



NSW Education Standards Authority

2023 HIGHER SCHOOL CERTIFICATE EXAMINATION

English Extension 1

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- General Instructions**
- Reading time – 10 minutes
 - Working time – 2 hours
 - Write using black pen

Total marks: 50

Section I – 25 marks (page 2)

- Attempt Question 1
- Allow about 1 hour for this section

Section II – 25 marks (pages 3–13)

- Attempt ONE question from Questions 2(a)–2(e)
- Allow about 1 hour for this section

Section I — Common Module: Literary Worlds

25 marks

Attempt Question 1

Allow about 1 hour for this section

Answer the question on pages 2–12 of the English Extension 1 Writing Booklet. Extra writing booklets are available.

Your answer will be assessed on how well you:

- demonstrate an understanding of the ideas and values of Literary Worlds and how they are shaped and reflected in texts
 - craft a sustained composition appropriate to the question, demonstrating control of the use of language
-

Question 1 (25 marks)

Compose an imaginative or discursive response which examines the possibilities and problems exposed by literary worlds.

In your response, include an unexpected journey into a literary world that transforms an individual.

Section II — Electives

25 marks

Attempt ONE question from Questions 2(a)–2(e)

Allow about 1 hour for this section

Answer the question on pages 14–24 of the English Extension 1 Writing Booklet. Extra writing booklets are available.

Your answer will be assessed on how well you:

- demonstrate an understanding of the ideas and values of Literary Worlds and how they are shaped and reflected in texts
 - craft a sustained composition appropriate to the question, demonstrating control of the use of language
-

Please turn over

Question 2 (a) — Elective 1: Literary Homelands (25 marks)

Read the stimulus provided below.

Evaluate how the ideas in the stimulus echo, unsettle or oppose your understanding of the texts you have studied in Literary Homelands.

In your response, make close reference to TWO prescribed texts and ONE other text of your own choosing.

Bridges are thresholds to other realities, archetypal, primal symbols of shifting consciousness. They are passageways, conduits, and connectors that connote transitioning, crossing borders, and changing perspectives. Bridges span liminal (threshold) spaces between worlds ...

But there are no safe spaces. “Home” can be unsafe and dangerous because it bears the likelihood of intimacy and thus thinner boundaries. Staying “home” and not venturing out from our own group comes from woundedness, and stagnates our growth. To bridge means loosening our borders, not closing off to others. Bridging is the work of opening the gate to the stranger, within and without. To step across the threshold is to be stripped of the illusion of safety because it moves us into unfamiliar territory and does not grant safe passage. To bridge is to attempt community, and for that we must risk being open to personal, political, and spiritual intimacy, to risk being wounded. Effective bridging comes from knowing when to close ranks to those outside our home, group, community, nation – and when to keep the gates open ...

A bridge ... is not just about one set of people crossing to the other side; it’s also about those on the other side crossing to this side. And ultimately, it’s about doing away with demarcations like “ours” and “theirs”. It’s about honouring people’s otherness in ways that allow us to be changed by embracing that otherness rather than punishing others for having a different view, belief system, skin colour, or spiritual practice. Diversity of perspectives expands and alters the dialogue, not in an add-on fashion but through a multiplicity that’s transformational ...

We honour those whose backs are the bedrock we stand on, even as our shoulders become the ground for the generations that follow, and their bodies then will become the next layer. Though we’re aware of the danger of losing our individuality to the collective fires and the risking of our safe spaces, this undertaking empowers us to become sentinels, bearers of witness, makers of [histories].

