



BOARD OF STUDIES  
NEW SOUTH WALES

**2006**

HIGHER SCHOOL CERTIFICATE  
EXAMINATION

# Comparative Literature

## General Instructions

- Reading time – 5 minutes
- Working time – 3 hours
- Write using black or blue pen

## Total marks – 50

- All questions are of equal value
- Attempt THREE questions, ONE from each section

### Section I Pages 2–7

- Question 1 is COMPULSORY
- Allow about 1 hour for this section

### Section II Page 9

- Attempt ONE question from Questions 2–5
- Refer ONLY to set texts
- Use different texts from the ones you use in Section III
- Allow about 1 hour for this section

### Section III Pages 10–11

- Attempt ONE question from Questions 6–13
- Refer ONLY to set texts
- Use different texts from the ones you use in Section II
- Allow about 1 hour for this section

## Section I

### Attempt Question 1

Allow about 1 hour for this section

Answer the question in a writing booklet. Extra writing booklets are available.

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**This question is COMPULSORY.**

### Question 1

The FIVE extracts below are translations of lines 139 – 160 from Book 3 of Homer's *Iliad*. Using THREE of the extracts, write an essay showing the principal differences in the use of language in the three translations you are discussing AND what the effects of these differences are. (Note: variations in the spellings of characters' names are not significant.)

**Context:** *In the tenth year of the Trojan War, it is decided that King Menelaus, the husband of Helen, Queen of Sparta, and Paris, her Trojan lover, will fight in single combat, the winner to take Helen. Iris, goddess of the rainbow and messenger of the gods, fetches Helen from her chamber to watch the combat from the Trojan walls.*

**Question 1 continues on page 3**

Question 1 (continued)

TRANSLATION 1

These words pierced Helen to the heart. She longed for her husband of the old days, for home and family. At once she threw a white veil over her, and left the house quickly with tears running down her cheeks. Two maids were in attendance, Aethra and Clymene with her great eyes. They made their way to the Scaian Gate.

Priam was sitting over the gatehouse in a group of the city elders, Panthoos and Thymoites, Lampos and Clytios, Hycetaon once well-known in the field, and two men of tried wisdom, Ucalegon and Antenor. These were old men long past their fighting days, but excellent speakers. There they all sat on the tower, chirruping in their thin old voices like so many crickets on a tree. As they saw Helen coming up, they whispered to one another in plain words:

“No wonder Achaians\* and Trojans have been fighting all these years for such a woman! I do declare she is like some divine creature come down from heaven. Well, all the same, I wish she would sail away, and not stay here to be the ruin of us and our children.”

W.H.D. ROUSE, 1938

\* Another word for Greeks

**Question 1 continues on page 4**

Question 1 (continued)

TRANSLATION 2

Thus spake the thousand-colour'd dame; and to her mind commends  
The joy to see her first espous'd, her native tow'rs and friends,  
Which stirr'd a sweet desire in her, to serve the which she hied:  
Shadow'd her graces with white veils, and (though she took a pride  
To set her thoughts at gaze, and see in her clear beauty's flood,  
What choice of glory swam to her), yet tender womanhood  
Season'd with tears her joys to see more joys the more offence,  
And that perfection could not flow from earthly excellence.

Thus went she forth, and took with her her women most of name,  
Aethra (Pithaeus' lovely birth) and Clymene, whom fame  
Hath for her fair eyes memoriz'd. They reach'd the Scaean tow'rs,  
Where Priam sat to see the fight, with all his counsellors;  
Panthous, Lampus, Clitius and stout Hycetaon,  
Thimates, wise Antenor, and profound Ucalegon:  
All grave old men, and soldiers they had been, but for age  
Now left the wars; yet counsellors they were exceeding sage.  
And as in well grown woods, on trees, cold spiny grasshoppers  
Sit chirping, and send voices out that scarce can pierce our ears  
For softness, and their weak faint sounds, so talking on the tow'r,  
These seniors of the people sat: who when they saw the pow'r  
Of beauty in the queen ascend, ev'n those cold-spirited peers,  
Those wise and almost wither'd men found this heat in their years,  
That they were forc'd (though whispering) to say: 'What man can blame  
The Greeks and Trojans to endure for so admir'd a dame,  
So many miseries, and so long? In her sweet countenance shine  
Looks like the goddesses: and yet (though never so divine)  
Before we boast, unjustly still, of her enforced prize,  
And justly suffer for her sake, with all our progenies,  
Labour and ruin, let her go: the profit of our land  
Must pass the beauty.'

