim. The "yellow hare that rolled like a flame / And crawled in a threshing circle" reflects the soldier's own agony, and its "mouth wide / Open silent" is a haunting image of a scream that nobody hears. This moment seems to shock the soldier into a new awareness of suffering. In "Exposure" nature is the aggressor: "Dawn massing in the east her melancholy army / Attacks once more in ranks on shivering ranks of grey". The military metaphor inverts the expected order, so the weather becomes the true enemy, and Owen observes that bullets are "Less deadly than the air that shudders black with snow". Perhaps both poets are suggesting that war corrupts the natural world, either by destroying it or by turning it against man.

Structure is used to convey confusion and futility. Hughes's poem moves through three stanzas that follow the charge, but the middle stanza freezes time: the soldier's "foot hung like / Statuary in mid-stride". The enjambment suspends the line just as the soldier is suspended, and he asks "In what cold clockwork of the stars and the nations / Was he the hand pointing that second?". The metaphor

Question number

presents him as a tiny cog in a mechanism controlled by powers he cannot understand. Owen creates futility through repetition: several stanzas end with the short refrain "But nothing happens", and the rhetorical question "What are we doing here?" echoes Hughes's questioning of "the reason / Of his still running". Owen's half-rhymes, such as "knive us" and "nervous", sound slightly wrong, reflecting a world that has fallen out of harmony.

Finally, both poems attack the language of patriotism. Hughes lists "King, honour, human dignity, etcetera", and the dismissive "etcetera" shows these ideals collapsing into meaningless words, dropped "like luxuries" as terror becomes "touchy dynamite". Owen's critique is more spiritual. Imagining home, the ghosts find "on us the doors are closed", and he fears that "love of God seems dying". Owen, who died in 1918 a week before the Armistice, was writing from direct experience to counter the jingoism of poets like Jessie Pope, while Hughes, writing in the 1950s, drew on his father's memories of Gallipoli to imagine a soldier's moment of realisation. Both, therefore, present war's deepest effect as the destruction of belief: Hughes's soldier loses faith in the cause in a single instant, while Owen's men slowly lose faith in everything.

27.1 In "Autumn", Alan Bold presents the season as a cunning thief whose crime gradually transforms the whole world, turning the abundance of summer into loss, chaos and, finally, a suppressed anger.

The central effect is established through the extended metaphor of crime. Autumn "arrives / Like an experienced robber", and the adjective "experienced" implies that this theft happens every year, with practised skill. The present participle "Grabbing the green stuff" is deliberately colloquial: "green stuff" could refer to leaves, but it

Question number

also carries the slang meaning of money, which makes the robbery feel real and slightly comic. The alliteration of "Grabbing" and "green" adds a harsh, plosive force, suggesting that the loss of summer's life is sudden and greedy.

However, the poet complicates this by showing that autumn's effects are not entirely negative. The thief is "cunningly covering his tracks / With a deep multitude / Of colourful distractions". The sibilant and hard "c" sounds in "cunningly covering" create a sly tone, and the phrase "colourful distractions" acknowledges the beauty of autumn leaves while presenting it as a trick. Perhaps Bold suggests that we are too easily charmed by appearances to notice what we have lost.

The introduction of the wind as "his accomplice" broadens the effect from loss to disorder. The repetition in "And the wind, / The wind is his accomplice" slows the reader down, as if the speaker is pausing to identify a second suspect. The wind is "Putting an air of chaos / Into the careful diversions", and the pun on "air" is effective: the wind literally brings air, but it also creates an atmosphere of confusion. The verbs "shake" and "blown" make the effects physical and restless, and the image of dead leaves blown "In the faces of inquisitive strangers" suggests that anyone who asks questions is literally pushed away. The word "dead" is a stark reminder of mortality beneath the colour.

The final lines widen the effect to the entire planet. "The theft chills the world" moves the poem from a single scene to something global, and the verb "chills" works both literally, as the temperature drops, and emotionally, as if the crime has left everyone uneasy. Autumn "Changes the temper of the earth", where "temper" can mean both climate and mood. This prepares for the closing image: "the normally placid sky / Glows red with a quiet rage." The oxymoron "quiet rage" is

Question number

the poem's most powerful moment. The red of an autumn sunset is reinterpreted as anger, perhaps the earth's resentment at being robbed, yet it remains "quiet", suggesting a powerless, simmering fury rather than open violence.

Structurally, the poem is a single, compact stanza of short lines, which mirrors the swift and continuous nature of the theft: there are no breaks, just as the season moves without pause. The long final line contrasts with the brevity of the lines before it, as if the sky's rage is the inevitable, lingering consequence of everything that has happened. The poem moves from crime to consequence, almost like a crime report.

Overall, Bold presents autumn's effects as both seductive and destructive. The season dazzles us with colour, but its true effect is a theft of life that leaves the world colder, more chaotic and quietly enraged.

27.2 Both poets use extended metaphor to convey their attitudes, but to opposite effect. Bold presents autumn as an "experienced robber", so the season is something that takes and traps, whereas Collins presents a spring day through images of release: the urge to "unlatch the door to the canary's cage" and to free the figures in the paperweight. Autumn is viewed with suspicion, spring with joy.

Their language reinforces this. Bold's alliteration in "cunningly covering" creates a sly, negative tone, while Collins's "canary's cage" sounds lighter and leads towards freedom. The garden "bursting with peonies" suggests energy and new life, in contrast to Bold's "dead leaves" and shaking branches. Colour is also used differently: Bold's sky "Glows red with a quiet rage", an oxymoron suggesting suppressed anger, while Collins ends with the calm, open "dome of blue and white".

Question number

Form and structure differ too. Bold's single compact stanza of short lines feels tightly controlled, like the careful crime it describes. Collins uses a series of couplets within one long, flowing sentence, and his conversational voice ("well, today is just that kind of day") delays the main clause until the very end, building anticipation like a held breath. As a result, Bold's attitude feels resentful and uneasy, while Collins's feels expansive and celebratory.