

MATRICULATION AND SECONDARY EDUCATION CERTIFICATE EXAMINATIONS BOARD

UNIVERSITY OF MALTA, MSIDA

MATRICULATION EXAMINATION

INTERMEDIATE LEVEL

MAY 2014

Candidate's Paper

SUBJECT:	ENGLISH – Oral
DATE:	28th March 2014
TIME:	P.M. (10 minutes)

PART 1 – Passage for Reading (5 marks)

For almost a century it has been rusting on a remote part of the Kent marshes. Now, following an investigation by experts for English Heritage, the hull of a First World War German submarine has finally given up its secrets. As part of a major project, marine archaeologists have conducted research into the shipwreck to establish its identity and piece together its final journey.

The vessel, on a creek off the River Medway, is thought to be the only wrecked submarine from the conflict which can be seen from British shores. It is almost completely exposed at low tide and can, with caution, be visited. It was previously thought to be one of either U122, U123 or UB 122, but following the investigation, the team believe they can discount the first two, which were minelayers, because they would have been larger in size.

According to the team's research, the vessel had surrendered at the end of the war, and been taken to Britain. It had later been towed up the Medway to Halling, where its diesel engines were removed and fitted at a local cement works. In 1921, it was being taken back down the river, towards the Thames Estuary to be further dismantled, when its tow broke and it was swept ashore, coming to rest in Humble Bee Creek, near to the Isle of Grain, where it remains.

Mark Dunkley, a marine archaeologist with EH, said: "For most people, U-boats are out of sight. We know many were lost during the First and Second World War. For those that live on the coast, this is a tangible and visible reminder of those that lost their lives at sea."

It has been surveyed by experts from Cotswold Archaeology as part of an English Heritage scheme to locate dozens of British and German submarines which sank off the coast of England during the First World War. The project, to last for another four years, will involve identification and analysis of all submarine shipwrecks from the period which are within territorial waters – 12 miles from the coast.

PART 2 – Discussion on a Topic (Long Turn) (5 marks)

Choose ONE topic from the list below and speak about it for an extended period of time.

- a. Doing business ethically
- b. Beach parties in Malta
- c. The advantages of Dance
- d. Is it possible to live without the latest technology?
- e. Cruise ships
- f. An exciting future

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MAY 2014
Candidate's Paper

SUBJECT:	ENGLISH – Oral
DATE:	1st April 2014
TIME:	P.M. (10 minutes)

PART 1 – Passage for Reading (5 marks)

Mindfulness. If you're not yet familiar with the concept, it might be a good idea to familiarise yourself with it now, because you'll be hearing a lot about it in 2014 – from business leaders, academics, politicians and educationalists.

It has been discussed as a therapy in relation to both unemployment and depression. But it isn't about zoning out. If anything, it's about zooming in: paying attention to the present and decluttering the brain to make room for creativity. To that end, mindfulness training has been embraced by organisations as diverse as Google and Transport for London, by way of an antidote to the relentless pressure and information overload common in many workplaces.

Many of us have so much on our minds at any given time that we function quite regularly on autopilot. It's not uncommon to set off in your car and arrive at your destination only to realise you remember nothing about the journey, or walk into a room to accomplish a task only to forget instantly what it was you wanted to do.

Mindfulness teaches individuals to be present in the moment rather than being distracted about the past or projecting into the future. It doesn't stop you feeling emotions, but it does allow you to deal with them more dispassionately.

The technique draws on the breathing exercises commonly used in meditation and yoga, but there the comparison ends. The aim is to become more aware of thoughts and feelings, in a non-judgmental way, so that instead of being overwhelmed by them, we can manage them better.

Modern crises such as a deluge of work-related emails or a clash of personalities are complex and require flexibility and emotional intelligence, but in its primitive state of high alert, the brain fixates on the immediate problem rather than thinking strategically.

The practice of mindfulness has been shown to calm the body down. It's not just beneficial to adults; when applied in schools, mindfulness increases both children's self-esteem and performance in class.

So if you would like an enhanced emotional equilibrium, a greater sense of perspective and a feeling that you can cope with the challenges life brings, mindfulness could well be the way forward. You have nothing to lose but your stress.

PART 2 – Discussion on a Topic (Long Turn) (5 marks)

Choose ONE topic from the list below and speak about it for an extended period of time.

- a. Water sports in Malta
- b. Living on an island is tough
- c. Sustainable tourism
- d. Moving house
- e. Good food
- f. Is the idea of intelligent robots wonderful or scary?

