

Pearson Edexcel Level 1/Level 2 GCSE (9–1)

English Language

Paper 1: Fiction and Imaginative Writing

Section A: Reading Text Insert

Specimen Papers for first teaching
September 2015

Time: 1 hour 45 minutes

Paper Reference

1EN0/01

Do not return the insert with the question paper.

Advice

- Read the text before answering the questions in Section A of the question paper.

Turn over ►

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Read the text below and answer Questions 1–4 on the question paper.

In this extract Jo March attempts to cook for her sisters, friend of the family Miss Crocker and next door neighbour Laurie.

Little Women: Louisa May Alcott

Having rekindled the fire, she thought she would go to market while the water heated. The walk revived her spirits, and flattering herself that she had made good bargains, she trudged home again, after buying a very young lobster, some very old asparagus, and two boxes of acid strawberries. By the time she got cleared up, the dinner arrived and the stove was red-hot. Hannah had left a pan of bread to rise, Meg had worked it up early, set it on the hearth for a second rising, and forgotten it. Meg was entertaining Sallie Gardiner in the parlor, when the door flew open and a floury, crocky¹, flushed, and disheveled figure appeared, demanding tartly... 5

“I say, isn’t bread risen enough when it runs over the pans?”...

...Language cannot describe the anxieties, experiences, and exertions which Jo underwent that morning, and the dinner she served up became a standing joke. Fearing to ask any more advice, she did her best alone, and discovered that something more than energy and good will is necessary to make a cook. She boiled the asparagus for an hour and was grieved to find the heads cooked off and the stalks harder than ever. The bread burned black; for the salad dressing so aggravated her that she could not make it fit to eat. The lobster was a scarlet mystery to her, but she hammered and poked till it was unshelled and its meager proportions concealed in a grove of lettuce leaves. The potatoes had to be hurried, not to keep the asparagus waiting, and were not done at the last. The blancmange was lumpy, and the strawberries not as ripe as they looked, having been skilfully ‘deaconed’². 10 15 20

“Well, they can eat beef and bread and butter, if they are hungry, only it’s mortifying to have to spend your whole morning for nothing,” thought Jo, as she rang the bell half an hour later than usual, and stood, hot, tired, and dispirited, surveying the feast spread before Laurie, accustomed to all sorts of elegance, and Miss Crocker, whose tattling tongue would report them far and wide. 25

Poor Jo would gladly have gone under the table, as one thing after another was tasted and left, while Amy giggled, Meg looked distressed, Miss Crocker pursed her lips³, and Laurie talked and laughed with all his might to give a cheerful tone to the festive scene. Jo’s one strong point was the fruit, for she had sugared it well, and had a pitcher of rich cream to eat with it. Her hot cheeks cooled a trifle, and she drew a long breath as the pretty glass plates went round, and everyone looked graciously at the little rosy islands floating in a sea of cream. Miss Crocker tasted first, made a wry face, and drank some water hastily. Jo, who refused, thinking there might not be enough, for they dwindled sadly after the picking over, glanced at Laurie, but he was eating away manfully, though there was a slight pucker about his mouth and he kept his eye fixed on his plate. Amy, who was fond of delicate fare, took a heaping spoonful, choked, hid her face in her napkin, and left the table precipitately⁴. 30 35

¹ dirty

² hidden at the bottom so the imperfect fruit cannot be seen

³ to pucker the lips to show distaste

⁴ quickly

"Oh, what is it?" exclaimed Jo, trembling.

"Salt instead of sugar, and the cream is sour," replied Meg with a tragic gesture.

Jo uttered a groan and fell back in her chair, remembering that she had given a last hasty powdering to the berries out of one of the two boxes on the kitchen table, and had neglected to put the milk in the refrigerator.

40

Acknowledgment:

Little Women, Louisa May Alcott, 2014, Scholastic Press.

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