

BACCALAUREAT GENERAL

SESSION 2008

ANGLAIS

LANGUE VIVANTE 1

Serie ES - S

DUREE DE L'EPREUVE : 3 heures - COEFFICIENT : 3

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

Comprehension et Expression:	10 points
Traduction:	10 points

1 After I graduated from Bryn Mawr in '43 Mother and Father hoped that I would marry
my steady¹ back then—a Haverford graduate named Horace Cowett. He'd just been accepted
into U. Penn² law school, and had proposed to me. But though Horace wasn't as prim³ and
5 humorless as his name (he actually was a rather bookish fellow who wrote some halfway
decent poetry for the Haverford literary magazine), I still wasn't ready to impound myself in
marriage at a premature age—especially to a man I liked, but about whom I felt no
overwhelming passion. Anyway, I wasn't going to squander my twenties by sequestering
myself in dull old Philadelphia, as I had my sights set on the city ninety miles north of there.
And nobody was going to stop me from going to New York.

10 Predictably, my parents tried to block my move there. When I announced—around
three weeks before my graduation—that I had been offered a trainee job at *Life*, they were
horrified. I was home for the weekend in Hartford (a trip I made deliberately to break the job
news to them, and also to inform them that I wouldn't be accepting Horace's marriage
proposal). Ten minutes into the conversation, the emotional temperature within our
15 household quickly hit boiling point.

'I am not having any daughter of mine living by herself in that venal, indecent city,'
my father pronounced.

'New York is hardly indecent—and *Life* isn't exactly *Confidential*,' I said, mentioning a
well-known scandal sheet of the time. 'Anyway I thought you'd be thrilled with my news.
20 *Life* only accepts ten trainees a year. It's an incredibly prestigious offer.'

'Father's still right,' my mother said. 'New York is no place for a young woman
without family.'

'Eric's not family?'

'Your brother is not the most moral of men,' my father said.

25 'And what does that mean?' I said angrily.

My father was suddenly flustered, but he covered up his embarrassment by saying, 'It
doesn't matter what it means. What matters is the simple fact that I will not permit you to
live in Manhattan.'

'I am twenty-two years old, Father.'

30 'That's not the issue.'

'You have no legal right to tell me what I can or cannot do.'

'Don't hector⁴ your father,' my mother said. 'And I must tell you that you are making a
dreadful mistake by not marrying Horace.'

'I knew you'd say that.'

35 'Horace is a splendid young man,' my father said.

'Horace is a very *nice* young man—with a very *nice*, dull future ahead of him.'

'You are being arrogant,' he said.

'No—just accurate. Because I will not be pushed into a life I don't want.'

'I am not pushing you into any life ...' my father said.

40 'By forbidding me from going to New York, you are stopping me from taking control
of my own destiny.'

'Your *destiny*!' my father said, with cruel irony. 'You actually think *you* have a
destiny! What bad novels have you been reading at Bryn Mawr?'

¹ my steady : *mon petit ami régulier*

² U. Penn : University of Pennsylvania

³ prim : *guindé*

⁴ hector : *répondre avec rudesse*

45 I stormed out of the room. I ran upstairs and fell on the bed, sobbing. Neither of my
parents came up to comfort me. Nor did I expect them to. That wasn't their style. They both
had a very Old Testament view of parenthood. Father was our household's version of The
Almighty⁵—and once He had spoken, all argument was silenced. So, for the rest of the
weekend, the subject wasn't raised again. Instead, we made strained conversation about the
50 recent Japanese activity in the Pacific—and I stayed button-lipped when Father went into one
of his jeremiads about FDR⁶. On Sunday he drove me to the train station. When we arrived
there he patted my arm.

'Sara, dear—I really don't like fighting with you. Though we are disappointed that you
won't be marrying Horace, we do respect your decision. And if you really are that keen on
journalism, I do have several contacts on the *Hartford Courant*. I don't think it would be too
55 difficult to find you something there...'

'I am accepting the job offer at *Life*, Father.'

He actually turned white—something Father never did.

'If you do accept that job, I will have no choice but to cut you off'

'That will be your loss.'

60 And I left the car.

Douglas KENNEDY, *The Pursuit of Happiness*, 2001

⁵ The Almighty : *Dieu Tout-Puissant*

⁶ FDR : Franklin Delano Roosevelt

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. : 8b)

-faire précéder les citations de la mention de la ligne.

-composer des phrases complètes à chaque fois qu'il leur est demandé de rédiger la réponse.

-respecter le nombre de mots indiqué qui constitue une exigence minimale. En l'absence d'indication, les candidats répondront brièvement à la question posée.

I - COMPREHENSION

1. In what historical period does the story take place? Make a sentence and justify with three elements from the text.
2. What do the following places represent for the narrator? Make a sentence for each item.
 - a) Bryn Mawr
 - b) Philadelphia
 - c) New York
 - d) Hartford
3. Say in your own words what the reader learns about the narrator? (name, age, marital status, present occupation, future prospects - **about 40 words**)
4. Who are the other characters? Say how they are related to one another.
 - a) characters present
 - b) characters mentioned
5. sum up the situation in your own words. (**about 50 words**)
6. Say in your own words what the reader learns about Horace Cowett's education, hobby, personal and professional plans for the future. (**about 40 words**)
7. Answer in your own words:
 - a) How does the narrator feel about Horace Cowett, and why? (**about 20 words**)
 - b) Compare the narrator's parents' opinion about Horace Cowett to that of the narrator. (**20 words**)
8. Say in your own words what New York represents for the narrator's parents. (**about 15 words**)
9. Pick out four sentences showing that the narrator is determined to reach her goals.

10. Say whether the following statements are true or false. Justify by quoting from the text.

- a) The narrator's father is authoritative.
- b) The narrator's mother sides with her daughter.
- c) The narrator did not expect her parents to react the way they did.
- d) The narrator is proud of her job offer.

11. Answer in your own words:

- a) What compromise does the father suggest? **(30 words)**
- b) What does it reveal about his vision of women? **(30 words)**

12. Explain in your own words what the consequences of the narrator's final decision will be. **(30 words)**

13. Translate into French from line 52 (Sara, dear...) to line 55 (...something there...').

II - EXPRESSION

Choose one of the following subjects. (250 words)

- 1. Imagine the conversation between the narrator and Eric a few days later.
- 2. What does 'being independent' mean to you?