Cambridge Assessment International Education

Cambridge IGCSE™

LITERATURE IN ENGLISH **0475/41**

Paper 4 Unseen **October/November 2025**

1 hour 15 minutes

9997710273

You must answer on the enclosed answer booklet.

You will need: Answer booklet (enclosed)

INSTRUCTIONS

- Answer **one** question: **either** Question 1 **or** Question 2.
- Follow the instructions on the front cover of the answer booklet. If you need additional answer paper, ask the invigilator for a continuation booklet.

INFORMATION

- The total mark for this paper is 25.
- All questions are worth equal marks.

This document has **8** pages. Any blank pages are indicated.

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You are advised to spend about 20 minutes reading the question paper and planning your answer.

Answer **either** Question 1 **or** Question 2.

Either

1 Read carefully the poem on page 3. The poet invites the reader to visit a place between the sidewalk, or pavement, and the road or street. Children have marked arrows on the sidewalk pointing to this place.

How does the poet make the imagined place so inviting?

To help you answer this question, you might consider:

- how the writing conveys the attractiveness of this place
- how the poet contrasts this imagined place and the real world
- the ways in which he persuades us to join his walk.

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Where the Sidewalk Ends

There is a place where the sidewalk ends

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the place where the sidewalk ends.

[1]*asphalt*: tar

Or

2 Read carefully the following extract from the opening of a novel. Isma is about to fly from the UK to the USA for her studies. She is detained and questioned by the British authorities at the airport.

How does the writer make this an intriguing opening to her novel?

To help you answer this question, you might consider:

- how the writer conveys Isma's discomfort in the first paragraph
- the tension between Isma and the woman who questions her
- how the arrival of the man increases the tension.

Isma was going to miss her flight. The ticket wouldn't be refunded because the airline took no responsibility for passengers who arrived at the airport three hours ahead of the departure time and were escorted to an interrogation room. She had expected the interrogation, but not the hours of waiting that would precede it, nor that it would feel so humiliating to have the contents of her suitcase inspected. She'd made sure not to pack anything that would invite comment or questions – no Quran[1], no family pictures, no books on her areas of academic interest – but, even so, the officer took hold of every item of Isma's clothing and ran it between her thumb and fingers, not so much searching for hidden pockets as judging the quality of the material. Finally she reached for the designer-label down[2] jacket Isma had folded over a chair back when she entered and held it up, one hand pinching each shoulder.

'This isn't yours,' she said, and Isma was sure she didn't mean *because it's at least a size too large* but rather *it's too nice for someone like you*.

'I used to work at a dry-cleaning shop. The woman who brought this in said she didn't want it when we couldn't get rid of the stain.' She pointed to the greasemark on the pocket.

'Does the manager know you took it?'

'I was the manager.'

'You were the manager of a dry-cleaning shop and now you're on your way to a PhD programme in sociology in Amherst, Massachusetts?'

'Yes.'

'And how did that happen?'

'My siblings and I were orphaned just after I finished uni[3]. They were twelve years old – twins. I took the first job I could find. Now they've grown up; I can go back to my life.'

'You're going back to your life … in Amherst, Massachusetts.'

'I meant the academic life. My former tutor from LSE[4] teaches in Amherst now, at the university there. Her name is Hira Shah. You can call her. I'll be staying with her when I arrive, until I find a place of my own.'

'In Amherst.'

'No. I don't know. Sorry, do you mean her place or the place of my own? She lives in Northampton – that's close to Amherst. I'll look all around the area for whatever suits me best. So it might be Amherst, but it might not. There are some real-estate[5] listings on my phone. Which you have.' She stopped herself. The official was doing that thing which she'd encountered before in security personnel – staying quiet when you answered their question in a straightforward manner, which made you think you had to say more. And the more you said the more guilty you sounded.

The woman dropped the jacket into the jumble of clothes and shoes and told Isma to wait.

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That had been a while ago. The plane would be boarding now. Isma looked over at the suitcase. She'd repacked when the woman left the room, and spent the time since worrying if doing that without permission constituted an offence. Should she empty the clothes out into a haphazard pile, or would that make things even worse? She stood up, unzipped the suitcase and flipped it open so its contents were visible.

