

**OPTION INTERNATIONALE DU BACCALAURÉAT
SESSION 2014**

SECTION : AMÉRICAINNE

ÉPREUVE : LANGUE ET LITTÉRATURE

DURÉE TOTALE : 4 HEURES

Les dictionnaires sont interdits.

Choose either option A or option B

Option A: Write on **one** of the following four essay topics in Part I and write a **commentary on one** of the two passages in Part II, either poetry or prose.

Option B: Write on **two** of the following four essay topics in Part I. Those candidates choosing two essay questions may not refer to the same works in both essays.

Part I - Essays

1. "All I have is a voice." (W. H. Auden) Analyze how two authors from your OIB program use narrative or poetic voices.
2. "I regret that it takes a life to learn how to live." (Jonathan Safran Foer) Sometimes the moments of true understanding come when it is too late to change or take action. Discuss this idea in two OIB works.
3. "Knowing others is wisdom, knowing yourself is enlightenment." (Lao Tzu) In light of this statement, discuss to what extent characters from two OIB works attain knowledge of themselves and others.
4. "Fiction depends for its life on place", wrote Eudora Welty. Discuss the use and the significance of the setting in two OIB works.

Option Américaine – session juin 2014

Epreuve écrite en Langue et Littérature

France Métropolitaine

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Poem - From *The Woman Who Fell From The Sky* (1994) by Joy Harjo

Prose - From *Free Radicals* (2008) by Alice Munro

Part II : Commentary

Poetry

Comment on the following poem.

Perhaps the World Ends Here

The world begins at a kitchen table. No matter what, we must eat to live.

The gifts of earth are brought and prepared, set on the table. So it has been since creation, and it will go on.

We chase chickens or dogs away from it. Babies teethe at the corners. They scrape their knees under it.

It is there that children are given instructions on what it means to be human. We make men at it, we make women.

At this table we gossip, recall enemies and the ghosts of lovers.

Our dreams drink coffee with us as they put their arms around our children. They laugh with us at our poor falling-down selves and as we put ourselves back together once again at the table.

This table has been a house in the rain, an umbrella in the sun.

Wars have begun and ended at this table. It is a place to hide in the shadow of terror. A place to celebrate the terrible victory.

We have given birth on this table, and have prepared our parents for burial here.

At this table we sing with joy, with sorrow. We pray of suffering and remorse. We give thanks.

Perhaps the world will end at the kitchen table, while we are laughing and crying, eating of the last sweet bite.

From *The Woman Who Fell From the Sky* (1994) by Joy Harjo

Prose

Comment on the following excerpt.

At first, people kept phoning, to make sure that Nita was not too depressed, not too lonely, not eating too little or drinking too much. (She had been such a diligent wine drinker that many forgot that she was now forbidden to drink at all.) She held them off, without sounding nobly grief-stricken or unnaturally cheerful or absent-minded or confused. She said that she didn't
5 need groceries; she was working through what she had on hand. She had enough of her prescription pills and enough stamps for her thank-you notes.

Her closer friends probably suspected the truth—that she was not bothering to eat much and that she threw out any sympathy note she happened to get. She had not even informed the people who lived at a distance, to elicit such notes. Not Rich's ex-wife in
10 Arizona or his semi-estranged brother in Nova Scotia, though those two might have understood, perhaps better than the people near at hand, why she had proceeded with the non-funeral as she had done.

Rich had told her that he was going to the village, to the hardware store. It was around ten o'clock in the morning, and he had just started to paint the railing of the deck. That is,
15 he'd been scraping it to prepare for the painting, and the old scraper had come apart in his hand.

She hadn't had time to wonder about his being late. He'd died bent over the sidewalk sign that stood in front of the hardware store offering a discount on lawnmowers. He hadn't even managed to get into the store. He'd been eighty-one years old and in fine health, aside
20 from some deafness in his right ear. His doctor had checked him over only the week before. Nita was to learn that the recent checkup, the clean bill of health, cropped up in a surprising number of the sudden-death stories that she was now presented with. "You'd almost think that such visits ought to be avoided," she'd said.

She should have spoken like this only to her close and fellow bad-mouthing friends, Virgie and Carol, women around her own age, which was sixty-two. Her younger friends found this
25 sort of talk unseemly and evasive. At first, they had crowded in on Nita. They had not actually spoken of the grieving process, but she had been afraid that at any moment they might start.

As soon as she got on with the arrangements, of course, all but the tried and true had fallen away. The cheapest box, into the ground immediately, no ceremony of any kind. The
30 undertaker had suggested that this might be against the law, but she and Rich had had their facts straight. They'd got their information almost a year before, when the diagnosis of her cancer became final.

How was I to know he'd steal my thunder?*" she'd said.

From *Free Radicals* (2008) by Alice Munro

**Steal my thunder* : in this case, ruin the effect of her death by dying first