

Epreuve écrite

Examen de fin d'études secondaires 2015

Section: A

Branche: anglais (textes connus)

Numéro d'ordre du candidat

PART ONE: GUIDED COMPREHENSION (30 marks)

Read the following excerpt from *The Handmaid's Tale* and answer the questions below.

A group of people is coming towards us. They're tourists, from Japan it looks like, a trade delegation perhaps, on a tour of the historic landmarks or out for local colour. They're diminutive and neatly turned out; each has his or her camera, his or her smile. They look around, bright-eyed, cocking their heads to one side like robins, their very cheerfulness aggressive, and I can't help staring. It's been a long time since I've seen skirts that short on women. The skirts reach just below the knee and the legs come out from beneath them, nearly naked in their thin stockings, blatant, the high-heeled shoes with their straps attached to the feet like delicate instruments of torture. The women teeter on their spiked feet as if on stilts, but off balance; their backs arch at the waist, thrusting the buttocks out. Their heads are uncovered and their hair too is exposed, in all its darkness and sexuality. They wear lipstick, red, outlining the damp cavities of their mouths, like scrawls on a washroom wall, of the time before.

I stop walking. Ofglen stops beside me and I know that she too cannot take her eyes off these women. We are fascinated, but also repelled. They seem undressed. It has taken so little time to change our minds, about things like this.

Then I think: I used to dress like that. That was freedom.

[...]

I'm looking down, at the sidewalk, mesmerized by the women's feet. One of them is wearing open-toed sandals, the toenails painted pink. I remember the smell of nail polish, the way it wrinkled if you put the second coat on too soon, the satiny brushing of sheer pantyhose against the skin, the way the toes felt, pushed towards the opening in the shoe by the whole weight of the body.

1. Describe the situation Offred finds herself in. (5m)
2. Analyse Offred's conflicting emotions in detail. (12m)
3. What is the function of the Japanese tourists in this part of the novel? (8m)
4. How do language and meaning interact in the excerpt? (5m)

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PART TWO: DEVELOPMENT ESSAY (30 marks)

Macbeth

Write a well-structured essay of 300–400 words on **one** of the following topics. Indicate the number of words used.

1. *"A tragic hero is a protagonist, usually of noble birth or high-standing, who brings about his own downfall by a choice brought on by a character flaw. Tragic heroes have several other common features: They undergo meaningful suffering, learn from their mistake somehow, and arouse pity or fear in the audience through their demise."*

According to this definition, is Macbeth a tragic hero?

2. Analyse to what extent Lady Macbeth is to blame for Macbeth's downfall. Discuss the relationship between the couple as the play develops.