

# Eton College King's Scholarship Examination 2019

## GENERAL II

(One and a half hours)

*Remember to write your candidate number on every sheet of answer paper used.*

*You must answer both questions.*

*Each of the questions is worth the same number of marks.*

*You need not answer the questions in the order set, but you must start each one on a separate piece of paper.*

*Spend about 45 minutes on each question.*

**Do not turn over until told to do so.**

**Question 1: START A NEW SHEET OF PAPER NOW**

- (a) Read Source 1. What do you think the author means when she distinguishes personal memory from historical memory?

[5]

**Source 1: from an autobiography by Vera Brittain, *Testament of Youth* (1933)**

At Amiens, with a sense of having strayed into the heart of an old, tragic legend, we stood in the dimness of the once threatened Cathedral; everything had deliberately been left, we were told, as it was just after the 1918 offensive, and we looked up with reminiscent melancholy at the still-boarded stained-glass windows smashed by German shells. How long will this bitter hatred continue? I wondered, thinking what aeons ago seemed the Retreat in which that damage was done, and realising with sudden surprise that in my own mind the anger and resentment had died long ago leaving only an everlasting sorrow, and a passionate pity which I did not yet quite know how to use or express. But then, I reflected, I have only a personal and not an historical memory; the Germans didn't really mean to kill Roland or Victor or Geoffrey, but they did intend to hold on to Alsace-Lorraine. [...]

[T]he day's real purpose was my visit to Louvencourt—as the words of the dead American poet, Alan Seeger, restlessly hammering in my head against the grinding of the car's sorely tried gears, had reminded me at intervals all afternoon:

*I have a rendezvous with Death  
On some scarred slope of battered hill. . . .*

As the car drove through the village to the cemetery, I realised with a shock, from its resemblance to a photograph in my possession, that the grey chateau half hidden by tall, drooping trees had once been the Casualty Clearing Station where Roland had drifted forlornly and unconsciously into death. We found the cemetery, as Edward had described it, on the top of a hill where two roads joined; the afternoon was bright and sunny, and just beyond the encircling wall a thin row of elms made a delicate pattern against the tranquil sky. The graves, each with its little garden in front, resembled a number of flower-beds planted at intervals in the smooth, wide lawn, which lay so placidly beneath the long shadow of the slender memorial cross. As I walked up the paved path where Edward had stood in April 1916, and looked at the trim, ordered burial-ground and the open, urbane country, I thought how different it all was from the grey Asiago Plateau, with its deep, sinister silence. The strange irony which had determined the fates of Roland and Edward seemed to persist even after death: the impetuous warrior slept calmly in the peaceful, complacent earth with its suave covering of velvet lawn; the serene musician lay on the dark summit of a grim, far-off mountain.

(b) Read Source 2.

Why does the poet choose to combine the personal and the historical?

[5]

**Source 2: a poem by Keith Douglas, 'Vergissmeinnicht' ['forget me not'] (1942)**

Three weeks gone and the combatants gone  
returning over the nightmare ground  
we found the place again, and found  
the soldier sprawling in the sun.

The frowning barrel of his gun  
overshadowing. As we came on  
that day, he hit my tank with one  
like the entry of a demon. 5

Look. Here in the gunpit spoil  
the dishonoured picture of his girl  
who has put: Steffi. Vergissmeinnicht.  
in a copybook gothic script. 10

We see him almost with content,  
abased, and seeming to have paid  
and mocked at by his own equipment  
that's hard and good when he's decayed. 15

But she would weep to see today  
how on his skin the swart flies move;  
the dust upon the paper eye  
and the burst stomach like a cave. 20

For here the lover and killer are mingled  
who had one body and one heart.  
And death who had the soldier singled  
has done the lover mortal hurt.

(c) Can we ever separate the personal from the historical, in your opinion?

- If so, give reasons as to why this might be a good or bad thing.
- If not, give examples where this separation might be particularly difficult or undesirable.

[15]

[Total mark for Question 1: 25]

**Question 2: *START A NEW SHEET OF PAPER NOW***

Write a response, in whatever style seems appropriate, to ONE of the following. It is recommended that you write no more than 700 words.

*EITHER*

- (a) ‘It is wrong to believe anything unless there is sufficient evidence’. Discuss.

*OR*

- (b) How and why might the happiness of a society be measured?

*OR*

- (c) Discuss the political problems likely to emerge from advances in digital technologies.

[Total mark for Question 2: 25]

END OF PAPER