

ZIMBABWE SCHOOL EXAMINATIONS COUNCIL

General Certificate of Education Ordinary Level

ENGLISH LANGUAGE

1122/2

PAPER 2

JUNE 2011 SESSION

2 hours

SECTION A (40 MARKS)

Read the following passage very carefully before you attempt any questions.

Answer **all** the questions. You are advised to answer them in the order set.

Mistakes in spelling, punctuation and grammar may be penalized in any part of the paper.

THE CHAMPION

1. Long ago in India, when I was still young, the uncertainties of a squalid youth were relieved by an innocent dream. I was convinced that I possessed the necessary qualities – speed, ferocity, stamina and the rest – to transform me into a world – class boxer. I now know that I was mistaken in this belief, and that my skill as a pugilist amounted to nothing. 5
2. Yet, it was true to say that I did possess a certain unusual agility in the ring, that is, I was capable of running away from my opponent with exceptional speed. I could also shoot out a fast, accurate left, and had the ability to emit a series of savage snorts and grunts designed to frighten my opponent into submission. Against these slender credits must be placed the melancholy truth that I could 10 punch hard enough, and that once the going got tough, my one impulse was to leap over the ropes and take to my heels.
3. I lacked the killer instinct, but all the same, I spent hours drugging myself with dreams in which I became the undisputed middleweight champion of the world. The roar of a vast crowd battered against my ears and the arc-lights blazed above my head, when, swiftly and dangerously as a panther, I almost decapitated 15 my unfortunate opponent with a savage upper-cut. Beautiful, rich, amoral, reckless and hot-blooded women pursued me wherever I went. I could choose one, or half a dozen of them, any time of my life. What dreams!
4. The fact that my real life was lived in rather different surroundings did not worry me in the least. I could wait, could I not? I had all the 20 time in the world. However, real life was pretty frustrating at times. I

lived in a down-at-hell Y.M.C.A. hostel in a shoddy part of the city where I occupied a tiny cubicle for which I paid ten dollars a month. Basically, I worked at a very ignoble job on Mount Road, Madras.

5. There were several white youths of about my own age, plus a sprinkling of 25
Goans, Indians and Anglo-Indians, living in this hostel. Whenever I got the chance, I would persuade one of them to spar with me. most of them had never boxed in their lives. Grimacing horribly, snorting like a bad-tempered war-horse, bobbing and weaving like some crazy puppet on a string, I must have seemed a formidable antagonist to those easy-going, pacific youngsters. Indeed, the 30
tactics proved so successful that, after a while, some of my more timid companions refused to spar with me – a state of affairs which flattered my vanity.
6. The Y.M.C.A. hostel also sheltered one or two middle-aged residents who seemed to us to be tottering on the verge of senility. There was one such Goan, with a bald head and a set of flashing white teeth. 35
He was a peppery little man, a woodwork teacher employed at a local school, who was deeply devoted to playing the violin whenever the opportunity occurred. The walls of my room were extremely thin, and I was frequently disturbed by the vibrations of the instrument bursting through the flimsy partition like the moaning of a demented bull-elephant. The sounds produced a vague grievance which was responsible for all the at follows. 40
7. As a general rule, Dacruz and I got on pretty well. I was a talker, and he had the valuable gift of saying almost nothing; I would sit yammering away while he listened with contemplative detachment. Everything went on smoothly until one evening when I was tactless enough to say something slightly disparaging about his ability as a musician. I cannot recall exactly what it was, but it must have 45
hurt his feelings because suddenly, his bullet head jerked upwards and he glared at me with unmistakable hostility. The argument which ensued was incoherent but heated.
8. After a while, Dacruz regained his composure and our conversation continued amicably, veering finally towards my prowess as a boxer. I remarked smugly 50

that I was afraid of becoming stale because it was impossible to get the practice I needed.