GLORIA E ANZALDÚA
(Un)natural bridges, (Un)safe spaces

Question 2 (a) continues on page 5

Question 2 (a) (continued)

The Elective 1 prescribed texts are:

- **Prose Fiction** – Aravind Adiga, *The White Tiger*
 - E M Forster, *A Passage to India*
 - Colm Tóibín, *Brooklyn*

- **Poetry** – Eileen Chong, *Burning Rice*

The prescribed poems are:

 - * *Burning Rice*
 - * *Mid-autumn Mooncakes*
 - * *My Hakka Grandmother*
 - * *Shophouse, Victoria Street*
 - * *Chinese Ginseng*
 - * *Winter Meeting*
 - * *Singapore*

- **Drama** – Andrew Bovell, *The Secret River* [by Kate Grenville – An adaptation for the stage by Andrew Bovell]

- **Film** – Sarah Gavron, *Brick Lane*

End of Question 2 (a)

OR

Question 2 (b) — Elective 2: Worlds of Upheaval (25 marks)

Read the stimulus provided below.

Evaluate how the ideas in the stimulus echo, unsettle or oppose your understanding of the texts you have studied in *Worlds of Upheaval*.

In your response, make close reference to TWO prescribed texts and ONE other text of your own choosing.

Since I've been alive (or a teenager anyway) I've been aware of forever arguments about whether or not fiction should be political, written to address injustice or at least to support social morality. Right now this could seem like an especially frivolous question: wherever you are on the ideological spectrum, social issues are sitting atop us like demon beasts, that is, if "social issues" is even a strong enough phrase for the literally burning evidence of planetary destruction, daily gun violence, grinding economic fear, violent racism, unpredictable pandemic illness and pointless war being waged ... all on rumbling sub-crawl under our daily lives.

Even in less harrowing times, social institutions and the political machinations surrounding them are huge facts of life that we are all subject to, regardless of where we live on the spectrum of class and privilege; the stories of small, soft humans – all humans – caught up in the wheels of such institutions are dramatically compelling even when they are badly written ...

Fiction speaks in a specific language of individual consciousness that senses and interprets the world with a moral ambiguity in which issues and impulses large and small fluctuate and conflict nonstop, running from ugly to beautiful, blending the two categories in mysterious, asocial ways that reflect the depths of human nature in darkish, dream-like flashes ...

Political writing requires clear definition, consistent, recognisable language and a "take-away" that will get people moving down the street as opposed to sitting on the curb wondering "what did he mean by that?" It requires consensus in thought and language ...

What I am saying is that stories about political systems or social struggle are most poignant and effective when they acknowledge that we are all up against such harsh mystery whether we are a powerful statesman or a poor child ...

I am expressing honour for art that illuminates this mystery of our human nature, where good and evil are constantly and unpredictably mixed. Because I think as artists it is of primary importance that we remember this paradox and maintain humility before it.

MARY GAITSKILL
Political Fiction: Why is it so hard to write?

Question 2 (b) continues on page 7

Question 2 (b) (continued)

The Elective 2 prescribed texts are:

- **Prose Fiction** – Elizabeth Gaskell, *North and South*
 - Mary Shelley, *Frankenstein*
 - Madeleine Thien, *Do Not Say We Have Nothing*
- **Poetry** – Seamus Heaney, *Opened Ground: Poems 1966–1996*

The prescribed poems are:

 - * *Digging*
 - * *The Strand at Lough Beg*
 - * *Casualty*
 - * *Funeral Rites*
 - * from *Whatever You Say Say Nothing*
 - * *Triptych*
- **Drama** – Samuel Beckett, *Waiting for Godot*
- **Film** – Fritz Lang, *Metropolis*

End of Question 2 (b)

OR

Question 2 (c) — Elective 3: Reimagined Worlds (25 marks)

Read the stimulus provided below.

Evaluate how the ideas in the stimulus echo, unsettle or oppose your understanding of the texts you have studied in Reimagined Worlds.

In your response, make close reference to TWO prescribed texts and ONE other text of your own choosing.

We writers ... have an obligation to our readers: it's the obligation to write true things, especially important when we are creating tales of people who do not exist in places that never were – to understand that truth is not in what happens but in what it tells us about who we are ... And while we must tell our readers true things and give them weapons and give them armour and pass on whatever wisdom we have gleaned from our short stay on this green world, we have an obligation not to preach, not to lecture, not to force predigested morals and messages down our readers' throats ...

