Advanced skills

Set 1

GLM

The Write Tribe

PAPER 2 TECHNIQUES

SECTION B

LIVEWORKSHEETS

Text 2

The text below describes a niece's visit to an old, estranged relative. Read it carefully and answer Questions 5 – 13.

1 Miss Lee looked at the mirror before her and she thought she had altered significantly within the last month. The hues of her complexion were paler, her eyes had dark rings circling them; her countenance was disconsolate—she was not so fresh as she used to be. She vaguely hinted this to Maggie but got no direct answer, only a remark that people were each different in their looks which really did nothing to make her feel better about her own fading looks.

2 When Miss Lee was finally ushered into Miss Rozy's little living room, she found the old spinster, as she always found her, surrounded by perfect neatness, cleanliness, and comfort. Miss Lee was impressed to note that there was not a speck of dust on the old lady's polished furniture nor on her carpet. There were fresh flowers in the vase on her table which surface gleamed brightly. Miss Rozy herself sat primly and rather grimly-tidy, in a cushioned rocking-chair, her hands busied with some knitting, her favourite work, as it required the least exertion.

3 She did not rise to meet Miss Lee for to avoid excitement was one of Miss Rozy's aims in life. She had been composing herself ever since she came down in the morning, and had just attained a certain languid state of calmness when the visitor's knock at the door startled her, and undid her day's work. She was hardly pleased, therefore, to see Miss Lee. She received her coldly, bade her be seated with graveness, and when she got Miss Lee placed opposite, she fixed her with her eyes. This was no ordinary fate—to be fixed with Miss Rozy's eyes. It was quite disturbing and made her poor guest flutter her eyelids and look up and down and sideways but never at the hard stare.

4 Miss Rozy was Miss Lee's aunt and a censorious one she was indeed for the younger niece had not sat five minutes before her hostess, still keeping the niece under the spell of that dread and Gorgon gaze, began flaying alive some of the families in the neighbourhood. She kept at this business in an unusually cool, deliberate manner, like some expert surgeon practising with his scalpel on a dead subject. She made few distinctions; she allowed scarcely any one to be good; she dissected disinterestedly almost all whom she knew. If her listener ventured now and then to put in a pacifying word, she set it aside with a certain scorn.

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5 Still, to her credit, the old maid was no scandal-monger. She never spewed really malignant or dangerous reports. Almost like a benevolent despot, it was not her heart so much as her temper that was wrong. Miss Lee made this discovery for the first time that day, and was moved to regret the numerous unjust statements she had more than once passed on the crabby old aunt.

6 Miss Lee began to talk to her in a sympathising voice. She felt her aunt's isolation from the rest of the world and saw the pallor of her complexion and the deeply worn lines that ran all over her shrunken face, in a new light. It was like the dawn of a new day. She no longer saw any ugliness there. Instead, the girl began to pity the solitary and afflicted woman. Miss Rozy's looks spoke of what she truly felt.

7 Miss Rozy, drawn by the sudden interest unexpectedly shown in her by this niece, turned communicative on her own affairs. She spoke like one who tells the truth—simply, and with a certain restraint; she did not boast, nor did she exaggerate. Usually, she would not say a syllable for no one cared to listen to her; but today she became quite gregarious, and her niece shed tears as she heard her aunt speak of cruel, slow-wasting, persistent sufferings.

8 At the end of it all, Miss Lee understood that her often thought of as eccentric aunt was right in her decision to remain grim, and to never smile; to avoid excitement, to gain and retain composure for it was all in the name of self-preservation. Miss Lee, when she knew all, acknowledged that her aged aunt was rather to be admired for endurance than accused of melancholy. Miss Lee, on her return, told her sister she was very glad she had gone out for she felt much better for the visit.

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Section B [20 marks]

5 Explain how the language used shows that Miss Lee's appearance had changed a great deal over a very short time.

Support your ideas with three details from paragraph 1.

.....

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.....

.....

.....

.....

..... [3]

6 In paragraph 2 'Miss Rozy herself sat primly and rather grimly-tidy, in a cushioned rocking-chair, her hands busied with some knitting, her favourite work, as it required the least exertion.'

Identify the words or phrases in the given sentence which suggest

(i) a forbidding air ..... [1]

(ii) requiring minimum energy ..... [1]

7 In paragraph 3, how did Miss Rozy show that she was unhappy about the disturbance to her 'languid state of calmness' (lines 18 – 19)?

.....

.....

.....

..... [2]

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8 'She kept at this business in an unusually cool, deliberate manner, like some expert surgeon practising with his scalpel on a dead subject' (lines 29 – 31).

(i) What is the scalpel being compared to?

.....

..... [1]

(ii) Why does the writer describe Miss Rozy in such a way?

.....

..... [2]

9 What is unusual and effective about the phrase 'benevolent despot' (line 36)?

.....

.....

.....

.....

..... [2]

10 The writer uses similes 'like the dawn of a new day' (line 44) and 'like one who tells the truth' (lines 48 – 49) to describe what Miss Lee experienced as she sat listening to her aunt.
What do the similes suggest about what Miss Lee was feeling or thinking then?

Similes	What Miss Lee was feeling or thinking
'like the dawn of a new day'	
'like one who tells the truth'	

[2]

11 In paragraph 7, in what way was Miss Rozy different from her usual self that day and why?

.....

..... [1]

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12 Give evidence from paragraph 8 to support the following:

(i) Miss Rozy was not one for excitement for her aged body would not be able to withstand it.

.....

..... [1]

(ii) Miss Rozy had been a misunderstood character.

.....

..... [1]

13 The structure of the text reflects the main feelings Miss Lee experienced on that day. 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.

Miss Lee's feelings

amusement	remorse	distress	compassion
anxiety	admiration	empathy	

Flow chart

Paragraph 2 : (i) .....

↓

Paragraph 3 : (ii) .....

↓

Paragraph 4 : (iii) .....

↓

Paragraph 5 : (iv) .....

[4]

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