

CAPES/CAFEP EXTERNE D'ANGLAIS SESSION 2015

EPREUVE DE MISE EN SITUATION PROFESSIONNELLE

Première partie :

Vous procéderez à la présentation, à l'étude et à la mise en relation des trois documents proposés (A, B, C non hiérarchisés).

Deuxième partie :

Cette partie de l'épreuve porte sur les documents B et C.

A partir de ces supports, vous définirez des objectifs communicationnels, culturels et linguistiques pouvant être retenus dans une séquence pédagogique en classe de seconde, en vous référant aux programmes. En vous appuyant sur la spécificité de ces supports, vous dégagerez des stratégies pour développer les compétences de communication des élèves.

Document A

The town itself is dreary; not much is there except the cotton mill, the two-room houses where the workers live, a few peach trees, a church with two colored windows, and a miserable main street only a hundred yards long. On Saturdays the tenants from the near-by farms come in for a day of talk and trade. Otherwise the town is lonesome, sad, and like a place that is far off and estranged from all other places in the world. The nearest train stop is Society City, and the Greyhound and White Bus Lines use the Forks Falls Road which is three miles away. The winters here are short and raw, the summers white with glare and fiery hot.

If you walk along the main street on an August afternoon there is nothing whatsoever to do. The largest building, in the very center of the town, is boarded up completely and leans so far to the right that it seems bound to collapse at any minute. The house is very old. There is about it a curious, cracked look that is very puzzling until you suddenly realize that at one time, and long ago, the right side of the front porch had been painted, and part of the wall—but the painting was left unfinished and one portion of the house is darker and dingier than the other. The building looks completely deserted. Nevertheless, on the second floor there is one window which is not boarded; sometimes in the late afternoon when the heat is at its worst a hand will slowly open the shutter and a face will look down on the town. It is a face like the terrible dim faces known in dreams—sexless and white, with two gray crossed eyes which are turned inward so sharply that they seem to be exchanging with each other one long and secret gaze of grief. The face lingers at the window for an hour or so, then the shutters are closed once more, and as likely as not there will not be another soul to be seen along the main street. These August afternoons—when your shift is finished there is absolutely nothing to do; you might as well walk down to the Forks Falls Road and listen to the chain gang.

However, here in this very town there was once a café. And this old boarded-up house was unlike any other place for many miles around. There were tables with cloths and paper napkins, colored streamers from the electric fans, great gatherings on Saturday nights. The owner of the place was Miss Amelia Evans. But the person most responsible for the success and gaiety of the place was a hunchback called Cousin Lymon. One other person had a part in the story of this café—he was the former husband of Miss Amelia, a terrible character who returned to the town after a long term in the penitentiary, caused ruin, and then went on his way again. The café has long since been closed, but it is still remembered.

The place was not always a café. Miss Amelia inherited the building from her father, and it was a store that carried mostly feed, guano, and staples such as meal and snuff. Miss Amelia was rich. In addition to the store she operated a still three miles back in the swamp, and ran out the best liquor in the county. She was a dark, tall woman with bones and muscles like a man. Her hair was cut short and brushed back from the forehead, and there was about her sunburned face a tense, haggard quality. She might have been a handsome woman if, even then, she was not slightly cross-eyed. There were those who would have courted her, but Miss Amelia cared nothing for the love of men and was a solitary person. Her marriage had been unlike any other marriage ever contracted in this county—it was a strange and dangerous marriage, lasting only for ten days, that left the whole town wondering and shocked. Except for this queer marriage, Miss Amelia had lived her life alone. Often she spent whole nights back in her shed in the swamp, dressed in overalls and gum boots, silently guarding the low fire of the still.

