

AQA

GCSE

ENGLISH LANGUAGE

**Paper 2 Writers' viewpoints and
perspectives**

8700/2

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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
5 wildest dreams. When I arrived on
site, I was told that a step had been
discovered, and a short amount of
extra clearing revealed the entrance
of a stairway cut into the rock. We
10 all worked feverishly throughout the
day to finish clearing away masses
of rubbish on the stairway until it
was beyond any question that, at**

last, we had before us the entrance
15 to a tomb – but worries persisted in
creeping in. There was always the
horrible possibility that it had been
completely plundered in ancient or
19 recent times.

20 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
25 other side of the mountain. The
local village leaders came to me and
asked me to take action. I hastily
collected a few of my workmen and
set out. It was midnight when we
30 arrived, and the guide pointed out to
me the end of a rope which dangled
sheer down the face of a cliff.

[Turn over]

Listening, we could hear the 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 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 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 – then

there was disclosed a sealed
55 doorway! The decisive moment had
arrived.

57 I found myself, with excitement
burning like the heat of a fever, on
the threshold of what might prove to
60 be a magnificent discovery. With
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
65 grew accustomed to the light, details
of the room within emerged slowly
from the mist, strange animals,
statues, and gold – everywhere the
glint of gold. For the moment – an
70 eternity – I was struck dumb with
amazement, then widening the hole
a little further, I inserted a torch.

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75 Surely never in the 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

80 had pierced the 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

85 lay before us. The effect was bewildering, overwhelming. We had never dreamed of anything like this, a roomful – a whole museumful – of objects piled one upon another in

90 seemingly 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
95 so many 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
100 feel it might have been but
yesterday. The very air you breathe,
unchanged throughout the
centuries, you share with those who
laid the mummy to its rest. Time is
105 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 fever
110 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
5 that I must say respecting these stupendous monuments. The pleasure which is felt by the modern traveller in seeing the pyramids is increased by the
10 consideration of their antiquity, and the reflection that many**

philosophers and heroes of ancient times have in like manner stood 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 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 their vastness. The perpendicular height of the

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30 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
35 during the period of our 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
40 Pyramid alone, but not unarmed as
he knew that robbers were active in
the area. While on the summit, he
saw a suspicious figure, making
towards the pyramid, from the
45 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
50 pistol from a case which 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,
55 Edward called to him, and asked him to descend; but he either did not hear him, or would not obey. My brother then fired a pistol, to show him that he was not without
60 the means of defence. Upon this, the man immediately began to climb down, and, having reached the base, walked slowly away into the desert.

65 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

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interior. My mind continued so
70 impressed with the difficulties of
this undertaking that I could not
forget them, even in my dreams.
The heat of the interior is
oppressive and the passage by
75 which we entered the pyramid is
only four feet high and we were
consequently obliged to descend
in a crouching position.

The size of the Great Chamber is
80 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
85 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

- 90** 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 of stone. This enormous pyramid
- 95** 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.
- 100** Historians assert that the building of the Great Pyramid occupied about twenty years, and three hundred and sixty thousand men were employed in its construction.
- 105** I did not think to have written to you so much on the pyramids; but having entered upon the subject, I have found it difficult to stop. So

[Turn over]

wonderful in themselves are the
110 principal pyramids, and so
impressive by reason of their
remote antiquity, that all other
existing works of man must, I
think, in comparison with them,
115 sink into insignificance.

END OF SOURCES

GLOSSARY

***sarcophagus – a stone coffin**

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