



Year 12 English Standard and Advanced

Paper 1: Area of Study - Discovery

2015 HSC Mini Examination

General Instructions

- Reading time: 10 minutes
- Working time: 80 minutes
- Attempt Sections 1 and 2
- Write using black or blue pen
- Do NOT write in pencil
- Complete all sections in different booklets
- Write your student number on the front of each booklet

Total marks – 45

Section 1 – Reading (5%) Pages 3-8

15 marks

- Allow about 40 minutes for this section

Section 2 – Writing (5%) Page 9

15 marks

- Allow about 40 minutes for this section

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Section I

15 marks

Attempt Question 1

Allow about 40 minutes for this section

Answer the question in a SEPARATE writing booklet. Extra writing booklets are available.

In your answers you will be assessed on how well you:

- demonstrate understanding of the way perceptions of discovery are shaped in and through texts
 - describe, explain and analyse the relationship between language, text and context
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Question 1 (15 marks)

Examine **Texts one, two, three and four** carefully and then answer the questions on page 8.

Text one – Photograph



The Chace Children's Discovery Library at Providence Public Library, Rhode Island, USA

Text two – Poem

Pangur Bán

*written by a student of the monastery of
Carinthia in the eighth century C.E.*

I and Pangur Bán my cat,
'Tis a like task we are at:
Hunting mice is his delight,
Hunting words I sit all night.

Better far than praise of men
'Tis to sit with book and pen;
Pangur bears me no ill-will,
He too plies his simple skill.

'Tis a merry task to see
At our tasks how glad are we,
When at home we sit and find
Entertainment to our mind.

Oftentimes a mouse will stray
In the hero Pangur's way;
Oftentimes my keen thought set
Takes a meaning in its net.

'Gainst the wall he sets his eye
Full and fierce and sharp and sly;
'Gainst the wall of knowledge I
All my little wisdom try.

When a mouse darts from its den,
O how glad is Pangur then!
O what gladness do I prove
When I solve the doubts I love!

So in peace our task we ply,
Pangur Bán, my cat, and I;
In our arts we find our bliss,
I have mine and he has his.

Practice every day has made
Pangur perfect in his trade;
I get wisdom day and night
Turning darkness into light.

TRANSLATED FROM THE GAELIC BY ROBIN FLOWER

Text three – Memoir extract

My classmates had either discovered novels years before I had or had happily given up the reading of fiction because they were going on to study science or medicine at university. Ironically, it was at this time that I discovered reading. I picked up a copy of *Lolita* because I had heard about the controversial film but I gave up after a couple of pages because the writing style was too highbrow for me, and, as I feared, the bulk and attention to detail of a novel like Nabokov's was too overwhelming. A few days later I picked it up again and read it through in one sitting. It is difficult to convey my excitement. I had never struck a writing style so artificial and particular, as if every word was a search for exactitude, yet at the same time it was so funny and so rich that it was like eating plum pudding. I became as obsessed with his work as I had been with Henry Mancini or Adam Clayton Powell. I sought out all his novels and in one of the most exquisite summers of my youth read everything of his that I could get my hands on. It was as if I had regarded novels as two-dimensional simulacra of reality whereas his novels were a perfect hologram, three-dimensional and yet artificial...

[At university] I loathed going to the library and I had no interest in my tutorial topics. If anybody was to blame it was probably Nabokov, who tempted me away from the straight and narrow path of the syllabus. Like the child running away from the guardian angel in one of the homily pictures in Brenda's living room, so I hurried towards the cliff edge where beautiful exotic flowers such as Firbank, Faulkner, Fitzgerald and Nathanael West grew. From someone whose knowledge of novels a year before was Biggles and the trash of Irving Wallace's *The Man*, I was now engaged on a crash course where each new novel was a personal revelation. I was in a constant state of elation or, if you like, imaginative arousal, as one novelist led to another like a baton changing hands during a relay (with an occasional fumble when I reached out and found myself with the sloppy prose of Kerouac or unintentional comedy of Hemingway's parody of manliness). These writers were not on the university syllabus and so I found myself on a course of my own that occasionally ran parallel to the official ones but never actually met or intersected.

LOUIS NOWRA

Text four – Feature article extract

The Answer Man

An ancient poem was rediscovered—and the world swerved.

When I was a student, I used to go at the end of the school year to the Yale Co-op to see what I could find to read over the summer. I had very little pocket money, but the bookstore would routinely sell its unwanted titles for ridiculously small sums. They were jumbled together in bins through which I would rummage until something caught my eye. On one of my forays, I was struck by an extremely odd paperback cover... The book, a prose translation of Lucretius' two-thousand-year-old poem "On the Nature of Things" ("De Rerum Natura"), was marked down to ten cents, and I bought it as much for the cover as for the classical account of the material universe.