Carson McCullers, *The Ballad of the Sad Café* (1951)

Document B



Edward Hopper, *Nighthawks* (1942)

Document C

Overture

I was looking for a quiet place to die. Someone recommended Brooklyn, and so the next morning I traveled down there from Westchester to scope out the terrain. I hadn't been back in fifty-six years, and I remembered nothing. My parents had moved out of the city when I was
5 three, but I instinctively found myself returning to the neighborhood where we had lived, crawling home like some wounded dog to the place of my birth. A local real estate agent ushered me around to six or seven brownstone flats, and by the end of the afternoon I had rented a two-bedroom garden apartment on First Street, just half a block away from Prospect
10 Park. I had no idea who my neighbors were, and I didn't care. They all worked at nine-to-five jobs, none of them had any children, and therefore the building would be relatively silent. More than anything else, that was what I craved. A silent end to my sad and ridiculous life.

The house in Bronxville was already under contract, and once the closing took place at the end of the month, money wasn't going to be a problem. My ex-wife and I were planning to split the proceeds from the sale, and with four hundred thousand dollars in the bank, there would be
15 more than enough to sustain me until I stopped breathing.

At first, I didn't know what to do with myself. I had spent thirty-one years commuting back and forth between the suburbs and the Manhattan offices of Mid-Atlantic Accident and Life, but now that I didn't have a job anymore, there were too many hours in the day. About a week after I moved into the apartment, my married daughter, Rachel, drove in from New Jersey to pay me
20 a visit. She said that I needed to get involved in something, to invent a project for myself. Rachel is not a stupid person. She has a doctorate in biochemistry from the University of Chicago and works as a researcher for a large drug company outside Princeton, but much like her mother before her, it's a rare day when she speaks in anything but platitudes—all those exhausted phrases and hand-me-down ideas that cram the dump sites of contemporary wisdom.

I explained that I was probably going to be dead before the year was out, and I didn't give a flying fuck about projects. For a moment, it looked as if Rachel was about to cry, but she
25 blinked back the tears and called me a cruel and selfish person instead. No wonder "Mom" had finally divorced me, she added, no wonder she hadn't been able to take it anymore. Being married to a man like me must have been an unending torture, a living hell. A living hell. Alas, poor Rachel—she simply can't help herself. My only child has inhabited this earth for twenty-
30 nine years, and not once has she come up with an original remark, with something absolutely and irreducibly her own.

Yes, I suppose there is something nasty about me at times. But not all the time—and not as a matter of principle. On my good days, I'm as sweet and friendly as any person I know. You
35 can't sell life insurance as successfully as I did by alienating your customers, at least not for three long decades you can't. You have to be sympathetic. You have to be able to listen. You have to know how to charm people. I possess all those qualities and more. I won't deny that I've had my bad moments as well, but everyone knows what dangers lurk behind the closed doors of family life. It can be poison for all concerned, especially if you discover that you probably
40 weren't cut out for marriage in the first place. I loved having sex with Edith, but after four or five years the passion seemed to run its course, and from then on I became less than a perfect husband. To hear Rachel tell it, I wasn't much in the parent department either. I wouldn't want to contradict her memories, but the truth is that I cared for them both in my own way, and if I sometimes found myself in the arms of other women, I never took any of those affairs
45 seriously. The divorce wasn't my idea. In spite of everything, I was planning to stay with Edith

until the end. She was the one who wanted out, and given the extent of my sins and transgressions over the years, I couldn't really blame her. Thirty-three years of living under the same roof, and by the time we walked off in opposite directions, what we added up to was approximately nothing.

Paul Auster, *The Brooklyn Follies* (2005)

4.2.4 Exemples de sujets

Sujet : EMSP 10

Première partie en anglais

This dossier revolves around the notions of urban isolation, alienation, nothingness, the absence of human relationships and the difficulty to communicate. Document A is the opening chapter of Carson McCullers's novella "The Ballad of the Sad Café" (1951), which depicts loneliness and the pain of unrequited love. The novella opens in a small, isolated Georgia town, introducing Miss Amelia Evans, a strong character in both body and mind.

Document B, "Nighthawks" (1942), is one of Hopper's most famous works and is one of the most recognizable paintings in American art. It depicts the interior of a cheap restaurant at night. It has a timeless, universal quality. Hopper denied that he purposefully depicted human isolation and urban emptiness, but he acknowledged that in "Nighthawks", "unconsciously, probably, [he] was painting the loneliness of a large city".