We all – adults and children, writers and readers – have an obligation to daydream. We have an obligation to imagine. It is easy to pretend that nobody can change anything, that we are in a world in which society is huge and the individual is less than nothing: an atom in a wall, a grain of rice in a rice field. But the truth is, individuals change their world over and over, individuals make the future, and they do it by imagining that things can be different ...

Just look around this room ... Everything you can see, including the walls, was, at some point, imagined. Someone decided that it might be easier to sit on a chair than on the ground and imagined the chair. Someone had to imagine a way that I could talk to you in London right now without us all getting rained on. This room and the things in it, and all the other things in this building, in this city, exist because, over and over and over, people imagined things. They daydreamed, they pondered, they made things that didn't quite work, they described things that didn't yet exist to people who laughed at them.

And then, in time, they succeeded. Political movements, personal movements, all begin with people imagining another way of existing.

NEIL GAIMAN

Why we read and what books do for the human experience

Question 2 (c) continues on page 9

Question 2 (c) (continued)

The Elective 3 prescribed texts are:

- **Prose Fiction**
 - Italo Calvino, *If on a Winter's Night a Traveller*
 - Ursula Le Guin, *The Left Hand of Darkness*
 - Jonathan Swift, *Gulliver's Travels*

- **Poetry**
 - Samuel Taylor Coleridge, *Samuel Taylor Coleridge: The Complete Poems*

The prescribed poems are:

 - * *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner* (1834)
 - * *The Eolian Harp*
 - * *Kubla Khan*
 - * *Christabel*

 - Tracy K Smith, *Life on Mars*

The prescribed poems are:

 - * *Sci-Fi*
 - * *My God, It's Full of Stars*
 - * *Don't You Wonder, Sometimes?*
 - * *The Universe: Original Motion Picture Soundtrack*
 - * *The Universe as Primal Scream*

- **Film**
 - Guillermo Del Toro, *Pan's Labyrinth*

End of Question 2 (c)

OR

Question 2 (d) — Elective 4: Literary Mindscapes (25 marks)

Read the stimulus provided below.

Evaluate how the ideas in the stimulus echo, unsettle or oppose your understanding of the texts you have studied in Literary Mindscapes.

In your response, make close reference to TWO prescribed texts and ONE other text of your own choosing.

Objects in mirror are closer than they appear, read the rear-view mirror. I did not understand, for perceptions of depth and time have always made me dizzy. I like the unreality of compressing time, past and present not so different, or looking down from a tall building, stomach drooping into my temple.

Caution, my parents explained. It meant that when you've left something behind it can sneak up on you, that you are never as far ahead of something as you believe. That the narrative of your present is crafted by the past ...

A true mirror is one that projects your image as others see you. Wave your right hand and the three-dimensional image will wave as if from the left. Lean to one side and see yourself lean away. The image is lifelike in a way that a traditional mirror is not and the experience disrupts our understanding of reflection, at once more human and intimate than our many years brushing our teeth or hair at the abstraction in front of us.

Some are startled, shaken, some shamed they have understood themselves incorrectly. And some weep at the rare chance to witness the self as it truly exists in time and space ...

Reflection is both the mirrored image and careful rumination*. I've been avoiding the image because I've been avoiding the thinking – about the homes I've made and the ways they do not fit, about the country changing underfoot. But these images I've avoided are not true reflections, and each is already gone. The only thing to do is remember there is no mirror test to convince your restless animal self that existence is precious, to convince you to step away from the reflection and into reality.

This doesn't mean we forget history or stop aching for it, mourning it if we must, but rather that living requires we keep some distance between our past and present, we keep our many selves in sight in the rear-view mirror, as we determine which path to take and where to deviate.

