

SESSION 2005

BACCALAUREAT GENERAL

ANGLAIS

LANGUE VIVANTE 1

SERIE L

Durée : 3 heures

Coefficient : 4

L'usage du dictionnaire et des calculatrices est interdit

Compréhension/Expression	14 points
Traduction	6 points

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).

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.

Avant de composer, le candidat s'assurera que le sujet comporte bien 4 pages numérotées de 1 à 4.

Where was I? I turn back the page: the war is still raging. *Raging* is what they used to say, for wars; still do, for all I know. But on this page, a fresh, clean page, I will cause the war to end – I alone, with a stroke of my black plastic pen. All I have to do is write: *1918. November 11. Armistice Day.*

5 There. It's over. The guns are silent. The men who are left alive look up at the sky, their faces grimed, their clothing sodden; they climb out of their foxholes and filthy burrows. Both sides feel they have lost. In the towns, in the countryside, here and across the ocean, the church bells all begin to ring. (I can remember that, the bells ringing. It's one of my first memories. It was so
10 strange – the air was so full of sound, and at the same time so empty. Reenie took me outside to hear. There were tears running down her face. *Thank God*, she said. The day was chilly, there was frost on the fallen leaves, a skim of ice on the lily pond. I broke it with a stick. Where was Mother?)

15 Father had been wounded at the Somme, but he'd recovered from that and had been made a second lieutenant. He was wounded again at Vimy Ridge, though not severely, and was made a captain. He was wounded again at Bourslon Wood, this time worse. It was while he was recovering in England that the war ended.

20 He missed the jubilant welcome for the returning troops at Halifax¹, the victory parades and so forth, but there was a special reception in Port Ticonderoga just for him. The train stopped. Cheering broke out. Hands reached up to help him down, then hesitated. He emerged. He had one good eye and one good leg. His face was gaunt, seamed, fanatical.

25 Farewells can be shattering, but returns are surely worse. Solid flesh can never live up to the bright shadow cast by its absence. Time and distance blur the edges; then suddenly the beloved has arrived, and it's noon with its merciless light, and every spot and pore and wrinkle and bristle stands clear.

30 Thus my mother and my father. How could either of them atone to the other for having changed so much? For failing to be what was expected. How could there not be grudges? Grudges held silently and unjustly, because there was nobody to blame, or nobody you could put your finger on. The war was not a person. Why blame a hurricane?

35 There they stand, on the railway platform. The town band plays, brass mostly. He's in his uniform; his medals are like holes shot in the cloth, through which the dull gleam of his real, metal body can be seen. Beside him, invisible, are his brothers – the two lost boys, the ones he feels he has lost. My mother is there in her best dress, a belted affair with lapels, and a hat with a crisp ribbon. She smiles tremulously. Neither knows quite what to do. The newspaper camera catches them in its flash; they stare, as if surprised in crime. My father is
40 wearing a black patch over his right eye. His left eye glares balefully. Underneath the patch, not yet revealed, is a web of scarred flesh, his missing eye the spider.

45 "Chase Heir Hero Returns," the paper will trumpet. That's another thing: my father is now the heir, which is to say he's fatherless as well as brotherless. The kingdom is in his hands. It feels like mud.

50 Did my mother cry? It's possible. They must have kissed awkwardly, as if at a box social, one for which he'd bought the wrong ticket. This wasn't what he had remembered, this efficient, careworn woman, with a pince-nez like some maiden aunt's glinting on a silver chain around her neck. They were now strangers, and – it must have occurred to them – they always had been. How

harsh the light was. How much older they'd become. There was no trace of the young man who'd once knelt so deferentially on the ice to lace up her skates, or of the young woman who'd sweetly accepted this homage.

Margaret Atwood, *The Blind Assassin*, 2000

¹ Halifax = a city in Canada

COMPREHENSION ET EXPRESSION

1. What kind of narrative is this?
2. What do we learn about the narrator's occupation and family ? (20 words)
3. Who is Reenie ?
 - the narrator's mother
 - a soldier
 - a servant
4. Among the following titles, select the one which best suits the passage :
 - The pleasure of being together again
 - Touring France
 - War and its consequences
 - A loving couple

Line 1 to line 13

5. a) Quote two elements from the text describing the weather conditions.
b) How does the weather contribute to setting the atmosphere of the passage ?
(30 words)
6. a) Find the words corresponding to the following definitions:
 - covered with dirt
 - completely wetb) Find the two nouns referring to the trenches.
7. a) Find three elements showing "it's over"(line 5)
b) Explain in your own words why that day was " so strange" ? (Lines 9-10)
(30 words)

Line 14 to line 27

8. Say whether the following statements are right or wrong and justify your answers by quoting from the text :
 - a) The father had been injured many times during the war
 - b) He was on the front, somewhere in France on Armistice Day
 - c) He enjoyed the jubilant welcome for the returning troops
 - d) He was a healthy man when he came back
9. a) Quote three adjectives used to describe the father's face.
b) Describe his physical appearance in your own words. (20 words)

Line 28 to the end

10. Find equivalents of the following words or phrases :

- rancours
- brightness
- in a trembling way
- stares in a threatening way
- showing worry

11. a) What new elements does the reader discover about the father ?
(name / family / heritage)

b) What is paradoxical about his new situation? (20 words)

12. Comment on the following comparisons and metaphors : (40 words)

a) "his medals are like holes in the cloth" (line 34)

b) "a web of scarred flesh, his missing eye the spider" (line 41)

13. Why was her mother in "her best dress"? (line 37) (20 words)

14. a) In what circumstances had mother discovered father's love for her ?

b) What changes in their relationship and feelings for each other took place while he was away ? (20 words)

15. What do you think the narrator means when saying "why blame a hurricane ?"
(line 32) (20 words)

16. Contrary to what is generally admitted, the narrator says that returns are worse than farewells. Why ? (40 words)

17. Choose one of the following subjects :

1. At the beginning of the passage, the narrator wrote: "...I will cause the war to end – I alone, with a stroke of my plastic pen". Have you ever been tempted to become an artist to have the power to create worlds and give life to characters ? (300 words)

2. On the following morning an article is published in the local newspaper : "The Return of the Hero".

Write the article. (300 words)

VERSION

Translate the second paragraph into French (from line 7 "Both sides" down to line 13 "Where was Mother ?)