

2026 HIGHER SCHOOL CERTIFICATE EXAMINATION

English Advanced

Paper 1 — Texts and Human Experiences

General Instructions

- Reading time – 10 minutes
- Working time – 1 hour and 30 minutes
- Write using black pen
- A Stimulus Booklet is provided at the back of this paper
- Write your Student Name and Class at the top of this page and page 5

Total marks: 40

Section I – 20 marks (pages 2–8)

- Attempt Questions 1–5
- Allow about 45 minutes for this section

Section II – 20 marks (pages 9–11)

- Attempt Question 6
- Allow about 45 minutes for this section

Section I

20 marks

Attempt Questions 1–5

Allow about 45 minutes for this section

Read the texts on pages 2–6 of the Stimulus Booklet carefully and then answer the questions in the spaces provided. These spaces provide guidance for the expected length of response.

Your answers will be assessed on how well you:

- demonstrate understanding of human experiences in texts
 - analyse, explain and assess the ways human experiences are represented in texts
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Question 1 (3 marks)

Text 1 — Image

Explain how the image represents the impact of technology.

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If you need additional space to answer Question 1 use the lines below.

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Analyse how the speaker represents the significance of memories to the human experience.

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How does the poet use imagery to reveal beauty within struggle?

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If you need additional space to answer Question 5 use the lines below.

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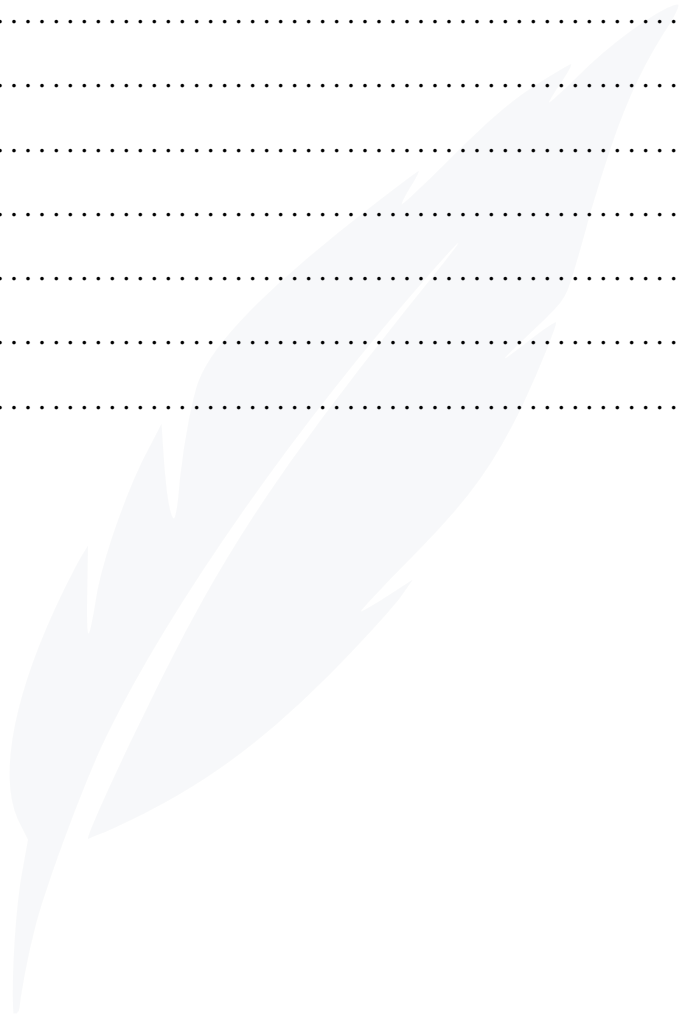
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English Advanced

Paper 1 — Texts and Human Experiences

Section II

20 marks

Attempt Question 6

Allow about 45 minutes for this section

Answer the question in the Section II Writing Booklet. Extra writing booklets are available.