SARAH FAWN MONTGOMERY

On Self-Reflection, Stories, and What Mirrors Really Tell Us

* rumination *deep considered thought*

Question 2 (d) continues on page 11

Question 2 (d) (continued)

The Elective 4 prescribed texts are:

- **Prose Fiction** – William Faulkner, *As I Lay Dying*
 - Gail Jones, *Sixty Lights*
 - Katherine Mansfield, *The Collected Stories*
 - * *Prelude*
 - * *Je ne Parle pas Français*
 - * *Bliss*
 - * *Psychology*
 - * *The Daughters of the Late Colonel*
- **Poetry** – Emily Dickinson, *The Complete Poems*

The prescribed poems are:

 - * *I felt a Funeral, in my Brain*
 - * *This is my letter to the World*
 - * *I died for Beauty – but was scarce*
 - * *I had been hungry, all the Years*
 - * *Because I could not stop for Death*
 - * *My Life had stood – a Loaded Gun*
 - * *A word dropped careless on a Page*
- **Drama** – William Shakespeare, *Hamlet*
- **Film** – Sofia Coppola, *Lost in Translation*

End of Question 2 (d)

OR

Question 2 (e) — Elective 5: Intersecting Worlds (25 marks)

Read the stimulus provided below.

Evaluate how the ideas in the stimulus echo, unsettle or oppose your understanding of the texts you have studied in *Intersecting Worlds*.

In your response, make close reference to TWO prescribed texts and ONE other text of your own choosing.

“Wild” is a challenging word.

“Wild” is used to describe a misbehaving child, a kick-ass party, a city with traffic congestion problems, a piece of salmon that hasn’t been designed in a chemical lab, a backyard overgrown with too many weeds. In the same breath, wild is a parcel of land or sea that seems to resist human control.

“Wild” – its etymology tells us – signifies something that is self-willed. Relatedly, “wilderness” – arising from a combination of “wild”, “deor” (deer or beast), and “ness” (promontory or cape) – is a place that abides by nothing but its own will, a nonhuman will. But if things were that simple, we would be remiss in calling “wild” challenging. What makes the word “wild” semantically treacherous* is its lack of formal policing ...

Who determines whether a place is truly unmodified, only slightly modified, or sufficiently modified? What is a “natural character”? When is human habitation “significant”? Above what threshold is the impact of humankind “substantially noticeable”? ...

Scores of writers before us have answered the call of the wild from places wild in their minds and their hearts. But “wild” continues to evade cognitive capture ...

The idea of wild is elusive, but so, too, are its geographical referents. When you seek wildness, where, precisely, do you go? Logically, to a place where you expect to find it, to a place that you deem wild. That is what most writers and adventurers do. But when you do, a problem emerges. If you look for wildness where you expect to find it, what you see mirrors your mental images. Wild places become a mere test of your ideologies, a manifestation of your fantasies, aspirations, and fears. Wilderness areas become fantasies of well-cultivated minds and well-trained bodies keen on putting their Instagram flag on the next highest peak.

PHILLIP VANNINI and APRIL VANNINI
The Problem with Calling Nature “Wild”

* semantically treacherous *problematic to define*

Question 2 (e) continues on page 13

Question 2 (e) (continued)

The Elective 5 prescribed texts are:

- **Prose Fiction** – Melissa Harrison, *Clay*
 - Alex Miller, *Journey to the Stone Country*
 - Annie Proulx, *The Shipping News*
- **Nonfiction** – Tim Winton, *Island Home*
- **Poetry** – William Wordsworth, *William Wordsworth: The Major Works*

The prescribed poems are:

- * *Lines written a few miles above Tintern Abbey*
 - * *Three years she grew in sun and shower*
 - * *My heart leaps up when I behold*
 - * *Resolution and Independence*
 - * *The world is too much with us*
 - * *Ode ('There was a time')*
 - * *The Solitary Reaper*
 - * *The Prelude* (1805) – Book One, lines 1–67, 271–441
- **Film** – Daniel Nettheim, *The Hunter*

End of paper