

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

YOU MUST HAVE:
the Question Paper



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
10 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 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
15 some harness.

20 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.

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

¹pesetas = Spanish currency

²whippet's = a thin dog's

25 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.

30 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 pot stood bubbling
upon it. The entire kitchen simmered and was awash
35 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
40 was about to 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
45 delayed 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
50 were of curved polished wood. The farmer's three
birds, 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
55 her sister spooned out our portions, one squashed
steamy limb to each plate.

'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.

10 “We serve now,” Grandmother said. “Why you look like that?”

15 “Nothing,” I said, still fuming about doing all the work when Jenny could have helped.

15 “Take off your nothing apron.”

15 I obeyed. She pointed to the cloth napkins. I folded the napkins, then picked up the chopsticks.

20 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 wok.

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

³wok = Chinese cooking dish

25 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 up the porcelain soup spoons, just
30 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 five
chairs. But there should have been six.

I caught a glimpse of Jenny Chong looking as mean
as her mother. Her eyes narrowed again, daring me
35 to stare one second longer.
Grandmother pushed me aside. "Watch out for the
soup!"

40 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.

45 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.

50 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
55 chewing.

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.
60 I slowly tipped the brimming porcelain spoon and caught a square of melon.

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
65 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!”

70 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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