



GCSE

C700U10-1A



A17-C700U10-1A



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

WEDNESDAY, 1 NOVEMBER 2017 – MORNING

Resource Material for use with Section A

SECTION A: 40 marks

Read carefully the passage below.

The main character in this extract is Lucy Faulkner and her parents are Brian and Maureen Faulkner.

Lucy Faulkner was born in Luton because her father met a man in a pub who had a good earner going in cheap leather jackets from Spain. Brian Faulkner decided to team up with him, phoned Maureen, who was eight months pregnant and sitting quietly in London with her mum, and told her to get herself up to Luton while he looked for a flat. In the event, the flat did not materialise and Brian discovered that the idea wasn't as good as he thought, and the other bloke was in trouble with the law anyway. So Maureen spent an uncomfortable few months in a bed and breakfast in Luton, first on her own and then with an incessantly wailing Lucy, while Brian made trips to Spain and then said they'd better move back to London because he had heard of something interesting in carpet sales.

This strange link with a place she was never to know often struck Lucy as odd, when she wrote her place of birth on a form or glanced in her passport. When she was a child she saw Luton as some sort of paradise from which they had been expelled. She would question her mother closely on the subject.

'I can't remember it,' said Maureen with honesty. 'I was too busy feeding you and trying to get the rent money off your father.'

Lucy's acquaintance with her father was to last for a few years only and, looking back, seemed just as meaningless as the connection with Luton. She remembered him as an amiable figure who took her once to a funfair and bought her some candyfloss. The memory seemed appropriately shabby. Her father, who by now would be older and greyer, was fixed in her memory as that jaunty figure who combined selfishness with a desire to make up for his failings.

Her mother, on the other hand, was constant, changing in slow motion from the harassed and loving figure of Lucy's childhood to the Maureen of today – unfailingly good-humoured, opinionated and forever a great deal younger than her daughter, or so it seemed to Lucy. Lucy was not like her mother. She was not easy-going and trusting. Lucy stared, probed and queried.

'Where does the sun go when it's night time?' she demanded, aged about four.

'It goes to bed,' replied Maureen comfortably. 'It goes bye-byes, just like you do. All tucked up. And then it wakes up in the morning and shines in your window, doesn't it?' Lucy listened in silence, her mouth knotted in disapproval. And then she burst out, 'No, it doesn't. It can't because it's not a girl.'

What Lucy meant was that Maureen's claim was impossible because the sun – up there, wherever it may be – is obviously not a conscious being like you and me, capable of putting on a nightdress and getting into bed and going to sleep. Since she was only four, the best she could do to express her insight was to resort to an outburst of temper.

As she grew up, Lucy became competent and combative. She had a sense of curiosity, a capacity for hard work and a strong refusal ever to admit defeat, qualities that she did not get from her upbringing. A mother who was unwilling or unable to confront a serious question about the universe was unlikely to turn out to be inspirational.

When Lucy was five, Maureen had two small children to cope with, a third on the way, and a husband who had embarked on the process of gently easing himself out of their lives. She was not aware of what was going on because he made an effort now and again. He was away a great deal. It was his work, of course. Maureen was never very clear what it was he was involved with at any particular moment. He'd always said she wasn't to bother herself with that side of things. That was his problem. He would be away for a week and then turn up with presents for the children and nights of love for Maureen. Then he'd be gone again, with a hug and a wave. It became just a series of phone calls. 'Reverse the charges ...' Maureen would cry into the receiver but there

50 would be a click and he was gone. Rushed off his feet, poor dear. And forgotten to send the housekeeping money again.

By the time Lucy was six, the weeks of absence had extended to fortnights and to months.

55 Her father failed to show up for birthdays, and then for Christmas. The phone calls became more infrequent and then tailed off into erratic postcards from places like Scunthorpe or Rhyl. Maureen put them on the mantelpiece and contemplated them without comment.

And so, over the years, Maureen found herself having to endure an endless series of humiliating sessions with solicitors and social security people, trying to follow what was

60 being said to her by this official or that. It soon became a way of life.

'That's life, isn't it?' said Maureen, without bitterness.

By the time she was seventeen, an indignant Lucy did not see why life should be like this at all and thought that absent husbands and arrogant officials should be made to answer for their behaviour. And yet, Lucy thought, Maureen was burdened by children

65 and poverty but she was resilient, resourceful in her way and a doggedly protective mother. She was doing the two things that any creature of whatever species is required to do: struggling to survive and ensuring the survival of her offspring.

It seemed to Lucy that Maureen's survival tactic was to keep her head down and weather the storms as they came. There was nothing to be done but grin and bear it, put your best foot forward, and so on. She did not question life. 'Curiosity killed the cat' was

70 one of her favourite expressions. Lucy thought it may well have killed some cats, under some circumstances, but it does not often kill human beings. Maureen was quite wrong there but Lucy was prepared to admit that it was undoubtedly the circumstances of her childhood that had sharpened her wits. If Maureen hadn't had such a rough time, her

75 daughter might have turned out differently.

Lucy adored her mother. And was maddened by her. By the time she was an adolescent, she found her mother's view of life exasperating, inconsistent and plain wrong. Maureen believed that people got what they deserved but also that life was deeply unfair. She was an avid reader of astrology columns in the newspapers and infuriated Lucy when she

80 spent £10 on a consultation with a fortune-teller.

'Why?' wailed Lucy. 'You *need* that money.'

'Because if she tells me there's something nice just around the corner I'll feel a lot better.'

Lucy just sighed.