

Answer **either** Question 1 **or** Question 2.

EITHER

- 1 Read carefully the poem opposite. The poet writes about the photographs of his parents which he keeps on his writing desk.

How does the writing capture the poet's feelings about the photographs of his parents?

To help you answer this question, you might consider:

- the ways in which the poet's words show his feelings as he looks at the photographs
- how he relates the photographs to their backgrounds
- how he brings himself into the story of what the photographs show.

Background Material

My writing desk. Two photos, mam and dad.
A birthday, him. Their ruby wedding¹, her.
Neither one a couple and both bad.
I make out what's behind them from the blur.

Dad's in our favourite pub², now gone for good.
My father and his background are both gone,
but hers has my Welsh cottage and a wood
that still shows those same greens eight summers on,
though only the greenness of it's stayed the same.

Though one of them's in colour and one's not,
the two are joined, apart from their shared frame,
by what, for photographers, would mar³ each shot:

in his, if you look close, the gleam, the light,
me in his blind right eye, but minute size –

in hers, as though just cast from where I write,
a shadow holding something to its eyes.

¹ *ruby wedding*: fortieth anniversary of their marriage

² *pub*: a local inn

³ *mar*: spoil

OR

2 Read carefully this extract from a novel. The writer describes his early passion for reading.

How does the extract show the impact of two very different kinds of writing on the young boy?

To help you answer this question, you might consider:

- the way the writer recaptures the excitement of the first novel he read
- how the writer has suggested that the 'model essay' had very different qualities of writing
- how much those two different experiences shape the writing here.

The first novel I read had a green hardboard cover and was two hundred and sixteen pages long.

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And yet I kept remembering that mother and son waiting in the Dutch interior of that essay, with the jug of milk and the butter on the table, while behind and above them were those wispy, shawly figures from the rebellion, sibilant above the great fire and below the aching, high wind.

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