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MAY 2014

Candidate's Paper

SUBJECT:	ENGLISH – Oral
DATE:	2nd April 2014
TIME:	P.M. (10 minutes)

PART 1 – Passage for Reading (5 marks)

New York City is the greenest place on Earth. Not in terms of actual greenery: as of 2007, New York had fewer green spaces per acre than just about any other major American city despite the manicured beauty of Central and Prospect Parks. But thanks chiefly to population density, New Yorkers have just about the smallest carbon footprint in the U.S. When it comes to just about every natural resource—including space, which ultimately might be the most scarce of all—New Yorkers do it more efficiently.

But there's one green thing New Yorkers do not do well: recycle. The city manages to divert only about 15% of its waste from landfills to recycling centres, which compares to about 34% nationwide. It's not really clear why. The current New York Mayor actually suspended pavement recycling for two years early in his first term, hoping to save money. The fact that a lot of New Yorkers live in small apartments, where even a single additional recycling bin can take up valuable space, might erode recycling rates. Besides this, pavement pickup itself might play a role—with neighbours' trash easily intermingling, it's hard to tell who's recycling and who's not, and even harder to fine them.

With less than a half a year left to go on his third and final term, however, the current New York Mayor seems determined to fix the recycling problem. He's already cracking down on anyone caught flouting the recycling laws, with more to come as the Sanitation Department beefs up enforcement. Earlier this year he announced that rigid plastics, including toys and ubiquitous food containers, would be able to be recycled. He's said that he wants the city to reuse 70% of its waste by 2030. Last year he appointed Ron Gonen, the co-founder of the innovative start-up RecycleBank, as the city's first recycling leader.

And now the Mayor says he's going to tackle what he called earlier this year "New York's final recycling frontier": food waste. But can he make New Yorkers learn to compost?

PART 2 – Discussion on a Topic (Long Turn) (5 marks)

Choose ONE topic from the list below and speak about it for an extended period of time.

- a. Planning a surprise party
- b. Malta's open spaces
- c. When travelling is no fun at all
- d. Why do sports?
- e. My favourite time of year
- f. Harnessing solar power can be costly

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MAY 2014
Candidate's Paper

SUBJECT:	ENGLISH – Oral
DATE:	3rd April 2014
TIME:	P.M. (10 minutes)

PART 1 – Passage for Reading (5 marks)

Tablet computers are so easy to use that even a 3-year-old can master them. This deceptive advantage actually has some pediatricians and other health experts worried.

Since navigating a tablet generally doesn't require the ability to type or read, children as young as toddlers can quickly learn how to stream movies, scroll through family photos or play simple games.

This easy access and user friendly, intuitive handling makes tablets – and smartphones – popular with busy parents who use them to pacify their kids during car rides, restaurant outings or while they're at home trying to get dinner on the table.

The devices have begun to rank among the top holiday gifts for children at Christmas and birthdays. In fact, gadget makers have introduced tablets specifically designed for kids and many manufacturers of adult tablets now include parental controls.

But some experts note there's no evidence that screen time – whether from a TV or tablet – provides any educational or developmental benefits for babies and toddlers. On the other hand, it does take away valuable time from activities that do promote brain development, such as non-electronic toys and adult interaction. They also say that too much screen time has been linked to behaviour problems and delayed social development in older children.

A pediatrician at Seattle Children's Hospital points out that educational games and apps have some value if they engage a child and prompt them to interact with the device. The same expert also cautioned that if the only thing that children do is watch videos on their tablets, then it's just like watching TV, which has a limited ability to engage a child.

He also notes that parents need to be mindful of whether tablet time is replacing more important activities such as sleeping, reading or interacting with adults. He says that while the general recommendation is no more than one to two hours of screen time a day for kids over the age of two, he thinks one hour is plenty.

The single most important thing for children is time with parents and caregivers, as many health experts have asserted countless times. Nothing is more important in terms of social development. If time with the tablet comes at the expense of that, then it is not such a good thing.

PART 2 – Discussion on a Topic (Long Turn) (5 marks)

Choose ONE topic from the list below and speak about it for an extended period of time.

