

Stanmore Secondary School  
English Home Language  
Grade 10 Literature Assignment

Question 1: Prescribed Poetry

TRUANT

*Sing a song of sunlight  
My pocket's full of sky—  
A starling's egg for April,  
Jay's feather for July;  
And here's a thorn bush three bags full  
Of drift-white wool*

They call him dunce, and yet he can discern  
Each mouse-brown bird,  
And call its name and whistle back its call,  
And spy among the fern  
Delicate movement of a furred  
Fugitive creature hiding from the day.  
Discovered secrets magnify his play  
Into a vocation.

Laughing at education,  
He knows where the redshank hides her nest, perceives  
A reed-patch tremble when a coot lays siege  
To watery territory.  
Nothing escapes his eye:  
A ladybird  
Slides like a blood-drop down a spear of grass;  
The sapphire sparkle of a dragon fly  
Redeems a waste of weeds.  
Collecting acorns, telling the beads of the year  
On yew tree berries, his mind's too full for speech.

Back in the classroom he can never find  
Answers to dusty questions, yet could teach,  
Deeper than blackboard knowledge,  
Geometry of twigs  
Scratched on a sunlit wall;  
History in stones, and seasons  
Told by the fields' calendar—  
Living languages of Spring and Fall.\*

*Phoebe Hesketh  
(Brit., 20th c.)*

- 1.1 Identify and explain one figure of speech in stanza 2. (3)
- 1.2 What is the poet's attitude to school. Quote a phrase to support your answer. (2)
- 1.3 Why does the poet use the word 'dusty' in the expression 'dusty questions'? (2)
- 1.4 Explain the irony in calling him a dunce – is it justified? Discuss. (3)

[10]

Question 2: Romeo and Juliet

Choose ONE of the following topics and write an essay of approximately 1½ pages.

- 2.1 The play is essentially about the tragedy of two star-crossed lovers. Discuss.
- 2.2 The play is characterised by several conflicting attitudes and values. Discuss.
- 2.3 Discuss the role of fate and destiny in the tragedy of Romeo and Juliet.

[25]