

# TEST D'ENTREE - SESSION 2019 -

## SECTION INTERNATIONALE AMERICAINE

LYCEE ANDRE ARGOUGES  
GRENOBLE

**PART I: Reading comprehension (20 points)**

Answer the questions on a separate sheet.

(Excerpt from *The Handmaid's Tale* by Margaret Atwood)

**PART II: Writing assignment (20 points)**

Choose **ONE** subject. Write about 250 words. Use a separate sheet.

**Parts I and II shall be done in one hour and thirty minutes**

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**PART III : Aural Comprehension . (20 points)**

(about 20 minutes ; use a separate sheet)

Interview with Margaret Atwood  
about the Canadian national anthem

## CHAPTER THIRTEEN

There's time to spare. This is one of the things I wasn't prepared for – the amount of unfilled time, the long parentheses of nothing. Time as white sound. If only I could embroider. Weave, knit, something to do with my hands. I want a cigarette. I remember walking in art galleries, through the nineteenth century: the obsession they had then with harems. Dozens of paintings of harems, fat women lolling on divans, turbans on their heads or velvet caps, being fanned with peacock tails, a eunuque in the background standing guard. Studies of sedentary flesh, painted by men who'd never been there. These pictures were supposed to be erotic, and I thought they were, at the time; but I see now what they were really about. They were paintings about suspended animation(1); about waiting, about objects not in use. They were paintings about boredom.

But maybe boredom is erotic, when women do it, for men.

I wait, washed, brushed, fed, like a prize pig. Sometime in the eighties they invented pig balls, for pigs who were being fattened in pens. Pig balls were large coloured balls; the pigs rolled them around with their snouts. The pig marketers said this improved their muscle tone; the pigs were curious, they liked to have something to think about.

I read about that in Introduction to Psychology; that, and the chapter on caged rats who'd give themselves electric shocks for something to do. And the one on the pigeons trained to peck a button which made a grain of corn appear. Three groups of them: the first got one grain per peck, the second one grain every other peck, the third was random. When the man in charge cut off the grain, the first group gave up quite soon, the second group a little later. The third group never gave up. They'd peck themselves to death, rather than quit. Who knew what worked ?

I wish I had a pig ball.

[...](2)

In the afternoons we lay on our beds for an hour in the gymnasium, between three and four. They said it was a period of rest and meditation. I thought then they did it because they wanted some time off themselves, from teaching us [...] But now I think that the rest also was practice. They were giving us a chance to get used to blank time.

A catnap, Aunt Lydia called it, in her coy (3) way.

The strange thing is we needed the rest. Many of us went to sleep. We were tired there, a lot of the time. We were on some kind of pill or drug I think, they put it in the food, to keep us calm. But maybe not. Maybe it was the place itself. After the first shock, after you'd come to terms, it was better to be lethargic. You could tell yourself you were saving up your strength.

*The Handmaid's Tale* by Margaret Atwood

- (1) suspended animation = state of being alive but not conscious or active.
- (2) The narrator is a woman held captive for reproductive purposes in a dystopian society. In that paragraph she remembers when she was being trained for childbirth (delivery).
- (3) Coy = pretending to be shy and innocent about love or sex in order to make people more interested.

## **PART I: Reading comprehension (20 points)**

Always justify your answer using elements from the text.

- 1) Why does the narrator identify herself to the women in the paintings? (2 points)
- 2) Why does she compare herself to women in a harem and to a prize pig? (2 points)
- 3) Why does she compare herself to a pig, a rat and a cat? (1 point)
- 4) What do the pigeons illustrate about her state of mind? (1,5 point)  
Try to link that point to the last two sentences. (1,5 point)
- 5) Explain what animals and her have in common. (2 points) (Write about 50 words)
- 6) What can you deduce from the text about her education. Justify your answer using elements from the text. (1 point)
- 7) In your opinion, whom might 'they' (last paragraph) and 'themselves' (last but one paragraph) refer to? (1 point)  
What is the narrator's relationship with these people? (2 points)
- 8) In your opinion, what is the position of women in this society? (2 points) (write about 50 words)
- 9) Based on the first and last paragraphs, in your opinion, how does the narrator consider that period of her life? (2 points)
- 10) In your opinion, who is the narrator writing to and what are her intentions? (2 points) (Write about 50 words)

## **PART II: Writing assignment (20 points)**

Choose **ONE** subject. Write about 250 words. Use a separate sheet.

a- Recall an episode when you were bored.  
(Why you were bored, what you imagine yourself doing, what your state of mind was ...)

**OR**

b- What animal best corresponds to you? (What is your spirit animal?) Explain in an essay.

**Parts I and II shall be done in one hour and thirty minutes**

**PART III : Aural Comprehension . (20 points)**  
**(about 20 minutes ; use a separate sheet)**

You are going to listen to a 1 minute 30 second – long document.  
You will report in French OR in English what you understood in a coherent way.

**Procedure.**

You will listen to the whole document **three times** :  
a first time followed by a one-minute pause to let you take notes ;  
then a second time also followed by a one-minute pause ;  
and finally a third time followed by a ten-minute pause during which you must write your report.

**Format.**

- You must present the document (type, how many people speak, in which setting, with what purpose ...).
- Then you must report what you understood using paragraphs (one part in the document corresponding to one paragraph of your report).
- Finally you can comment on the tone or the attitude of the speaker(s).

**TITLE OF THE AUDIO DOCUMENT :**

The Canadian national anthem, comments by Magaret Atwood