

**ANSWER ALL QUESTIONS**

**SECTION A: Reading**

**You should spend about 40 minutes on this section.**

**Read the following passage carefully and then answer the questions which follow.**

*The writer is gradually losing his sight but is unwilling to give up driving his car.*

**The Day I Quit Driving**



All my life I was crazy about cars. Within days of turning 16 I got my driver's licence and took off. I assumed the trip would never end.

5 But, unknown to me, I was going blind. After a few decades of normal vision I could no longer see at night or make out faces clearly from more than a few feet away. I couldn't imagine a life without wheels. So, holding my breath and trusting to luck I stayed on the road, a little too long.

10 By this time, my eyesight was worse. Traffic signals had started vanishing and reappearing – the whole signal box, not just the bulbs – as if conjured in and out of sight by mischievous sprites. Street signs were unreadable. Cars loomed up at me out of nowhere, and pedestrians materialised in the middle of empty crossings.

Why, you might reasonably ask, would someone with vision so impaired persist in driving? Romance. Practicality. Pride. Denial.

15 When I was a teenager, I had a stack of car magazines that dwarfed everything else in my bedroom bookcase. The cars in my real life were less fierce, less perfect. But so what? They started, they ran, they carried me down the highway of dreams. Now I had a 10-year-old car that took me anywhere I wanted to go. Driving wasn't everything, just life, liberty, the pursuit of happiness, and the promise that I would never, ever grow old, that I would not fade away. Riding the bus meant being sucked into a symbolic, bottomless vortex of failure. I was terrified.

20 I had the route to the school where I worked pretty much mastered from long experience. I took a left into the street and began to peer along the kerb for a parking space. I couldn't have been going more than 10 mph.



25 Suddenly. The sickening thud of my front bumper hitting flesh and bone. My right foot coming off the gas and slamming down on the brake pedal. The car stopped just short of an airborne boy, maybe 12 or 13, levitating a few inches above the pavement as his unzipped nylon school bag launched itself from his shoulder and spewed notebooks, pencils and personal effects all over the street.

30 The kid lay sprawled in a heap on the pavement. A car door slammed somewhere off to my left, and then a woman, his mother, was kneeling beside him. By the time I managed to turn off the engine, she had helped him hobble back to their old car and lowered him onto the back seat, where he sat with the door still flung open, dazed and splay-limbed, holding his back. It never even occurred to me to go and see how the boy was, I felt so shaken, so ashamed, so uninvited. I just stood next to my car, watching as people emerged from nowhere. Sirens came speeding toward us up the  
35 avenue.

40 The paramedics lifted the kid onto a stretcher. As the mother stood behind the ambulance watching them shove him inside, I finally got up the nerve to approach her. "I'm very sorry," I said. She wouldn't even look at me. They took the boy to a hospital emergency room and I waited on the kerb for the police, who showed up an hour later to take the accident report.

"I just didn't see him," I admitted, which was true. The officer didn't ask me anything about that, but simply said the kid shouldn't have walked in front of my car, which was also true. She got my signature, tore off a copy of the report for me, and drove away.

45 Somebody told me they knew in the school office what had happened. If I wanted, I could go home. I did want to go home. Desperately.

50 I got back into my car, fastened my seat belt, started the engine, felt how much I was shaking, and turned it off. I went into the office, borrowed the phone, and got my friend Adrian out of bed. Adrian drove me home and put the car back in its space behind my apartment.

So, finally facing facts, I put the car up for sale and gave up my driver's licence. No one ever contacted me about the accident. Not my insurance company, not the school or a personal injury lawyer. I felt justified in assuming – thankfully – that the boy wasn't hurt too badly.

55 But still, every time I think about it, my hands remember the weird, rubber shock of the impact through the steering wheel, and I see the whole thing all over again. The boy bouncing off the front of the car in slow motion. The books flying. The stretcher sliding into the open mouth of the ambulance. The rage and disbelief on his mother's face. Some things, some of us only learn the hard way.

(Source: Joel Deutsch, 1997)





<p><b>You should refer closely to the passage to support your answers. You may include brief quotations.</b></p> <p>1. How do we know that the writer has always been enthusiastic about driving?</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><b>(Total 2 marks)</b></p>	<p>Leave blank</p> <p><b>Q1</b></p> <input style="width: 20px; height: 20px;" type="text"/>
<p>2. Look again at lines 7 to 10 . Select <b>two</b> phrases or sentences that the writer uses to describe his worsening eyesight.</p> <p>1 .....</p> <p>.....</p> <p>2 .....</p> <p>.....</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><b>(Total 2 marks)</b></p>	<p><b>Q2</b></p> <input style="width: 20px; height: 20px;" type="text"/>
<p>3. Look again at lines 11 to 19. <b>In your own words</b>, explain why the writer continues to drive, despite his deteriorating sight.</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><b>(Total 4 marks)</b></p>	<p><b>Q3</b></p> <input style="width: 20px; height: 20px;" type="text"/>



4. How does the writer try to make us share his thoughts and feelings?

In your answer you may wish to write about:

- the dramatic nature of the events in the passage and how people react to them
- what the writer tells us about himself, throughout the passage
- interesting use of language.

You should refer closely to this passage to support your answer. You may include **brief** quotations.

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

