



MINISTERUL EDUCAȚIEI



**THE INTERNATIONAL ENGLISH LANGUAGE OLYMPIAD**  
**BUCHAREST SEPTEMBER 2023**  
**WRITTEN PAPER - USE OF ENGLISH**  
**LEVEL C1**

- All questions are compulsory
- Allotted points: 40
- Allotted time: 90 minutes

**I. Read the text below and do the tasks that follow.**

It is natural, on **approaching** Marlowe's *Doctor Faustus*, to feel a certain sense of familiarity. Not only is it the best known, the most frequently performed, and the most widely studied of Marlowe's plays; it is an early incarnation of a myth that has been highly influential both in 'high' and in popular culture, and that can be discerned (with varying degrees of obviousness) in Goethe's *Faust*, Oscar Wilde's *The Picture of Dorian Gray* and Thomas Mann's *Doctor Faustus*, not to mention the 1955 musical *Damn Yankees* (where a man sells his soul to become a baseball star) and the film *Bedazzled* (1967), to name just a few of many possible examples. The story has also attracted numerous parodies, such as the 1993 Hallowe'en special of the cartoon *The Simpsons*, 'Treehouse of Horror IV', in which Homer sells his soul to the devil in exchange for a doughnut. As some scholars will argue, though, *Doctor Faustus* is very much a play shaped by the debates of Marlowe's own time, not just over religion but over science, politics and art. Locating it in the historical moment within which Marlowe lived and wrote can help to dissipate the atmosphere of familiarity that surrounds the myth. *Faustus*'s date is relatively uncertain. It is known the play was staged in September 1594, but this was not its first performance; the earliest known edition of its principal source, *The History of the Damnable Life and Deserved Death of Doctor John Faustus* (attributed to one 'P. F.'), is from 1592, but the work may have been available to Marlowe before that date. The play certainly dates from after 1587, when the German *Historia von D. Johann Fausten* appeared in print, but recent editors of the play have tended to place it nearer the beginning rather than the end of the chronological window this creates.

The plot is quite familiar to the theatre lovers and passionate readers alike. Faustus is a brilliant but embittered academic, a solitary scholar who has exhausted the confines of human knowledge. Frustrated with the **futility** of religion, law and science he is desperate for a deeper understanding of the universe – and for the worldwide fame that it will bring. Risking everything, he **conjures** the demon Mephistopheles.



Twenty-four years of absolute knowledge and infinite power in exchange for his soul. Despite being tormented by doubt, Faustus agrees and signs the deal in blood. But as he begins to revel in his new powers, the world around him starts to collapse and the clock inexorably counts down to the final moment of reckoning.

**A. Answer the following questions, according to the text. (4 points)**

1. What makes people feel a certain familiarity when approaching Marlowe's *Doctor Faustus*?
2. Why can one associate Marlowe's play with popular culture?
3. What is the first mentioning of the Doctor Faustus's story in a print version?
4. What makes Doctor Faustus conjure Mephistopheles?

**B. Choose the right synonym for the words below, according to their meaning in the text. (3 points)**

- |                       |                |                  |                    |                       |
|-----------------------|----------------|------------------|--------------------|-----------------------|
| <b>1. approaching</b> | a. coming near | b. dealing with  | c. saluting        | d. communicating with |
| <b>2. futility</b>    | a. hollowness  | b. worthlessness | c. ineffectiveness | d. vanity             |
| <b>3. conjures</b>    | a. evokes;     | b. invokes       | c. stirs           | d. conspires          |

**C. Rephrase the following sentences so as to preserve the meaning. (3 points)**

1. It is known the play was staged in September 1594, but this was not its first performance.  
The play, \_\_\_\_\_ performed before that time.
2. The plot is quite familiar to theatre lovers and passionate readers alike.  
Both those \_\_\_\_\_ the plot.
3. Despite being tormented by doubt, Faustus agrees and signs the deal in blood.  
Tormented \_\_\_\_\_ agrees and signs the deal in blood.