- a. My favourite part of the Maltese Islands
- b. Exotic travel
- c. What is green transport?
- d. Eating out
- e. Is there such a thing as privacy anymore?
- f. Famous football teams

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MAY 2014

Candidate's Paper

SUBJECT:	ENGLISH – Oral
DATE:	4th April 2014
TIME:	P.M. (10 minutes)

PART 1 – Passage for Reading (5 marks)

It smears flies across your view and freezes up in winter but now the humble windscreen wiper is destined for history. Supercar designers McLaren are working on secret plans to replace the rubber wiper with a hi-tech ultrasound device that stops anything sticking to the windscreen.

It would mean wiper arms heading down the same road as wind up windows and ashtrays as they vanish from cars. Adapted from a similar system used on fighter jets, the proposed design is understood to centre on high frequency sound waves that effectively create a force field across the windscreen preventing water, insects and mud from resting on the glass. It would create tiny vibrations outside the range of human hearing that shake off any debris that comes near.

McLaren is keeping its design a closely guarded secret, according to the Sunday Times, but believes it could improve vehicle efficiency by removing the weight of wiper motors.

Sound wave technology is already used in unborn baby scans and by dentists for removing plaque.

The system could be introduced in to McLaren's range of cars, which cost from around £170,000 to £870,000, by 2015, and, if successful, it is likely to be quickly adopted by mass produced cars.

Frank Stephenson, chief designer at McLaren, told the newspaper that the windscreen wiper is an archaic piece of technology. He suggested the military had kept the technology under wraps, adding that it took a lot of effort to get this out of a source in the military. Stephenson asked why you don't see wipers on some aircraft when they are coming in at very low speeds for landing. He was told that it's not a coating on the surface but a high frequency electronic system that never fails and is constantly active. Nothing will attach to the windscreen.

Mary Anderson, an American property developer, is credited with inventing the wiper after seeing a New York tram driver struggle to see in falling sleet in 1903. In the same year, James Henry Apjohn patented a device in the UK that saw two brushes move up and down on a glass windscreen.

PART 2 – Discussion on a Topic (Long Turn) (5 marks)

Choose ONE topic from the list below and speak about it for an extended period of time.

- a. Study or work?
- b. Travelling on a budget
- c. Noisy Malta
- d. What's a party animal?
- e. The Selfie
- f. Team sport or individual sport?

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MAY 2014

SUBJECT:	ENGLISH
DATE:	3rd May 2014
TIME:	9.00 a.m. to 12.00 noon

ANSWER BOTH SECTIONS

You are advised to spend about 1 hour on each task.

SECTION A – LANGUAGE

(60 marks)

1. ESSAY

(30 marks)

Write approximately 500 words on **ONE** of the following:

- a. Describe the attraction of travelling to far away countries.
- b. Currently in Malta it is generally women who take parental leave to look after young children. Should men be encouraged to stay at home on parental leave while women continue to work? Discuss, giving reasons to support your views.
- c. You have been asked by your local council to prepare a report evaluating the different types of entertainment available in your town/village and suggesting any changes that might offer improvements. Write the report.
- d. Write a short story involving a trapdoor, a half empty bottle and an old piano.
- e. The future.
- f. You are A. Borg. Your Italian friend is going to spend some time in Malta as part of a school project, and s/he has to attend some English lessons and also learn about the geography and history of the Maltese Islands. S/He has asked you to help plan her/his stay. Write an informal email to her/him, in which you lay out some ideas to help your friend with this school project.

2. COMPREHENSION AND SUMMARY

(30 marks)

Read the passage below and answer the questions that follow.

