

This extract is taken from the opening of Chimamanda Adichie's novel *Half of a Yellow Sun*, set in Nigeria in 1960. Ugwu, a thirteen-year-old boy, is starting work as a cleaner for a university professor in the city.

1 Master was a little crazy; he had spent too many years reading books overseas, talked to himself in his office, did not always return greetings, and had too much hair. Ugwu's aunty said this in a low voice as they walked on the path. 'But he is a good man,' she added.

4 'And as long as you work well, you will eat well. You will even eat meat every day.'

5 Ugwu did not believe that anybody, not even this master he was going to live with, ate meat every day. He did not disagree with his aunty, though, because he was too choked with expectation, too busy imagining his new life away from the village. They had been walking for a while now, since they got off the lorry at the motor park, and the afternoon sun burned the back of his neck. But he did not mind. He was prepared to walk hours more in even

10 hotter sun. He had never seen anything like the streets that appeared after they went past the university gates, streets so smooth and tarred that he itched to lay his cheek down on them. He would never be able to describe to his sister Anulika how the bungalows here were painted the colour of the sky and sat side by side like polite well-dressed men, how the hedges separating them were trimmed so flat on top that they looked like tables

15 wrapped with leaves.

His aunty walked faster, her slippers making *slap-slap* sounds that echoed in the silent street. Ugwu wondered if she, too, could feel the coal tar getting hotter underneath, through her thin soles. They went past a sign, ODIM STREET, and Ugwu mouthed street, as he did whenever he saw an English word that was not too long.

20 He smelt something sweet, heady, as they walked into a compound, and was sure it came from the white flowers clustered on the bushes at the entrance. The bushes were shaped like slender hills. The lawn glistened. Butterflies hovered overhead.

'I told Master you will learn everything very fast' his aunty said. Ugwu nodded attentively although she had already told him the story of how his good fortune came about: while she 25 was sweeping the corridor in the Mathematics Department a week ago, she heard Master say that he needed a houseboy to do his cleaning, and she immediately said she could help, speaking before his typist or office messenger could offer to bring someone.

'I will learn fast, Aunty,' Ugwu said. He was staring at the car in the garage; a strip of metal ran around its blue body like a necklace.

30 'Remember, what you will answer whenever he calls you is Yes, sah!'

'Yes, sah!' Ugwu repeated.

They were standing before the glass door. Ugwu held back from reaching out to touch the cement wall, to see how different it would feel from the mud walls of his mother's hut that still bore the faint patterns of moulding fingers. For a brief moment, he wished he were 35 back there now, in his mother's hut, under the dim coolness of the thatch roof; or in his aunty's hut, the only one in the village with a corrugated-iron roof.

His aunty tapped on the glass. Ugwu could see the white curtains behind the door. A voice said, in English, 'Yes? Come in.'

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They took off their slippers before walking in. Ugwu had never seen a room so wide. 40 Despite the brown sofas arranged in a semi-circle, the side tables between them, the shelves crammed with books, and the centre table with a vase of red and white plastic flowers, the room still seemed to have too much space. Master sat in an armchair, wearing a vest and a pair of shorts. He was not sitting upright but slanted, a book covering his face, as though oblivious that he had just asked people in.

45 'Good afternoon, sah! This is the child,' Ugwu's aunty said.

Master looked up. He pulled off his glasses. 'The child?'

'The houseboy, sah. He will work hard,' his aunty said. 'He is a very good boy. Thank, sah!'

Master grunted in response, watching Ugwu and his aunty with a faintly distracted expression, as if their presence made it difficult for him to remember something important. Ugwu's aunty patted Ugwu's shoulder, whispered that he should do well, and turned to the door.

Ugwu stood by the door, waiting.

### Section A: Reading

Answer **all** questions in this section.  
You are advised to spend about 45 minutes on this section.

**0 1**

Read again the first part of the source, from **lines 1 to 4**.

List **four** things about Master from this part of the source.

**[4 marks]**

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Ugwu did not believe that anybody, not even this master he was going to live with, ate meat every day. He did not disagree with his aunty, though, because he was too choked with expectation, too busy imagining his new life away from the village. They had been walking for a while now, since they got off the lorry at the motor park, and the afternoon sun burned the back of his neck. But he did not mind. He was prepared to walk hours more in even hotter sun. He had never seen anything like the streets that appeared after they went past the university gates, streets so smooth and tarred that he itched to lay his cheek down on them. He would never be able to describe to his sister Anulika how the bungalows here were painted the colour of the sky and sat side by side like polite well-dressed men, how the hedges separating them were trimmed so flat on top that they looked like tables wrapped with leaves.

How does the writer use language here to describe Ugwu's impression of the city?

You could include the writer's choice of:

- words and phrases
- language features and techniques
- sentence forms.

[8 marks]

Turn over ►



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0 3

You now need to think about the **whole** of the source.

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This text is from the opening of a novel.

How has the writer structured the text to interest you as a reader?

You could write about:

- what the writer focuses your attention on at the beginning of the source
- how and why the writer changes this focus as the source develops
- any other structural features that interest you.

[8 marks]



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0 4

Focus this part of your answer on the second part of the source, from **line 20 to the end**.

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A student said, 'From the moment he arrives at Master's compound, the writer portrays Ugwu's feelings of pure excitement, but by the end it seems that he may be very disappointed.'

To what extent do you agree?

In your response, you could:

- consider your own impressions of Ugwu's feelings
- evaluate how the writer describes Ugwu's feelings by the end
- support your response with references to the text.

[20 marks]

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Either

Describe a place at sunset as suggested by this picture:



01

Write a story about a new beginning.

(24 marks for content and organisation  
16 marks for technical accuracy)  
**[40 marks]**

Turn over ►



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You are advised to plan your answer to Question 5 before you start to write.

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