

DE BEERS

GROUP OF COMPANIES

2014 ENGLISH OLYMPIAD *Language, Literature and Laughter*

MAINSTREAM PAPER

DATE: Tuesday 4 March 2014

TIME: 2 – 3 HOURS

TEXT: *Life's a Laugh?*

TOTAL MARKS: 100

You may have with you in the examination room:

- Pens, pencils, rulers, erasers
- The anthology *Life's a laugh?* (may contain underlining or highlighting but **no notes**)
- Your dictionary

You must not have any other papers, documents, cell phones or technological information retrieval systems of any kind.

INSTRUCTIONS:

Answer

- 1.** **one** question from SECTION A1, **AND**
 - 2.** **one** question from SECTION A2
 - 3.** and **all the questions** from SECTION B
- Answer in the **Examination Booklet**
- Answer on the **Answer Sheet** that is stapled into the Examination Booklet

4. Regarding SECTION A:

- 4.1 We invite you to express your own ideas in response to the questions, using your own voice – there are no “right” answers. However, the better responses tend to refer to, and quote from, the anthology often.
- 4.2 Answer these questions in the **Examination Booklet** provided.
- 4.3 Write the section and number of the question above each answer, and start each question at the top of a new page.
- 4.4 On the cover of the examination book, please clearly indicate:
 - a) your School's Olympiad Number (e.g. 317)
 - b) your personal Examination Number (e.g. 317 / 3)
 - c) the Questions Answered: each section and *the number of the question that you have answered from that section* (e.g. A1- 3 and A2 - 4).

5. Regarding SECTION B:

- 5.1 Answer these questions on the **Answer Sheet** that is stapled into the centre of your **Examination Booklet**. Do not remove it.
- 5.2 Write your School Number and your Examination Number in the spaces provided (e.g. 317 / 3).
- 5.3 The shaded sections are for the examiner's use only.

Do NOT write your name, your address or your school's name on the cover, or anywhere in your answers.

WE VALUE YOUR ANSWERS SO ENJOY THE EXPERIENCE!

**DO NOT TURN OVER THIS PAGE UNTIL THE INVIGILATOR
GIVES YOU PERMISSION TO DO SO.**

SECTION A1: HUMOUR IN LITERATURE (50 MARKS)

Answer **ONE** of the following questions in an essay of about 300-350 words.

1. The “mechanicals” play of *Pyramus and Thisby* has kept audiences laughing for more than four hundred years. Write an essay in which you discuss why it remains humorous.
2. Discuss how movement, timing, puns and wit might contribute to why the Nurse scenes in your anthology are funny.
3. In both the “mechanicals” play *Pyramus and Thisby*, and the Lemmer play *Playing in the Park*, the players are sensitive to the audience’s reactions. Discuss why we laugh at the mechanicals’s concerns about the audience’s possible reactions, yet we cry with Zamisa when she sobs in the dressing room because of her audience’s reaction to her role of Juliet.
4. For Barry, who is “The King of Laughter”, life is not a laugh, yet he teaches Jerome to laugh. What might we, as South Africans, learn from Barry?
5. The following lyrics from “Comedy Tonight” (penned by Stephen Sondheim for his musical, *A Funny Thing Happened on the way to the Forum*) capture the essence of Comedy as a form of Drama:

**Something familiar,
Something peculiar,
Something for everyone:
A comedy tonight!**

**Nothing with kings, nothing
with crowns;
Bring on the lovers, liars and
clowns!**

**Something appealing,
Something appalling,
Something for everyone:
A comedy tonight!**

**Old situations,
New complications,
Nothing portentous or polite;
Tragedy tomorrow,
Comedy tonight!**

<http://www.songlyrics.com/stephen-sondheim/comedy-tonight-lyrics/>

Discuss how Sondheim’s notion of Comedy is achieved in any of the texts in your anthology. Substantiate your response with detailed reference to your chosen text(s).

6. **“There is more logic in humour than in anything else. Because, you see, humour is truth.”**
- *Victor Borge*

With detailed reference to any two of the texts in your anthology, analyse the nature and technique of the “truth” revealed in your chosen texts.

SECTION A2: (10 MARKS)

The length of the body of the e-mail/ review/ blog/ letter/ monologue should be roughly 80–100 words.

Answer **ONE** of the following questions:

1. Write an e-mail (using the correct format) to a friend who usually does not enjoy comedy, recommending that s/he attend a performance of *The King of Laughter*.
2. Post an account on your Facebook Wall declaring your admiration for Shakespeare’s ability to defy the effects of time and continue to make us laugh.
3. Write the dialogue that happened between you, who happened to be a member of the audience, and the hooligan who disrupted the play after the production of *Romeo and Juliet* as it is described in *Playing in the Park*.
4. During the past couple of months while you have been preparing for the 2014 English Olympiad, you have kept a blog. Write a blog post entitled “Lessons in Life’s Laughter” in which you share the insights you have gained from the texts about the importance of laughter in life.
5. Write a letter to the press (using the correct format) in which you comment on the relevance of this year’s English Olympiad theme and choice of texts.
6. You are auditioning for a role in one of the plays contained in your anthology. As an audition requirement, you need to deliver an **original** comic monologue. Write your comic monologue (using the correct format). Ensure that your monologue contains at least **two** of the comic devices covered in the Study Guide at the back of your anthology.