	<p><i>Jaywalking: How the car industry outlawed crossing the road</i> (adapted) By Aidan Lewis BBC News, Washington</p>
5	<p>The idea of being fined for crossing the road at the wrong place can bemuse foreign visitors to the US, where the origins of so-called jaywalking lie in a propaganda campaign by the motor industry in the 1920s. The California Vehicle Code states: "No pedestrian shall start crossing in direction of a flashing or steady 'DON'T WALK' or upraised hand symbol." It also forbids crossing between controlled intersections, or 'jaywalking'.</p>
10	<p>Late last year, police began a concerted effort to enforce the rules in central Los Angeles. Pedestrians had been "impeding traffic and causing too many accidents and deaths", one traffic police official said. Fines range from \$190-\$250. Then in New York, officials responded to several pedestrian deaths last month by issuing a flurry of tickets for jaywalking. The campaign quickly ran into controversy when an 84-year-old Chinese immigrant who had been stopped for jaywalking suffered a gash to his head during an altercation with the police.</p>
15	<p>Enforcement of anti-jaywalking laws in the US is sporadic, often only triggered by repeated complaints from drivers about pedestrian behaviour in a particular place. But jaywalking remains illegal across the country, and has been for many decades.</p>
20	<p>The first known reference to it dates to December 1913, says Peter Norton, a history professor at the University of Virginia and author of <i>Fighting Traffic – The Dawn of the Motor Age in the American City</i>. That month a department store in Syracuse hired a Santa Claus who stood on the street with a megaphone, bellowing at people who didn't cross properly and calling them "jaywalkers". The word was first used to describe "someone from the countryside who goes to the city and is so dazzled by the lights and the show windows that they keep stopping and getting in the way of other pedestrians". The use of jaywalking as a term of ridicule against pedestrians crossing roads took off in the 1920s.</p>
30	<p>A key moment, says Norton, was a petition signed by 42,000 people in Cincinnati in 1923 to limit the speed of cars mechanically to 25 mph (40 kph). Though the petition failed, an alarmed auto industry scrambled to shift the blame for pedestrian casualties from drivers to walkers. Local car firms got boy scouts to hand out cards to pedestrians explaining jaywalking. "These kids would be posted on sidewalks and when they saw someone starting to jaywalk they'd hand them one of these cards," says Norton. "It would tell them that it was dangerous and old fashioned and that it's a new era and we can't cross streets that way."</p>
40	<p>"The newspaper coverage quite suddenly changes, so that in 1923 they're all blaming the drivers, and by late 1924 they're all blaming jaywalking," Norton says. Soon, he adds, car lobby groups also started taking over school safety education, stressing that "streets are for cars and children need to stay out of them". Anti-jaywalking laws were adopted in many cities in the late 1920s, and became the norm by the 1930s.</p>

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In the decades that followed, the cultural ascendancy of the car was secured as the auto industry promoted "America's love affair with the automobile". Car makers portrayed them as the ultimate expression of personal freedom, an essential element of the "American dream".

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Meanwhile, an overriding goal of city planners and engineers became to allow traffic to circulate **unhindered**. "For years, pedestrians were essentially written out of the equation when it came to designing streets," says Tom Vanderbilt, author of *Traffic – Why We Drive the Way We Do*. "They didn't even appear in early computer models, and when they did, it was largely for their role as 'impedance' – blocking vehicle traffic." This made US cities unusually hostile to walkers, says Vanderbilt. Jaywalking became an "often misunderstood umbrella term", covering many situations in which the pedestrian should in fact have the right of way.

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Elsewhere, in Cairo say, or Calcutta, a lack of rules, enforcement and pedestrian infrastructure mean that the only way to cross the road is often by launching oneself into the oncoming traffic. In Singapore, where repeated jaywalking offences can lead to a \$1,000 fine or a six month jail term, rules are routinely **flouted**.

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In New York, an effort to crack down on jaywalking under former mayor Rudy Giuliani met with opposition from police officers who said they had better things to do. And in Los Angeles, walkers and cyclists have recently become more common downtown. When the LAPD advertised the anti-jaywalking campaign on its Facebook page, responses accused the police of seeking an easy source of **revenue** by fining people with the means to pay, and of wasting their time.

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Advocates for walking say drivers are most often to blame for pedestrian deaths and injuries, and that there is no evidence to prove that anti-jaywalking campaigns are effective. This rings true for John Moffat, a former commander of Seattle's traffic police. Seattle was known for being especially strict on jaywalking, and Moffat calculated that some 50 million tickets had been issued there between the 1930s and the 1980s. But he oversaw a change of policy in 1988 after a study in the city showed that the most **vulnerable** pedestrians were the elderly, children and drunks – not jaywalkers. "Are they the ones ending up in the morgue or in hospital?" he says. "The answer is no, and the reason is that most of them are pretty fleet of foot and agile."

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But fines for jaywalking look set to continue, says Ray Thomas, a lawyer in Portland, Oregon, who specialises in pedestrian and bicycle law. "People in law-enforcement tend to identify with a motorist's perspective", he says. Wherever there's a push to protect the rights of pedestrians, officials feel they also need to enforce limits on them. "It's their version of being fair," he says. "The difference is that no jaywalking pedestrian ever ran down and killed a driver, and by sheer survival strategy most pedestrians don't jaywalk in front of cars."