9. “Why?” asked Dacruz. “Surely our chaps give you all the sparring you need.” I told him this was not the case.
10. “Most of the blighters refuse to fight me now. They’re a lily-livered bunch, and I only wish I could find somebody really tough in the 55 way of opposition.”
11. He appeared to reflect for a moment before he said offhandedly, “Perhaps I could find the sort of fellow you need. Would you like me to try?”
12. “Yes, do that,” I said quickly, never believing that the offer needed to be treated as anything more than a polite formality. After all, where could Dacruz find the kind of opponent who was likely to threaten 60 my supremacy?
13. Unsuspecting, confident, I moved through the next two days without thinking again of this trivial exchange. The following day, I cycled back to the hostel. I was dead tired, oozing with perspiration, when at last I reached my room. Once inside, I climbed out of my damp clothes, changed into a pair of pyjama trousers and lay on the 65 bend, determined to enjoy a siesta until tea-time. Almost immediately, I was engulfed in a deep sleep.
14. Suddenly, I was jerked awake by a determined hand kneading my shoulder and voice calling sharply, “Come on, wake up, wake up, I say.”
15. Struggling to shake off the hand, and longing to return to the comfortable depths of sleep, I said thickly, “What’s the matter? 70 Leave me alone.”
16. My bleary eyes focused unwillingly, first on dacruz’s dark, grinning face, peering intently into my own, and then, with a sensation of indescribable horror, on the form of an enormous, young man, with a chest like a barrel and close – cropped, dark hair, who towered beside him. With a sense of dazed disbelief, I noticed that this giant was

- attired, as though for a fancy – dress party, in the vest, shorts and 75 boots of a boxer.
17. “Hallo,” I said weakly, directing the situation somewhere in the direction of my two men as they loomed above my head.
 18. I heard Dacruz say, “This is Gibson, a medical student, who has come along to spar with you.” 80
 19. “Spar with me?” A current of fear coursed through my veins.
 20. “Yes,” said Dacruz, “he’s come along to take you on with the gloves. Don’t you remember asking me to get you somebody tough to spar with?”
 21. “Oh yes, of course,” I mumbled unwillingly, and then I said to Gibson, “Very kind of you to come along.” 85
 22. I forced my lips into what I hoped would be accepted as an affable grin. More than anything else in the world, I wanted to establish a friendly relationship with this man. However, my efforts at warmth met with negative results. Gibson’s small, steady, pale – grey eyes slid away from my genial glance and I noticed that he had a singularly 90 unpleasant face.
 23. “When do we get started?” he asked, ignoring my presence and directing his question high above my head towards Dacruz. It was clear that his sole ambition lay in beating the living day-lights out of me.
 24. However, always patient and unwilling to believe the worst, I made a second effort to bridge the gulf that divided us. “How much do 95 you weigh?” I asked brightly.
 25. “Ugh!” said Gibson, apparently astonished at the question. His eyes roved past me again as he looked helplessly at Dacruz.
 26. There was a pause, and then Gibson, still ignoring me, mumbled hoarsely, “About 180 kgs, I think.” He was clearly a man who found

- conversation irksome and enjoyed only the more savage and 100 demanding forms of action.
27. “Well,” I said, smiling bravely and speaking in a rather wavering note, “I weigh just over seventy kilograms, so take it easy when we meet.”
 28. Instead of offering me the reassurance I needed, he remarked sullenly to Dacruz, “I thought you said he wanted to fight?” 105
 29. Pulling myself to my feet, I told them curtly, “You’ll have to wait until I’ve had a shower.”
 30. I wanted time to think, to formulate a plan. Under the shower, with the chill water pouring over me, my brain worked with the speed of an insane piston. What could I do to avoid the dreadful ordeal that lay ahead? I could pretend to faint; let my body slump to the slippery floor of the washroom. That was useless; nobody would want to 110 believe that such a collapse was genuine, and for the rest of my life, my reputation would bear the smear of crass cowardice. No, fainting was out of the question. What else was there? Could I go suddenly mad, wander out of the washroom gibbering and grimacing? Again, no-one would accept the validity of such a convenient breakdown. 115
 31. Clean and horribly awake, I left the shower and returned to my room. After I had put on my shoes and a pair of trousers, I looked for a belt, but the thing had vanished. Watched by the grinning Dacruz and the stolid, menacing Gibson, I hurriedly opened drawers and peered under my bed. Finally, in despair, I found an old red tie and knotted it swiftly around my waist. Then the three of us – myself some distance ahead, Dacruz and Gibson, like warders guarding a prisoner, 120 following a few meters at the rear – walked down the narrow, stone staircase towards the ring on the other side of the compound.

Adapted From: Short Story International, 1977, Volume 1 Number 4, October, 1977, New York, Published By International Cultural Exchange.

Answer all the questions.

You are advised to answer them in the order set.

