

OXFORD CAMBRIDGE AND RSA EXAMINATIONS
GCSE (9–1)
J351/02
ENGLISH LANGUAGE
Exploring effects and impact
READING INSERT
Friday 8 June 2018 – Morning
TIME ALLOWED: 2 hours
plus your additional time allowance
MODIFIED ENLARGED 24pt

YOU MUST HAVE:
the Question Paper

READ INSTRUCTIONS OVERLEAF



INSTRUCTIONS

The materials in this Reading Insert are for use with the questions in Section A of the Question Paper.

Details of text extracts:

TEXT 1

Text: 'A Moment of War'

Author: Laurie Lee (1991)

TEXT 2

Text: 'All That Matters'

Author: Wayson Choy (2004)

TEXT 1

This is an extract from Laurie Lee's autobiographical novel, "A Moment of War", published in 1991. Here, the author remembers how he had joined the army in Spain. It is winter, and he and the other soldiers are cold and hungry.

5 An almost wolf-like hunger was now part of our lives, sharpened by the winter cold and idleness. At last, wearying of our acorn coffee and thin donkey soup, a half a dozen of us pooled our pay – over a thousand pesetas¹ in fresh-printed notes – and persuaded an old farmer to part with three chickens, each of which looked as hungry as we were. These bony birds we took to two widowed sisters who lived with their old father on the other side of the town. They had one of those bare stone kitchens which were still almost
10 medieval – a paved floor, high roof, brick and tiled stove by the wall, a few chairs, a table, a twist of olive wood in the corner, and hanging from the rafters an old ham-bone and some harness.

15 The sisters were wispy, watchful, bright-eyed, sunken-cheeked, their bodies almost mummified in their widow-black. The father sat on a high-backed chair near the stove, his limbs as lean as a whippet's². He slipped to his tiny feet as we came crowding in and raised a wrinkled fist.

20 'Your house,' he said. 'I am Jose, at your service. And these are my daughters – Dona Anselm – Dona Luisa ...'

The sisters bridled at this, but lost none of their watchfulness. They took the birds we had brought with us with little clucks of the tongue. 'Come back in two hours,' they said.

25 So we walked around in the snow, and when we returned Dona Anselm swept our boots with a broom. The old stove blazed with a mixture of wood and refuse, and a great iron

¹pesetas = Spanish currency

²whippet's = a thin dog's

30 pot stood bubbling upon it. The entire kitchen simmered
and was awash with steam, a steam banked on the long-
forgotten juices of real home-cooked food, swimming
aromas of tomatoes, dried beans, and garlic sausage,
and boiled chicken peeling on the bone. How the widows
had done it seemed a miracle. We stood there in a swoon
of hunger. A hunger more blest in that it was about to
35 be appeased. The widows could have asked us another
thousand pesetas.

I'd been hungry before, and had also known the simple,
voluptuous appetite of youth when taste was never
jaded. So it seemed now, that long moment of delayed
40 consummation, as we sat round the table while the sisters
fussed and quarreled by the stove and carried us at last the
stew in a great earthen dish. We had brought our slabs of
grey bread, our metal knives and spoons, and the plates we
had were of curved polished wood. The farmer's three birds,
45 who must have been survivors of at least two long winters,
now swam brokenly in a thick soup of beans and sausage,
splendidly recharged with succulence. Dona Anselm
guarded the dish while her sister spooned out our portions,
one squashed steamy limb to each plate.

50 'Eat!' snapped Dona Anselm, and we broke our grey bread
with solemn ritual under her scaring eyes.

TEXT 2

This is an extract from the novel, “All That Matters”, by Wayson Choy (published in 2004). In this passage, the narrator is helping his Grandmother prepare food for a party. There has been an argument between the narrator and Jenny Chong (the daughter of one of the guests), who has been told off and sent out of the kitchen as a punishment.

5 Tonight, at Grandmother’s gathering, I was supposed to be on my best behaviour. I was. Still, in the midst of all the activity between Grandmother and myself, I thought Jenny Chong should be here, too, not sulking in our parlour. More than I did, she belonged in the kitchen.

10 The melon soup was now at full boil. Five steaming plates were piled with greens and meats.
“We serve now,” Grandmother said. “Why you look like that?”
“Nothing,” I said, still fuming about doing all the work when Jenny could have helped.
“Take off your nothing apron.”
I obeyed. She pointed to the cloth napkins. I folded the napkins, then picked up the chopsticks.

15 With a pot holder, Grandmother lifted the hot dish of beef and greens sprinkled with herbs, all steaming with flavours and glistening from the sesame oil. Grandmother clanged her ladle against the wok³.

20 “Everyone please help!” she said, and the three ladies rushed into the kitchen, exclaiming over the delicious smells. Mrs Chong filled blue-and-white bowls with rice, and scrawny Mrs Leong and pudgy Mrs Wong, holding tea towels against the hot platters, carried the remaining pie-plate tin and porcelain dishes past Grandmother’s surveying eyes. I counted out enough napkins for everyone and picked
25 up the porcelain soup spoons, just as I always did at dinner time. I slapped a napkin, chopsticks, and a spoon down in front of each empty chair. Adding me to the table, there were

³wok = Chinese cooking dish

five chairs. But there should have been six.

30 I caught a glimpse of Jenny Chong looking as mean as her mother. Her eyes narrowed again, daring me to stare one second longer.

Grandmother pushed me aside. “Watch out for the soup!”

35 And when the lid with the lucky red-and-gold crests was lifted off, the golden brew steamed majestically. Crystals of melon lay in a rich broth. The air smelled of crushed ginger. Everyone sighed with delight. Summer melon with chicken and sweet pork in chicken-feet stock was one of Grandmother’s specialities.

40 To signal the beginning of the meal, Grandmother dipped her chopsticks down into the communal soup bowl and gracefully lifted away the largest pork bone. Thick tender-cooked pork slid away and fell back into the fragrant broth.

45 Jenny Chong’s head turned slightly. She looked at me from the corner of her eye. I imagined her stomach growling with hunger, a tigress’s empty belly, her mouth salivating, her eyes the eyes of a huntress. Her jaw moved slightly as if she were chewing.

50 I gobbled down some rice like a hungry bear. I took up my spoon and royally dipped into the communal bowl. The mixed pork and chicken broth was savoury with sweet dried shrimp and greens. I slowly tipped the brimming porcelain spoon and caught a square of melon.

55 I only meant to slurp gently, but the heat of the melon caught me off guard. I gulped, gasped. Everyone stopped talking. I sputtered, a trail of glowing liquid dribbling down the corner of my mouth. Jenny Chong stared wide-eyed. Knuckles rapped my head.

“Stop showing off,” Grandmother said. “No one wants you!”

60 Beneath the stinging pain, through the waves of half-swallowed heat that made my eyes tear, I saw a grin break out on Jenny Chong’s face.

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