

EAE 0422 A	Sujet Jury	Sujet Candidat		Code Sujet	CLG 18
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Your main commentary should be focused on *TO-infinitive clauses*. Other topics may also be addressed.

The question of how one could broach the topic of reducing his responsibilities was not, then, an easy one. My difficulty was further compounded by the fact that for some years my father and I had tended - for some reason I have never really fathomed - to converse less and less.

5 So much so that after his arrival at Darlington Hall, even the brief exchanges necessary to communicate information relating to work took place in an atmosphere of mutual embarrassment.

10 In the end, I judged the best option to be to talk in the privacy of his room, thus giving him the opportunity to ponder his new situation in solitude once I took my leave. The only times my father could be found in his room were first thing in the morning and last thing at night. Choosing the former, I climbed up to his small attic room at the top of the servants' wing early one morning and knocked gently.

15 I had rarely had reason to enter my father's room prior to this occasion and I was newly struck by the smallness and starkness of it. Indeed, I recall my impression at the time was of having stepped into a prison cell, but then this might have had as much to do with the pale early light as with the size of the room or the bareness of its walls. For my father had opened his curtains and was sitting, shaved and in full uniform, on the edge of his bed from where evidently he had been watching the sky turn to dawn. At least one assumed he had been watching the sky, there being little else to view from his small window other than roof-tiles and guttering. The oil lamp beside his bed had been extinguished, and when I saw my father glance disapprovingly at the lamp I had brought to guide me up the rickety staircase, I quickly lowered the wick. Having done this, I noticed all the more the effect of the pale light coming into the room and the way it lit up the edges of my father's craggy, lined, still awesome features.

25 "Ah," I said, and gave a short laugh, "I might have known Father would be up and ready for the day."

30 "I've been up for the past three hours," he said, looking me up and down rather coldly.

"I hope Father is not being kept awake by his arthritic troubles."

"I get all the sleep I need."

35 My father reached forward to the only chair in the room, a small wooden one, and placing both hands on its back, brought himself to his feet. When I saw him stood upright before me, I could not be sure to what extent he was hunched over due to infirmity and what extent due to the habit of accommodating the steeply sloped ceilings of the room.

40 "I have come here to relate something to you, Father."
"Then relate it briefly and concisely. I haven't all morning to listen to you chatter."

"In that case, Father, I will come straight to the point."

"Come to the point then and be done with it. Some of us have work to be getting on with."

45 "Very well. Since you wish me to be brief, I will do my best to comply. The fact is, Father has become increasingly infirm. So much so that even the duties of an under-butler are now beyond his capabilities. His lordship is of the view, as indeed I am myself, that while Father is allowed to continue with his present round of duties, he represents an ever-present threat to the smooth running of this household, and in particular to next week's important international gathering."

My father's face, in the half-light, betrayed no emotion whatsoever.

"Principally," I continued, "it has been felt that Father should no longer be asked to wait at table, whether or not guests are present."

55 "I have waited at table every day for the last fifty-four years," my father remarked, his voice perfectly unhurried.

60 "Furthermore, it has been decided that Father should not carry laden trays of any sort for even the shortest distances. In view of these limitations, and knowing Father's esteem for conciseness, I have listed here the revised round of duties he will from now on be expected to perform."

I felt disinclined actually to hand to him the piece of paper I was holding, and so put it down on the end of his bed.