



GCSE

ENGLISH LANGUAGE

**Paper 1 Explorations in creative reading
and writing**

8700/1

Insert

The source that follows is:

SOURCE A: 20th Century prose-fiction

‘A Sound of Thunder’ by Ray Bradbury

**An extract from the middle of a short
story, published in 1952.**

**Please turn the page over to see the
source**

SOURCE A

Using a time machine, an organisation called Time Safari transports clients into the past to take part in hunting expeditions. A group that includes Mr Eckels, together with their guide, Travis, is visiting a prehistoric jungle in order to shoot a Tyrannosaurus Rex.

**1 The jungle was high and the jungle was broad. Sounds like music and flying tents filled the sky, and those were pterodactyls soaring with huge
5 grey wings.**

‘I’ve hunted tiger, wild boar, buffalo, elephant, but now, this is it,’ said Eckels. ‘I’m shaking like a kid.’

‘Ah,’ said Travis.

10 Everyone stopped.

Travis raised his hand. 'Ahead,' he whispered, 'in the mist. There he is. There's his Royal Majesty now.'

15 The jungle was wide and full of
16 twitterings, rustlings, murmurs, and sighs.

Suddenly it all ceased, as if someone had shut a door.

Silence.

20 A sound of thunder.

Out of the mist, one hundred yards away, came Tyrannosaurus Rex.

'It,' whispered Eckels, 'it.....'

'Ssh!'

25 It came on great oiled, resilient, striding legs. It towered thirty feet

[Turn over]

above half of the trees, a great evil
god, folding its delicate
watchmaker's claws close to its oily
30 reptilian chest. Each lower leg was
a piston, a thousand pounds of
white bone, sunk in thick ropes of
muscle, sheathed over in a gleam of
pebbled skin like the armour of a
35 terrible warrior. Each thigh was a
ton of meat, ivory, and steel mesh.
And from the great breathing cage
of the upper body those two delicate
arms dangled out front, arms with
40 hands which might pick up and
examine men like toys, while the
snake neck coiled. And the head
itself, a ton of sculptured stone,
lifted easily upon the sky. Its mouth
45 gaped, exposing a fence of teeth
like daggers. Its eyes rolled, ostrich
eggs, empty of all expression save
hunger. It closed its mouth in a
death grin. It ran, its pelvic bones
50 crushing aside trees and bushes, its

taloned feet clawing damp earth,
leaving prints six inches deep
53 wherever it settled its weight.

It ran with a gliding ballet step, far
55 too poised and balanced for its ten
tons. It moved into a sunlit area
warily, its beautifully reptilian hands
feeling the air.

‘Why, why...,’ Eckels twitched his
60 mouth, ‘it could reach up and grab
the moon.’

‘Ssh!’ Travis jerked angrily. ‘He
hasn’t seen us yet.’

64 ‘It can’t be killed.’ Eckels
65 pronounced this verdict quietly, as
if there could be no argument. He
had weighed the evidence and this
was his considered opinion. The
rifle in his hands seemed like a toy
70 gun. ‘We were fools to come.

[Turn over]

This is impossible.'

'Shut up!' hissed Travis.

'Nightmare.'

'Turn around,' commanded Travis.

**75 'Walk quietly to the Machine. We'll
remit half your fee.'**

**'I didn't realize it would be this big,'
said Eckels. 'I miscalculated, that's
all. And now I want out.'**

80 'It sees us!'

'There's the red paint on its chest.'

**The Tyrant Lizard raised itself. Its
armoured flesh glittered like a
thousand green coins. The coins,
85 crusted with slime, steamed. In the
slime, tiny insects wriggled, so that
the entire body seemed to twitch**

and undulate, even while the
monster itself did not move. It
90 exhaled. The stink of raw flesh blew
down the wilderness.

‘Get me out of here,’ said Eckels. ‘It
was never like this before. I was
always sure I’d come through alive.
95 I had good guides, good safaris, and
safety. This time, I figured wrong.
I’ve met my match and admit it.
This is too much for me to get hold
of.’

100 ‘Don’t run,’ said Lesperance. ‘Turn
around. Hide in the Machine.’

‘Yes.’ Eckels seemed to be numb.
He looked at his feet as if trying to
make them move. He gave a grunt of
105 helplessness.

‘Eckels!’

[Turn over]

He took a few steps, blinking, shuffling.

‘Not that way!’

110 The Monster, at the first motion, lunged forward with a terrible scream. It covered one hundred yards in six seconds. The rifles jerked up and blazed fire. A
115 windstorm from the beast’s mouth engulfed them in the stench of slime and old blood. The Monster roared, teeth glittering with sun.

The rifles cracked again, but their
120 sound was lost in shriek and lizard thunder. The great level of the reptile’s tail swung up, lashed sideways. Trees exploded in clouds of leaf and branch. The Monster
125 twitched its jeweller’s hands down to fondle at the men, to twist them in half, to crush them like berries, to

**cram them into its teeth and its
screaming throat. Its boulder-stone
130 eyes levelled with the men. They
saw themselves mirrored. They
fired at the metallic eyelids and the
blazing black iris.**

**Like a stone idol, like a mountain
135 avalanche, Tyrannosaurus fell.**

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