

At the restaurant his father pulled out the admissions packet for Langford, showing photographs of the campus, smiling students gathered around classroom tables, teachers standing in front of blackboards, caught midsentence by the camera's lens. Academically it was far superior to the school he'd been attending, his father told him, mentioning the percentage of
5 Langford graduates who went on to Ivy League colleges. Amit realized, as his father spoke, that the position in Delhi had been accepted, their house in Winchester already put up for sale. There was no question of his going to school in Delhi; it wasn't worth the trouble to adjust to education in a different country, his father said, given that eventually Amit would be attending an American college.

10 From Langford, during Christmas and after each academic year came to an end, Amit went to Delhi to be with his parents, staying in their flat full of servants in Chittaranjan Park, in a barren¹ room set aside for his stays. He never enjoyed his visits to Delhi, his broken Bengali² of no use in that city. It made him miss Calcutta, where all his relatives lived, where he was used to going. His parents had moved to Delhi the year of Indira Gandhi's assassination, and the riots
15 that subsequently raged there, the curfews and the constant vigilance with which his parents had to live, meant that Amit remained cooped up inside, without friends, without anything to do. In that sense it was a relief to him to return to this peaceful town. Four years later his parents were back in America, moving to Houston. In Delhi his father had perfected a laser technique to correct astigmatism that earned him invitations to work and teach in hospitals all over the world.
20 After five years in Houston they'd moved yet again, to Lausanne, Switzerland. They lived in Saudi Arabia now.

At Langford, Amit was the only Indian student, and people always assumed that he'd been born and raised in that country and not in Massachusetts. They complimented him on his accent, always telling him how good his English was. He'd arrived when he was fifteen, for sophomore
25 year, which at Langford was called the fourth form, and by that time friendships and alliances among the boys of his class were already in place. At his high school in Winchester he'd been a star student, but suddenly he'd had to work doggedly to maintain his grades. He had to wear a jacket every morning to his classes and call his teachers "masters" and attend chapel on Sundays. Quickly he learned that his parents' wealth was laughable compared to the majority of
30 Langford boys. There was no escape at the end of the day, and though he admitted it to no one, especially not his parents when they called from Delhi every week-end, he was crippled with homesickness, missing his parents to the point where tears often filled his eyes, in those first months, without warning. He sought traces of his parents' faces and voices among the people who surrounded and cared for him, but there was absolutely nothing, no one, at Langford to remind him of them. After that first semester he had slipped as best as he could into this world,
35 swimming competitively, calling boys by their last names, always wearing khakis because jeans were not allowed. He learned to live without his mother and father, as everyone else did, shedding his daily dependence on them even though he was still a boy, and even to enjoy it. Still, he refused to forgive them.

40 Jumpa Lahiri, *Unaccustomed Earth*, 2008

¹ *barren*: empty

² Bengali: language spoken in the South of India

NOTE AUX CANDIDATS

Les candidats traiteront le sujet sur la copie qui leur sera fournie et veilleront à :

- respecter l'ordre des questions et reporter la numérotation sur la copie ; (numéro et lettre repère, le cas échéant ; ex. : 6b) ;
- faire précéder les citations de la mention de la ligne ;
- composer des phrases complètes à chaque fois qu'il leur est demandé de rédiger la réponse.
- respecter le nombre de mots indiqué qui constitue une exigence minimale. En l'absence d'indication, les candidats répondront brièvement à la question posée.

COMPRÉHENSION

1. Who is the main character?
2. In which country was he born? Justify by quoting from the text.
3. Explain how the main character is connected to the following places:
 - a) *Langford*
 - b) *Winchester*
 - c) *Calcutta*
 - d) *Delhi*
 - e) *Massachusetts*
4. What do we learn about his parents (origin, occupation, social status)?
5. What consequences did the father's job have on the life of his family?
6. In your own words, explain to what extent Langford was a new experience to the main character. Justify by quoting at least five details from the text. (40-50 words)
7. (11. 35-36) "... *he had slipped as best as he could into this world, ...* ". Explain the sentence in your own words.
8. Why had his parents chosen Langford for him? (30-40 words)
9. (1. 39) "*Still, he refused to forgive them*". Comment on the sentence and explain the character's feelings. (30-40 words)
10. Translate from "From Langford... " (1.10) to "... used to going. " (1.14)

EXPRESSION

Les candidats choisiront de traiter l'UN des deux sujets au choix.

1. At the end of his first semester at Langford, Amit writes a letter to his parents, pretending he is happy. (300 words)
2. Should parents interfere with their children's choices? (300 words)