

## Paper 2

Read the passage below and then answer all the questions that follow. Note that up to fifteen marks will be given for the quality and accuracy of your use of English throughout this Paper

**Note:** When a question asks for an answer **IN YOUR OWN WORDS AS FAR AS POSSIBLE** and you select the appropriate material from the passage for your answer, you must still use your own words to express it. Little credit can be given to answers which copy words or phrases from the passage.

### Shakespeare Never Lost a Manuscript to a Computer Crash

- 1 Is there any chance, I wonder, that we might prevail on the movie industry to change its rating for *Shakespeare in Love* from R to G? I'd be willing to risk whatever harm a few flashes of Gwyneth Paltrow's breasts might do to our children in exchange for the contribution the film makes to computer literacy.
- 2 Yes, I know there are no computers in the movie. That's the point. As brazenly anachronistic as the film is about Elizabethan life and times, it is reasonably accurate in the few brief scenes that stuck with me. Shakespeare at work doing what history most remembers him for. Not bedding fair ladies, but writing. And with what? A tattered feather dipped in liquefied carbon. We see the playwright softening the tip, cutting it at just the right angle, stopping to sharpen it again and again, then casting it aside when it grows too mushy and reaching for another. 5 10
- 3 Yet that is how *Romeo and Juliet* was written. And *Hamlet* and *King Lear*. All were laboriously scribbled into existence by an inspired poet who cared above all for the depth, eloquence and intellectual force of his work and got right down to it. Between the days of the ancient stylus and the advent of the steel-tipped pen of the industrial period, the quill and the hollow reed brought every major and minor piece of writing in Western civilization to life. I wish our kids could see that happening. 15
- 4 It might teach them the basic cultural truth they will never learn from Bill Gates or school administrators who cannot spend enough wiring our classrooms, often at the expense of hiring teachers. Quality is in the mind, not the machine. Someday we may have a computer on every desk in every school, but that won't make us a nation of Shakespeares – or Newtons or Chopins or Jane Austens or Thomas Jeffersons, all of whom scaled the heights of excellence without the benefit of Windows 98. 20
- 5 I'd like my students to ponder the fact that by the time they have located their style sheets and selected their fonts, Shakespeare was probably well into Act One Scene One. In the time they take to decode some inscrutable error message ("Invalid Signature – Checksum Does Not Match"), Shakespeare might have been revising Mercutio's glorious Queen Mab speech. In the time they spend rebooting and waiting for 20 drivers to load after their machines have locked up, he would very likely have been roughing out the balcony scene. 25 30
- 6 And that is lesson No.1 in computer literacy: the computer contributes nothing

→ note  
echo  
close

essential to the life of the mind. No, not even all the information that comes gushing out of the World Wide Web. Remember, Shakespeare never needed to surf his way to www. [Traveleurope.net/verona.htm](http://Traveleurope.net/verona.htm) to write the play that made the city famous.

- 7 Am I saying that computers might actually get in the way of significant intellectual work? Yes, I am, especially where children are concerned. Because even user-friendly machines are a barrier that need not be there between the kid and the idea. A child with a pencil in hand is ready to write. A child with a crayon in hand is ready to draw. A kid with a computer is ready to ... begin learning a curve that starts with booting up, virus-checking, rebooting if the machine hangs, searching for misplaced files, undeleting lost files, arranging the desktop, resizing and positioning windows, formatting, reformatting, downloading, uploading, clicking on menus and choosing fonts, unless, of course, a teacher does all that for the kids and creates the illusion that it's easy to do. 35 40
- 8 And once the machine is ready to work there is all the whizzing, whirling distraction of a million Web sites to contend with. Computer enthusiasts tell us that the Internet brings children a "world of information." And there's the rub. Children simply do not need that much information to learn how to think or taste their joys of creativity. Not first of all. 45
- 9 What they need are impassioned ideas to think with. Where are those found? In other knowledge-loving minds. True, the web can search out such minds. But they are most readily and least expensively available from the authors of books and from teachers in classrooms. A good teacher with enough copies of "Huckleberry Finn" to go around can do more to make young minds blossom than the same teacher forced to revamp all she knows to fit the limited capacities of a roomful of expensive computers. 50 *rebuttal.* 55
- 10 Information is worthless if it is not informed by ideas, values and judgement – or worse than worthless if one recognizes why the Web exists at all. The Web is a product of a predatory entrepreneurial sensibility. Like a spider's trap, it exists to ensnare attention with high-tech effects and eye-popping tricks. Those who weave the Web are seeking desperately to transform the medium into the new television, the new movies. Their objective is to lure millions to their sites so they can make lots of money. 60
- 11 The main point about the Web is how much profit its backers are taking in. What passes through the medium is being shaped by those values, not by any significant regard for quality, truth or taste. Currently, in one of the most bizarre campaigns in the history of hucksterism, the Apple Company is encouraging us to "think differently". Apple's advertisements show Picasso, Einstein, Cesar Chavez, Gandhi and Martha Graham, all of whom seem to be endorsing the iMac. I would not be surprised to see Shakespeare and Jesus joining their number soon. These people had only one thing in common where computers are concerned: they never used one. 65 70
- 12 If they had, they might have wound up thinking "same" rather than different. Those who created this campaign may not have so intended, but they invite us to remember that all the greatest thoughts were thought before computers. For that matter, the scientific insights and engineering principles embodied in the computer itself were discovered before computers existed. 75

- 13 Norbert Wiener, a founding father of information technology, believed that the computer was our chance to make “the human use of human beings”. He may have had certain forms of secretarial drudgery in mind: memos, records, reports, inventories. Computers are good at all that. But he surely did not think that great literature, significant thought, and true education needed computational technology. As “Shakespeare in Love” reminds us, our cultural heritage comes down to us from men and women who needed no machines to think with, but only the resources of their naked minds working upon deeply pondered experience – and beyond that, perhaps a sharpened feather to scrawl those thoughts on any writing surface. 80

Theodore Roszak: *New York Times*: Mar 11<sup>th</sup> 99. (Adapted)

***From paragraphs 1 and 2:***

1. The author is inclined to be in favour of changing the rating for “Shakespeare in Love” from R to G. Explain **in your own words as far as possible**
- (a) Why he is inclined to favour it.
- (b) Why the movie is rated R and not G. [4]

***From paragraphs 3 to 6:***

2. Using **your own words as far as possible** give five reasons why the author is against “wiring our classrooms”. Number your answers 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5. [5]

***From paragraphs 10 and 11:***

3. (a) How does the writer create the image of the Web as “a product of a predatory entrepreneurial sensibility”?
- (b) What is ironical about Apple’s advertisements? [5]

***From the passage as a whole:***

4. Explain the meaning of the following words and phrases **as they are used** in the passage. You may write the answer in one word or a short phrase.

flashes (line 3); brazenly (line 5); mushy (line 11);  
roughing out (line 30); illusion (line 43)

[5]

5. Use each of the following words **as it is used in the passage** in a sentence of your own which clearly illustrates this meaning. Your five sentences should not deal with the subject-matter of the passage.

laboriously (line 13); inscrutable (line 26); impassioned (line 50);  
endorsing (line 68); drudgery (line 78);

[5]

6. Restricting yourself to material from paragraphs 7 to 13, explain how the author supports the view that computational technology stands in the way of true education. Your summary should be written in **your own words as far as possible** and should not exceed 150 words.

[11]

\*\*\*\*\* END OF PAPER \*\*\*\*\*