

# ELAT MINI-PAPER

# MOCK EXAMINATION 1

## English Literature Aptitude Test

**Time Allowed:** 1 hour (*normal test: 1 hr 30 mins*)

Instructions to Candidates: **Please read this page carefully.**

You should allow at least 15 minutes (*normal test – 30 minutes*) for reading this question paper, making notes and preparing your answer.

No texts, dictionaries or sources of reference may be used during the examination.

**Please turn over.**

The following poems and extracts from longer texts consider the experience of light. Read the material carefully and then complete the task below.

- (a) An untitled poem by Emily Dickinson (1830 – 1886).
- (b) An extract from *The Ordeal of Richard Feveril*, a novel by George Meredith, published in 1859.
- (c) 'Sunlight in the Garden,' a poem by Louis MacNeice, published in 1936.

**Task:**

Select two or three of the passages (a) to (c) and compare and contrast them in any ways that seem interesting to you, paying particular attention to distinctive features of structure, language and style. In your introduction, indicate briefly what you intend to explore or illustrate through close reading of your chosen passages.

*This task is designed to assess your responsiveness to unfamiliar literary material and your skills in close reading. Marks are not awarded for references to other texts or authors you have studied.*

(a) An untitled poem by Emily Dickinson

There's a certain Slant of light,  
Winter Afternoons –  
That oppresses, like the Heft  
Of Cathedral Tunes –

Heavenly Hurt, it gives us –  
We can find no scar,  
But internal difference,  
Where the Meanings, are –

None may teach it – Any –  
'Tis the Seal Despair –  
An imperial affliction  
Sent us of the Air –

When it comes, the Landscape listens –  
Shadows – hold their breath –  
When it goes, 'tis like the Distance  
On the look of Death –

(b) An extract from *The Ordeal of Richard Feveril*, a novel by George Meredith, published in 1859.

A pale grey light on the skirts of the flying tempest displayed the dawn. Richard was walking hurriedly. The green drenched weeds lay all about in his path, bent thick, and the forest drooped glimmeringly. Impelled as a man who feels a revelation mounting obscurely to his brain, Richard was passing one of those little forest-chapels, hung with votive wreaths, where the peasant halts to kneel and pray. Cold, still, in the twilight it stood, rain-drops pattering round it. He looked within, and saw the Virgin holding her Child. He moved by. But not many steps had he gone ere his strength went out of him, and he shuddered. What was it? He asked not. He was in other hands. Vivid as lightning the Spirit of Life illumined him. He felt in his heart the cry of his child, his darling's touch. With shut eyes he saw them both. They drew him from the depths; they led him a blind and tottering man. And as they led him he had a sense of purification so sweet he shuddered again and again.

When he looked out from his trance on the breathing world, the small birds hopped and chirped: warm fresh sunlight was over all the hills. He was on the edge of the forest, entering a plain clothed with ripe corn under a spacious morning sky.

c) 'Sunlight in the Garden,' a poem by Louis MacNeice, published in 1936

The sunlight on the garden  
Hardens and grows cold,  
We cannot cage the minute  
Within its nets of gold;  
When all is told  
We cannot beg for pardon.

Our freedom as free lances  
Advances towards its end;  
The earth compels, upon it  
Sonnets and birds descend;  
And soon, my friend,  
We shall have no time for dances.

The sky was good for flying  
Defying the church bells  
And every evil iron  
Siren and what it tells:  
The earth compels,  
We are dying, Egypt, dying

And not expecting pardon,  
Hardened in heart anew,  
But glad to have sat under  
Thunder and rain with you,  
And grateful too  
For sunlight on the garden.