English Language Paper 1 Set C (Save my Grade papers)

**Question 1 = 4 facts (4 marks)**

List **four** things about Mrs Palfrey’s journey to the hotel from this part of the source.

Mrs Palfrey first came to the Claremont Hotel on a Sunday afternoon in January. Rain had closed in over London, and her taxi sloshed along the almost deserted Cromwell Road, past one cavernous1 porch after another, the driver going slowly and poking his head out into the wet, for the hotel was not known to him.

1. *Her journey was on a Sunday afternoon in January.*
2. *She travelled by taxi.*
3. *The road seemed deserted.*
4. *Her taxi driver did not know the hotel.*

**Question 2 = Language TEE (8 marks)**

Look in detail at this extract, from **lines 5 to 12** of the source:

This discovery, that he did not know, had a little disconcerted Mrs Palfrey, for she did not know it either, and began to wonder what she was coming to. She tried to banish terror from her heart. She was alarmed at the threat of her own depression.

If it's not nice, I needn't stay, she promised herself, her lips slightly moving, as she leaned forward in the taxi, looking from side to side of the wide, frightening road, almost dreading to read the name Claremont over one of those porches. There were so many hotels, one after the other along this street, all looking much the same.

How does the writer use language here to describe Mrs Palfrey’s feeling as her taxi drives close to the hotel?

*Despite the fairly confident tone, the writer’s exaggerated and negative language betrays Mrs Palfrey’s overall feeling of unease as the taxi drives closer to the hotel.*

*Firstly, the writer establishes the character’s strong-minded, no nonsense characterisation through the confident and brusque tone. The fact that she was “little disconcerted”, at the taxi driver being lost as she “did not know it either” makes her appear unfazed and confident. The tone makes her seem to have a ‘stiff upper lip’ to deal with trying situations.*

*However, her underlying unease is quickly revealed when she “tried to banish terror from her heart”. This metaphorical language reveals how she is trying to be strong, shown in the strong verb “banish”, yet this juxtaposes with the word “terror”, showing panic and vulnerability. The personification of “terror”, an exaggerated emotion, cannot be banished like a person. This highlights how she is trying to control her emotions, yet does not really know how.*

*Overall, the semantic field of words like “terror”, “alarmed”, “threat”, “frightening” and “dreading” could all indicate that, despite her attempts to be strong and independent, Mrs Palfrey feels intimidated and vulnerable going to this unknown place. She does not know what to expect and the number of negative words together in this short extract build the sense that she is feeling increasingly uncomfortable, even if she at first appeared unfazed.*

**Question 3 = Structure TEE (8 marks)**

You now need to think about the **whole** of the source. This text is from the beginning of a novel.

How has the writer structured the text to interest you as a reader?

*Overall, the writer has structured the opening of the novel to develop an understanding of the main character, developing her characterisation.*

*The first words of the opening of the novel establish the writer’s initial focus as being on creating a first impression of her character, Mrs Palfrey. While on her journey to an unknown place, Taylor arguably makes the “authoritative” Mrs Palfrey seem almost pompous and aloof, especially when she seemed “alarmed at the threat of her own depression”; this suggests that Mrs Palfrey is uncomfortable demonstrating unpalatable emotions that don’t seem fitting in polite society. This first impression of her aloof manner is consolidated later in the extract when she talks about the “respectability” of the hotel and reveals her high expectations, taking the hotel’s claims of good cuisine “with a pinch of salt”. However, her refusal to give in to depression is again seen when she gave “herself a good talking-to”, further suggesting that Taylor has created a character who is fairly cold and unyielding.*

*However, Taylor’s character development offsets this first impression a little when the description of the character reveals more vulnerability. She is described as having to haul herself out of the taxi with a “rubber-tipped walking-stick” and being in pain due to her “varicose veins”. This image of an aging character, coupled with her feelings of “terror” and how she found the road “frightening”, could create sympathy for the old lady travelling to an unknown place alone.*

*Finally, later in the extract, Taylor uses a flashback to give even more insight into why the character is so strong-minded. She remembers her first experiences as a “bride, in strange, alarming conditions in Burma”, where she had to deal with floods and snakes. Therefore, the flashback to these tough times helps the reader to better understand her comment that she had “always known how to behave” and to see that her behaviour is perhaps because of how she was brought up or due to her experiences in her life.*

*However, ending the extract with her disdain at the room being “more like a maid's bedroom” brings the reader back to our first impression of a more unlikeable and pompous character.*

**Question 4 = Statement TEE (20 marks)**

Focus this part of your answer on the second part of the source, from **line 26 to the end**.

