

EAE 0422 A	
Code Sujet	EHP
Sujet Jury	
Sujet Candidat	
Page	1 / 5

Document A

Stephen Crane, *The Red Badge of Courage*, New York, W.W. Norton (1893)

The cold passed reluctantly from the earth, and the retiring fogs revealed an army stretched out on the hills, resting. As the landscape changed from brown to green, the army awakened, and began to tremble with eagerness at the noise of rumors. It cast its eyes upon the roads, which were growing from long troughs of liquid mud to proper thoroughfares. A river, amber-tinted in the shadow of its banks, purred at the army's feet; and at night, when the stream had become of a sorrowful blackness, one could see across it the red, eyelike gleam of hostile camp-fires set in the low brows of distant hills.

Once a certain tall soldier developed virtues and went resolutely to wash a shirt. He came flying back from a brook waving his garment bannerlike. He was swelled with a tale he had heard from a reliable friend, who had heard it from a truthful cavalryman, who had heard it from his trustworthy brother, one of the orderlies at division headquarters. He adopted the important air of a herald in red and gold.

"We're goin' t' move t'morrah — sure," he said pompously to a group in the company street. "We're goin' 'way up the river, cut across, an' come around in behint 'em."

To his attentive audience he drew a loud and elaborate plan of a very brilliant campaign. When he had finished, the blue-clothed men scattered into small arguing groups between the rows of squat brown huts. A negro teamster who had been dancing upon a cracker box with the hilarious encouragement of twoscore soldiers was deserted. He sat mournfully down. Smoke drifted lazily from a multitude of quaint chimneys.

"It's a lie! that's all it is — a thunderin' lie!" said another private loudly. His smooth face was flushed, and his hands were thrust sulkily into his trousers' pockets. He took the matter as an affront to him. "I don't believe the derned old army's ever going to move. We're set. I've got ready to move eight times in the last two weeks, and we ain't moved yet."

The tall soldier felt called upon to defend the truth of a rumor he himself had introduced. He and the loud one came near to fighting over it.

A corporal began to swear before the assemblage. He had just put a costly board floor in his house, he said. During the early spring he had refrained from adding extensively to the comfort of his environment because he had felt that the army might start on the march at any moment. Of late, however, he had been impressed that they were in a sort of eternal camp.

Many of the men engaged in a spirited debate. One outlined in a peculiarly lucid manner all the plans of the commanding general. He was opposed by men who advocated that there were other plans of campaign. They clamored at each other, numbers making futile bids for the popular attention. Meanwhile, the

Code Sujet	EHP
Page	2 / 5

40 soldier who had fetched the rumor bustled about with much importance. He was continually assailed by questions.

"What's up, Jim?"

"Th'army's goin' t' move."

"Ah, what yeh talkin' about? How yeh know it is?"

45 "Well, yeh kin b'lieve me er not, jest as yeh like. I don't care a hang."

There was much food for thought in the manner in which he replied. He came near to convincing them by disdaining to produce proofs. They grew much excited over it.

50 There was a youthful private who listened with eager ears to the words of the tall soldier and to the varied comments of his comrades. After receiving a fill of discussions concerning marches and attacks, he went to his hut and crawled through an intricate hole that served it as a door. He wished to be alone with some new thoughts that had lately come to him.

55 He lay down on a wide bunk that stretched across the end of the room. In the other end, cracker boxes were made to serve as furniture. They were grouped about the fireplace. A picture from an illustrated weekly was upon the log walls, and three rifles were paralleled on pegs. Equipments hung on handy projections, and some tin dishes lay upon a small pile of firewood. A folded tent was serving as a roof. The sunlight, without, beating upon it, made it glow a light yellow shade. A small window shot an oblique square of whiter light upon the cluttered floor. The smoke from the fire at times neglected the clay chimney and wreathed into the room, and this flimsy chimney of clay and sticks made endless threats to set ablaze the whole establishment.

60 The youth was in a little trance of astonishment. So they were at last going to fight. On the morrow, perhaps, there would be a battle, and he would be in it. For a time he was obliged to labor to make himself believe. He could not accept with assurance an omen that he was about to mingle in one of those great affairs of the earth.

65 He had, of course, dreamed of battles all his life — of vague and bloody conflicts that had thrilled him with their sweep and fire. In visions he had seen himself in many struggles. He had imagined peoples secure in the shadow of his eagle-eyed prowess. But awake he had regarded battles as crimson blotches on the pages of the past. He had put them as things of the bygone with his thought-images of heavy crowns and high castles. There was a portion of the world's history which he had regarded as the time of wars, but it, he thought, had been long gone over
75 the horizon and had disappeared forever.

From his home his youthful eyes had looked upon the war in his own country with distrust. It must be some sort of a play affair. He had long despaired of witnessing a Greeklike struggle. Such would be no more, he had said. Men were
80 better, or more timid. Secular and religious education had effaced the throat-grappling instinct, or else firm finance held in check the passions.