Document C is the opening chapter of The Brooklyn Follies, a novel published in 2005, dealing with 60-year-old Nathan Glass who returns to Brooklyn after his wife has left him. He is recovering from cancer and is looking for "a quiet place to die". "It is a book about survival", Paul Auster said.

The analysis suggested here will examine how urban isolation is depicted in the dossier and how perspective contributes to the impression of alienation. It will first focus on nothingness and the way in which the absence of bonds is mirrored by the setting. Then, closure and circularity will be dealt with before analyzing viewpoints and theatricality.

I. Nothingness and an absence of bonds which is mirrored by the representation of the setting

Even though money is not the most striking element in the dossier, it is nevertheless present in the three documents: Miss Amelia's café and bootlegging activities (l. 33-34) in document A, the unmanned cash register in the background in document B, the narrator's divorce in document C and the fact that it provides him with enough money to live on. Yet such business as is thus suggested is not shown as a way to compensate for the absence of communication. In addition, food is almost absent from the set of documents, although it could have been expected, both in Miss Amelia's café and in the diner in document B, where only the female character is eating, and even then, only a sandwich. In this respect, one should bear in mind the historical context of Hopper's painting in order to interpret the absence of food in document B, i.e. the height of the Second World War, which was a time of anxiety for Americans, a time when Franklin D. Roosevelt delivered his well-known "Four Freedoms Speech", in which one of the freedoms is "Freedom from Want" (1941).

One might also point out that in each of the three documents, the description of the setting contributes to characterization: in document A, various pejorative adjectives attach to the town ("dreary", l. 1; "miserable", l. 2); it is defined in terms of what it is not (l. 1); it is inhospitable because of its harsh climate (l. 7, 15). The depiction of a ghost town (l. 10), "far off and estranged from all other places in the world" (l. 5), makes readers wonder about the ironic toponymy ("Society City") in the opening chapter of the novella. Therefore, the description of the building ("curious, cracked look", "puzzling", l. 11) could almost refer to Miss Amelia herself. Similarly, in document B, the cheap restaurant, the deserted street and the eerie glow outside the diner mirror the strange atmosphere inside the restaurant. In document C, the narrator stresses that none of his neighbors "had any children" (l. 10): this could mean that he has found a quiet place to die but it also suggests a place where there is no immediate future, if children are understood as representing the future. In addition, Brooklyn was an off-centred core in New York City before it became trendy. Thus, after "commuting

back and forth" (l. 16), he seems to have been left with no bond with either Westchester or New York City, where he spent his working life.

The absence of bonds is stressed in the three documents: in document B, the woman is singled out: the red blouse and lipstick represent the only use of red in the composition, causing her to stand apart from everything else in the painting, while the head of the customer who is sitting alone is at the centre of the frame-within-a-frame and also the centre of the painting as a whole, highlighting his isolation. In document C, the narrator is alone (l. 9), he speaks to his daughter but they don't communicate (l. 25-32). In document A, Miss Amelia is portrayed as an outcast (l. 38), a misfit or even a freak. Moreover, there seems to be a blurring of genders: Miss Amelia is described as though she were a man (l. 34), she is actively involved in bootlegging activities (l. 33-34) and she is "sexless" (l. 17), so that, ultimately, she is portrayed as being neither woman nor man. Even her face is blurred: the adjective which is used to characterize it ("a terrible dim face", l. 16) does not seem to be in keeping with the presentation of light: how can her face be dim in the afternoon's glaring sun? Yet again, this points to the notion of nothingness. Thus, nothingness is prevalent in the three documents and this recurring motif is also emphasized by a sense of closure and circularity.

