



# AFA CREATIVE WRITING

WRITE-3

Responsive Writing

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Published in December 2018

## LIST OF STIMULUS TEXTS

The STIMULUS TEXTS for the 2019 paper are:

### POETRY

Jackie Kay                      *Bantam* (Picador, 2017)

### PROSE FICTION

Nafissa Thompson-Spires   *Heads of the Colored People* (Chatto & Windus, 2018)

### PROSE NON-FICTION

Simon Armitage                *Walking Away* (Faber & Faber, 2016)

### SCRIPT

Alan Bennett                    *The History Boys* (Faber & Faber, 2004)



Candidates for WRITE-3 in the Apprenticeship of Fine Arts in Creative Writing should read and examine the writer's use of language, form and structure in ONE of these texts. In the examination in May, candidates will be expected to be able to demonstrate the influence of their chosen text on their own writing.

Candidates may study and make use of more than ONE text if they wish to, but it is possible to meet the criteria for the highest levels of achievement in this component by using only ONE text.

## Principal Examiner's description of the STIMULUS TEXTS

### POETRY

Jackie Kay, *Bantam* (Picador, 2017)

This collection brings three generations into sharp focus (Kay's, her father's, and his father's). "Bantam crosses borders, from Rannoch Moor to the Somme, from Brexit to Brontë Country..." These are poems that explore the personal and the social through vivid, powerful language. They are deeply embedded in Scottish society yet also universal in subject matter. Kay covers birth, death and loss, memory, the power of family relationships, contemporary politics, outsiders, gender and race. She shows us the power of the contemporary sonnet, and deft use of repetition, metre, rhyme, free verse, and dialect. Her work also engages by means of a strong narrative voice throughout the collection.

### PROSE FICTION

Nafissa Thompson-Spires, *Heads of the Colored People* (Chatto & Windus, 2018)

These stories explore life in the 21st Century, and are especially concerned with identity and race. Thompson-Spires also examines the preoccupations of the contemporary middle-class in America, in stories that range from presenting two young men who die – one trying to sell his comic book, the other in fancy dress on an ordinary day out – to a young woman addicted to social media. The writing is controlled, powerful and humorous. Each story is an example of pared-back writing, using vivid dialogue to develop plot and allow characters to reveal themselves. These stories challenge us, using narrative viewpoints and structure in diverse and inventive ways.



## PROSE NON-FICTION

Simon Armitage, *Walking Away* (Faber & Faber, 2016)

Simon Armitage, better known for his poetry, travels along the South West Coast Path, through Somerset, North Devon and Cornwall. Giving poetry readings in a range of venues along the way, he aims to see whether he can live on the donations from his audiences. He calls himself a modern troubadour, assessing the health of poetry in Britain today. This travelogue shows us how to write in a relevant, lively, humorous, ironic way about accessible places rather than exotic, expensive locations. It's an example of what the writer can achieve in their 'back garden' – well, almost. Armitage captures the landscape, his inner thoughts and preoccupations, and the colourful characters he meets with self-deprecating humour and wit.

## SCRIPT

Alan Bennett, *The History Boys* (Faber & Faber, 2004)

Bennett's play is set in a 1980s grammar school in Sheffield. The boys have achieved great 'A' Level results and the Headteacher wants the accolade of this cohort triumphing in the battle for Oxbridge places, despite Hector, the boys' teacher, working as hard as he can to subvert him. To counteract Hector's subversive influence, the Head hires a young man to coach the boys into intellectual shape. This is a play about loyalty; about coming-of-age and identity; about the education system and the role of literature and history; about whether there is more to learning than the pursuit of grades; about the clash between aspiration and self-destruction. Bennett's ironic humour underpins the quick-fire dialogue as he creates a lively cast of characters with human weaknesses which demand our sympathy. Bennett takes us on a tragic journey, with compassion as well as a sharply observant eye.