

Session 2008

BACCALAUREAT GENERAL

ANGLAIS

Langue vivante 1

Séries ES-S

Durée : 3 heures - Coefficient 3

L'usage du dictionnaire et des calculatrices est interdit.

Compréhension	10 points
Expression	10 points

Le sujet comporte 4 pages numérotées 1/4 à 4/4.

At the age of sixty, just a few years from retirement, my father lost his job. For most of his working life he had managed a small printing department in a Connecticut rubber factory. (...) I was away at graduate school when he called to tell me the startling news. The community was stunned; the area already had one of the highest unemployment rates in the state. Most of the people had lived in the Housatonic Valley all their lives. Where would they find work? My father hated the idea of collecting unemployment; it contradicted his beliefs about how an honest person earns his way through life. If he had managed to find a job digging ditches as a teenager during the Great Depression, then by God he could find a job now.

My father had taken good care of himself and still looked like a man in his early forties. His jet-black hair, thick and wavy like Fred MacMurray's in *Double Indemnity*, showed barely a trace of gray, and a daily regimen of sit-ups had kept his stomach flat. Surely no one could hold his chronological age against him. He scoured the want ads with a vengeance, considering everything from night watchman – my mother quashed that possibility – to shipping clerk. There wasn't much demand for printers.

Finally, after months of rejections and poor prospects, he heard about an opening for a print-shop manager at a local college. The position was a perfect match for his skills. It didn't pay as much as his old job, but it offered him a chance to use the technical knowledge he'd acquired over the years. He rushed to apply.

He got on well with the young personnel officer, who reviewed his application with obvious interest and enthusiasm. My father liked the guy and loved the thought of being in an academic environment. He had always regretted not finishing high school, and working on a college campus would be the next best thing to heaven.

After some friendly conversation, the personnel officer leaned back, slapped his hands down on his desk, and said, "Well, I think we've found our printer." He asked my father how soon he could start. Though policy required one more bureaucratic stage of approval, he told my father that he was by far the most qualified applicant and that he could expect to be officially notified of his hiring within days.

They shook hands, but as my father walked to the door, the young man called him back. "One little thing," he said, smiling, "you forgot to fill in your age on the application." This was no mistake. Having been brusquely disqualified so often because of his age, my father had learned to forestall the inevitable by leaving the line blank. But this time was different. He was the best person for the job. He was practically hired. Why not be honest?

"I'm sixty," my father said, with a touch of pride. The young man's smile faded. "Sixty?" he repeated. He lowered his head; his forehead furrowed. It was as if someone had turned off a light. "I see," he said, his voice suddenly flat and impersonal, "well, we do have several more applicants to interview, so I can't make any promises. We'll let you know. Have a nice day."

There was no call, no letter. My father lost his spirit, any hope that his last working years would be of real value. Feeling desperate, even with six months of unemployment benefits left, he took a job as a laborer at a dye works. There was no union. The work was physically grueling, breaks were minimal, and he was forced to eat lunch on the job, grabbing bites as he could from a sandwich he kept in a back pocket. Surrounded by recent immigrants from Eastern Europe and Central America, people so hungry for a good life in the United States that they would accept any working conditions without complaint, my father was nearly the only person in the plant who spoke English. He was also the oldest.

I visited my parents that Thanksgiving, less than two months after my father had started his new job. When he rushed forward to hug me, as he always did whenever I came home, I saw that his hands were stained with indelible dye, and that his hair had turned completely gray.

Adapted from Fred Muratori, in *True Tales Of American Life*, 2001.

Les candidats traiteront le sujet sur la copie qui leur sera fournie en respectant l'ordre des questions et en faisant apparaître la numérotation. Ils composeront des phrases complètes à chaque fois qu'il leur est demandé de rédiger des réponses. Le nombre de mots indiqué constitue une exigence minimale. En l'absence d'indication, les candidats répondront brièvement à la question posée. Les citations seront précédées de la mention de la ligne.

COMPRÉHENSION

READ THE WHOLE TEXT.

1. Write the following statements in chronological order.

- A brutal end to the interview
- A promising job interview
- My father's dismissal
- An ageing and broken man

READ FROM LINE 1 to LINE 27.

2. True or False? Justify each answer with a different quotation. Indicate the line.

- a) The father was under 45.
- b) The father had responsibilities in his former job.
- c) The father was glad to receive state benefits.
- d) The father was not fit for being a print-shop manager.
- e) The father left school before getting a diploma.

3. a) Read paragraph one. To what extent was the father's situation critical? Answer in your own words. (30 words)

b) Read paragraphs two and three. What played in the father's favour? (30 words)

c) Which adjectives best correspond to his personality? Write them on your paper.

lazy – motivated – immature – easily discouraged – determined – persevering

4. Pick out four words and phrases showing that the personnel manager was likely to hire the father.

READ FROM LINE 28 TO THE END.

5. Describe the personnel manager's attitude, using your own words. (30 words)

6. Why did the narrator's father choose not to lie about his age this time? (30 words)

7. The father took a job as a labourer at a dye works. Describe, in your own words, his new working conditions. (20 words)

8. What struck the narrator when he went home for Thanksgiving? (20 words)

EXPRESSION

Choose ONE of the following subjects. (300 words)

- 1) The narrator decides to meet the personnel manager to discuss his decision not to hire his father. Write the dialogue.
- 2) Do you think our society discriminates against old people? Justify your answer.