

Choose 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 will treat **four** different works, two for each essay topic.~~

Part I – Essays

1. "The deepest fear we have, 'the fear beneath all fears,' is the fear of not measuring up, the fear of judgement. It's this fear that creates the stress and depression of everyday life." (Tullian Tchividjian) Discuss how fear of judgement affects characters in two works in your program.
2. Writers are often successful in drawing our attention to what is singular, strange or different. Discuss how writers in two of the works you have studied achieve this.
3. Examine the means employed by two OIB writers to ensure that the reader / audience is able to sympathize with even the most unappealing characters.
4. "To thine own self be true." How do two writers from the OIB program explore the consequences of following or not following this advice?

Part II- Commentary

Poetry - "So Much Happiness" by Shihab Nye

or

Prose - Extract from The Awakening by Kate Chopin

Poetry: Comment on the following poem by Shihab Nye

So Much Happiness

- 16 It is difficult to know what to do with so much happiness.
11 With sadness there is something to rub against,
9 a wound to tend with lotion and cloth.
10 When the world falls in around you, you have pieces to pick up,
8 something to hold in your hands, like ticket stubs or change. *smile*
5 But happiness floats. *personification*
9 It doesn't need you to hold it down.
7 It doesn't need anything.
13 Happiness lands on the roof of the next house, singing,
8 and disappears when it wants to. *person.*
7 You are happy either way.
14 Even the fact that you once lived in a peaceful tree house
12 and now live over a quarry of noise and dust
7 cannot make you unhappy.
9 Everything has a life of its own,
11 it too could wake up filled with possibilities
8 of coffee cake and ripe peaches,
11 and love even the floor which needs to be swept,
8 the soiled linens and scratched records . . .
9 Since there is no place large enough
8 to contain so much happiness,
12 you shrug, you raise your hands, and it flows out of you
14 into everything you touch. You are not responsible.
13 You take no credit, as the night sky takes no credit *person*
13 for the moon, but continues to hold it, and share it,
6 and in that way, be known.

+ metaphoro = share happiness.

Prose: Comment on the following excerpt from *The awakening* by Kate Chopin

Edna had attempted all summer to learn to swim. She had received instructions from both the men and women; in some instances from the children. Robert had pursued a system of lessons almost daily; and he was nearly at the point of discouragement in realizing the futility of his efforts. A certain ungovernable dread hung about her when in the water, unless there was a hand nearby that might reach out and reassure her.

But that night she was like the little tottering, stumbling, clutching child, who of a sudden realizes its powers, and walks for the first time alone, boldly and with overconfidence. She could have shouted for joy. She did shout for joy, as with a sweeping stroke or two she lifted her body to the surface of the water.

A feeling of exultation overtook her, as if some power of significant import had been given her to control the working of her body and her soul. She grew daring and reckless, overestimating her strength. She wanted to swim far out, where no woman had swum before.

Her unlooked-for achievement was the subject of wonder, applause, and admiration. Each one congratulated himself that his special teachings had accomplished this desired end.

"How easy it is!" she thought. "It is nothing," she said aloud; "why did I not discover before that it was nothing. Think of the time I have lost splashing about like a baby!" She would not join the groups in their sports and bouts, but intoxicated with her newly conquered power, she swam out alone.

She turned her face seaward to gather in an impression of space and solitude, which the vast expanse of water, meeting and melting with the moonlit sky, conveyed to her excited fancy. As she swam she seemed to be reaching out for the unlimited in which to lose herself.

Once she turned and looked toward the shore, toward the people she had left there. She had not gone any great distance — that is, what would have been a great distance for an experienced swimmer. But to her unaccustomed vision the stretch of water behind her assumed the aspect of a barrier which her unaided strength would never be able to overcome.

A quick vision of death smote her soul, and for a second of time appalled and enfeebled her senses. But by an effort she rallied her staggering faculties and managed to regain the land.

She made no mention of her encounter with death and her flash of terror, except to say to her husband, "I thought I should have perished out there alone."

"You were not so very far, my dear, I was watching you," he told her.

Edna went at once to the bath-house, and she had put on her dry clothes and was ready to return home before the others had left the water. She started to walk away alone. They all called to her and shouted to her. She waved a dissenting hand, and went on, paying no further heed to their renewed cries which sought to detain her.