1 Examine how Maupassant uses the relationship between Boule d e Suif and the other travelers to show the latter’s hypocrisy

Possible content

* There will be a well-documented analysis of the relationships between the characters and how these relationships develop during the story. There will be clear evidence of how their behaviour shows hypocrisy.
* At the start of the journey, Boule de Suif feels inferior to her travelling companions but happily shares her food with them.
* From the start they look down on her but are polite because they want her food. The other travellers appreciate her company and share her political views.
* The male travellers find her attractive and charming.
* Her generosity is not reciprocated by the other travellers.
* They judge her because she is from a different social class and because she is a prostitute.
* They see nothing wrong with their behaviour towards her and see no reason why she should not sacrifice herself for them with the Prussian officer.
* They judge her and yet she is the better person as she is selfless.
* Their own cowardliness leads them to judge her.
* They judge her easily and yet are happy to benefit from her actions – hypocrisy. During the final journey they refuse to share their food with Boule de Suif, looking down on her because of what she has done.
* Boule de Suif says nothing, realising that they may judge her but that she has made sacrifices for them and they are unworthy of her.

2 Analyse whether Maupassant’s opinion about human nature is more positive or negative in the short story Boule de Suif

Possible content

Optimistic

* •  Boule de Suif is non-judgemental.
* •  She is sincere in her relations with the other travellers.
* •  She willingly shares her food and makes sacrifices to help the others.
* •  She is courageous and acts for the good of the group.
* •  She represents everything good about la nature humaine.

Pessimistic

* •  The other characters take advantage of Boule de Suif’s generosity of spirit.
* •  Boule de Suif is ultimately rejected by society.
* •  Society is shown as cowardly and cruel.
* •  War brings out the worst in people and reveals their true nature.
* •  Boule de Suif realises that her sacrifice and generosity means nothing to the other travellers.
* •  Maupassant illustrates how selfish and cruel human beings can be.
* •  Ultimately, the superiority of class and respectability is more important to the other characters than anything else.

3 “Maupassant wants us to understand how war affects the lives of normal people” – referring to two stories, to what extent do you agree with this statement

Possible content

Probably Boule de Suif plus one other story but it could be any two stories Probably most answers will agree with the quotation

Some justification for the choice of stories

Some explanation of the ordinariness of the chosen characters

An explanation of their lives before the war and during (or after) and how their lives have changed because of the war

Some understanding and examples of behaviour that would otherwise be uncharacteristic of the characters (eg La mère sauvage ; Un Duel)

How war affects ordinary people’s attitudes to each other and their behaviour towards each other

4 Analyse how war provokes extreme reactions in Maupassant’s characters

Possible content

Good answers will have well-chosen examples to illustrate the « réactions extrêmes »

Some answers may have less convincing examples

An understanding of the significance of extremes of behaviour with relevant examples to illustrate these An understanding of the psychological effects of the experience of war in provoking extreme reactions Some awareness perhaps of characters who do not react in an extreme way