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- a) Define the following words or phrases (in **bold**) as they are used in the text: bemuse (1.1), sporadic (1.15), unhindered (1.49), flouted (1.60), revenue (1.66), vulnerable (1.74) (6 marks)
- b) Use your own words to explain what the term "jaywalking" means, as it is described in this article. (3 marks)
- c) Why did the auto industry want "to shift the blame for pedestrian casualties from drivers to walkers" (1.30-31)? (3 marks)
- d) What does the author mean in saying that people walking along streets (pedestrians) were "written out of the equation" (1.49)? (3 marks)
- e) How are cities like Cairo or Calcutta portrayed as different from cities in America in this article? (3 marks)
- f) Summarise the history of how American cities have dealt with pedestrians and traffic from 1913 up to the present as described in this article. Use your own words and write between 80-100 words. (12 marks)

SECTION B – LITERATURE

(30 marks)

Choose one of the texts below and answer **ONE** of the three questions set on the text using no less than 450 words. All answers should be supported by close reference to the text.

Text 1: Graham Greene *The Heart of the Matter*

- a. Discuss the theme of loyalty and trust in *The Heart of the Matter*.

Or

- b. Discuss Wilson's character in *The Heart of the Matter*, paying particular attention to his secrecy and to his relationship with Scobie.

Or

- c. Write an essay on the importance of the following passage to the novel *The Heart of the Matter*. These topics are being offered to you as guidelines:
- The relation of the passage to the plot or action of the novel.
 - What the passage reveals about any of the characters in the novel.
 - The relation to the central themes of the novel.

"He walked up, at midnight, to the Nissen huts. In the blackout he felt momentarily safe, unwatched, unreported on; in the soggy ground his footsteps made the smallest sounds, but as he passed Wilson's hut he was aware again of the deep necessity for caution. An awful weariness touched him, and he thought: I will go home: I won't creep by to her tonight: her last words had been 'don't come back'. Couldn't one, for once, take somebody at their word? He stood twenty yards from Wilson's hut, watching the crack of light between the curtains. A drunken voice shouted somewhere up the hill and the first spatter of the returning rain licked his face. He thought: I'll go back and go to bed, in the morning I'll write to Louise and in the evening go to Confession: the day after that God

will return to me in a priest's hands: life will be simple again. Virtue, the good life, tempted him in the dark like a sin. The rain blurred his eyes, the ground sucked at his feet as they trod reluctantly towards the Nissen hut.

He knocked twice and the door immediately opened. He had prayed between the two knocks that anger might still be there behind the door, that he wouldn't be wanted. He couldn't shut his eyes or his ears to any human need of him; he was not the centurion, but a man in the ranks who had to do the bidding of a hundred centurions, and when the door opened, he could tell the command was going to be given again – the command to stay, to love, to accept responsibility, to lie.

'Oh darling,' she said, 'I thought you were never coming. I bitched you so.'

'I'll always come if you want me.'

'Will you?'

'Always. If I'm alive'. God can wait, he thought: how can one love God at the expense of one of his creatures? Would a woman accept the love for which a child had to be sacrificed?

Carefully they drew the curtains close before turning up the lamps."

Text 2: Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie *Purple Hibiscus*

a. Discuss the theme of rebellion in *Purple Hibiscus*.

Or

b. Compare and contrast the characters of Amaka and Kambili, with particular reference to the influence of their upbringing on their personality.

Or

c. Write an essay on the importance of the following passage to the novel *Purple Hibiscus*. These topics are being offered to you as guidelines:

- The relation of the passage to the plot or action of the novel.
- What the passage reveals about any of the characters in the novel.
- The relation to the central themes of the novel.

The sound of a car driving toward the flat disrupted our peace. I knew Father Amadi had office hours that morning at the chaplaincy, yet I still hoped it was him. I imagined him walking up to the verandah, holding his soutane in one hand so he could run up the short stairs, smiling.

Amaka turned to look. 'Aunty Beatrice!'

I whipped around. Mama was climbing out of a yellow unsteady-looking taxi. What was she doing here? What had happened? Why was she wearing her rubber slippers all the way from Enugu? She walked slowly, holding on to her wrapper that seemed so loose it would slip off her waist any minute. Her blouse did not look ironed.

'Mama, *o gini?* Did something happen?' I asked, hugging her quickly so I could stand back and examine her face. Her hand was cold.

Amaka hugged her and took her handbag. 'Aunty Beatrice, *nno.*'

Aunty Ifeoma came hurrying out to the verandah, drying her hands in front of her shorts. She hugged Mama and then led her into the living room, supporting her as one would support a cripple.

'Where is Jaja?' Mama asked.