A student said, ‘This part of the story, where Mrs Palfrey assesses her room and her new circumstances, shows she is more optimistic and good humoured than she might first appear.”

To what extent do you agree?

In your response, you could:

• consider your own impressions of Mrs Palfrey and how others view her

• evaluate how the writer conveys Mrs Palfrey’s reaction to her new home

• support your response with references to the text.

Followed by the driver and her luggage (for the hotel gave no sign of life), she battled with revolving doors and almost lurched into the hushed vestibule4. The receptionist was coldly kind, as if she were working in a nursing-home, and one for deranged patients at that. *'What* a day!' she said. The taxi-driver, lumbering in with the suitcases, seemed alien in this muffled place, and was at once taken over by the porter. Mrs

Palfrey opened her handbag and carefully picked out coins. Everything she did was unhurried, almost authoritative. She had always known how to behave. Even as a bride, in strange, alarming conditions in Burma, she had been magnificent, calm - when (for instance) she was rowed across floods to her new home; unruffled, finding it more than damp, with a snake wound round the banisters to greet her. She had straightened her back and given herself a good talking-to, as she had this afternoon in the train.

When the porter had put down her suitcases and gone, she thought that prisoners must feel as she did now, the first time they are left in their cell, first turning to the window, then facing about to stare at the closed door: after that, counting the paces from wall to wall. She envisaged this briskly.

From the window she could see - could see only - a white brick wall down which dirty rain slithered, and a cast-iron fire-escape, which was rather graceful. She tried to see that it was graceful. The outlook - especially on this darkening afternoon – was daunting; but the backs of hotels, which are kept for indigent5 ladies, can't be expected to provide a view, she knew. The best is kept for honeymooners, though God alone knew why they should require it.

The bed looked rather high, and the carpet was worn, but not threadbare. Roses could be made out. A comer fireplace was boarded up, but still had a hearth6 before it of peacock-blue tiles. The radiator gave off a dry, scorched smell and subdued noises. Heavy wooden knobs to the drawers of the chest, she noted. It was more like a maid's bedroom.

*Overall, I believe that Mrs Palfrey is more good humoured than she first appeared, however I disagree that she is more optimistic; although she attempts to be more optimistic, she doesn’t manage to really accept the simplicity of her new surroundings.*

*Firstly, Taylor uses humorous observations to establish a somewhat more good humoured side to Mrs Palfrey. She compares the hotel’s receptionist to one working in “a nursing-home, and one for deranged patients at that”. When introduced to her room, she compares her experience to one of a prisoner “the first time they are left in their cell”. These similes show a darkly humorous tone, arguably reflecting humour, yet not necessarily ‘good’ humour due to the pessimistic comparisons of the hotel and the people in it to a prison or homes for the deranged. This is clearly not showing optimism about her stay, even if she feels able to deal with it through using dark humour.*

*Secondly, I agree that Mrs Palfrey attempts to be more optimistic about the hotel that the earlier feeling of “terror” and “almost dreading” her arrival at the hotel suggested. Towards the end of the extract, we see a contrast in her tone to a more optimistic one. She “tried to see that [the brick wall and fire-escape] was graceful” and shows some understanding that her window “can’t be expected to provide a view”; these more optimistic observations contrast with her previous pessimism of taking the hotel’s claims about their good cuisine “with a pinch of salt”. Therefore the contrast helps to show that Mrs Palfrey is attempting to resolve to have a more positive and optimistic view.*

*However, these attempts at optimism are ultimately not successful. The extract ends with a simile that reveals Mrs Palfrey’s disdain when she says her room is “more like a maid's bedroom”. Taylor’s use of a pompous tone suggests the character is judgemental, harsh and clearly not optimistic about the room and her stay there. Furthermore, the simile comparing the room to that of a “maid” helps the reader to understand that her lack of optimism stems from a feeling of superiority. She is too aloof to appreciate the simple accommodations and the pompous tone suggests she feels they are beneath her.*