



**Upper secondary
Week 20**

The Write Tribe

PAPER 2 TECHNIQUES

SECTION B



Section B

[20 Marks]

Text 2

The text is about a man who visits an old childhood friend, whom he had not heard from for a long time, upon the latter's insistence. Read it carefully and answer Questions 5 – 13.

1 With the first glimpse of the building, a sense of insufferable gloom pervaded my spirit. The grim walls of the building as though warning visitors to stay away; the vacant eye-like windows that seemed to bore down upon me with their cold stare and the few white trunks of decayed trees from which seemed to emanate a vapour, dull and sluggish, giving the atmosphere a most unearthly vibe – filled me with an utter depression of soul which I had never felt before. Still, in this mansion of gloom I now planned to stay for some weeks. 5

2 Its owner, Roderick Usher, was my boyhood friend; but many years had passed since our last meeting. A letter from him had reached me, which, in its persistent nature, necessitated a personal reply. The writer spoke of acute bodily illness, of a 10 mental disorder which oppressed him, and of an earnest desire to see me, as his best, and only, personal friend, in the hope that the cheerfulness of my society would alleviate his malady. It was the manner in which all this was said which allowed me no room for hesitation; and I hastened to obey what I considered a very extraordinary summon. 15

3 Soon, I found myself being led into a room where my friend awaited me. Upon my entrance, Roderick greeted me with a vivacious chatter I at first thought of as an overdone cordiality. A glance, however, at his countenance convinced me of his perfect sincerity. 20

4 We sat down; and for some moments, while he spoke not. He was terribly altered and it was with difficulty that I brought myself to admit the identity of the wan being before me with the companion of my early boyhood. His once bright skin had now upon it a grisly pallor and his eyes, once liquid and radiant, were dull and deranged. Time might have crept up on him but life had certainly bullied him to near death. The change startled me. 25

5 After making some small talk, Roderick spoke of the object of my visit. He spoke, with an air of mournful optimism, of the nature of his malady, a mere nervous affection, he immediately added, which would undoubtedly soon pass off. He also suffered greatly from a morbid acuteness of the senses and could eat only the most bland of foods and not smell the odours of flowers and the slightest noise would drive him mad. It was completely bewildering and made me a little uneasy. 30

6 Nonetheless, for several days after, I busied myself in earnest endeavours to alleviate the melancholy of my friend. We painted and read together most of the time. Sometimes, he would talk. Yet, the more I got into the recesses of his spirit, the more bitterly did I perceive the futility of all attempt at cheering a mind from which 35 darkness, as if an inherent positive quality, poured forth upon all objects of the moral

and physical universe, in one unceasing radiation of gloom. It also made me feel as if there was a huge boulder between us.

7 One evening as we were at our usual readings, I became aware of a distinct, hollow, metallic and clangourous, yet apparently muffled reverberations that shook the 40 old mansion. Completely unnerved, I leapt to my feet; but Roderick was undisturbed. I rushed to the chair in which he sat.

8 "Not hear it?—Yes, I hear it, and have heard it. Many minutes, many hours, many days, have I heard it—yet I dared not—We have put her living in the tomb! Said I not that my senses were acute? Oh, where shall I fly? Will she not be here soon? Is she 45 not hurrying to censure me for my haste? Oh Madeline! Will you not forgive me? Oh where shall I fly? " my friend cried.

9 Horrified at this new piece of information, I turned to look and there, astride the doorway stood the enshrouded figure of the woman – his sister – Roderick was stammering about. For a moment she remained trembling and reeling upon the 50 threshold. Then, with a low, moaning cry, fell heavily upon her brother, and in her violent and final death-agonies, bore him to the floor – a corpse.

From that chamber, and from that mansion, I fled aghast in a wild stormy night and when a wild light shot forth before me from my back, I turned to witness the flames that devoured the house as it crumbled, piece by piece.

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5. (i) With reference to paragraph 1, what does the phrase 'a sense of insufferable gloom pervaded my spirit' mean? [1]

(ii) With reference to paragraph 1, how does the building seem uninviting? [1]

(iii) In paragraph 1 (line 2), what are the windows being compared to? [1]

6. (i) At the end of paragraph 2, identify Roderick Usher's relationship to the narrator. [1]

(ii) With reference to paragraph 2, explain why the narrator was summoned to Usher's house. [1]

7. In paragraph 3 (line 18), 'Roderick greeted me with a vivacious chatter I at first thought of as an overdone cordiality.'

Why did the narrator describe Roderick's welcome as 'an overdone cordiality'?

8. From paragraph 4 (line 24), the writer writes, 'Time might have crept up on him but life had certainly bullied him to near death.'

(i) What living traits have been given to time and life here? [1]

(ii) Why does the writer use the word 'bullied'? [1]

9. In paragraph 5 (line 26), 'He spoke, with an air of mournful optimism...'

What is unusual and effective about the phrase 'mournful optimism'? [2]

10. The writer uses similes 'as if an inherent positive quality' (line 36) and 'as if there was a huge boulder between us' (line 38).

What do these similes suggest about the narrator's view of his friend Usher? [2]

Similes	Narrator's view of his friend
as if an inherent positive quality	
as if there was a huge boulder between us	



11. In paragraph 7 (line 39) 'One evening as we were at our usual readings, I became aware of a distinct, hollow, metallic and clangourous, yet apparently muffled reverberations that shook the old mansion.'

(i) What did Roderick claim the sounds were from? [1]

(ii) What was Roderick's reaction to these sounds and why? [1]

12. Give evidence from paragraph 8 to support the following:

(i) The narrator was not aware of the story about Roderick's sister. [1]

(ii) As the narrator fled, the house of Usher stood defiant behind him. [1]

13. The structure of the text reflects the main feelings of the narrator experienced throughout his stay with Roderick Usher. Complete the flow chart by choosing one word from the box to summarise the main feeling described in each part of the text. There are some extra words in the box you do not need to use. [4]

Narrator's feelings

scared	disgusted	confounded	sincere
overexcited	uncomfortable	offended	

Flow Chart