He had burned several times to enlist. Tales of great movements shook the land. They might not be distinctly Homeric, but there seemed to be much glory in them. He had read of marches, sieges, conflicts, and he had longed to see it all.
85 His busy mind had drawn for him large pictures extravagant in color, lurid with breathless deeds.

Code Sujet	EHP
Page	3 / 5

Document B

Alistair Cooke, 'These are My Times and I Must Know Them', Letter from America n°2621, 7 May 1999, *Reporting America*, London, Penguin Books (2008)

The old Roman poet Martial, or 'Mar-tee-al' - he was a Spaniard who went to Rome in his twenties in about 64 AD, and spent the rest of his life there - was once chided by a friend for going to the Coliseum and watching lions fight and devour slaves. Martial said he hated the scene as much as anyone could but he must go once. "These," he said, "are my times and I must know them."

I feel very much the same way about the atrocious shootings at the small town school in Colorado. I've not talked about them because I've always said I see no point in talking about great natural disasters - earthquakes, tornadoes, even assassinations - unless a commentary can help in some way. Nothing we say now can help those dead children and the well-liked teacher. But these horrors keep happening far more often in this country than anywhere and since the dread day in Littleton, everybody from the president and the Congress down - or up - to the psychiatrists, prison commissioners, clerics, parent-teachers' associations - everybody has had his or her say. And lots of good people have agonised over two words - why did it happen and how can it possibly be prevented?

Apart from one overriding topic everything that you or I have thought and said has been thought and said. And mostly it amounts to laying down what ought to happen. For instance parents ought to stay closer to their children and their pastimes at home. The two boys plotted for a year and spent months building a bomb in their garage. Surely somebody upstairs might have noticed. But surely also there's no way of making parents pay attention by act of Congress. There is one state, the far-western state of Oregon, has a law which punishes parents for any crime committed by a child of theirs, with a fine going to a stiff prison sentence, according to the severity of the crime.

But apart from that, every sort of idea has been offered as a preventative. Every school in the country ought to have metal detectors at every entrance, bullet proof vests, an ever-ready counselling group, trouble watchers who wonder if this boy might play with a gun at home, if that girl is likely to think of suicide, and so on and on. There are imaginative and well-meaning suggestions about what ought to happen, but not much consideration given to the how, except on the main topic. The main, indeed the seething argument all over the country swirls around gun control.

The pros and cons are about evenly split. The fight between gun controllers and the National Rifle Association, which maintains all Americans have a right to carry a gun, has been going on so long and so exhaustively that by now it has all the subtlety of two drunken sailors at the end of a saloon brawl. I should tell you

Code Sujet	EHP
Page	4 / 5

40 that every state has its own gun control laws - light or heavy, simple, complicated - and the nation has two, three laws. The first of which (the Brady Law) passed against Herculean resistance in the Congress after 12 years of lobbying by Sarah Brady, the wife of James Brady, who was President Reagan's press secretary and was with him and was shot and paralysed during the assassination attempt on the president.

45 The bill is called The Brady Handgun Violence Prevention Act. It requires a five-day wait and a computer check on the background of anyone who wants to buy a handgun at retail. I stress retail because thousands of handguns are bought privately and from unlicensed dealers at gun shows. It's not much of a bill, is it? Any intelligent crook of any age can easily fake his identity as a purchaser. In the following year, 1994, President Clinton put up a new federal bill which made it a crime for any adult to sell or pass on a handgun to a juvenile. And then the possession of a concealed weapon became a federal crime.

50 Well now that's much better, or it would have been, if the Justice Department had started catching and prosecuting and jailing offenders. However, of over 2,000 adults caught passing on guns, the Department of Justice prosecuted five one year, six last. Over 200,000 felons have tried to buy handguns; nine were prosecuted and convicted.

55 The solid core of the National Rifle Association's membership is the country people of America, especially in the south and west, who started as toddlers following their father at weekends on hunting expeditions. 'Hunting' in America means always and everywhere 'shooting' and is not remotely a class - that's to say, upper class - sport. On the contrary it has flourished since the earliest colonial days among poor people whose food was the animals that roamed the woods and the mountains and no president, no Party, is ever going to prohibit the ownership of rifles.

60 You'd think once that was understood that the argument would end there but about once a year there's a murderous school shoot out and automatic weapons are used. How can anyone justify anyone's right to own an automatic assault weapon? If you have the luck - or the misfortunate, according to taste - to attend a meeting of the National Rifle Association you will hear a phrase constantly quoted, chanted as reverently as a prayer: "Our constitutional right to bear arms shall not be infringed."

65 What constitutional right?

70 On the façade of the National Rifle Association's headquarters building in Washington there is or was chiselled in the stone a phrase enclosed in quotation marks. It says: "... the right to keep and bear arms shall not be infringed." That is the mantra, the watchword, the rationale for the NRA's conviction that the Constitution gives them a sacred right to keep guns.

Code Sujet	EHP
Page	5 / 5

Document C

Llyn Foulkes, *Deliverance* (2007)
Mixed media, 182.9 x 213.4 cm

