

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

Document A

Henry James. *The Portrait of a Lady*. London: Macmillan, 1921, pp.1-4
(1st ed. Boston: Houghton, Mifflin and Company, 1882).

5 UNDER certain circumstances there are few hours in life more agreeable than the hour
dedicated to the ceremony known as afternoon tea. There are circumstances in which, whether
you partake of the tea or not—some people of course never do—the situation is in itself
delightful. Those that I have in mind in beginning to unfold this simple history offered an
10 admirable setting to an innocent pastime. The implements of the little feast had been disposed
upon the lawn of an old English country-house, in what I should call the perfect middle of a
splendid summer afternoon. Part of the afternoon had waned, but much of it was left, and
what was left was of the finest and rarest quality. Real dusk would not arrive for many hours;
but the flood of summer light had begun to ebb, the air had grown mellow, the shadows were
15 long upon the smooth, dense turf. They lengthened slowly, however, and the scene expressed
that sense of leisure still to come which is perhaps the chief source of one's enjoyment of such
a scene at such an hour. From five o'clock to eight is on certain occasions a little eternity; but
on such an occasion as this the interval could be only an eternity of pleasure. The persons
concerned in it were taking their pleasure quietly, and they were not of the sex which is
20 supposed to furnish the regular votaries of the ceremony I have mentioned. The shadows on
the perfect lawn were straight and angular; they were the shadows of an old man sitting in a
deep wickerchair near the low table on which the tea had been served, and of two younger
men strolling to and fro, in desultory talk, in front of him. The old man had his cup in his
hand; it was an unusually large cup, of a different pattern from the rest of the set, and painted
25 in brilliant colours. He disposed of its contents with much circumspection, holding it for a
long time close to his chin, with his face turned to the house. His companions had either
finished their tea or were indifferent to their privilege; they smoked cigarettes as they
continued to stroll. One of them, from time to time, as he passed, looked with a certain
attention at the elder man, who, unconscious of observation, rested his eyes upon the rich red
30 front of his dwelling. The house that rose beyond the lawn was a structure to repay such
consideration, and was the most characteristic object in the peculiarly English picture I have
attempted to sketch.

It stood upon a low hill, above the river—the river being the Thames, at some forty miles
35 from London. A long gabled front of red brick, with the complexion of which time and the
weather had played all sorts of picturesque tricks, only, however, to improve and refine it,
presented itself to the lawn, with its patches of ivy, its clustered chimneys, its windows
smothered in creepers. The house had a name and a history; the old gentleman taking his tea
would have been delighted to tell you these things: how it had been built under Edward the
Sixth, had offered a night's hospitality to the great Elizabeth (whose august person had
40 extended itself upon a huge, magnificent, and terribly angular bed which still formed the
principal honour of the sleeping apartments), had been a good deal bruised and defaced in
Cromwell's wars, and then, under the Restoration, repaired and much enlarged; and how,
finally, after having been remodelled and disfigured in the eighteenth century, it had passed
into the careful keeping of a shrewd American banker, who had bought it originally because
(owing to circumstances too complicated to set forth) it was offered at a great bargain; bought

EAE 0422 A	
Code Sujet	EHP
Sujet Jury	
Sujet Candidat	
Page	2/5

it with much grumbling at its ugliness, its antiquity, its incommmodity, and who now, at the end of twenty years, had become conscious of a real æsthetic passion for it, so that he knew all its points, and would tell you just where to stand to see them in combination, and just the hour when the shadows of its various protuberances—which fell so softly upon the warm, weary
45 brickwork—were of the right measure. Besides this, as I have said, he could have counted off most of the successive owners and occupants, several of whom were known to general fame; doing so, however, with an undemonstrative conviction that the latest phase of its destiny was not the least honourable. The front of the house overlooking that portion of the lawn with which we are concerned, was not the entrance-front; this was in quite another quarter. Privacy
50 here reigned supreme, and the wide carpet of turf that covered the level hill-top seemed but the extension of a luxurious interior. The great still oaks and beeches flung down a shade as dense as that of velvet curtains; and the place was furnished, like a room, with cushioned seats with rich-coloured rugs, with the books and papers that lay upon the grass. The river was at some distance; where the ground began to slope, the lawn, properly speaking, ceased. But it
55 was none the less a charming walk down to the water.

