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

English Language

Paper 1: Fiction and Imaginative Writing
Section A: Reading Text Insert

Tuesday 5 June 2018 – Morning
Time: 1 hour 45 minutes

Paper Reference
1EN0/01

Do not return this Reading Text 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 the narrator has just murdered two people in a fourth-floor flat with an axe. He is almost disturbed by a group of men and is now trying to make his escape down the stairs.

***Crime and Punishment*: Fyodor Dostoyevsky**

But at that very instant several men, speaking loud and fast, began tramping up the stairs. There were three or four of them. He recognised the young lad's booming voice. 'It's them!'

In total despair he made straight for them: 'What will be, will be! I'm ruined if they stop me, ruined if they let me pass: they'll remember.' They were about to meet; just one flight of stairs between them – when suddenly, salvation! A few steps away from him, to the right, an apartment stood empty and open, that same second-floor apartment which the workmen had been painting and which, as if on purpose, they'd now vacated. So that was them running out just now with such a hue and cry. The floors had just been painted; in the middle of the room stood a vat and a pot with paint and a brush. He darted through the open door in a flash and hid on the other side of the wall, in the very nick of time: they were already on the landing. Then they turned to carry on up to the fourth floor, talking loudly. He waited for them to go past, walked out on tiptoe and ran off down.

No one on the stairs! Or at the gates. He passed quickly under the arch and turned left down the street.

He knew full well that they were already in the apartment, right now, that they were astonished to find it open when it had just been closed, that they were already looking at the bodies, and that it would take no more than a minute for them to work out beyond any shadow of a doubt that the murderer had been there just moments before and had managed to hide somewhere, slip past them, run off; and they might also work out that he'd been waiting in the empty apartment as they climbed up. Still, for the life of him he dared not quicken his stride more than a little, even though it was another hundred paces or so to the next turning. 'Perhaps I should duck under one of these arches and wait it out in some stairwell? No, no good! Or chuck away the axe somewhere? Or hail a cab? No good! No good!'

At last, the lane. He turned into it more dead than alive. He was already halfway to safety and he understood this: there'd be less reason for suspicion, not to mention a bustling crowd in which to lose himself like a grain of sand. But all these agonies had left him so feeble he could barely move. Sweat was dripping off him; his neck was all wet. 'Drunk as a lord!' someone yelled out to him when he came out by the Ditch*.

He was in a state of near-oblivion**, and it was only getting worse. But he did remember how frightened he was when he came out by the Ditch and saw how few people there were and how conspicuous he was, and he almost turned back into the lane. But even though he could barely stay on his feet, he still made a detour and returned home from a completely different direction.

He still hadn't recovered his wits when he passed through the gates to his building; at any rate, he was already on the stairs by the time he remembered the axe. Yet the task facing him was of the utmost importance: to put it back, and as discreetly as possible. Of course, he was in no fit state by now to realise that he might have been better off not returning the axe to its former place at all, but …

*Ditch** – a local word for the canal

*near-oblivion*** – being almost unaware or unconscious of what is happening around you

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Acknowledgement:

Crime and Punishment, Fyodor Dostoyevsky, 1866, Penguin Translated Texts (Oliver Ready) Kindle Edition 2014
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