

GCSE English Paper 1 Section A - Mock Exam

(AQA)

This extract is from the opening of *The Hole in the Wall*, a novel by Arthur Morrison. Set in the East End of London, it was published in 1902 and it is set then. In this section the narrator's mother has died in giving birth to a baby boy, born dead.

1	I have no more to say of my mother, and of her funeral only so much as records the least part of my grief. Some of her relations came, whom I cannot distinctly remember seeing at any other time: a group of elderly and hard-featured women, who talked of me as "the child," very much as they might have talked of
5	some troublesome article of baggage; and who turned up their noses at my grandfather: who, for his part, was uneasily respectful, calling each of them "mum" very often. I was not attracted by my mother's relations, and I kept as near my grandfather as possible, feeling a vague fear that some of them might have a design of taking me away. Though indeed none was in the least ambitious of that responsibility.
11	They were not all women, for there was one quiet little man in their midst, who, when not eating cake or drinking wine, was sucking the bone handle of a woman's umbrella, which he carried with him everywhere, indoors and out. He was in the custody of the largest and grimmest of ladies, whom the others called
15	Aunt Martha. He was so completely in her custody that after some consideration I judged he must be her son; though indeed he seemed very old for that. I now believe him to have been her husband; but I cannot remember to have heard his name, and I cannot invent him a better one than Uncle Martha.
20	Uncle Martha would have behaved quite well, I am convinced, if he had been left alone, and would have acquitted himself with perfect propriety in all the transactions of the day; but it seemed to be Aunt Martha's immovable belief that he was wholly incapable of any action, even the simplest and most obvious, unless impelled by shoves and jerks. Consequently he was shoved into the mourning carriage—we had two—and jerked into the corner opposite to the one
25	he selected; shoved out—almost on all fours—at the cemetery; and, perceiving him entering the little chapel of his own motion, Aunt Martha overtook him and jerked him in there. This example presently impressed the other ladies with the expediency of shoving Uncle Martha at any convenient opportunity; so that he arrived home with us at last in a severely jostled condition, faithful to the bone-
30	handled umbrella through everything.
	Grandfather Nat had been liberal in provision for the funeral party, and the cake and port wine, the gin and water, the tea and the watercress, occupied the visitors for some time; a period illuminated by many moral reflections from a rather fat relation, who was no doubt, like most of the others, an aunt.
35	"Ah well," said the Fat Aunt, shaking her head, with a deep sigh that suggested repletion; "ah well, it's what we must all come to!"

	There had been a deal of other conversation, but I remember this remark because the Fat Aunt had already made it twice.
	"Ah, indeed," assented another aunt, a thin one; "so we must, sooner or later."
40	"Yes, yes; as I often say, we're all mortal."
	"Yes, indeed!"
	"We've all got to be born, an' we've all got to die."
	"That's true!"
	"Rich an' poor—just the same."
45	"Ah!"
	"In the midst of life we're in the middle of it."
	"Ah yes!"
50	Grandfather Nat, deeply impressed, made haste to refill the Fat Aunt's glass, and to push the cake-dish nearer. Aunt Martha jerked Uncle Martha's elbow toward his glass, which he was neglecting, with a sudden nod and a frown of pointed significance—even command.
	"It's a great trial for all of the family, I'm sure," pursued the Fat Aunt, after applications to glass and cake-dish; "but we must bear up. Not that we ain't had trials enough, neither."
55	"No, indeed," replied Aunt Martha with a snap at my grandfather, as though he were the trial chiefly on her mind; which Grandfather Nat took very humbly.
	"Well, she's better off, poor thing," the Fat Aunt went on.
60	Some began to say "Ah!" again, but Aunt Martha snapped it into "Well, let's hope so!"—in the tone of one convinced that my mother couldn't be much worse off than she had been. From which, and from sundry other remarks among the aunts, I gathered that my mother was held to have hurt the dignity of her family by alliance with Grandfather Nat's. I have never wholly understood why; but I put the family pride down to the traditional wedding of an undoubted auctioneer with Aunt Martha's cousin. So Aunt Martha said "Let's hope so!" and, with another
65	sudden frown and nod, shoved Uncle Martha toward the cake.

QUESTIONS

QUESTION 1

Read again the first part of the source from lines 1 to 10.

List four things from this part of the text about the people at the funeral.

QUESTION 2

Look in detail at this extract from lines 11 to 30 of the Source

How does the writer use language here to describe Uncle Martha?

You could include the writer's choice of:

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

QUESTION 3

You now need to think about the whole of the Source (lines 1-65)

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
- how and why the writer changes this focus as the Source develops
- any other structural features that interest you.

QUESTION 4

Focus this part of your answer on the second part of the Source from line 31 to the end.

A student, having read this section of the text said: "The writer brings the very different characters to life for the reader. It is as if you are at the funeral with them."

To what extent do you agree? In your response, you could:

- write about your own impressions of the characters
- evaluate how the writer has created these impressions
- support your opinions with references to the text.