

English Literature Admissions Test (ELAT)

Notes for candidates

The sample paper has been compiled to show you the structure and style of the English Admissions Test to be sat for the first time in November 2007 by all candidates applying to read English at Oxford University in 2008.

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 three 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 on page 1. The wording of the task will be as follows:

Select two or three of the passages (a) to (f) and compare and contrast them in any ways that seem interesting to you, paying particular attention to distinctive features of structure, language and 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. Marks are not awarded for references to other texts or authors you have studied.

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, showing accurate comprehension of the sense of the passages*
- *demonstrate skills of close reading, identifying and commenting on distinctive features of structure, language and style*
- *construct a well-focused essay, based on comparing and contrasting two or three passages*
- *write fluently and accurately.*

This test will be only one of the elements admissions tutors use to decide whether to invite you for interview. The others will include your academic record and forecast grades in your school-leaving examinations; your UCAS application form, and one item of your recent written work, submitted to the college to which you are applying. For further information, please see the English Faculty's admissions web pages:

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