

## Notes for candidates

*This sample paper has been compiled to show you the structure and style of the English Admissions Test to be trialed in November 2006.*

*There will be a single task or question, designed to assess your responsiveness to unfamiliar literary material and your skills in close reading. Your essay will be based on a comparative analysis of two or more items of unseen poetry or prose contained in the question paper. You may choose any of the items, and you will be expected to explain in your introduction why you have chosen them and what you hope to discover or illustrate by comparing them.*

*There will be no more than six poems or passages from prose and/or drama. The prose may include fiction and non-fiction. The six passages will be linked in some way, and this link will be made explicit in the introduction to the passages. The wording of the task will be as follows:*

**Select two or more of the passages (a) to (f) and compare and contrast them in any ways that seem interesting to you, paying particular attention to structure, voice and features of style. In your introduction, indicate *briefly* what you intend to explore or illustrate through close reading of your chosen passages.**

*The names of the authors and their dates, or the date of publication, will be given. The type of prose (fiction, biography, reportage etc.) will also be indicated. This is to avoid any confusion about the passages, not to give you clues as to what you should write. You are not expected to introduce any references to other texts or authors you have studied, unless directly relevant to the argument of your essay or to the analysis of your chosen passages.*

*It is important that you should allow plenty of time to read all the material and to plan your answer carefully. You should not need to write for longer than one hour. All rough work should be done in your answer book and handed in, together with the question paper, at the end of the examination.*

*The examiners will reward your ability to do the following:*

- *respond perceptively to unfamiliar writing of different kinds*
- *demonstrate skills of close reading, paying attention to the effects of structure, voice and features of style*
- *construct a well-focused essay, based on comparing and contrasting two or more passages*
- *write fluently and accurately.*

***The trial in November 2006 is being conducted purely for research purposes, and results will not be used in the university admissions process. Scores will not be released by Cambridge Assessment until after admissions decisions have been made.***

*This test will be sat for the first time in November 2007 by all candidates applying to read English at Oxford University in 2008. This test will be only one of the elements admissions tutors use to decide whether to invite candidates for interview. The others will include candidates' GCSE results and forecast grades in school-leaving examinations; their UCAS application form, and one item of recent written work, submitted to the college. For further information, please see the English Faculty's admissions web pages:*

<http://www.english.ox.ac.uk/undergraduate/admissions.htm>