



**GCSE**

**ENGLISH LANGUAGE**

**Paper 2 Writers' viewpoints and perspectives**

**8700/2**

**Insert**

**The two sources that follow are:**

**SOURCE A: 20th Century literary non-fiction**

**'The Tomb of Tutankhamun Volume 1' by  
Howard Carter**

**An extract from a memoir, published  
in 1923**

**SOURCE B: 19th Century non-fiction**

**'The Englishwoman in Egypt' by  
Sophia Lane Poole**

**An extract from a letter, published in 1844**

**[Turn over]**

**SOURCE A**

**Source A is an extract from a book written in 1923 by the British archaeologist, Howard Carter. Here, he describes his discovery of the tomb of the ancient Egyptian Pharaoh, Tutankhamun.**

**1 This was to be our final season looking for tombs in The Valley of the Kings. At last, we made a discovery that far exceeded our wildest dreams. When I arrived on site, I was told that a step had  
5 been discovered, and a short amount of extra clearing revealed the entrance of a stairway cut into the rock. We all worked feverishly throughout the day to finish clearing away masses of rubbish on the stairway until it was beyond any question  
10 that, at last, we had before us the entrance to a tomb – but worries persisted in creeping in. There was always the horrible possibility that it had been completely plundered in ancient or recent  
14 times.**

**15 Just such a robbery had happened in the previous year. News had come in that a party of tomb-robbers had armed themselves and made their way to a lonely region on the other side of the mountain. The local village leaders came to me  
20 and asked me to take action. I hastily collected a few of my workmen and set out. It was midnight when we arrived, and the guide pointed out to me**

the end of a rope which dangled sheer down the  
face of a cliff. Listening, we could hear the  
25 robbers at work, so I first severed their rope,  
cutting off their means of escape, and then,  
making secure a good stout rope of my own, I  
lowered myself down the cliff. Climbing down a  
rope at midnight into a nestful of industrious  
30 tomb-robbers is a pastime which does not lack  
excitement. There were eight at work, and when I  
reached the bottom there was an awkward  
moment or two. I gave them the alternative of  
clearing out by means of my rope, or else of  
35 staying where they were without a rope at all, and  
eventually they saw reason and departed.

It was, therefore, with nervousness that I now  
watched the steps of the staircase we had  
discovered as one by one they came to light –  
40 then there was disclosed a sealed doorway! The  
decisive moment had arrived.

42 I found myself, with excitement burning like the  
heat of a fever, on the threshold of what might  
prove to be a magnificent discovery. With  
45 trembling hands, I made a tiny breach in the door,  
lit a candle and peered in. At first I could see  
nothing, but presently, as my eyes grew  
accustomed to the light, details of the room within  
emerged slowly from the mist, strange animals,

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50 statues, and gold – everywhere the glint of gold.  
For the moment – an eternity – I was struck dumb  
with amazement, then widening the hole a little  
further, I inserted a torch. Surely never in the  
55 whole history of excavation had such an amazing  
sight been seen as the light of the torch revealed  
to us. Let the reader imagine how it appeared  
from our spy-hole, casting the beam of light from  
our torch – the first light that had pierced the  
60 darkness of the chamber for three thousand years  
– as we looked down on one group of objects then  
another, in a vain attempt to interpret the treasure  
that lay before us. The effect was bewildering,  
overwhelming. We had never dreamed of  
anything like this, a roomful – a whole museumful  
65 – of objects piled one upon another in seemingly  
66 endless profusion.

I suppose most archaeologists would confess to a  
feeling of awe when they break into a chamber  
closed and sealed by pious hands so many  
70 centuries ago. For the moment, time has lost its  
meaning. Three thousand years have passed  
since human feet last trod the floor on which you  
stand, although you feel it might have been but  
yesterday. The very air you breathe, unchanged  
75 throughout the centuries, you share with those  
who laid the mummy to its rest. Time is  
annihilated and you feel like an intruder. That is  
the first and dominant sensation, but others follow  
thick and fast – the exhilaration of discovery, the

**80 fever of suspense, the thought – pure joy to the investigator – that you are about to add a page to history, the strained expectancy – why not confess it? – of the treasure-seeker.**

**[Turn over for Source B]**

**SOURCE B**

**Source B is an extract from a letter written in 1844 by Sophia Lane Poole. Here she describes a visit to the pyramids of Egypt with her brother, Edward Lane, a famous British archaeologist.**

**My Dear Friend**

**So many have written of the pyramids, the great tombs of Egyptian Pharaohs. I find much that I must say respecting these stupendous**

**5 monuments. The pleasure which is felt by the modern traveller in seeing the pyramids is increased by the consideration of their antiquity, and the reflection that many philosophers and heroes of ancient times have in like manner stood**

**10 before them in admiration and amazement. Although, from the brightness of their colour, apparently little changed by the thousands of years that have passed since they were built, the pyramids do not appear ancient: there is an**

**15 appearance of freshness about them which amazed me.**

**With regard to their wonderful magnitude, when I was within a few yards of the base of the Great Pyramid, I was enabled to the full to comprehend**

**20 their vastness. The perpendicular height of the Great Pyramid is four hundred and fifty-six feet, according to my brother Edward's measurement.**

I had fully determined to attempt an ascent; but  
the wind was so high during the period of our  
25 visit, that I dared not do so. Edward did climb to  
the top; he had done so many times before.

This time, he ascended the Great Pyramid alone,  
but not unarmed as he knew that robbers were  
active in the area. While on the summit, he saw a  
30 suspicious figure, making towards the pyramid,  
from the west. The man began to ascend; when  
he arrived about halfway up, little thinking that  
Edward's telescope was directed towards him, he  
stopped, and took out a pistol from a case which  
35 was slung by his side, looked at it, and then  
continued the ascent. As it was evident that the  
fellow had no good intentions and intended  
robbery, Edward called to him, and asked him to  
descend; but he either did not hear him, or would  
40 not obey. My brother then fired a pistol, to show  
him that he was not without the means of defence.  
Upon this, the man immediately began to climb  
down, and, having reached the base, walked  
slowly away into the desert.

45 Although I did not climb to the summit, I did go  
inside the Great Pyramid. It is no trifle, I assure  
you, for a woman to explore its interior. My mind  
continued so impressed with the difficulties of  
this undertaking that I could not forget them, even

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50 in my dreams. The heat of the interior is  
oppressive and the passage by which we entered  
the pyramid is only four feet high and we were  
consequently obliged to descend in a crouching  
position.

55 The size of the Great Chamber is especially  
worthy of remark: the length is thirty-four feet four  
inches and a half. It is entirely constructed of red  
granite. Near the western end is the  
60 sarcophagus\*. No hieroglyphics nor sculptures of  
any kind adorn it; its sides are perfectly plain and  
polished, and its form is simply that of an oblong  
chest, in every way rectangular. Its lid has been  
carried away, as well as its original contents; and  
we find in it nothing but dust and small fragments  
65 of stone. This enormous pyramid seems to have  
been raised merely to contain one single mummy,  
not a particle of which now remains in the place in  
which it was deposited with so much precaution.  
Historians assert that the building of the Great  
70 Pyramid occupied about twenty years, and three  
hundred and sixty thousand men were employed  
in its construction.

I did not think to have written to you so much on  
the pyramids; but having entered upon the  
75 subject, I have found it difficult to stop. So  
wonderful in themselves are the principal  
pyramids, and so impressive by reason of their  
remote antiquity, that all other existing works of

80 man must, I think, in comparison with them, sink  
into insignificance.

**END OF SOURCES**

**GLOSSARY**

**\*sarcophagus – a stone coffin**

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