The old gentleman at the tea-table, who had come from America thirty years before, had brought with him, at the top of his baggage, his American physiognomy; and he had not only brought it with him, but he had kept it in the best order, so that, if necessary, he might have taken it back to his own country with perfect confidence. But at present, obviously, he was not
60 likely to displace himself; his journeys were over, and he was taking the rest that precedes the great rest. He had a narrow, clean-shaven face, with evenly distributed features, and an expression of placid acuteness. It was evidently a face in which the range of expression was not large; so that the air of contented shrewdness was all the more of a merit. It seemed to tell that he had been successful in life, but it seemed to tell also that his success had not been
65 exclusive and invidious, but had had much of the inoffensiveness of failure. He had certainly had a great experience of men; but there was an almost rustic simplicity in the faint smile that played upon his lean, spacious cheek, and lighted up his humorous eye, as he at last slowly and carefully deposited his big tea-cup upon the table. He was neatly dressed, in well-brushed black; but a shawl was folded upon his knees, and his feet were encased in thick, embroidered
70 slippers. A beautiful collie dog lay upon the grass near his chair, watching the master's face almost as tenderly as the master contemplated the still more magisterial physiognomy of the house; and a little bristling, bustling terrier bestowed a desultory attendance upon the other gentlemen.[...]

EAE 0422 A	
Code Sujet	EHP
Sujet Jury	
Sujet Candidat	
Page	3/5

Document B

Jacob A. Riis. *How the other half lives: Studies among the tenements of New York*. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1890, pp. 249-251.

[...] It is curious to find preconceived notions quite upset in a review of the nationalities that go to make up this squad of street beggars. The Irish head the list with fifteen per cent, and the native American is only a little way behind with twelve per cent, while the Italian, who in his own country turns beggary into a fine art, has less than two per cent. Eight per cent, were
5 Germans. The relative prevalence of the races in our population does not account for this showing. Various causes operate, no doubt, to produce it. Chief among them is, I think, the tenement itself. It has no power to corrupt the Italian, who comes here in almost every instance to work—no beggar would ever emigrate from anywhere unless forced to do so. He is distinctly on its lowest level from the start. With the Irishman the case is different. The
10 tenement, especially its lowest type, appears to possess a peculiar affinity for the worse nature of the Celt, to whose best and strongest instincts it does violence, and soonest and most thoroughly corrupts him. The “native” twelve per cent represent the result of this process, the hereditary beggar of the second or third generation in the slums.

The blind beggar alone is winked at in New York's streets, because the authorities do not
15 know what else to do with him. There is no provision for him anywhere after he is old enough to strike out for himself. The annual pittance of thirty or forty dollars which he receives from the city serves to keep his landlord in good humor; for the rest his misfortune and his thin disguise of selling pencils on the street corners must provide. Until the city affords him some systematic way of earning his living by work (as Philadelphia has done, for instance) to
20 banish him from the street would be tantamount to sentencing him to death by starvation. So he possesses it in peace, that is, if he is blind in good earnest, and begs without “encumbrance.” Professional mendicancy does not hesitate to make use of the greatest of human afflictions as a pretence for enlisting the sympathy upon which it thrives. Many New Yorkers will remember the French school-master who was “blinded by a shell at the siege of
25 Paris,” but miraculously recovered his sight when arrested and deprived of his children by the officers of Mr. Gerry's society. When last heard of he kept a “museum” in Hartford, and acted the overseer with financial success. His sign with its pitiful tale, that was a familiar sight in our streets for years and earned for him the capital upon which he started his business, might have found a place among the curiosities exhibited there, had it not been kept in a different
30 sort of museum here as a memento of his rascality. There was another of his tribe, a woman, who begged for years with a deformed child in her arms, which she was found to have hired at an almshouse in Genoa for fifteen francs a month. It was a good investment, for she proved to be possessed of a comfortable fortune. Some time before that, the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children, that found her out, had broken up the dreadful padrone
35 system, a real slave trade in Italian children, who were bought of poor parents across the sea and made to beg their way on foot through France to the port whence they were shipped to this city, to be beaten and starved here by their cruel masters and sent out to beg, often after merciless mutilation to make them “take” better with a pitying public.

EAE 0422 A	
Code Sujet	EHP
Sujet Jury	
Sujet Candidat	
Page	4/5

40 But, after all, the tenement offers a better chance of fraud on impulsive but thoughtless
charity, than all the wretchedness of the street, and with fewer risks. To the tender-hearted and
unwary it is, in itself, the strongest plea for help. When such a cry goes up as was heard
recently from a Mott Street den, where the family of a "sick" husband, a despairing mother,
and half a dozen children in rags and dirt were destitute of the "first necessities of life," it is
not to be wondered at that a stream of gold comes pouring in to relieve. It happens too often,
45 as in that case, that a little critical inquiry or reference to the "black list" of the Charity
Organization Society, justly dreaded only by the frauds, discovers the "sickness" to stand for
laziness, and the destitution to be the family's stock in trade; and the community receives a
shock that for once is downright wholesome, if it imposes a check on an indiscriminating
charity that is worse than none at all. [...]

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

Document C



David Hockney. *American Collectors* (Fred & Marcia Weisman), 1968.
Acrylic on canvas. 213.4 x 304.8 cm (83 7/8 x 120 in.)