II. A sense of closure and circularity

In document B, there is no sign of an entrance: the viewer is drawn to the light but is shut out from the scene by large panes of glass resulting in an enclosed, semi-circular or even self-contained space. In document A, circularity is mirrored in the use of tenses: the first two paragraphs are in the present tense, pointing to a form of universal truth and to an absence of evolution. Miss Amelia is willingly separating herself from the world outside: she is hiding in the swamp (l. 33) and her illegal bootlegging activities offer her a chance to be isolated from the town. In the opening chapter of the novella, her marriage is described as "strange and dangerous" (l. 39) and "this queer marriage" (l. 40), a phrase in which 'this' doesn't have the same meaning of closure as 'that', pointing to the fact that Miss Amelia's short marriage is still present in people's minds. This may be why the character is waiting for the scorching heat of the afternoon to open her shutters (l. 15), why she wants to be sure that she will not be seen: the only way to escape from inquisitive neighbors and glaring sunshine ("white with glare", l. 7) is to lock herself in. Thus, there is a form of predation in the act of looking, as is the case in document C, when the narrator is "scoping out the terrain" (l. 2).

In document C, insofar as Prospect Park is situated on a hill, overlooking New York where the narrator spent most of his working life, the reference can be taken as a metaphor for the narrator's standing back from his own life and looking at it retrospectively. The name "Prospect Park" can also be read ironically, since the narrator first presents himself as a dying man who is not forward-looking, but rather focuses on how quietly he wants to die. One might say that the narrator's prospects are presented as limited and that the dominant movement of the first paragraph is circular, pointing back to a starting point, symbolically "First Street". The circular movement is also mirrored by the neighbors who have "nine-to-five jobs," with days that repeat themselves much as the narrator's life starts and ends in the same place, and also by the "closing" event (l. 17): selling the house where the couple lived together can be taken as a way of marking the end of an era and, from the narrator's point of view, the end of a life.

The overwhelming impression which is conveyed in the first two paragraphs of the novel is that of an imminent end. Indeed, the word "end" appears three times in these paragraphs ("end of the afternoon", l. 9; "A silent end to my sad and ridiculous life", l. 15; "end of the month", l. 17), and the second paragraph uses the periphrasis "I stopped breathing" to refer to death, which also points to an end. Thus one might say that the opening paragraphs of the novel are startling and that they are meant to puzzle the reader with an ironic start: how can the opening chapter of a novel be entitled "overture" while the first two paragraphs dwell heavily on endings and on closure?

III. Viewpoints and theatricality

In document C, the title of the first chapter is unusual: the term "Overture" seems to point to a form of self-dramatization since it corresponds to the moment when the curtain rises and when the orchestra sets the mood for the opera. In the opening chapter of "The Brooklyn Follies", the narrator presents himself as a tragic character, using exaggerations such as "some wounded dog" (l. 6). Furthermore, the overture is performed by the narrator alone, as opposed to a full orchestra: this might be interpreted as an inward-looking attitude or even hubris on the part of the homodiegetic narrator.

The question of viewpoints is equally central in document A which has a cinematic quality, starting with a general presentation of the town before focusing more closely on the café. One might even go so far as to say that the setting itself could almost be seen as a film studio. The reader is also placed in the position of an onlooker, the narrator's point of view is external. Readers do not have access to the character's feelings, apart from the symbolism of the setting which contributes to characterization and from a hint concerning a "secret gaze of grief" (l. 18-19).

In document B, the point of view is that of a passer-by on the sidewalk and, owing to the frame-within-the-frame, the four characters are as isolated from each other as they are from the viewer. The interior light comes from more than a single light bulb, as though they were spotlights on a stage, and this contributes to the theatricality of the scene. The characters are belittled by the perspective and, apart from the man at the centre of the painting, they all look somewhat marginalized. Consequently, they look fragile, as though something might happen to them. In connection with that, one should keep in mind that the title of the painting, "Nighthawks", can be interpreted as meaning "insomniacs", as well as referring to hawks which, being birds of prey, also suggest danger or predation through the act of looking.

