



GCSE

C700U10-1A



ENGLISH LANGUAGE – Component 1
20th Century Literature Reading and Creative Prose Writing

TUESDAY, 5 JUNE 2018 – MORNING

Resource Material for use with Section A

SECTION A: 40 marks

Read carefully the passage below.

This story is set on a Caribbean island where the main characters, Emma and Robbie, are on holiday.

Emma was always falling in love. She thought that for her it was a lot like skydiving: you leap impulsively into the air and trust your parachute will open. The men she fell in love with were usually married, and awful as well. Her friends tried to find nice men for her but these kind, polite men didn't interest her. She usually wanted men who were successful and she could look up to, which often meant that they had no real time for anyone else, including Emma. Why she couldn't spot this kind of man a mile off was a mystery but she was fearless.

At this time in her life Emma was in love with Robbie. He was twenty years older than her, a stocky, red-bearded Scot who was well known for his grumpiness. Emma mistook it for shyness. She thought he was more mature than he was and therefore difficult to understand. During the early stage of their relationship, Emma almost killed Robbie. She didn't do it on purpose.

They were on a Caribbean island and staying in a house that belonged to a friend. They were there for two weeks and by the end of the first one, Emma was feeling the need for some time apart from Robbie, although she still loved him as much as ever. Emma, who was more physically adventurous, began to go for long walks. Sometimes she would climb up cliffs, or make her way along slippery ledges visible only at low tide. Occasionally Robbie would go with her but more often he would stay at the house and sulk.

Near the house there was a beach and across from it, about half a mile away, there was an island called Wreck Island. There was an underwater ridge running out to Wreck Island and there was a local tradition that at low tide it was possible to walk to the island along the ridge. The water would come up to your neck, they said. Emma got the idea into her head that she would like to walk out to Wreck Island. She couldn't explain why. To Robbie, she put it down to boredom and said it was a challenge. She wanted to persuade him to make the walk with her. She wasn't totally reckless and, although she still believed she was invincible, she didn't mind having a little back-up. She knew that Robbie didn't really want to go but she also knew he wouldn't be able to resist the word *challenge*. She made it clear that she was going anyway and in the end he agreed to accompany her. He said she'd need someone to keep an eye on her, in case she got into trouble.

Emma chose their gear carefully, including bathing suits, running shoes and floppy sun hats. She felt they should each carry a water bottle and a long walking stick for feeling their way under the water. At low tide they set out and there were a few spectators there to see them off.

Emma went first. Finding the ridge was not difficult. The water was quickly up to her armpits but the footing wasn't bad. The ridge was about a foot wide and dropped steeply on either side. A quarter of the way out, Emma realised that the water was much colder than it was when you just went swimming in it. Also the current was stronger than she had thought. The truth was she hadn't given it much attention. The tide had begun to run in again and she decided they wouldn't try to walk back but would signal someone to come out and get them. Until then she had not thought about getting back. This was typical of Emma. She disliked going backwards. She felt the waves were getting bigger and, although she was managing by using her stick, it was harder to keep her footing. Her muscles were beginning to ache and she had to concentrate, which was why she didn't look around earlier to see where Robbie was. Now she did.

At first she didn't see him at all. He wasn't on the ridge behind her, where he should have been. What she did see was that the hill overlooking the bay was covered with people, sitting quietly, as if at a play and watching the performance going on before them. The performance was Robbie drowning. He had been swept off the ridge and was being carried out to sea by the current. All she could see was his sun hat. As she watched, an arm came up then sank again. She raised her stick in the air and shook it at the hillside. 'Do something!' she yelled. She pointed at Robbie with the stick, as if it were a magic wand and she could command him to stop and float backwards. She felt helpless. She knew she could not swim after him and rescue him. If she did that, they would both be lost. She had to keep walking or the water would soon be too high.

In the end, they sent out Horace in an ancient rowboat. Nobody else would chance it. Everybody sane kept their boats at the other side of the island where there was a safe harbour, but Horace was stubborn and liked to keep his boat where he could watch it. He was also, luckily for Robbie, as strong as an ox. He fished Robbie out of the water and rowed back to shore. The crowd
55 cheered and Robbie went into shock.
Emma reached Wreck Island and sat on it, shivering and worrying about Robbie, until someone remembered her and sent a motorboat out to get her. No-one complimented her on her daring. Instead they said what a damn fool she had been to try such a thing.
‘Why didn’t you stop me then?’ Emma said, doubly annoyed because she knew they were right.
60 The bartender said everyone knew she was that sort of woman. ‘An idea get in her head, no use trying to get it out.’ He shrugged and went on polishing glasses.
Emma felt terrible about Robbie. She sat at his bedside, where he lay wrapped in several blankets, and held his hand, and actually did say, ‘Robbie, what have I done to you?’ Only in
65 books do people think of original ways of expressing grief and fear. Robbie was a kind man whom she loved, and she had almost killed him.
Emma made tea for Robbie and coaxed him to eat, going so far as to bake him some cakes. He lay around while Emma grovelled. As soon as he felt better he became more grumpy than usual. He felt humiliated by the whole incident. He felt he was ageing, although Emma, being
70 twenty-three, didn’t understand this at the time. She wondered briefly whether she really wanted to marry Robbie after all but soon he recovered and they flew back to the real world.

Margaret Atwood