

Section 1

20 marks

Attempt Question 1

Allow about 45 minutes for this section

Answer the question in a SEPARATE writing booklet

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

- Demonstrate an understanding of the way perceptions of *human experience* are shaped in and through texts
 - Describe, explain and analyse the relationship between language, text and context
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Question 1 (20 marks)

Examine **Texts One, Two, Three and Four** carefully and then answer the questions on page 7.

Text 1 – Visual image – “Freedom from Want”, painted by Norman Rockwell (1943)



Text 2- Editorial – “If language tells us who we are, then who am I?”, written by Stan Grant (2016)

My father says language tells us not just who we are but where we are.

He is a wise man, it is wisdom that comes from the certainty of being. He is a Wiradjuri man: born and raised on his country, the country on which he lives still.

I have never known my father to have a crisis of identity. To him, being Wiradjuri is as natural as breathing.

My father has language that speaks to his sense of place. The birds, the rocks, the trees, the hills and the waters have names that echo through millennia. To hear these words fall from his tongue is to know who he is and where he is.

Balladhu Wiradjuri gibir. Dyriramadalinya badhu Wiradjuri. I am a Wiradjuri man. I am proud to be Wiradjuri.

My father can speak those words with unflinching belief. There is no dissonance between word and man and place. In a country of many tongues that speak of other lands, who can say this? I am who I am and I am from here.

It is a certainty I don't quite possess; I don't seek to possess. My life has been lived in the worlds in between.

If language tells us not who we are but where we are, then who am I? Where am I when my language is English?

I have made my life, my career, out of a love of the English language. I have had a lifelong passion for words and books. I love the rhythm and the musical quality of a beautifully constructed sentence.

This is the language of Shakespeare. Who could not find the divine in the bards sonnets?

*“If I could write the beauty of your eyes,
And in fresh numbers number all your graces,
The age to come would say ‘This poet lies;
Such heavenly touches ne’er touched earthly faces.”*

This is the language that sets loose the imagination of Bob Dylan.

*“They’re selling postcards of the hanging, they’re painting the passports brown.
The beauty parlour is filled with sailors, the circus is in town.”*

Dickens, Hemingway, Twain, these were the companions of my childhood. Later came James Baldwin, an African American writer who set my mind and soul ablaze.

My travels have opened up a world of languages and the people who speak them. My closest friend overseas was an Iranian cameraman steeped in Persian poetry.

My Pakistani friends introduced me to the music of Nusrat Fateh Ali Khan. I had no need of interpretation to feel the power of his words.

I have the same feeling listening to the Tuareg rock band Tinariwen.

Other languages have words that speak with a force that eludes their English equivalent.

The Arabic word for justice – *adl* – means to put things in order, to return to their rightful place. That has always felt more profound to me than our western ideas of fairness, equity or objectivity.

I love how dissident Chinese – their thoughts and words – monitored and censored by the Communist party, play with language and exploit ambiguous meaning.

The underground rock band Car Sick Cars have a song called Zhongnanhai – at once the name of the official residence and headquarters of the party leadership and a brand of cigarettes.

Being exposed to new languages, meeting different people, understanding how they see and express their world and the world around them has enriched me. These friendships have made me a better person.

I can speak some Chinese, some Arabic and some French. I will spend my lifetime struggling and failing to master English.

But Wiradjuri – the language of my people – was never a big part of my life. As a boy it wasn't spoken, the old people kept their silence. We fashioned a patois – a creole mix of Wiradjuri and English.

We had words for white people and police and food and animals; it was a language apart, it belonged to us, likely incomprehensible to others.

But it wasn't Wiradjuri. It was a language like us – people clinging to often shattered traditions, part of an old world and not yet finding a place in the new.

Language tells us not just who we are but where we are.

This Australia had supplanted us. Our languages fell silent as surely as our people were forced from our lands and herded onto reserves and missions, our lives controlled.

My father's grandfather was arrested and locked up after police overheard him speaking Wiradjuri to his grandson in the main street of town.

Now my father has kept faith with his grandfather. The old man's language is spoken again. My father is teaching Wiradjuri to a new generation.

To some Indigenous people recovering language is like recovering self. They see it not just as reasserting their blackness but rejecting whiteness.

Some reclaim or create "traditional" names, reaching back to an ancestral past that feels more authentic than the names of the colonisers they were born with.

Here is the struggle for identity of a people whose identities have been defined – indeed legislated – by others with often devastating personal cost. Just who is and what is Aboriginal remains contested.