Both document A and document C are opening chapters. An opening chapter performs the traditional function of introducing the characters, presenting the setting and establishing a narrative contract between the reader and the narrator. Nevertheless, the narrator's reliability in document C is challenged since he stresses his own qualities ("sweet and friendly", l. 34; "sympathetic", l. 36; "I possess all those qualities and more", l. 37) and yet uses offensive language ("I didn't give a flying fuck", l. 25-26). The narrator even presents himself as a cynical old man (l. 23-24) but one who also proves loving (l. 43). Saying "There is something nasty about me at times" (l. 33) is an understatement.

Thus, the set of documents highlights the ways in which urban isolation and a form of alienation are presented in the painting and in the two opening chapters. The setting contributes to the presentation of the characters, all the more so as limited access is given to the characters' feelings in the three documents. Not only does the setting add to our representation of the character, but it also reinforces the impression of circularity and the sense of closure, even in the meaningful toponymy of the geographical locations. This sense of isolation can further be perceived in the act of reading or the act of looking itself. By adopting the point of view of an outsider in documents A and B, and seeing through the eyes of the narrator who is presenting himself as a lyrical character in an opera in document C, readers or viewers are also simultaneously isolated from the scene. The spectator's gaze might be equated with a form of predation through the act of looking in documents A, B or C. Despite the strong emphasis on alienation and urban isolation, this set of documents is not entirely negative. For example, even though Hopper's painting has been so stripped down that it could be the representation of an archetypal American city, there are some clues which place us in a particular place at a particular time, such as the napkin holders and the coffee urns in which you can see how much coffee is left. Similarly, in document A, there is something fascinating about the derelict setting and eccentric characters, while The Brooklyn Follies is clearly not as gloomy as its opening chapter might suggest, and in that respect, the use of "At first" (Document C, l. 16) seems to suggest a form of change. In a sense, one could even wonder if the set of documents could not somehow be regarded as a way of illustrating a form of resilience at the same time as it stresses the impact of urban isolation.

Seconde partie en français

La seconde partie de l'épreuve portait sur les documents B et C. Il s'agissait pour les candidats de proposer des pistes d'exploitation didactique et pédagogique pour la classe de Seconde.

Ces documents s'inscrivent dans l'entrée culturelle « L'art de vivre ensemble (famille, communauté, ville, territoires) » et peuvent être étudiés au regard de la notion « sentiment d'appartenance, singularités et solidarités ». Certains candidats ont proposé d'étudier ces documents dans la perspective de la notion « Mémoire : héritages et ruptures », ce qui a été jugé recevable. En effet, le dossier peut également faire l'objet d'une étude plus diachronique des documents (en lien, par exemple, avec le contexte historique du document A). Il est néanmoins important que le candidat soit en mesure de justifier ses choix et de proposer une approche sous un angle autre que celui qu'il a choisi, si le jury l'y invite.

Le niveau visé en classe de Seconde est le niveau B1 du Cadre européen commun de référence pour les langues (CECRL) en ce qui concerne la LV1 et A2 pour la LV2. Toutes les propositions de pistes didactiques pertinentes se devaient d'être adossées au CECRL.

Ont été appréciées les prestations des candidats qui ont pris en compte la spécificité des documents. Il est vrai qu'un document iconographique est souvent déclencheur de parole, mais cette affirmation ne doit pas empêcher les candidats de s'interroger sur les difficultés potentielles que les documents iconographiques peuvent aussi représenter. Ainsi, en ce qui concerne le document B, il était pertinent de relever le fait que le tableau n'a pas un aspect narratif dans le sens où il ne représente pas une action en train de se dérouler. De plus, la complexité de la mise en scène et des jeux de lumière ajoute des niveaux de compréhension qui sont essentiels et qui nécessitent la mise en place de stratégies adaptées de la part de l'enseignant.

Il était pertinent, avec le document B, de proposer par exemple l'utilisation d'un tableau interactif afin de faire émettre des hypothèses en révélant l'image au fur et à mesure, de gauche à droite, ou bien encore en projetant dans un premier temps l'image enchâssée avant de révéler la peinture dans sa globalité afin de faire réfléchir à la question de point de vue. Par ailleurs, le document B n'illustre pas le document C de manière évidente, si bien qu'un candidat ne pouvait se contenter de proposer l'étude du document B comme une anticipation qui allait de soi avant la lecture du document C.