GEORGE CHAPMAN, 1598

**Question 1 continues on page 5**

Question 1 (continued)

TRANSLATION 3

This said, the many-coloured maid inspires  
Her husband's love, and wakes her former fires;  
Her country, parents, all that once were dear,  
Rush to her thought, and force a tender tear,  
O'er her fair face a snowy veil she threw,  
And, softly sighing, from the loom withdrew.  
Her handmaids, Clymene and Aethra, wait  
Her silent footsteps to the Scaean gate.

There sat the seniors of the Trojan race:  
(Old Priam's chiefs, and most in Priam's grace,)  
The king the first; Thymoetes at his side;  
Lampus and Clytius, long in council tried;  
Panthus, and Hicetaon, once the strong;  
And next, the wisest of the reverend throng,  
Antenor grave, and sage Ucalegon,  
Lean'd on the walls and bask'd before the sun:  
Chiefs, who no more in bloody fights engage,  
But wise through time, and narrative with age,  
In summer days, like grasshoppers rejoice,  
A bloodless race, that send a feeble voice.  
These, when the Spartan queen approach'd the tower,  
In secret own'd resistless beauty's power:  
They cried, "No wonder such celestial charms  
For nine long years have set the world in arms;  
What winning graces! what majestic mien!  
She moves a goddess, and she looks a queen!  
Yet hence, O Heaven, convey that fatal face,  
And from destruction save the Trojan race."

ALEXANDER POPE, ABOUT 1720

**Question 1 continues on page 6**

Question 1 (continued)

TRANSLATION 4

Awaiting Copyright Clearance

\* Ares is the Greek name of the god of war

**Question 1 continues on page 7**

Question 1 (continued)

TRANSLATION 5

Awaiting Copyright Clearance

\* Another word for Greeks

**End of Question 1**

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## **Section II**

**Attempt ONE question from Questions 2–5**

**Allow about 1 hour for this section**

In Section II, your answer must make close reference to works from MORE THAN ONE MODULE.

Answer EITHER on TWO or THREE longer works, OR on ONE longer work and FOUR or FIVE poems or extracts.

Refer ONLY to set texts.

Use different texts from the ones you use in Section III.

Answer the question in a SEPARATE writing booklet. Extra writing booklets are available.

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### **Question 2**

Is it true to suggest that ‘We read the literature of the past from an ambivalent position of recognition and ignorance’?

**OR**

### **Question 3**

‘All literature flirts with the reader’s desire for alternative realities.’

How?

**OR**

### **Question 4**

‘Literature has no function: therein lies its inestimable power.’

Discuss.

**OR**

### **Question 5**

‘For writers, distinctions between truth and falsehood do not exist.’

What are the implications of this claim for your reading of literature?

### **Section III**

**Attempt ONE question from Questions 6–13**

**Allow about 1 hour for this section**

Refer ONLY to set texts.

Use different texts from the ones you use in Section II.

Answer the question in a SEPARATE writing booklet. Extra writing booklets are available.

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#### **Question 6 — The Nineteenth-Century European Novel**

‘Characters in nineteenth-century novels are exclusively constructed to argue positions in debates on social and moral issues.’

Do you agree? Refer in some detail to TWO or THREE novels in your answer.

**OR**

#### **Question 7 — The Nineteenth-Century European Novel**

‘Nineteenth-century novels chart the shipwrecks of human hopes.’

Explore some of the implications of this statement, referring in some detail to TWO or THREE novels in your answer.

**OR**

#### **Question 8 — Poetry and Religious Experience**

What is the meaning of death?

Discuss in relation to the way ideas about death are explored EITHER in *An Imaginary Life* and up to THREE poems or extracts OR in no more than FIVE poems or extracts.

**OR**

#### **Question 9 — Poetry and Religious Experience**

‘The literature of religious experience gives form to the irrationality and randomness of human existence.’

Examine some of the implications of this statement in a discussion of EITHER *An Imaginary Life* and up to THREE poems or extracts OR no more than FIVE poems or extracts.

**OR**

**Question 10 — Satiric Voices**

‘Satire is the cynical expression of idealism.’

Do you agree?

Refer to at least THREE major works or TWO major works and several short ones.

**OR**

**Question 11 — Satiric Voices**

‘Satirists cannot arouse our disgust without engaging our sympathies.’

Explore the implications of this view with reference to at least THREE major works or TWO major works and several short ones.

**OR**

**Question 12 — Post-Colonial Voices**

Post-colonial writing is ‘obsessed with notions of absence and return.’

Is this a strength or a weakness?

Answer with reference to at least THREE major works or TWO major works and several short ones.

**OR**

**Question 13 — Post-Colonial Voices**

Post-colonial literature has been dismissed as ‘the grizzling of difficult children’.

Evaluate this view with reference to at least THREE major works or TWO major works and several short ones.

**End of paper**

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