

BACCALAURÉAT GÉNÉRAL

SESSION 2011

ANGLAIS

LANGUE VIVANTE 1

Série L

Durée de l'épreuve 3 heures – Coefficient : 4

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

Dès que ce sujet vous est remis, assurez-vous qu'il est complet.
Ce sujet comporte 3 pages numérotées de 1/3 à 3/3.

Compréhension et expression	14 points
Traduction	06 points

How to begin.

After high school I went to a small college in my home town (my parents were opposed, as it had been made very plain that I was expected to help my father run his business, one of the many reasons I was in such an agony to escape) and, during my two years there, I studied ancient Greek. This was due to no love for the language but because I was majoring in pre-med (money, you see, was the only way to improve my fortunes, doctors make a lot of money, quod erat demonstrandum) and my counselor had suggested I take a language to fulfill the humanities requirement; and, since the Greek classes happened to meet in the afternoon, I took Greek so I could sleep late on Mondays. It was an entirely random decision which, as you will see, turned out to be quite fateful.

I did well at Greek, excelled in it, and I even won an award from the Classics department my last year. It was my favorite class because it was the only one held in a regular classroom - no jars of cow hearts, no smell of formaldehyde, no cages full of screaming monkeys. Initially I had thought with hard work I could overcome a fundamental squeamishness and distaste for my subject, that perhaps with even harder work I could simulate something like a talent for it. But this was not the case. As the months went by I remained uninterested, if not downright sickened, by my study of biology; my grades were poor; I was held in contempt by teacher and classmate alike. In what seemed even to me a doomed and Pyrrhic gesture, I switched to English literature without telling my parents. I felt that I was cutting my own throat by this, that I would certainly be very sorry, being still convinced that it was better to fail in a lucrative field than to thrive in one that my father (who knew nothing of either finance or academia) had assured me was most unprofitable; one which would inevitably result in my hanging around the house for the rest of my life asking him for money; money which, he assured me forcefully, he had no intention of giving me.

So I studied literature and liked it better. But I didn't like home any better. I don't think I can explain the despair my surroundings inspired in me. Though I now suspect, given the circumstances and my disposition, I would've been unhappy anywhere, in Biarritz or Caracas or the Isle of Capri, I was then convinced that my unhappiness was indigenous to that place. Perhaps a part of it was. While to a certain extent Milton is right - the mind is its own place and in itself can make a Heaven of Hell and so forth - it is nonetheless clear that Plano was modelled less on Paradise than that other, more dolorous city. In high school, I developed a habit of wandering through shopping malls after school, swaying through the bright, chill mezzanines until I was so dazed with consumer goods and product codes, with promenades and escalators, with mirrors and Muzak¹ and noise and light, that a fuse would blow in my brain and all at once everything would become unintelligible: color without form, a babble of detached molecules. Then I would walk like a zombie to the parking lot and drive to the baseball field, where I wouldn't even get out of the car, just sit with my hands on the steering wheel and stare at the Cyclone fence and the yellowed winter grass until the sun went down and it was too dark for me to see.

Donna Tartt, *The Secret History*, 1992.

¹ Muzak : music heard in shopping malls

NOTE IMPORTANTE AUX CANDIDATS :

Les candidats traiteront tous les exercices **sur la copie** qui leur sera fournie et veilleront à :

- respecter l'**ordre des questions** et reporter la **numérotation** sur la copie (numéro de l'exercice et, le cas échéant, la lettre repère ; ex. : 1a, 1b, etc.)
- composer des phrases complètes à chaque fois qu'il leur est demandé de rédiger. Le **nombre de mots** indiqué constitue une exigence minimale. En l'absence d'indication, les candidats répondront brièvement (moins de 20 mots) à la question posée.
- faire précéder les citations éventuellement demandées du **numéro de ligne** dans le texte.

COMPREHENSION

- 1- What type of narrative is it? Justify with one quotation from the text.
- 2- What information can you find about
 - the narrator's occupation?
 - the narrator's family?
- 3- What values were essential to the father?
- 4- Explain why the narrator chose to study Greek. Did the narrator enjoy it?
- 5- To what extent would you agree that the narrator had an interest for medical studies?
- 6- How does the narrator feel about switching to "English literature" (line 21)?
- 7- Where did the narrator live and study? Give the name of the city and the main characteristics of the surroundings.
8. "Though I **now** suspect ..." (l.29-30); "I was **then** convinced..." (l.31); "**Then** I would walk..." (l.40)
Oppose what the narrator thought at the time to what he thinks now.

TRADUCTION

Translate into French from line 15: "Initially I had thought" to line 20: "teacher and classmate alike".

EXPRESSION

Choose **one** of the following questions. (300 words)

1. Would you agree that you have to know yourself in order to choose a career?

OR

2. Do you agree that wherever you live, "the mind is its own place" as the famous British poet John Milton wrote?