

# BACCALAUREAT GENERAL - SESSION 2005

<b>ÉPREUVE</b>	<b>ANGLAIS LV.1</b>	<b>Durée : 3 heures</b>
<b>SERIE</b>	<b>L</b>	<b>Coefficient : 4</b>
<i>Ce sujet comporte 5 pages numérotées de 1/5 à 5/5.</i>		

*L'usage de la calculatrice et du dictionnaire n'est pas autorisé.*

*Dès que ce sujet vous est remis, assurez-vous qu'il est complet.*

<b>Barème</b>	
<b>Compréhension - Expression</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>Traduction</b>	<b>6</b>

I had been sent to Mexico to cover a murder, one of a remarkable kind. And since it had not yet happened, I had been ordered to get photographs, too.

I was therefore burdened with unfamiliar gear – a large carrying case of Japanese cameras, some of which could photograph swift action occurring at a distance – and as my rickety bus trundled across central Mexico I wondered what I could do to protect these cameras if I followed my inclination to walk into the city from Kilometer 303.

I knew no one in the crowded bus and the cameras were far too valuable to entrust to strangers, so I resigned myself to staying on the bus and guarding them the seven remaining kilometres into the city. But as we approached Kilometer 303 the inchoate<sup>1</sup> longing that had always possessed me at this curious spot in the highway surged over me with terrible force, and I was tempted to jump out and leave my cameras to chance.

Fighting back this childish impulse, I slumped in my seat and tried not to look at the road that had always haunted me, but I was powerless to keep my eyes away from it. Like many Mexican boys of good family, at thirteen I had been packed off to Lawrenceville School near Princeton<sup>2</sup>, to ‘learn some English,’ my father had grumbled, and sometimes on the green lawn of that excellent school I had stopped and gasped for breath, choked by nostalgia for the road I was now on. Later at Princeton, where there were also many young men from Mexico, I would sometimes seek out boys who had known this area and I would ask haltingly, ‘Have you ever seen anything lovelier than the view of Toledo from that gash in the hills where the road winds down from Kilometer 303?’ And if my friends had ever seen this miraculous spot for themselves we would indulge our homesickness and think of our city of Toledo, the fairest in Mexico, as it displayed its golden iridescence in the late afternoon sun.

As a matter of fact, I think I became a writer because of this scintillating view. It had always been assumed by my parents that I would graduate from Princeton as my ancestors from Virginia had been doing since 1764, and that I would then take one year of graduate work in mining at Colorado and return to the silver mines of Toledo, which my family had been operating for many years. But all this changed in my junior year at college, when I wrote a prize-winning essay that occasioned much favourable comment among the English faculty. It described the view of Toledo from a point just beyond Kilometer 303 as it might have been seen in sequence by an Aztec district governor in 1500, by Cortés in 1524, by a Spanish priest in 1530, by a German traveller in 1660, by an American mining engineer in 1866 – that would be my grandfather – and by General Gurza in the revolutionary battles of 1918.

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<sup>1</sup> *inchoate: recent and vague, new and not yet properly developed.*

<sup>2</sup> *Princeton (New Jersey): one of the most prestigious universities in the USA.*

35           Actually, it is not correct to say that I wrote this essay that was to have such  
influence in my life. I started it, and the visions came to me so vividly, so directly from the  
heart of Mexico and from my own memories, that I merely recorded them. In a sense, this  
prize was a damnable thing, for long after I had become a professional writer I  
remembered the ease with which I had composed the essay. And I was never again to  
40 experience that facility. But the visions I conjured up that day have lived with me forever.

          Now they possessed me, and I surrendered myself to them, my glowing memories  
of Toledo, and I was reacting to them in my sentimental way when I saw through the  
window of the bus a sight that captured my imagination. Two young Indian women wearing  
leather sandals, rough-cloth skirts and bright shawls, and with their hair in swaying braids,  
45 were walking along the road toward Toledo. Obviously, they were heading for the Festival  
of Ixmiqu, the site of my assignment, and the soft rhythm of their movement, from the  
undulating braids down to their slim ankles, reminded me of all the Indians I had ever seen  
walking home from my father's mines, and I wanted to be with them as I had been forty  
years ago, and I found myself impulsively shouting in Spanish, 'Halt the bus! Halt the bus!  
50 I'll walk in from here.'

          As the surprised driver ground down on his ancient brakes and as they squealed  
back in protest, I looked hurriedly about the bus in search of someone to whom I could  
entrust my bag of cameras, and it may seem curious to a typical American who might have  
a prejudiced view of Mexico, but I could hear my Mexican mother saying: 'In other parts of  
55 Mexico evil men may steal now and then, but in Toledo we have only honest people.'  
Deciding to rely on her judgment, I quickly studied my fellow passengers to identify  
someone I could trust.

James A. Michener, *Mexico*, 1992.

## NOTE IMPORTANTE AUX CANDIDATS :

Les candidats traiteront le sujet sur la copie qui leur sera fournie en respectant l'ordre des questions et en faisant apparaître la numérotation – (numéro et lettre repère le cas échéant, ex 9b). Ils composeront des phrases complètes à chaque fois qu'il leur est demandé de rédiger les réponses. Les citations seront précédées de la mention de la ligne.

### I - COMPREHENSION DU TEXTE

1. What type of narrative is this? Justify with one quote.
2. Write a short paragraph to explain what we learn about the narrator regarding: his approximate age, his place of birth, his origins and social background, his education.
3. What do we know regarding the narrator's job, current mission and travelling conditions?
4. Describe the effect the landscape has on the narrator. Quote three words or expressions to justify your answer.
5. Find the symptoms the narrator developed when he was far from Toledo and the therapy that he applied to ease the pain (l. 17 to 23). Give three quotations.
6. What life and career was the narrator expected to have?
7. What changed the course of his life?
8. How does he feel when he looks back upon the essay that he wrote when he was a student?
9. Is the old fascination still as strong today? Justify with two quotations from the text.
10. What does he finally decide to do with his cameras and why?

## EXPRESSION

Write about one of the following subjects in 300 words:

1. In your opinion, how do childhood memories influence an adult's life?
2. Has a particular place ever fascinated you to the point of wishing to live there for the rest of your life?

## II - TRADUCTION

Translate from "*Like many Mexican boys of good family...* (l. 13-14) to "*...Kilometer 303.*" (l. 20).