'He is out with Obiora,' Aunt Ifeoma said. 'Sit down, *nwunye m.* Amaka, get money from my purse and go and buy a soft drink for your Aunty.'

'Don't worry, I will drink water,' Mama said.

'We have not had light, the water will not be cold.'

'It does not matter. I will drink it.'

Mama sat carefully at the edge of a cane chair. Her eyes were glazed over as she looked around. I knew she could not see the picture with the cracked frame or the fresh African lilies in the oriental vase.

'I do not know if my head is correct,' she said, and pressed the back of her hand to her forehead, in the way that one checks the degree of a fever. 'I got back from the hospital today. The doctor told me to rest, but I took Eugene's money and asked Kevin to take me to the park. I hired a taxi and came here.'

Text 3: Robert Bolt *A Man for All Seasons*

a. Discuss the role played by the desire for survival and self-preservation in *A Man for All Seasons*.

Or

b. Discuss the ways in which the Common Man serves as a contrast to More in *A Man for All Seasons*.

Or

c. Write an essay on the importance of the following passage to the play *A Man for All Seasons*.

These topics are being offered to you as guidelines:

- The relation of the passage to the plot or action of the play.
- What the passage reveals about any of the characters in the play.
- The relation to the central themes of the play.

MORE Alice, you must tell me that you understand!

ALICE I don't! (*She throws it straight at his head.*) I don't believe this had to happen.

MORE (*His face is drawn*) If you say that, Alice, I don't see how I'm to face it.

ALICE It's the truth!

MORE (*Gasping*) You're an honest woman.

ALICE Much good may it do me! I'll tell you what I'm afraid of; that when you've gone, I'll hate you for it.

MORE (*Turns from her: his face working*) Well. You mustn't, Alice, that's all. (*Swiftly she crosses the stage to him; he turns and they clasp each other fiercely*). You mustn't, you-

ALICE (*Covers his mouth with her hand*) S-s-sh ... As for understanding, I understand you're the best man that I ever met or am likely to; and if you go – well God knows why I suppose – though as God's my witness God's kept deadly quiet about it! And if anyone wants my opinion of the King and his Council they've only to ask for it!

MORE Why, it's a lion I married! A lion! A lion! (*He breaks away from her his face shining.*) Get them to take half this to Bishop Fisher – they've got him in the upper gallery –

ALICE It's for you, not Bishop Fisher!

MORE Now do as I ask – (*Breaks off a piece of the custard and eats it.*) Oh, it's good, it's very, very good. (*He puts his face in his hands; ALICE and MARGARET comfort him; ROPER and JAILER erupt on to the stage above, wrangling fiercely.*)

JAILER It's no good, sir! I know what you're up to! And it can't be done!

ROPER Another minute, man!

Text 4: Ian McEwan *Atonement*

a. How far do you agree that all depictions of marriage in *Atonement* are negative?

Or

b. Discuss the importance of Robbie in *Atonement*.

Or

c. Write an essay on the importance of the following passage to the novel *Atonement*. These topics are being offered to you as guidelines:

- The relation of the passage to the plot or action of the novel.
- What the passage reveals about any of the characters in the novel.
- The relation to the central themes of the novel.

In the half hour before lights out, after cocoa, the girls would be in and out of each other's rooms, sitting on their beds writing letters home, or to sweethearts. Some still cried a little from homesickness, and there would be much comforting going on at this time, with arms around shoulders and soothing words. It seemed theatrical to Briony, and ridiculous, grown young women tearful for their mothers, or as one of the students put it through her sobs, for the smell of Daddy's pipe. Those doing the consoling seemed to be enjoying themselves rather too much. In this cloying atmosphere Briony sometimes wrote her own concise letters home which conveyed little more than that she was not ill, not unhappy, not in need of her allowance and not about to change her mind in the way that her mother had predicted. Other girls proudly wrote out their exacting routines of work and study to astound their loving parents. Briony confided these matters only to her notebook, and even then, in no great detail. She did not want her mother to know about the lowly work she did. Part of the purpose of becoming a nurse was to work for her independence. It was important to her that her parents, especially her mother, knew as little about her life as possible.

Apart from a string of repeated questions which remained unanswered, Emily's letters were mostly about the evacuees. Three mothers with seven children, all from the Hackney area of London, had been billeted on the Tallis family. One of the mothers had disgraced herself in the village pub and was now banned. Another woman was a devout Catholic who walked four miles with her three children to the local town for mass on Sunday.