**II. Use the word given in brackets to form a word that fits in each gap. (10 points)**

Saga, in medieval Icelandic literature, is any type of story or history in prose, 1. \_\_\_\_\_ (**RESPECT**) of the kind of the narrative or the purposes for which it was written. Used in this general sense, the term applies to a wide range of literary works. Chronicles and other 2. \_\_\_\_\_ (**FACT**) records of the history of Scandinavia and Iceland down to the 14th century are also included under the blanket term *saga literature*.

In a stricter sense, however, the term *saga* is confined to legendary and 3. \_\_\_\_\_ (**HISTORY**) texts in which the author has attempted an imaginative 4. \_\_\_\_\_ (**CONSTRUCT**) of the past. Using the distinctive features of the hero as principal 5. \_\_\_\_\_ (**LINE**), medieval Icelandic narrative fiction can be classified as kings' sagas, legendary sagas, and sagas of Icelanders.



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The origin and evolution of saga writing in Iceland are largely matters for speculation. A common 6. \_\_\_\_\_ (**PASS**) on Icelandic farms, from the 12th century down to modern times, was the reading aloud of stories to entertain the household. It seems to have replaced the traditional art of storytelling. The Icelandic church took a 7. \_\_\_\_\_ (**SYMPATHY**) view of the writing and reading of sagas, and many of the authors were monks or priests.

Translations of lives of the saints and accounts of the Holy Virgin testify to the skill of Icelandic prose writers from the 12th century 8. \_\_\_\_\_ (**WARD**). Histories were also adapted and translated from Latin, based on those of the 7th- and 8th-century Anglo-Saxon writer Bede, on accounts of the Trojan wars, 9. \_\_\_\_\_ (**NOTE**) one of the 4th century attributed to Dictys Cretensis, and so on. In the 13th century, saga literature was also 10. \_\_\_\_\_ (**RICH**) by Norwegian prose translations of French romance literature, which soon found their way into Iceland.

**III. You will read an article about the British writer Wilkie Collins. Match the headings A-H below with the appropriate paragraphs. There are three headings you will not need to use. (10 points)**

1.

Wilkie Collins had the longest writing career of any major mid-19th-century English novelist, writing short stories and novels from 1844 to 1889. Literary criticism, however, has traditionally seen him as only notable for his two mystery novels, *The Woman in White* (1860) and *The Moonstone* (1868). While these are some of the century's earliest and best mysteries, praising only them ignores the social and political themes common in Collins's work, especially in his later novels. [...]

2.

Collins' first two novels were unlike the rest of his work. He began with themes that were overseas and historical, following Walter Scott and Edward Bulwer-Lytton, but his topics were distinctly lively. *Ioláni*, written in 1844-5, was about love and tragedy in the Pacific, but it remained unpublished until 1999. *Antonina* (1850) depicted the Gothic attack on Rome in 408 BCE, with a woman among their leaders. But then Collins shook off the weight of the past, starting on the main theme of his life's work, modern troubled families. In *Hide and Seek* (1851), Mat Marksman, who has returned from America, having been scalped by native Americans, detects his strange family past. A very different novel, but another with a modern-day colloquial title and again dealing with complex family matters, was *The Dead Secret* (1857): this time a woman traces her own baffling origins and their impact on the present.

3.



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Family puzzles and intrusive criminality flourish in *The Woman in White* (1860), a highly popular and admired novel. An unemployed art-teacher meets a white-clad beauty late at night in London: she has escaped from an asylum, and says she comes from Cumberland. Then he finds a job at a country house: Laura Fairlie, who looks very much like the girl in the street, lives there. Mysteries, crimes, and acts of unselfish courage follow: finally, the intrusive evil forces – Sir Percival Glyde and Count Fosco – are defeated and the art-teacher and the beauty can be happy together. [...] After that, Collins produced *The Moonstone* (1868). It offers a mystery: what happened to the great diamond on the heroine's birthday night? But it provides much more than an unguessable solution – that should not be revealed here. In addition to that, the police detective fails, an amateur does much better, there is a bossy over-religious woman, a radical young girl servant and overall praise for three heroic Indians. Collins dissents from conservative English hostility towards Indians at that time, stemming from the 1857 native resistance to colonialism they called the “Indian Mutiny”.

