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

English Language

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

Wednesday 1 November 2017 – Morning
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 Maggie is in a boat fighting against dangerous floodwaters to rescue her family from the mill where they live. She finds Tom, her brother, whom she loved as a child, but they have not had a good relationship for many years.

***The Mill on the Floss*: George Eliot**

With panting joy that she was there at last, joy that overcame all distress, Maggie neared the front of the house. At first she heard no sound, she saw no object moving. Her boat was on a level with the upstairs windows. She called out in a loud, piercing voice, 'Tom, where are you? Mother, where are you? Here is Maggie!'

Soon, from the window of the attic in the central gable*, she heard Tom's voice, 'Who is it? Have you brought a boat?'

'It is I, Tom, – Maggie. Where is mother?'

'She is not here; she went to Garum the day before yesterday. I'll come down to the lower window.'

'Alone, Maggie?' said Tom, in a voice of deep astonishment, as he opened the middle window, on a level with the boat.

'Yes, Tom; God has taken care of me, to bring me to you. Get in quickly. Is there no one else?'

'No,' said Tom, stepping into the boat; 'I fear the man is drowned; he was carried down the Ripple, I think, when part of the mill fell with the crash of trees and stones against it; I've shouted again and again, and there has been no answer. Give me the oars, Maggie.'

It was not till Tom had pushed off and they were on the wide water – he face to face with Maggie – that the full meaning of what had happened rushed upon his mind. It came with so overpowering a force – it was such a new revelation to his spirit, of the depths in life that had lain beyond his vision, which he had fancied so keen and clear – that he was unable to ask a question. They sat mutely gazing at each other; Maggie with eyes of intense life looking out from a weary, beaten face, Tom pale, with a certain awe and humiliation. Thought was busy though the lips were silent, and though he could ask no question, he guessed a story of almost miraculous, divinely protected effort. But at last a mist gathered over the blue-grey eyes, and the lips found a word they could utter, the old childish 'Magsie!'

Maggie could make no answer but a long, deep sob of that mysterious wondrous happiness that is one with pain.

As soon as she could speak, she said, 'We will go to Lucy, Tom; we'll go and see if she is safe, and then we can help the rest.'

Tom rowed with untired vigour, and with a different speed from poor Maggie's. The boat was soon in the current of the river again, and soon they would be at Tofton.

'Park House stands high up out of the flood,' said Maggie. 'Perhaps they have got Lucy there.'

Nothing else was said; a new danger was being carried towards them by the river. Some wooden machinery had just given way and huge fragments were being floated along. The sun was rising now, and the wide area of watery desolation was spread out

in dreadful clearness around them – in dreadful clearness floated onward the hurrying, threatening masses. A large company in a boat that was working its way along under the Tofton houses observed their danger and shouted, 'Get out of the current!'

But that could not be done at once, and Tom, looking before him, saw death rushing on them. Huge fragments, clinging together in fatal fellowship, made one wide mass across the stream.

'It is coming, Maggie!' Tom said, in a deep, hoarse voice, loosing the oars and clasping her.

The next instant the boat was no longer seen upon the water, and the huge mass was hurrying on in hideous triumph.

But soon the keel** of the boat reappeared, a black speck on the golden water.

The boat reappeared, but brother and sister had gone down in an embrace never to be parted, living through again in one supreme moment the days when they had clasped their little hands in love, and roamed the daisied fields together.

*gable** – the highest part of the roof

*keel*** – part of the bottom of a boat

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Acknowledgement:

The Mill on the Floss, George Eliot, 1860, Penguin Popular Classics edition 2003
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