

# BACCALAURÉAT GÉNÉRAL

SESSION 2008

ANGLAIS LV 1

Série L

Durée : 3 heures - Coefficient : 4

*L'usage de la calculatrice et du dictionnaire n'est pas autorisé.*

*Dès que le sujet vous est remis, assurez-vous qu'il est complet.  
Ce sujet comporte 4 pages numérotées de 1/4 à 4/4.*

## BARÈME

COMPRÉHENSION - EXPRESSION	14 pts
TRADUCTION	6 pts

Kirpal Singh had arrived in England knowing no one, distanced from his family in the Punjab. He was twenty-one years old. He had met no one but soldiers. So that when he read the notice asking for volunteers with an experimental bomb squad<sup>1</sup>, even though he heard other sappers<sup>2</sup> speak of Lord Suffolk as a madman, he had already decided that in a war you have to take control, and there was a greater chance of choice and life alongside a personality or an individual.

He was the only Indian among the applicants, and Lord Suffolk was late. Fifteen of them were led into a library and asked by the secretary to wait. She remained at the desk, copying out names, while the soldiers joked about the interview and the test. He knew no one. He walked over to a wall and stared at a barometer, was about to touch it but pulled back, just putting his face close to it. Very Dry to Fair to Stormy. He muttered the words to himself with his new English pronunciation. "Wery dry. Very dry." He looked back at the others, peered around the room and caught the gaze of the middle-aged secretary. She watched him sternly. An Indian boy. He smiled and walked towards the bookshelves. Again he touched nothing. At one point he put his nose close to a volume called Raymond, or Life and Death by Sir Oliver Hodge. He turned and caught the woman's eyes on him again. He felt as guilty as if he had put the book in his pocket. She had probably never seen a turban before. The English! They expect you to fight for them but won't talk to you.

They met a very hearty Lord Suffolk during lunch, who poured wine for anyone who wanted it, and laughed loudly at every attempt at a joke by the recruits. In the afternoon they were all given a strange exam in which a piece of machinery had to be put back together without any prior information of what it was used for. They were allowed two hours but could leave as soon as the problem was solved. Singh finished quickly and spent the rest of the time inventing other objects that could be made from the various components. He sensed he would be admitted easily if it were not for his race. He had come from a country where mathematics and mechanics were natural traits. Cars were never destroyed. Parts of them were carried across a village and readapted into a sewing machine or water pump. The backseat of a Ford was reupholstered<sup>3</sup> and became a sofa. Most people in his village were more likely to carry a spanner or screwdriver<sup>4</sup> than a pencil. Antidotes to mechanized disaster were easily found. One cooled an overheating car engine not with new rubber hoses but by scooping up cow shit and patting it around the condenser. What he saw in England was a surfeit of parts that would keep the continent of India going for two hundred years.

He was one of three applicants selected by Lord Suffolk. This man who had not even spoken to him (and had not laughed with him, simply because he had not joked) walked across the room and put his arm around his shoulder. The severe secretary turned out to be Miss Morden, and she bustled in with a tray that held two large glasses of sherry, handed one to Lord Suffolk and, saying, "I know you don't drink," took the other one for herself and raised her glass to him. "Congratulations, your exam was splendid. Though I was sure you would be chosen, even before you took it."

"Miss Morden is a splendid judge of character. She has a nose for brilliance and character. Even before lunch Miss Morden had selected you."

"I found it quite a strain<sup>5</sup> being unable to wink at you, Mr Singh."

Michael Ondaatje, adapted from *The English Patient*, 1992

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<sup>1</sup> a squad: a military team

<sup>2</sup> sappers: specialized soldiers

<sup>3</sup> reupholstered: repaired and covered

<sup>4</sup> spanner/screwdriver: tools

<sup>5</sup> to find something a strain: to find something difficult

## NOTE AUX CANDIDATS

Les candidats traiteront le sujet sur la copie qui leur sera fournie et veilleront à :

- respecter l'ordre des questions et reporter la numérotation sur la copie (numéro et lettre repère le cas échéant, ex. 14 c) ;
- faire précéder les citations de la mention de la ligne ;
- composer des phrases complètes chaque fois qu'il est demandé de rédiger la réponse.

## COMPRÉHENSION - EXPRESSION

1. What type of narrative is it?
2. Give the following information about the three important characters: name, job or position, nationality. (40 words)
3. Why has the main character come here today? (10 words)
4. Who or what do the underlined words refer to?
  - a) "They expect you to fight for them..." (line 18)
  - b) "...what it was used for" (line 22)
  - c) "They were allowed two hours..." (lines 22-23)
  - d) "This man who had not..." (line 34)
  - e) "...he had not joked" (line 35)
  - f) "Though I was sure..." (lines 39-40)
5. Choose the most appropriate title for each part of the text:
  - a) *lines 7-18*: making friends – waiting in the library – joking with the soldiers – practising English
  - b) *lines 19-25*: having a drink – out of time – useful inventions – taking a test
  - c) *lines 25-33*: Indian inventiveness – damaged cars – Indian schooling – 200 years of history
  - d) *lines 34-43*: only a secretary – a sober applicant – party time – a successful outcome

### **Focus on the second paragraph (lines 7-18)**

6. Answer these questions in your own words and justify by quoting from the text:
  - a) Describe the woman's attitude towards the main character. (10 words + quotation)
  - b) How does the main character interpret the woman's attitude? (20 words + quotation)

7. Quote from the text to show that the main character is:

- a) intimidated (1 quotation)
- b) curious (1 quotation)
- c) indignant (1 quotation)

**Focus on the third paragraph (lines 19-33)**

8. Explain in your own words why Singh finishes the task so quickly. (30 words)

9. "He sensed he would be admitted easily if it were not for his race." (line 25)  
Explain this sentence in your own words. (20 words)

**Consider the whole text**

10. What is Lord Suffolk's final decision? Answer in your own words and justify by quoting from the text. (10 words + quotation)

11. Compare Lord Suffolk's attitude to Singh before and after the exam. (20 words)

12. What does this change reveal about the main character's previous impressions? (20 words)

13. Choose one of the following subjects: subject 1 (a + b) **OR** subject 2.

**Subject 1**

- a) At the end of the day, Miss Morden and Lord Suffolk discuss Kirpal Singh. Imagine their conversation. (150 words)
- b) In your opinion, are first impressions always right? (150 words)

**Subject 2**

How easy is it to open up to a foreign culture? (300 words)

## TRADUCTION

Translate into French from line 36 to line 43: "The severe secretary... Mr Singh".