From Paragraph 1

- 1 (a) (i) The narrator says, "... the uncertainties ... were relieved by an innocent dream." (line 1 – 2). What was the dream? [1]
- (ii) Name two qualities which, according to the narrator, one needs to become a successful boxer. Number your answers separately 1 and 2. [2]

From Paragraph 2

- (b) "... I did possess a certain unusual agility ..." (line 6) Why do you think the narrator used the word "**unusual**"? [1]
- (c) Why would the narrator take to his heels "once the going got tough"? (line 11)

From Paragraph 4

- (d) For which one major reason did the narrator dislike his real life? [1]

From Paragraph 5

- (e) What does the word "sprinkling" (line 25) suggest about the number of Goans, Indians and Anglo-Indians who were living in the hostel? [1]

From Paragraph 7

- (f) Which phrase of two consecutive words proves that what the author said about Dacruz's ability as a musician was uncomplimentary? [1]

From Paragraph 13

- (g) In your own words, explain the meaning of “...oozing with perspiration.” (line 64) [2]

From Paragraph 14

- (h) “Suddenly, I was jerked awake by a determined hand ...”
Whose hand was it? [1]

From Paragraph 22

2. (a) Why do you think the narrator wanted to establish a friendly relationship with Gibson? [1]

From Paragraph 28 and 29

- (b) Which phrase of **five consecutive words** shows that the narrator was reluctant to fight Gibson? [1]

From Paragraph 30

- (c) Which one consideration about the narrator’s character made him dismiss the idea of fainting in order to avoid fighting Gibson? [1]

From Paragraph 31

- (d) The narrator used the word “grinning” two times to describe Dacruz’s face. (paragraph 16 and 31) Why do you think Dacruz was grinning? [1]

From the whole passage

- (e) Choose five of the following words or phrases. For each of them, give one word or short phrase (of not more than seven words) which has the same meaning that the word or phrase has in the passage.

1 agility (line 6)

5 demented (line 39)

2	take to my heels (line 12)	6	trivial (line 63)
3	amoral (line 17)	7	irksome (line 100)
4	formidable (line 30)	8	gibbering (114) [5]

[Total 9 marks]

3. The narrator was day-dreaming, imagining himself as a very successful boxer. He thought he had the necessary qualities to become the middleweight champion of the world until he met Gibson.

Imagine that you are the narrator. Write a summary describing your reactions and thoughts from the time you saw Gibson up to the time you took a shower.

Use only material from paragraph 16 up to the end of paragraph 30.

Your summary, which should be in continuous writing (not note form), must not be longer than 160 words including the 10 words given below:

When Dacruz shook me awake, my bleary eyes focused on ...

[20 marks]

SECTION B (10 MARKS)

Answer **all** the following questions.

You are advised to spend not more than **30 minutes** on this section.

4. Described below are five situations. Read the descriptions of each situation carefully and then answer briefly the questions which follow.

- (a) Imagine that next weekend is a long weekend with a public holiday on Monday. You invite two friends, John and Mary, to a party at your parents' house. The two friends react as follows:

A John: It'll be fun to be at the party.

B Mary: Yes, I would love to, but what if it rains?

What does each statement show about the attitude of each friend? Number your answers separately (A) and (B) or John and Mary. [2]

- (b) A husband and wife are walking along the road in silence. The husband breaks the silence by saying, "Mrs Moyo is a very arrogant woman." The wife hears the statement but remains silent.

Give two possible reasons why the wife does not respond. Number your answers separately (i) and (ii). [2]

- (c) A supermarket finds itself short of small denominations for United States dollars for the purpose of change. Two shoppers are informed by the till operator that he has no change.
- (i) One shopper says, "What! I want my change. You people are exploiting the situation for your own benefit. I'm not going anywhere without my change."
- (ii) The other shopper says, "It's alright! But do not forget to credit me when I am also a little short. I always shop here and am sure you recognize me?"

What character trait does each shopper display?
Number your answers separately (i) and (ii) [2]

- (d) People jostle for places in a crowded bank on a Saturday morning. In the melee, a large man steps heavily on another's foot. The injured man responds:
- (i) "Ouch! That was painful. I am sorry I put my foot under yours."
 - (ii) "Hey! Don't be stupid. You hurt me, you big fat – head. Why can't you wait for your turn?"

In each case, how would you describe the reaction of the aggrieved person? Number your answers separately (i) and (ii).
[2]

- (e) Match the statement from column A with the most appropriate term in column b. write down the number only of each of the statements under column A and against that number write down the most appropriate term from column B.

A (i) "Come on, come along! Let's keep going! We'll soon be there."

(ii) "No! Never! We cannot accept that nonsense. We will withdraw our labour if we have to. We say No! no to exploitation?"

(iii) "Please! I beg you. Do not do that."

(iv) "If you stop working, you will be fired. You will also be forced to leave the premises at once."

- B 1 defiant
2 diplomacy
3 imploring
4 threat
5 encouragement

[2]