4.

In the 1870s Collins [...] produced a range of usually short but often very interesting novels. They are ignored by most commentators, no doubt at least in part because they are often challengingly socially aware. In *The Law and the Lady* (1875), a wife determinedly investigates and saves her husband from the charge of murdering his previous wife. There is early feminism here: a critic said Collins creates women who are “strong, resolute, and intellectual”. Radicalism can also be a central element. *The Fallen Leaves* (1879) has the young British hero lecturing on the Christian Socialism he learnt abroad in an American radical community. Then *Heart and Science* (1883) attacks modern vivisectionists: central to the story is a scientist who has been killing dogs in his research. In this last period, Collins ranges widely: *Jezebel's Daughter* (1879) is set in the complexities of the German business world, and his very last book, *Blind Love* (1890), completed by Walter Besant after Collins died in September 1889, has a central figure seriously involved with the Irish independence conflict of the time.

5.

There is much more to read, and to think about, in Collins's work than has traditionally been noticed. In recent years his reputation has been rising: American critics have seen his richness and strength more than most. But there is still a long way to go to recognise him as a full member of that remarkable group of mid-19th century major British writers, along with Benjamin Disraeli, Elizabeth Gaskell, Charles Dickens, Mary Elizabeth Braddon and George Eliot. (adapted from <https://theconversation.com/radicalism-feminism-and-family-puzzles-why-wilkie-collins-is-so-much-more-than-a-mystery-writer-189305>)



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- A. Exploring Modern Social Issues
- B. A Defender of Women's Rights
- C. A Focus on Women
- D. Awaiting Full Recognition
- E. A Mystery Writer
- F. A Shift from the Past
- G. Joining the Giants
- H. An Incomplete Image

**IV. Fill in the gaps in the text below with ONE appropriate word in each gap. (10 points)**

There's nothing like curling 1.\_\_\_\_ with a good book and a soft cat. Even better is a book with a cat in it. Since ancient times, cats have 2.\_\_\_\_ all sorts of roles in literature around the world. In some early cultural depictions, cats were close to the gods. In ancient Egypt they found sanctuary in the temples of Bast. In Norse myths, Freya, goddess of love, rode 3.\_\_\_\_ a chariot drawn by cats. On the other hand, in medieval Europe, cats were often tied to Satan. Painters placed them near Judas in the Last Supper. In Slavic folklore, a giant black cat lulled people to sleep only 4.\_\_\_\_ rob or eat them. The evil connotations were bad news for real cats, which were sometimes burned with the witches they supposedly 5.\_\_\_\_ have served. By the nineteenth century, cats had become increasingly popular pets 6.\_\_\_\_ the middle and upper classes of Europe. Children's picture books also served up plenty of stories about cats 7.\_\_\_\_ were basically furry people, like the character of Beatrix Potter's *The Tale of Tom Kitten* (1907). But literary cats never quite lost their edge. As the cat in Rudyard Kipling's *Just So Stories* (1902) explains: "I am not a friend, and I am not a servant. I am the cat who walks by himself." Kipling's cat 8.\_\_\_\_ up a bargain with the human, promising to catch mice in 9. \_\_\_\_ for the chance to drink warm milk, sit by the fire and, crucially, come and go as he pleases. In more fantastical stories, cats may be 10.\_\_\_\_ tricksters, liminal figures, or chaotic forces, like Lewis Carroll's Cheshire Cat.