A man entered the office, carrying Isma's passport, laptop and phone. She allowed herself to hope, but he sat down, gestured for her to do the same, and placed a voice recorder between them.

'Do you consider yourself British?' the man said.

'I am British.'

'But do you consider yourself British?'

'I've lived here all my life.' She meant there was no other country of which she could feel herself a part, but the words came out sounding evasive.

[1]*Quran*: Holy book of Islam
[2]*down*: feather-filled
[3]*uni*: (slang) university
[4]*LSE*: a British university
[5]*real-estate*: property

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

Question number

2

The writer makes this an intriguing opening by plunging us into a situation that is already going wrong and then refusing to tell us why. We never learn what Isma is suspected of, and the officials never say, so the reader is placed in her position: anxious, uncertain and forced to read meaning into silence. The intrigue comes less from dramatic action than from the slow pressure of a room in which every word might count against her.

The very first sentence, "Isma was going to miss her flight", is flat and final, as though defeat has arrived before the story begins. The long second sentence then twists into bitter irony: the airline will not refund passengers who arrived "three hours ahead" and were "escorted to an interrogation room". The careful, almost bureaucratic phrasing mimics official language, and the absurdity of the rule exposes how powerless she is. Most intriguing of all is the admission that "She had expected the interrogation". This quietly suggests that such treatment is a familiar part of her life, and it makes us want to know what kind of world, and what kind of identity, makes humiliation predictable. Her careful packing, "no Quran, no family pictures", is heartbreaking, because she has had to erase her faith, her family and even her intellect before she travels. The officer's handling of the clothes is described with telling precision: she runs each item "between her thumb and fingers", not searching but "judging the quality of the material". The search becomes a judgement of Isma herself, and the reader feels the indignity of being assessed rather than investigated.

The tension with the woman is built largely through dialogue that is terse on one side and anxious on the other. "This isn't yours" is an accusation disguised as a

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statement, and the narrator's interpretation, "too nice for someone like you", reveals the unspoken prejudice Isma hears beneath it. The gap between the spoken line and the thought shows how much is communicated without being said, which is exactly what makes the scene so unsettling. Isma's answers are honest and even quietly proud, as in the crisp "I was the manager", yet the officer's questions keep implying disbelief. Her habit of repeating Isma's words back, "In Amherst", is especially chilling. These fragments are not quite questions, so Isma does not know what is being asked, and she begins to over-explain, tangling herself in "her place or the place of my own". The writer then steps back to explain the technique: officials stay "quiet" so that "the more you said the more guilty you sounded". This is a perceptive moment, because it shows that Isma understands the game perfectly and still cannot win it. Her backstory, delivered almost in passing, that she and her siblings "were orphaned", also hints at a painful past the novel will surely explore.

The structure then slows time. "That had been a while ago" opens a gap in which nothing happens, and the reader, like Isma, is left waiting. Her worry about whether repacking "constituted an offence" shows how thoroughly she has internalised suspicion: she polices herself even when no one is watching. Her decision to flip the suitcase open "so its contents were visible" is a small, pitiful gesture of transparency, as if she must prove her innocence to an empty room.

The arrival of the man raises the stakes sharply. He carries her "passport, laptop and phone", the objects that hold her identity and her private life, so he literally holds her in his hands. The short sentence "She allowed herself to hope" is instantly undercut by "but", and the "voice recorder" placed between them turns the conversation into evidence. His question, "Do you consider yourself British?", followed by the pointed repetition "But do you consider", shifts the interrogation

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from her luggage to her loyalty and belonging. Her answer, "I've lived here all my life", is sincere, yet the narrator notes that it came out "sounding evasive". This is a superb ending to the extract, because it shows that even the truth can be made to look like a lie.

The opening is intriguing, then, because it raises questions it will not yet answer: why Isma is suspected, what her family history holds, and whether she will ever be allowed to belong. The writer makes us share her discomfort so fully that we cannot help reading on.