

**OPTION INTERNATIONALE DU BACCALAURÉAT  
SESSION 2018**

SECTION : AMÉRICAINNE

ÉPREUVE : LANGUE ET LITTÉRATURE

DURÉE TOTALE : 4 HEURES

*Les dictionnaires sont interdits.*

## Choose Option A or Option B or Option C

- A) **Option A:** Write on **two** of the following essay topics in Part I. Those candidates choosing two essay questions may not refer to the same works in both essays.
- B) **Option B:** Write on one of the following essay topics in Part I and compose a **creative writing piece** from the prompt in Part II.
- C) **Option C:** Write on one of the following essay topics in Part I and write a **commentary** on **one** of the two passages in Part III, either poetry or prose.

### Part I – Essays

1. Many works of literature feature a moment of revelation. Explore the importance of this moment in two of the works on your OIB syllabus.
2. Transgression, or the violation of laws or social conventions, often plays an important role in literature. How do two authors on the OIB syllabus show an interest in transgressing rules, whether it be on a thematic or stylistic level?
3. In some literary works, the full significance of the title becomes apparent to the reader only at the end. Discuss this statement, using two works on your OIB syllabus.
4. How do two writers on your OIB syllabus use structure to enhance the meaning of their work?

### Part II: Creative writing

Shoes... Using shoes in either a literal or metaphorical sense, create a short story, monologue, or poem in which shoes have an important significance. Your response may or may not be inspired by a work on your OIB syllabus. If inspired by a work, write the title.

### **PART III**

#### **Poetry- Comment on the following poem from Philip Levine**

##### The Mercy

The ship that took my mother to Ellis Island  
eighty-three years ago was named 'The Mercy'.  
She remembers trying to eat a banana  
without first peeling it and seeing her first orange  
in the hands of a young Scot, a seaman  
who gave her a bite and wiped her mouth for her  
with a red bandana and taught her the word,  
'orange', saying it patiently over and over.  
A long autumn voyage, the days darkening  
with the black waters calming as night came on,  
then nothing as far as her eyes could see and space  
without limit rushing off to the corners  
of creation. She prayed in Russian and Yiddish  
to find her family in New York, prayers  
unheard or misunderstood or perhaps ignored  
by all the powers that swept the waves of darkness  
before she woke, that kept 'The Mercy' afloat  
while smallpox raged among the passengers  
and crew until the dead were buried at sea  
with strange prayers in a tongue she could not fathom.  
'The Mercy', I read on the yellowing pages of a book  
I located in a windowless room of the library  
on 42nd Street, sat thirty-one days  
offshore in quarantine before the passengers  
disembarked. There a story ends. Other ships  
arrived, 'Tancred' out of Glasgow, 'The Neptune'  
registered as Danish, 'Umberto IV',  
the list goes on for pages, November gives  
way to winter, the sea pounds this alien shore.  
Italian miners from Piemonte dig  
under towns in western Pennsylvania  
only to rediscover the same nightmare  
they left at home. A nine-year-old girl travels  
all night by train with one suitcase and an orange.  
She learns that mercy is something you can eat  
again and again while the juice spills over  
your chin, you can wipe it away with the back  
of your hands and you can never get enough.

**Prose: Comment on the following excerpt from *Reservation Blues* by Sherman Alexie.**

The winters and summers arrived and left, as did the family's seasons. Luke and Linda Warm Water raged like storms, lightning in the summer, blizzards in the winter. But sometimes both sat in the house, placid as a lake during spring or an autumn evening. The sisters never knew what to expect, but Checkers grew taller and more frightened with each day. Chess just wanted to be older, to run away from home. She wanted to bury her parents beside Backgammon, to find a way to love them in death, because she forgot how to love them in life.

Then it was winter again and Linda Warm Water walked into the woods like an old dog and found a hiding place to die. Checkers and Chess nearly fell back in love with their father that winter. He quit drinking after his wife disappeared and spent most of his time searching for her. He refused to believe that she had dug a hole and buried herself or climbed into a den and lay down in the bones of a long dead bear. Because he'd convinced himself that Linda ran away with another man, Luke wandered all over Montana in search of his unfaithful wife. Whenever he returned from his endless searches, Luke brought his daughters little gifts: ribbons, scraps of material, buttons, pages torn from magazines, even food, candy bars and bottles of Pepsi. One time he brought the sisters each a Pepsi from Missoula. Chess and Checkers buried those soft drinks in the bank so they would be cold, cold. Luke sat at his piano then and played for the first time since the baby died. The sisters ran inside and sang with him. They sang for a long time.

"Where are those Pepsi" Luke asked his daughters.

"Outside," Chess said and knew they were in trouble. The three rushed outside to the snowbank and discovered the Pepsis had exploded from the cold. The snow was stained brown with Pepsi. Luke grabbed Checkers by the arm and shook her violently.

"Goddamn it, " he shouted, "You've wasted it all!"

He shook her harder, then let her go and ran away. The sisters fell to their knees in the snow and wept.

"I'm sorry," Checkers said. "The Pepsi's gone. It's all my fault."

"No, it's not," Chess said, scooped up a handful of Pepsi stained snow, and held it in front of her sister. "Not everything's your fault."

"What?" Checkers asked.

"Look, " Chess said. The snow was saturated with Pepsi. Chess bit off a mouthful, tasted the cold, sweet, dark. Checkers buried both hands in the snowbank, away from the broken glass, and shoved handful after handful of snow into her mouth. The sisters drank that snow and Pepsi until their hands and mouths were sticky and frozen. Soon they went into the house to build a fire and wait for their father's return. Checkers and Chess lay down together by the stove and held onto each other. They held on.