



TASKS

- 1 Outline how Mark teaches Beauty to read and write. (30 %)
- 2 Show how the author characterizes Beauty. Give evidence from the text. (30 %)
- 3 Choose **one** of the following tasks:
 - 3.1 “No one had been patient with her or encouraged her [...]” (l. 57) Explain how the experience described in the quote influences Beauty’s reaction to Mark’s teaching. Comment on the importance of emotional support for personal development. (40 %)

OR

- 3.2 Compare the way Mark helps Beauty with how another character from literature or film supports someone else in a difficult situation. Assess the way Mark and the character of your choice act. (40 %)

OR

- 3.3 You as a student of English have been asked by the editors of a reader on Ethnic Diversity to assess the suitability of the excerpt for demonstrating how people from different backgrounds can come together.

Address your letter to: Editors of the Education Division

The Random House Group Limited

20 Vauxhall Bridge Road,

London SW1V 2SA

Great Britain

(40 %)

Text: Excerpt from the novel

Beauty

By Raphael Selbourne

Note: *The 19-year-old, illiterate Bangladeshi woman Beauty Begum has left her home in Wolverhampton to escape from her family. Not knowing where to stay, Beauty is helped by Mark, a young English skinhead and ex-prisoner, who has rescued her from an assault by Asian youths and gives her shelter in his own home.*

[...] Mark waited for her and remembered the few English lessons he'd had in jail; how he'd struggled with some fucked-up spelling rules and spent hours on his bed after lock-in getting his head round it; and how he'd taught that lad he'd shared a cell with. If Beauty knew the alphabet it would be a start. She'd need to know the sounds each letter made, alone and together. He felt confident he could do it, and he was happy to help her. It would give him an excuse to be with her. Sit near her. It didn't go any further than that. [...]

Spending some time with her would be a good thing. She'd get to know him more and see that he was a good bloke.

Beauty came in and sat on the sofa. 'Promise you aynt gonna laugh?' she asked.

10 Mark saw the begging look in her eye. 'Do' worry. I dey learn till I were sixteen misself.'

He took some paper from the printer and searched for a pen on the computer desk.

'D'you know the alphabet?' he asked

'A-B-C stuff?'

15 Beauty knew she would sound thick at first. There was nothing she could do about it. But she did know the alphabet.

'Giw on then,' he said.

'What?'

'Say it.'

'Loud?'

20 'Uh-huh.'

She recited it steadily to the end.

'Thass all right,' Mark said. 'Can you write it?'

She could, but not very well.

'Both ways?' he asked.

25 What did that mean? Big and small?

She could do that as well. She told him what the problem was. She knew the letters, but when they were put together it didn't make no sense. Even her own name. How could bee, ee, ay, you, tee, why make 'Beauty'?

30 Mark listened. It was like diagnosing engine problems. He searched for a simple explanation. Each letter made a different sound, he told her. [...]

Beauty asked him how she was supposed to know which way to say some of the letters, like 'c' and 'g'. He told her she'd get used to it. He'd keep it simple to start with, he promised, and wrote three-letter words on a piece of paper. They sounded them out slowly together.

35 [...] [Mark] wrote all the three-letter words he could think of. Beauty sounded out each one, letter by letter, over and again until the words took shape before her. M-a-n. Man. D-o-g. Dog.

She sat cross-legged on the parquet floor and read the words to him, surprised and delighted each time the snaking letters revealed their meaning. The tiredness from her sleepless night vanished. She felt awake, the room seemed brighter, everything was clearer, not just the words on a piece of paper.

I aynt mental.

40 *I aynt got 'learning difficulties'.*

I aynt dumb.

She could read. Not well, but she could do it. Mark was patient. He went over the letters with her until she got it right and didn't need his help.

Hours passed. He made tea and rolled cigarettes. She took one to please him. It tasted horrible at first
45 and made her head spin.

Then he called out words from the list and she tried to write them down, repeating each word over and trying to work out the letters. It was harder than reading but when she got it right it felt good. 'I' and 'E' were difficult.

Mark watched her fingers grip the pen as she wrote. He willed her on and planned what to introduce
50 next. He was pleased with her progress and his skills as a teacher. When he was satisfied she'd got the hang of it he introduced some harder stuff. Two letters together, like 'st' and 'th'.

Beauty's finger hurt from pressing the pen. She stretched and leaned back, brushing against his leg.

She was happy. She wanted to tell her little sis that she could read, and her mum.

No one had explained it to her like Mark had. Maybe she hadn't wanted to listen. Her family told her
55 she was dumb, so she had been dumb for them. It helped block them out, their noise and shouts. Then the old man said she was mad, so she was mad for them.

No one had been patient with her or encouraged her like Mark did. No one had ever asked her how she got on at school. They didn't ask Sharifa either.

Mark was different. How was it that a stranger had done more for her than her own family? She knew
60 he liked her, but he looked at her from far away. The white *gunda* was shy. He was a tough guy but he couldn't hold her eye for long.

[...]

(771 words)

Source: Selbourne, Raphael. *Beauty*. Birmingham: Tindal Street Press, 2009, 267-270



Annotations

Lines

3	lad	<i>informal</i> : boy or man
8	bloke	<i>informal</i> : man
9	you aynt	<i>non-standard</i> : you aren't
10	do'	<i>non-standard</i> : don't
10	dey	<i>non-standard</i> : didn't
10	misself	<i>non-standard</i> : myself
14	thick	<i>informal</i> : stupid
16	giw on	<i>non-standard</i> : go on
22	thass	<i>non-standard</i> : that's
39	mental	<i>informal</i> : mad, crazy
39-41	I aynt	<i>non-standard</i> : I'm not / I don't have
49	to will someone on	to encourage someone
51	to get the hang of something	to understand and become able to do something
56	the old man	Beauty's father
58	Sharifa	Beauty's sister
60	gunda	<i>derogatory</i> : hooligan