Your answer will be assessed on how well you:

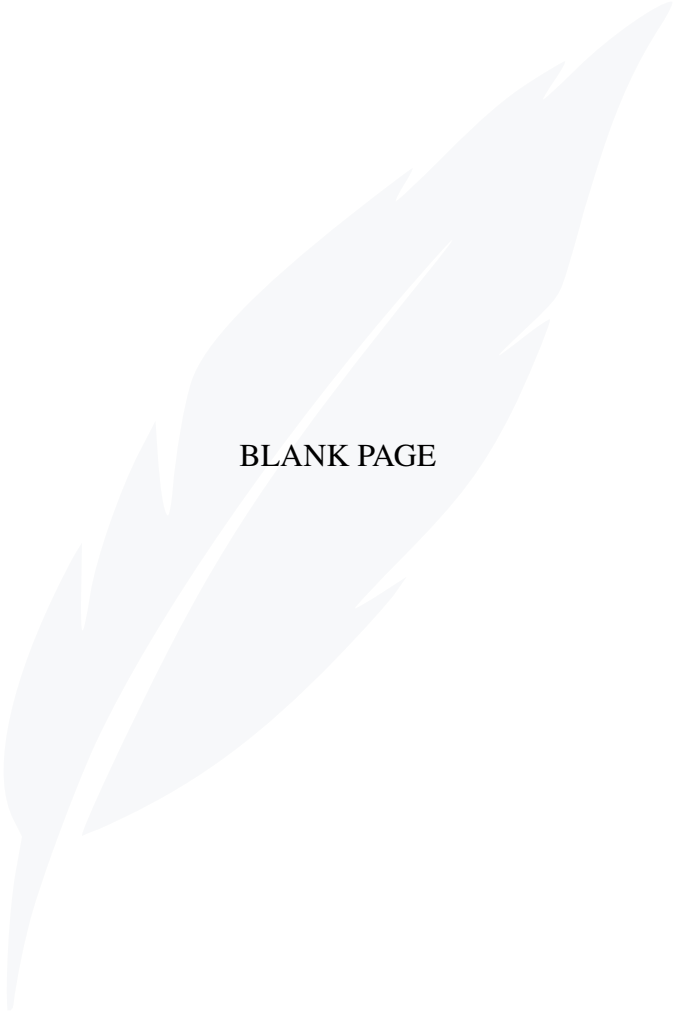
- demonstrate understanding of human experiences in texts
 - analyse, explain and assess the ways human experiences are represented in texts
 - organise, develop and express ideas using language appropriate to audience, purpose and context
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Question 6 (20 marks)

To what extent does your prescribed text suggest that moments of uncertainty reveal both the fragility and resilience of human connections?

In your response, make close reference to your prescribed text.

End of paper



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English Advanced

Paper 1 — Texts and Human Experiences

Stimulus Booklet

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Text 1 Image



Text 2 Memoir extract

Extract from *The invention of Solitude*

There was a cable television in his grandfather's apartment, with more channels than A. had ever known existed. Whenever he turned it on, there seemed to be a baseball game in progress. Not only was he able to follow the Yankees and Mets of New York, but the Red Sox of Boston, the Phillies of Philadelphia, and the Braves of Atlanta. Not to speak of the little bonuses occasionally provided during the afternoon: the games from the Japanese major leagues, for example (and his fascination with the constant beating of the drums during the course of the game), or, even more strangely, the Little League championships from Long Island. To immerse himself in these games was to fill his mind striving to enter a place of pure form. Despite the agitation on the field, baseball offered itself to him as an image of that which does not move, and therefore a place where his mind could be at rest, secure in its refuge against the mutabilities of the world.

