

Sujet bac 2008 : Anglais LV1 Série L – Métropole

Session 2008

BACCALAURÉAT GENERAL

ANGLAIS

Langue vivante 1

Série L

Durée : 3 heures – Coefficient 4

L'usage du dictionnaire et des calculatrices est interdit.

Compréhension	
Expression	14 points
Traduction	6 points

Le sujet comporte 5 pages.

[The story takes place in Kenya in the early 1950s.]

A postcard came airmail from London :

Dear Vic and Deepa,
We're having a wonderful time here !
Hope you have a smashing holiday too. Say "jamba" to Njoroge.
Kwa heri ! See you soon !

- Bill and Annie

On the reverse side, Picadilly Circus in full colour, a city scene grander and infinitely more bustling than our own modest and quite somnolent King Street roundabout. Look, said Papa, who was holding up the postcard, the biggest city in the world.

Where's the circus, Papa? I asked him, our self-styled expert on matters English.

Maybe there was a circus there a long time ago, he said, trying to sound confident and unable to hide his uncertainty.

Mother, Deepa, and I were gathered round Papa in the shop, poring with him over every detail of the glorious scene. The black taxis, a red double-bus carrying advertisements on its side, men and women in hats, a red mailbox, a newsagent, all the store and street signs. Papa turned a wistful eye to Mother, who acknowledged with a smile; It was his dearest wish to visit that centre of the universe once in his lifetime. It was his Mecca, his Varanasi, his Jerusalem. A visit there conferred status, moreover : you became one of the select group, the London-returned.

He tacked the postcard on the upright behind the table, where it stayed for more than a year, proud reminder not only of his yearning but also of his European "friends".

Bill and Annie had gone without their parents. To my parents, it was a sign of European irresponsibility that they could send their children on an expensive voyage and yet run up sizeable debts in town. Though Mother remembered graciously that Mrs. Bruce did have a wealthy family in England. But how could she allow herself to send the children by themselves, unescorted, on a voyage that took twenty-four hours, with stopovers in strange places ? Suppose someone kidnapped them ? Who'd hurt a British child, Papa snapped in reply, they'd have every policeman in the world looking for them. That privilege comes from ruling the world.

It was mid July, a month and a half since they had gone. Six weeks was an eternity to a child in those days. Saturday playtime at our shopping center became subdued¹ and lacking in adventure. I recall Deepa, Njoroge, and myself sitting on the cement floor of the veranda outside our shop, playing a game of imagining by turns all the exciting things our two friends must be up to in London: riding double-buses and taxis, visiting all those castles and palaces and bridges we had read about, shopping at wonderful stores spilling over with comic books, toffees and chocolates. If you ran out of something to say in this game, you were "out".

That postcard clinched the case for my mother : her children too needed to visit places during their vacation. And so it was resolved in our home that all of us would go to Nairobi² and Mombasa for the August holidays.

The train from Kisumu had come in late and so we left at a little before dawn from Nakuru, which was as well because we could see more, though the Kisumu passengers were irate for having to wake up from their rocking slumbers. We reached Naivasha as dawn was breaking beyond the mountains.

How can I describe that feeling of looking out the sliding window above the little washbasin, as the small second-class cabin jostled and bumped along the rails, and taking in deep breaths of that cool, clean air and, simply, with wide hungry eyes absorbing my world. It was to become aware of one's world, *physically*, for the first time, in a manner I had never done before, whose universe had encompassed³ our housing estate and my school, the shop and my friends, the tree-lined street outside that brought people in and out of our neighbourhood. That scene outside the train window I can conjure up at any time of the day or night ; I would see, feel, and experience it in similar ways

1 subdued : quiet, lifeless

2 Nairobi, Mombasa, Nakuru, Kisumu and Naivasha are all places in Kenya

3 to encompass : to include, to contain

so frequently in my life ; in some essential way it defines me. This was my country – how could it not be ? Yes, there was that yearning for England, the land of Annie and Bill and the Queen, and for all the exciting, wonderful possibilities of the larger world out there. But this, all around me, was mine, where I belonged with my heart and soul.

Adapted from M.G. Vassanji, *The In-Between World of Vikram Lall*, 2003

COMPREHENSION – EXPRESSION

*Vous traiterez les questions **dans l'ordre**, en indiquant clairement leur **numéro** sur votre copie. Lorsque la réponse doit être développée, le nombre de mots ou d'éléments de réponse sera indiqué dans la question. En l'absence d'indications, vous répondrez **brièvement** (moins de 20 mots) à la question posée.*

Questions 1, 2, 3 and 4 : focus on lines 1 to 27.

1. Line 1 : "A postcard came airmail from London."

- a) Say who this postcard is addressed to and who is actually looking at it.
- b) Deduce the name of the narrator.

2. Describe the characters' dominant reaction when looking at the postcard.

3. Line 19 : "He tacked the postcard on the upright behind his table, where it stayed for more than a year..."

- a) Who does "her" refer to ?
- b) Using elements from the text, find three reasons why this character decides to tack and keep the postcard. (50 / 60 words)

4. a) What aspects of Bill and Annie's trip to London do the narrator's parents discuss ?

- b) Lines 26-27 : "Who'd hurt a British child, Papa snapped in reply, they'd have every policeman in the world looking for them. That privilege comes from ruling the world." Explain what the father means by that. (40 / 50 words)

Questions 5 and 6 : focus on lines 28 to 37.

5. a) How does Bill and Annie's absence affect Deepa and the narrator's mood and activities ?

- b) What do Deepa and the narrator's activities show about their vision of London ?

6. a) What decision does the mother make after the postcard has arrived ?

- b) Commenting on the use of "too" (line 35) and "all of us" (line 36), explain what motivates her decision. (40 / 50 words)

Question 7 : focus on the passage from line 38 to the end.

7. a) Say where the narrator is in this passage.

b) "...taking in deep breaths of that cool, clean air and, simply, with wide hungry eyes absorbing my world." (lines 43-44)

What happens to the narrator at that moment and how does it affect him for the rest of his life ?
(40 / 50 words)

8 . Choose one of the following subjects.

(250 words approximately. Write down the number of words.)

Subject 1

"... it was his dearest wish to visit that center of the universe once in his lifetime." (line 16-17)

Is there a place in the world that you would particularly like to visit ? Explain why.

Subject 2

"Leaving is more important than arriving". Discuss and illustrate, drawing from your experience or your readings.

TRADUCTION

Translate into French from line 28 to line 34.