Si le candidat avait choisi de présenter une tâche finale, il lui fallait également veiller à ce que celle-ci soit en adéquation avec la spécificité des documents. De fait, afin de mettre en avant l'absence de communication, un candidat pouvait, par exemple, proposer un travail en groupes avec pour consigne : « Vous êtes tel personnage du tableau de Hopper et vous écrivez un monologue intérieur à la première personne avant d'en faire une lecture théâtrale » ou bien encore « Vous êtes réalisateur et vous vous inspirez de *Nighthawks* pour concevoir la voix off de la première scène de votre film ». Si le candidat proposait la réalisation d'une voix *off*, il pouvait également suggérer un travail sur un exemple de voix *off* (par exemple un extrait tiré d'un film noir) ainsi qu'un travail phonologique nécessaire à la mise en voix du monologue intérieur ou d'une voix *off*, car il s'agit là d'un vrai écrit oralisé dans une situation de communication. Comme tâche intermédiaire, le candidat pouvait également proposer l'écriture de la pensée sous forme de bulles de bande dessinée (doc B).

Soulignons l'importance de l'entretien qui suit la prestation du candidat et qui permet, le cas échéant, d'approfondir la réflexion. Ainsi, un candidat, qui proposait comme tâche finale une entrée de journal intime écrite par un immigré notant son ressenti à son arrivée aux Etats-Unis, a été convié, pendant l'entretien, à s'interroger sur la pertinence de déplacer la thématique sur la question de l'immigration. Il est à noter que l'entretien est une phase de l'épreuve qui permet au candidat de préciser sa pensée et de corriger certaines imprécisions éventuelles : la capacité à écouter, à se remettre en question et à affiner sa pensée ne peut que servir le candidat.

Il est important que, dans sa démarche, le candidat propose des pistes d'exploitation didactique et pédagogique qui soient cohérentes, adaptées à la spécificité des documents et qui permettent la mise en place de stratégies d'accès au sens. Ainsi, en ce qui concerne l'étude du document C, les candidats pouvaient proposer des stratégies de compréhension qui ne visaient pas l'exhaustivité, les repérages proposés étant intimement liés à la tâche. A ce sujet, le candidat pouvait utilement rappeler qu'au niveau B1, l'élève peut, entre autres, « comprendre un enchaînement de faits » et « localiser les informations recherchées ou pertinentes pour s'informer et réaliser une tâche ». En d'autres termes, le travail de compréhension se fait dans l'optique de la réalisation d'une tâche. Par exemple, un candidat qui aurait, à juste titre, repéré la longueur du texte comme un obstacle potentiel à la compréhension pouvait néanmoins difficilement proposer de tronquer la dernière partie du texte car c'est précisément la dernière partie du document C qui donne un éclairage sur le lien entre les documents B et C. Ici, entre autres, les candidats pouvaient proposer un travail de repérage sur les personnages, les liens de parenté, les relations entre les personnages etc. Il était également possible de suggérer un type de document susceptible de faciliter la compréhension du texte (par exemple, *Room in New York, 1932*, d'Edward Hopper, où un couple ne se parle plus).

Dans son exposé, il est important que le candidat veille à ce que les objectifs envisagés soient bien mis en relation avec la notion retenue et la problématique proposée. Suivant l'angle d'approche, entre autres, il était possible d'envisager comme objectifs communicationnels (« savoir mettre en voix la pensée »), culturels (« les États-Unis des années 40 et au 21^e siècle et/ou Edward Hopper et/ou la ville aux États-Unis, New York City ») et linguistiques (« la modalité, le lexique de l'atmosphère, de la lumière, du ressenti etc. »).

Il pouvait être judicieux de faire en outre le lien avec le programme de Seconde en histoire des arts, qui est un enseignement de culture artistique fondé sur une approche co-disciplinaire dont le programme englobe les villes idéales, les fonctions de socialisation, les rapports entre centre et périphérie.

Sébastien Slisse