He had spent his entire childhood playing it. From the first muddy days in early March to the last frozen afternoons of late October. He had played well, with an almost obsessive devotion. Not only had it given him a feeling for his own possibilities, convinced him that he was not entirely hopeless in the eyes of others, but it had been the thing that drew him out from the solitary enclosures of his early childhood. It had initiated him into the world of the other, but at the same time it was something he could also keep within himself. Baseball was a terrain rich in potential for reverie. He fantasized about it continually, projecting himself into a New York Giants uniform and trotting out to his position at third base in the Polo Grounds, with the crowd cheering wildly at the mention of his name over the loudspeakers. Day after day, he would come home from school and throw a tennis ball against the steps of his house, pretending that each gesture was a part of the World Series game unfolding in his head. It always came down to two outs in the bottom of the ninth, a man on base, the Giants trailing by one. He was always the batter, and he always hit the game-winning homerun.

As he sat through those long summer days in his grandfather's apartment, he began to see that the power of baseball was for him the power of memory. Memory in both senses of the word: as a catalyst for remembering his own life and as an artificial structure for ordering the historical past. 1960, for example, was the year Kennedy was elected president; it was also the year of A's Bar Mitzvah, the year he supposedly reached manhood. But the first image that springs to his mind when 1960 is mentioned is Bill Mazeroski's homerun that beat the Yankees in the World Series. He can still see the ball soaring over the Forbes Field fence—that high, dark barrier, so densely cluttered with white numbers—and by recalling the sensations of that moment, that abrupt and stunning instant of pleasure, he is able to re-enter his own past, to stand in a world that would otherwise be lost to him.

Inevitably, A.'s memories of baseball were connected with his memories of his grandfather. It was his grandfather who had taken him to his first game, had talked to him about the old players, had shown him that baseball was as much about talk as it was about watching. As a little boy, A. would be dropped off at the office on Fifty-seventh Street, play around with the typewriters and adding machines until his grandfather was ready to leave, and then walk out with him for a leisurely stroll down Broadway. The ritual always included a few rounds of Pokerino in one of the amusement arcades, a quick lunch, and then the subway—to one of the city ball parks.

Now, with his grandfather disappearing into death, they continued to talk about baseball. It was the one subject they could still come to as equals. Each time he visited the hospital, A. would buy a copy of the New York Post, and then sit by the old man's bed, reading to him about the games of the day before. It was his last contact with the outside world, and his eyes closed. Anything else would have been too much.

Paul Auster



Text 3 Prose fiction extract

Our Parents Are Our Future

People often ask me: How can we make sure our loved ones are prepared for life's joys and challenges? And my answer is always the same: You, the child, have to step back. You have to *let go*. You have to allow your parents to make mistakes – that's the only way he or she will learn. You have to let your parent get her heart broken by a man in her assisted living facility who she thinks is Warren Beatty*. You have to let your parent slip and fall on the playground when he is wandering there, lost, after setting out on an errand he can't recall. You have to let your parent give the wrong answer, because otherwise how will he or she ever really know who Ariana Grande is?

You don't want to smother your parent. She may be calling you several times a day, but, trust me, if you don't pick up she'll figure it out. He'll remember the nine-digit numerical passcode to the Wi-Fi network your brother installed. Or find a way to stop the home stair-lift from going up and down the stairs, over and over, while he is sitting on it. She is perfectly capable of turning off an accidentally triggered burglar alarm herself, or with the help of the police, when they arrive.

Many people think hovering and love are one and the same. That's just not true. There's a difference between inserting oneself and offering encouragement. There's a difference between setting up a LinkedIn account for your parent and suggesting, "You should get on LinkedIn, Dad. No, not Linked *On*. Did you seriously think it was called LinkedOn? Ha ha ha, wait one sec – I have to text that to Emily."

You can't micromanage your parent. You have to sit back and let her file two tax returns for the same year because she forgot she already filled one out. You can't intervene every time your parent plants the entire bag of expensive chia seeds you gave her in her flower garden. And both of you will see benefits. Be honest – it wouldn't be so bad if the hour you spend every two weeks speaking to a parent could be redirected towards a more fulfilling hobby, like re-watching "Buffy the Vampire Slayer" episodes while scrolling through a work spread-sheet.