Language and names are markers of identity. This is how we introduce ourselves to the world; how we explain ourselves to each other. I admire this conscious effort to keep themselves and their people alive in the world, but I am wary too.

I am who I am and I am born of a country whose history is what it is. My struggle is to live free to determine my identity unconstrained by the expectations or definitions of others.

Reviving Indigenous languages is in itself a response to a history of oppression and denial. It can be liberating and assertive but like all identity it is a construction.

Identity – to me – is not a singular thing.

The economist and philosopher Amartya Sen has warned of what he calls a solitarist identity: “Our humanity gets savagely challenged when the divisions of the world are unified into one allegedly dominant system of classification.”

Sen argues that this makes the world “inflammable”.

Like Sen, I prefer a layered identity; I am the sum of many parts.

Inspired by my father and to honour his legacy and the traditions of our people I have learned more of the Wiradjuri language. I am proud when I see my children – raised in China and the Middle East as much as Australia – finding pride in being Wiradjuri.

Yet English is my first language.

In English I find the words to describe myself. I am a Wiradjuri and Kamilaroi man, an Australian of this country’s first peoples, connected to deep traditions, seeking to live in a fascinating world.

In this world I keep a place for myself, my ancestors and my family. In the words of Shakespeare in Titus Andronicus: “For all the water in the ocean cannot turn the swan’s black legs to white.”

Text 3- poem- ““Hope” is the thing with feathers”, written by Emily Dickinson (1891)

“Hope” is the thing with feathers -
That perches in the soul -
And sings the tune without the words -
And never stops - at all -

And sweetest - in the Gale - is heard -
And sore must be the storm -
That could abash the little Bird
That kept so many warm -

I’ve heard it in the chilliest land -
And on the strangest Sea -
Yet - never - in Extremity,
It asked a crumb - of me.

Text 4- Prose - "Sticks", George Saunders (1995)

Every year Thanksgiving night we flocked out behind Dad as he dragged the Santa suit to the road and draped it over a kind of crucifix he'd built out of metal pole in the yard. Super Bowl week the pole was dressed in a jersey and Rod's helmet and Rod had to clear it with Dad if he wanted to take the helmet off. On the Fourth of July the pole was Uncle Sam, on Veteran's Day a soldier, on Halloween a ghost. The pole was Dad's only concession to glee. We were allowed a single Crayola from the box at a time. One Christmas Eve he shrieked at Kimmie for wasting an apple slice. He hovered over us as we poured ketchup saying: good enough good enough good enough. Birthday parties consisted of cupcakes, no ice cream. The first time I brought a date over she said: what's with your dad and that pole? and I sat there blinking.

We left home, married, had children of our own, found the seeds of meanness blooming also within us. Dad began dressing the pole with more complexity and less discernible logic. He draped some kind of fur over it on Groundhog Day and lugged out a floodlight to ensure a shadow. When an earthquake struck Chile he lay the pole on its side and spray painted a rift in the earth. Mom died and he dressed the pole as Death and hung from the crossbar photos of Mom as a baby. We'd stop by and find odd talismans from his youth arranged around the base: army medals, theater tickets, old sweatshirts, tubes of Mom's makeup. One autumn he painted the pole bright yellow. He covered it with cotton swabs that winter for warmth and provided offspring by hammering in six crossed sticks around the yard. He ran lengths of string between the pole and the sticks, and taped to the string letters of apology, admissions of error, pleas for understanding, all written in a frantic hand on index cards. He painted a sign saying LOVE and hung it from the pole and another that said FORGIVE? and then he died in the hall with the radio on and we sold the house to a young couple who yanked out the pole and the sticks and left them by the road on garbage day.

Question 1 - Text 1 - image

How has Rockwell communicated his perspective on the importance of collective human experience?

3 marks

Question 2 - Text 2 - editorial

Examine how Grant represents the relationship between language and one's sense of identity.

3 marks

Question 3 - Text 3 - poem

How does the poem capture the impact of hope to the individual human experience?

4 marks

Question 4 – Text 4 – prose

How does the story evoke the experience that 'one person's treasure is another person's trash'?

4 marks

Question 5 – Text 1, 2, 3, and 4

Compare how TWO of these texts represent human qualities and emotions associated with, or arising from, these experiences.

6 marks

Section II

20 marks

Attempt Question 1

Allow about 45 minutes for this section

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 1

Through the telling and receiving of stories, we become more aware of ourselves and our shared human experiences.

Explore this statement with close reference to your prescribed text.