Ancient physics is not a particularly promising subject for vacation reading, but sometime over the summer I idly picked up the book. I found it thrilling. It persuasively laid out what seemed to be a strikingly modern understanding of the world. Every page reflected a core scientific vision—a vision of atoms randomly moving in an infinite universe—imbued with a poet's sense of wonder in Lucretius it welled up out of a recognition that we are made of the same matter as the stars and the oceans and all things else.

As it turned out, there was a line from this work to modernity, though not a direct one: nothing is ever so simple. There were innumerable forgettings, disappearances, recoveries, and dismissals. The poem was lost, apparently irrevocably, and then found. This retrieval, after many centuries, is something one is tempted to call a miracle. But the author of the poem in question did not believe in miracles. He thought that nothing could violate the laws of nature. He posited instead what he called a "swerve"—Lucretius' principal word for it was *clinamen*—an unexpected, unpredictable movement of matter.

The poem's rediscovery is a story of how the world swerved in a new direction. The agent of change was not a revolution, an implacable army at the gates, or landfall on an unknown continent. When it occurred, nearly six hundred years ago, the key event was muffled and almost invisible, tucked away behind walls in a remote place. A short, genial, cannily alert man in his late thirties reached out one day, took a very old manuscript off a shelf, and saw with excitement what he had discovered. That was all; but it was enough.

Text four continues on page 7

By that time, Lucretius' ideas had been out of circulation for centuries. In the Roman Empire, the literacy rate was never high, and after the Sack of Rome, in 410 C.E., it began to plummet. It is possible for a whole culture to turn away from reading and writing. As the empire crumbled and Christianity became ascendant, as cities decayed, trade declined, and an anxious populace scanned the horizon for barbarian armies, the ancient system of education fell apart. What began as downsizing went on to wholesale abandonment. Schools closed, libraries and academies shut their doors, professional grammarians and teachers of rhetoric found themselves out of work, scribes were no longer given manuscripts to copy.

By chance, copies of "On the Nature of Things" somehow made it into a few monastery libraries... By chance, a monk laboring in a scriptorium somewhere or other in the ninth century copied the poem before it moldered away. And, by chance, this copy escaped fire and flood and the teeth of time for some five hundred years until, one day in 1417, it came into the hands of a man who proudly called himself Poggio Florentinus, Poggio the Florentine.

Italians had been obsessed with book hunting ever since the poet and scholar Petrarch brought glory on himself around 1330 by piecing together Livy's monumental "History of Rome" and finding forgotten masterpieces by Cicero and Propertius. Petrarch's achievement had inspired others to seek out lost classics that had been lying unread, often for centuries. The recovered texts were copied, edited, commented upon, and eagerly exchanged, conferring distinction on those who had found them and forming the basis for what became known as the "study of the humanities." The "humanists," as those who were devoted to this study were called, knew from carefully poring over the texts that had survived from classical Rome that many once famous books or parts of books were still missing.

As a humanist, Poggio had quite a few accomplishments. But it was in January, 1417, when Poggio found himself in a monastery library, that he made his greatest discovery.

STEPHEN GREENBLATT

End of Text four

In your answer you will be assessed on how well you:

- demonstrate understanding of the way perceptions of discovery are shaped in and through texts
 - describe, explain and analyse the relationship between language, text and context
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Question 1 (continued)

Text one – Photograph

(a) Describe how the library's name is reinforced by the design of its entranceway. **2**

Text two – Poem

(b) Why is Pangur Bán described as a 'hero'? **2**

Text three – Memoir extract

(c) How does the author use similes to evoke his sense of excitement? **3**

Text four – Feature article extract

(d) Explain how the author emphasises the role of chance in making discoveries. **3**

Texts one, two, three and four – Photograph, Poem, Memoir extract and Feature article extract

(e) Analyse how TWO of these texts portray the impact of discoveries. **5**

End of Question 1

Section II

15 marks

Attempt Question 2

Allow about 40 minutes for this section

Answer the question in a SEPARATE writing booklet. Extra writing booklets are available.

In your answers you will be assessed on how well you:

- express understanding of discovery in the context of your studies
 - organise, develop and express ideas using language appropriate to audience, purpose and context
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Question 2 (15 marks)

Compose a piece of imaginative writing that explores the impact of a discovery made while reading.

Use ONE of the phrases below as a central element of your writing. Identify which choice you have made by writing it at the top of your response.

darkness into light

OR

a personal revelation

OR

book hunting