Some of my readers have written in to say that, if they adopted this approach they would feel like 'bad children'. Let's ease up on the shaming language! The only truly 'bad child' is one who shelters a parent from important truths – for example, that the mailman's name is nothing like Roger.

When I am feeling down, I like to stop by the shuffleboard court at my local park. I watch the people playing there, making slow, deliberate movements with the use of walkers or cranes, staring down at the board for minutes on end, seemingly without comprehension, saying loudly to one another, "What?! What?!" I look at them and think the whole world is at their wrinkled fingertips! Then the sun appears through the clouds, the players aren't sure whose turn it is, and I smile sadly, but proudly, knowing that, one day, they won't need us anymore. And at the end of my life, if there's some sort of final judgement, I will look back and say, "Hey, if nothing else, I raised two adults who grew all the way into feeble-minded octogenarians."

Cora Frazier

Text 4 Poem

What my mornings look like off meds

morning after morning
the earth buffers in wait
for the rising of the sun
my waking exhale
is really a lamentation
as I turn to water the lily plant,
the snake plant & the cactus
it is a miracle they're still green
sprouting new leaves and spikes
my intentions as delicate as the
irony that hides its crooked hands
sometimes the body of water
is not a body of water
it is the miracle
of being almost consumed
often I have wandered into my kitchen
observing the lily plant's habit of playing comatose
despite my daily waterings
at the rising of the sun
I fingered at the edge of the chewed off plant
endlessly
my heart is tender
my mouth is not
I have missed many miracles of my own mornings
just like the dishonest plant
sprouting new and green leaves
when my hand is no longer heavy
the watering can abandoned
the risperidone* worn off

* A type of antipsychotic medication, used to treat conditions such as schizophrenia.

Iyanuoluwa Adenle

Text 5 Nonfiction extract

Extract from *The Life to Come*

He had been back in Sydney for four years and still swam gratefully in its impersonal ease. In Melbourne, where George had lived since he was six, he had wanted to write about modernism in Australian fiction for his PhD. After some difficulty, a professor who would admit to having once read an Australian novel was found. At their first meeting, she handed George a reading list made up of French and German philosophers. When George settled down to read these texts, he discovered something astonishing: the meaning of each word was clear and the meaning of sentences baffled. Insignificant yet crucial words like ‘however’ and ‘which’— words whose meaning was surely beyond dispute—had been deployed in ways that made no sense. It was as unnerving as if George had seen a sunset in his east-facing window, and for a while it was as mesmeric as any disturbance to the order of things. When despair threatened, he transferred his scholarship to a university in Sydney. There, George read novels and books about novels and was wildly happy. He taught a couple of tutorials to supplement his scholarship. Recently, with his thesis more or less out of the way, he had begun to write a novel at night. A verandah with archways ran along the upper floor on the river side of the house. That was where George ate his meals and sometimes came to sit very early, as the park detached itself from the night. Koels called, and currawongs — the birds who had whistled over his childhood. Fifteen minutes by train from the centre of the city, he lived among trees, bird song, Greeks. The Greeks, arriving forty years earlier, had seen paradise: cheap real estate, sunlight for their stunted children. Fresh from civil war and starvation, they were too ignorant to grasp what every Australian knew: this was the wrong side of Sydney. Where was the beach?

There were mornings when George left the house at sunrise, crossed the river and turned into a road that ran beside the quarried-out side of a hill. The sandstone was sheer and largely obscured by greenery: giant gum trees fanned against the rock, and native figs, vines, scrub. Brick bungalows cowered at the base of the cliff and skulked on the ridge above—it seemed an affront for which they would all be punished. In the moist, grey summer dawns, George felt that he was walking into a book he had read long ago. The grainy light was a presage. Something was coming — rain, for certain, and a catastrophe.

Michelle de Kretser