

GCSE ENGLISH LANGUAGE (8700)

Paper 1 Explorations in Creative Writing and Reading

Time allowed: 1 hour 45 minutes

Materials

For this paper you must have:

- Source A**

Instructions

- Answer **all** questions.
- Use black ink or black ball-point pen.
- Fill in the boxes on this page.
- You must answer the questions in the spaces provided.
- Do not write outside the box around each page or on blank pages.
- Do all rough work in this book. Cross through any work you do not want to be marked.
- You must refer to the insert booklet provided.
- You must **not** use a dictionary.

Information

- The marks for questions are shown in brackets.
- The maximum mark of this paper is 80.
- There are 40 marks for **Section A** and 40 marks for **Section B**.
- You are reminded of the need for good English and clear presentation in your answers.
- You will be assessed on the quality of your **reading** in **Section A**.
- You will be assessed on the quality of your **writing** in **Section B**.

Advice

- You are advised to spend about 15 minutes reading through the Source and all five questions you have to answer.
- You should make sure you leave sufficient time to check your answers.

Source A – This passage is from the opening of a novel ‘The Falls’. Here, we are introduced to the gatekeeper who works in a tourist booth at the Niagara Falls. He sees a young man running towards the bridge and decides to investigate.

By this time the gatekeeper had decided to leave his tollbooth to follow the agitated man. Calling, “Mister! Hey mister!”—“Mister, wait!” He’d had experience with suicides in the past. More times than he wished to remember. He was a thirty-year veteran of The Falls tourist trade. He was in his early sixties, couldn’t keep up with the younger man. Pleading, “Mister! Don’t! God damn I’m begging you: *don’t!*”

He should have dialed his emergency number, back in the tollbooth. Now it was too late to turn back.

Once on Goat Island the younger man didn’t pause by the railing to gaze across the river at the Canadian shore, nor did he pause to contemplate the raging, tumultuous scene, as any normal tourist would do. He didn’t pause even to wipe his streaming face, or brush his straggly hair out of his eyes. *Under the spell of The Falls. Nobody mortal was going to stop him.*

But you have to interfere, or try. Can’t let a man—or a woman—commit suicide, the unforgiveable sin, before your staring eyes.

The gatekeeper, short of breath, light-headed, limped after the younger man shouting at him as he made his unerring way to the southern tip of the little island, Terrapin Point, above the Horseshoe Falls. The most treacherous corner of Goat Island, as it was the most beautiful and enthralling. Here the rapids go into a frenzy. White frothy churning water shooting up fifteen feet into the air. Hardly any visibility. The chaos of a nightmare. The Horseshoe Falls is a gigantic cataract a half-mile long at its crest, three thousand tons of water pouring over the Gorge each second. The air roars, shakes. The ground beneath your feet shakes. As if the very earth is beginning to come apart, disintegrate into particles, down to its molten center. As if time has ceased. Time has exploded. As if you’ve come too near to the radiant, thrumming, mad heart of all being. Here, your veins, arteries, the minute precision and perfection of your nerves will be unstrung in an instant. Your brain, in which you reside, that one-of-a-

kind repository of *you*, will be pounded into its chemical components: brain cells, molecules, atoms. Every shadow and echo of every memory erased.

Maybe that’s the promise of The Falls? The secret?

Like we’re sick of ourselves. Mankind. This is the way out, only a few have the vision.

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Thirty yards from the younger man, the gatekeeper saw him place one foot on the lowest rung of the railing. A tentative foot, on the slippery wrought iron. But the man's hands gripped the top rung, both fists, tight,

"Don't do it! Mister! God damn—"

The gatekeeper's words were drowned out by The Falls. Flung back into his face like cold spit.

Near to collapsing, himself. This would be his last summer at Goat Island. His heart hurt, pounding to send oxygen to his stunned brain. And his lungs hurt, not only the stinging spray of the river but the strange metallic taste of the air of the industrial city sprawling east and north of The Falls, in which the gatekeeper had lived all his life. *You wear out. You see too much. Every breath hurts.*

The gatekeeper would afterward swear he'd seen the younger man make a gesture of farewell in the instant before he jumped: a mock salute, a salute of defiance, as a bright brash schoolboy might make to an elder, to provoke; yet a sincere farewell too, as you might make to a stranger, a witness to whom you mean no harm, whom you wish to absolve of the slightest shred of guilt he might feel, for allowing you to die when he might have saved you.

And in the next instant the young man, who'd been commandeering the gatekeeper's exclusive attention, was simply—gone.

In a heartbeat, gone. Over the Horseshoe Falls.

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Section A: Reading

Answer **all** questions in this section.
You are advised to spend about 45 minutes on this section.

1. Read lines 1 – 6. Write down 4 things you learn about the gatekeeper.

4 marks.

2. Re-read the lines below

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How does the writer use language here to describe the Niagara Falls?

You could include the writer's choice of:

- words and phrases
- language features and techniques
- sentence forms.

8 marks

3. You now need to think about the whole of the source.

This text is from the opening of a novel.

How has the writer structured the text to interest you as a reader?

You could write about:

- what the writer focuses your attention on at the beginning
- how and why the writer changes this focus as the source develops
- any other structural features that interest you.

8 marks

4. Focus this part of your answer on the whole of the source.

A student, having read this extract said: "The writer makes the reader for sympathy for the gatekeeper. He is frantically trying to stop the man but is completely helpless to.'

To what extent do you agree?

In your response, you could:

- write about your own impressions of the characters
- evaluate how the writer has created these impressions
- support your opinions with references to the text.

[20 marks]

Section B: Writing

You are advised to spend about 45 minutes on this section.

Write in full sentences.

You are reminded of the need to plan your answer.

You should leave enough time to check your work at the end.

5.

You have been asked to produce a piece of writing for a collection of descriptive writing your school is creating.

Either: write a description based on this picture:



Or write a short story based upon a day spent out in the countryside.

(24 marks for content and organisation
16 marks for technical accuracy)

40 marks