



WESTMINSTER
SCHOOL

The Challenge (Core)

Specimen Paper First Examination 2027

ENGLISH

Time: 60 minutes

SECTION A – 5 minutes – 5 marks

Question 1

Read the quote below and identify the different aspects of the sentence.

“The old clock measured the passing hours steadily during the night”

Subject:

Object:

Adjective:

Verb:

Adverb:

[5]

SECTION B – 30 minutes – 20 marks

Morning Song (1961) – Sylvia Plath

Love set you going like a fat gold watch.

The midwife slapped your footsoles, and your bald cry

Took its place among the elements.

Our voices echo, magnifying your arrival. New statue.

In a drafty museum, your nakedness

Shadows our safety. We stand round blankly as walls.

I'm no more your mother

Than the cloud that distills¹ a mirror to reflect its own slow

Effacement² at the wind's hand.

All night your moth-breath

Flickers among the flat pink roses. I wake to listen:

A far sea moves in my ear.

One cry, and I stumble from bed, cow-heavy and floral

In my Victorian nightgown.

Your mouth opens clean as a cat's. The window square

Whitens and swallows its dull stars. And now you try

Your handful of notes;

The clear vowels rise like balloons.

¹ Purify/extract the essence of something

² Erasing

Warm-up questions

Question 1

What does Plath mean by the simile 'Love set you going like a fat gold watch'?

[2]

Question 2

Identify an example of natural imagery in the poem and explain its impact.

[2]

Question 3

What is meant by 'your bald cry/took its place amongst the elements'?

[2]

Question 5 - Language analysis

How does Sylvia Plath use language and structure to explore the relationship between mother and child in 'Morning Song'? [14]

SECTION C – 25 minutes – 15 marks

Read the section below and answer the questions that follow.

This extract is taken from Shakespeare's 'Richard II' (1595)

In this passage from Richard II, the king has recently been overthrown, and here dwells on the hours spent in solitary confinement under the orders of his cousin and usurper, Henry Bolingbroke (Henry IV).

KING RICHARD II: Music do I hear?

Music sounds outside

Ha, ha! keep time: how sour sweet music is,
When time is broke and no proportion kept!
So is it in the music of men's lives.
I wasted time, and now doth time waste me;
For now hath time made me his numbering clock:
My thoughts are minutes; and with sighs they jar
Their watches on unto mine eyes, the outward watch,
Whereto my finger, like a dial's point,
Is pointing still, in cleansing them from tears.
Now sir, the sound that tells what hour it is
Are clamorous groans, which strike upon my heart which
is the bell: so sighs and tears and groans
Show minutes, times, and hours: but my time
Runs posting³ on in Bolingbroke's proud joy,
While I stand fooling here, his Jack o' the clock⁴.
This music mads me; let it sound no more;
For though it have help madmen to their wits,
In me it seems it will make wise men mad.
Yet blessing on his heart that gives it me!
For 'tis a sign of love; and love to Richard
Is a strange brooch in this all-hating world.

Question 9 - Language analysis

How does Shakespeare show Richard's unhappiness in the passage? You must make close reference to the text.

[15]

³ Time is moving forward quickly for Bolingbroke, but not for Richard

⁴ A figure that strikes a bell on a clock – a figure that repeats a monotonous action.

[END OF PAPER]