



National  
Qualifications  
2018

**X824/75/11**

**English  
Reading for Understanding,  
Analysis and Evaluation**

MONDAY, 14 MAY

9:00 AM – 10:00 AM

**Total marks — 30**

**Attempt ALL questions.**

Write your answers clearly in the answer booklet provided. In the answer booklet you must clearly identify the question number you are attempting.

Use **blue** or **black** ink.

Before leaving the examination room you must give your answer booklet to the Invigilator; if you do not, you may lose all the marks for this paper.



\* X 8 2 4 7 5 1 1 \*

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## Why do cats love bookshops?

When I walk into my local bookshop, the first thing I do (after saying hi to the owners) is look for the shop cat, Tiny the Mini Master. Tiny is the photogenic spirit of the place who gives you approximately five seconds to impress him, otherwise he goes right back to sleep on that pile of nineteenth-century novels.

- 5 I understand the idea of people being either more for dogs or cats, I do. I also get the weird looks I've received for proudly stating that I'm for both, that I can relate to dogs and their wonderfully dumb, but fiercely loyal attitudes, as well as appreciate the way cats keep you in check by making you work for their love. But I can say without any doubt that bookshop cats represent the apex of domesticated pets.
- 10 If a bookshop is so fortunate as to have a cat on the premises during opening hours, you can bet that feline is co-owner, manager, security, and the abiding conscience of the place. Cats generally seem above it all — that's what I tend to like about them. Personally, I'm more like a dog, all stupid and excited about the smallest things, easy to read and always hungry. Cats, on the other hand, look right through you, force you to contemplate things; they just seem smarter than
- 15 they're letting on, as if they know everything but won't tell. So it makes sense to see so many of them navigating the stacks of dusty old hardcovers at used bookshops. But there's another, deeper reason cats make so much sense in bookshops — it's in their DNA.

'One cannot help wondering what the silent critic on the hearth-rug thinks of our strange conventions — the mystic Persian, whose ancestors were worshipped as gods, whilst we, their

20 masters and mistresses, grovelled in caves and painted our bodies blue,' the famous novelist Virginia Woolf wrote in the essay 'On a Faithful Friend'. Cats held a special place in ancient Egyptian society, to the point where if you even accidentally killed a cat, you'd be sentenced to death. Cats were often adorned with jewels, and fed meals that would make today's tinned cat food look like, well, tinned cat food. They were sometimes mummified (the grieving owners

25 shaved off their eyebrows as an act of mourning). Bastet, the deity representing protection, fertility, and motherhood, could turn herself into a cat, hence the popular idea that Egyptians worshipped them.

It's pretty obvious that cats haven't really moved on from the sort of treatment they received in the time of Pharaoh. They carry themselves in a stately manner and demand that you treat them

30 with a certain amount of reverence, letting you know if you're doing a good job of petting them, when they're ready for their meal, and making you aware of what they like and what displeases them. My cats certainly do. They love their comfy spots, and often give me a hard time when I try to make them move, shooting me a look, letting out a sad meow, and then instigating a showdown which almost always ends with me picking them up. And their favourite place in my

35 house? Among my books.

Egypt, where cats are believed to have been first domesticated, is also where the relationship with bookshops can be traced. While mainly used to keep rodents away from homes and crops, cats were trained to keep pests away from papyrus rolls which contained texts. Without cats, in fact, it's hard to imagine how Egyptian civilisation could have so successfully weathered the

40 diseases and famine caused by vermin — but also imagine the knowledge that might have been lost were it not for those four-legged protectors guarding the temples from tiny intruders.

Today, when we think of a cat chasing a mouse it's usually in some cartoonesque, Tom and Jerry sort of way. The dumb cat is always foiled by its tiny adversary, like we're supposed to forgive the little pests for gnawing on our possessions and spreading disease. It's unfair.

45 So how did they end up in bookshops? Look to Russia and a decree issued by Empress Elizabeth in  
1745 for the ‘best and biggest cats, capable of catching mice’ to be sent to the Museum of  
St Petersburg to protect the treasures contained within from rats (the tradition lives on to the  
present day, with dozens of strays living in the basement of the museum). Not long after, in the  
50 early 1800s, with Europeans still sure that rats caused the Black Death (this idea has been recently  
debunked, with scholars now believing that giant gerbils might be to blame), and rat catchers  
unable to stop rodents from overrunning filthy urban centres, the British government started to  
encourage libraries to keep cats in order to bring down populations of book-loving vermin. It  
made sense that bookshop owners would also employ the four-legged security guards to keep  
their shops free of pests. Cats were easy to find, and all you had to do was feed them as  
55 compensation. And once cats were invited into bookshops, they never really left.

Cats are quiet and want to be left alone for the bulk of the day; they’re animals that long for  
solitude, much like readers and writers. It began as a working relationship, but became something  
more than that, something deeper. Cats ultimately became integral to the bookshop experience,  
a small part of why you would rather go to your local shop than buy online. Sure, not every  
60 bookshop has a cat prowling around; but in the ones that do, the cats are a big part of what  
makes these stores great (along with, you know, the booksellers and the comfortable places to sit  
and read).

Of course, if you asked a cat, he’d say he was the main attraction, but that’s what you get from a  
species which once reached god-like status.

*Jason Diamond, Literary Hub*

Total marks — 30

Attempt ALL questions

1. Look at lines 1–4. Explain **in your own words** why ‘the first thing’ the writer does when he visits his local bookshop is to ‘look for the shop cat, Tiny.’  
You should make **two** key points in your answer. 2
2. Look at lines 5–17. Identify, **in your own words** as far as possible, **five** positive points the writer makes about cats. 5
3. Look at lines 18–27. Identify, **in your own words** as far as possible, **four** ways in which cats ‘held a special place’ in the ancient world. 4
4. By referring to the sentence in lines 28–29 (‘It’s pretty obvious . . . of Pharaoh’), explain how it helps to provide a link between the writer’s ideas at this point in the passage. 2
5. Look at lines 32–35 (‘My cats . . . my books.’). Explain how **one** example of the writer’s use of sentence structure makes it clear what cats prefer. 2
6. Look at lines 36–41. Explain how **two** examples of the writer’s word choice make it clear that cats played a very important part in preserving Egyptian writing. 4
7. Look at lines 42–44. Explain how **two** examples of language make it clear that the writer is defending cats here. 4
8. Look at lines 45–55. Summarise, **in your own words** as far as possible, how cats ended up in bookshops.  
You should make **five** key points in your answer. 5
9. Look at lines 56–64. Select any expression from these lines and explain how it contributes to the passage’s effective conclusion. 2

[END OF QUESTION PAPER]

**OPEN OUT FOR QUESTIONS**

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## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

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