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**2020
TRIAL HIGHER SCHOOL
CERTIFICATE
EXAMINATION**

English Advanced

Paper 1 – Common Module: Texts and Human Experiences

Total marks – 40

General Instructions

section

- Reading time – 10 minutes
- Working time – 1 hour 30 mins
- Write using black pen
- Write your Student Number on every answer booklet

section

Section I Page 2
20 marks

- Attempt Question 1
- Allow about 45 minutes for this

Section II Page 3
20 marks

- Attempt Question 2
- Allow about 45 minutes for this

SECTION I

Text 1 –

Poem At

the

Funeral

Brother and sister take polar bears.
Brother parks his between
two F-150s but sister's won't
stay, instead follows her to the
front row of fold-out seats and
licks her wrists
when hungry, so she digs through her pockets
for bits of raw seal. After the ceremony, she feeds
brother's bear too. Family members say nothing
because there aren't any rules against bears.
Brother and sister take polar bears
for a walk, all the way to the Arctic and back.
Bundled to their chins, they watch
their bears ask other bears why
it's so cold here. And other
bears say it could be colder.
Sun a gravestone.
Ice the body being buried. Time
for the reception, sister finds hers scraping its
claws through layers of white to brown, scraping
an H, an E,
Help, Heaven, Hello, and
brother can't find his at all.
Sister takes hers into the funeral home and for a
snack it eats its whole plate, crunch of ceramics.
Mother says nothing
because their father is
dead.
Mother says nothing but feeds the bear
his shoes, his wallet, a wedding invitation he left magnetised
to the refrigerator which now sits filled with fish. And sister hates the
bear and the way it smells

but falls asleep on a bench with her face in its fur, rubs
its ears now she's out of seal,
does nothing to make it leave though she
wonders why it stays.

maggie olszewski

Olszewski, Maggie (2003), *At the Funeral*. Accessed June 2020. <https://poems.poetrysociety.org.uk/poems/at-the-funeral/>

Text 2 – Nonfiction extract

The Power of Babel

What do I mean by “language as we know it”? To understand this requires an awareness of two things. First, human language differs sharply in a qualitative sense from the various levels of communicative ability, marvelous in themselves, possessed by some animals. Bees can tell other bees where honey is located by a butt-wagging dance. Chimpanzees and other apes can be trained to use a rudimentary kind of sign language. Parrots have been trained to match words to concepts. Some animals have specific cries warning their comrades against predators. We have all seen how dogs can learn to recognize a dozen or so words (you had to make sure to always spell the word *walk* in the presence of one dog I knew, because otherwise even saying “I think she wanted him to take a walk on the wild side” would lead him to spend the next two minutes jumping in ecstatic frustration waiting to be taken outside).

However, human language is unique in its ability to communicate or convey an open-ended volume of concepts: we are not limited to talking about exactly where honey is, to warning each other that something is coming to try and eat us, or to matching vocalizations to fifty-odd basic concepts pertaining to our immediate surroundings and usually focusing on bananas and desire. Neither bees, chimps, parrots, nor dogs could produce or perceive a sentence such as “Did you know that there are squid fifty feet and longer in the deep sea? They have only been seen as corpses washed up on beaches.” Because animals can only communicate about either things in the immediate environment or a small set of things genetically programmed (“The honey is over there,” “A leopard is coming,” “Banana!”), they could not tell each other about giant squid even if they had seen one, nor could they “talk” about corpses even if they had seen plenty. Then there is the specificity for which human language is designed: no animal could specify that the squid have been seen in the past, rather than being seen right now, nor could they communicate the concept of “knowing” in “Did you know...?”

Not only are no animals remotely capable of communication on this level (and, if you think about it, even those sentences about giant squid are not exactly Proust) but none even approximate it: there are no animals that could even pull off “Once I met a huge animal” or the concepts of “washed up on” or even the concept of “once” in the sense of “one instance in the past.” There is a vast gulf in complexity, subtlety, and flexibility between human beings and other animals in regard to language ability, and that gulf is a large part of why humans have been such a successful species of such disproportionate influence on this planet.

The second thing to keep in mind about “language as we know it” is that language is as sophisticated in all human cultures and is thus truly a trait of the species ... In other words, in this book, “language” is not shorthand for just the languages encoded in newspapers, serving as vehicles of great literature, used on the Internet, and taught badly by Berlitz (for decades, the first sentence in the Berlitz English self-teacher for Spanish speakers was the indispensable and warmly natural “Have you a book?”).

One might quite reasonably suppose that a First World culture with tall buildings, cappuccino, and Pokémon would have a grammatically “richer” language, necessary to convey the particular complexities inherent to our treadmill to oblivion, whereas preliterate cultures such as, say, those in the Amazon rain forest would have “simpler” languages for simpler lives. “Bunga bunga bunga!!!!” as the “natives” say in old cartoons.

Ironically, however, if there is any difference along these lines, it is the opposite: the more remote and “primitive” the culture, the more likely the language is to be bristling with constructions and declensions and exceptions and bizarre sounds that leave an English speaker wondering how anyone could actually speak the language without running the risk of a stroke. Meanwhile, many of the hotshot “airport” languages are rather simple in many ways in comparison with the “National Geographic” cultures’ languages: English, Spanish, and Japanese grammar are “Romper Room” compared with almost any language spoken by the hunter-gatherers who first inhabited the Americas. In short, one could inform one’s friend about the giant squid and how they have been encountered in all six thousand of the world’s languages with all of the nuance and precision with which we could express these ideas in English.

john mcwhorter

Extract from *The Power of Babel*

Text 3 – Autobiography extract

Sunrise West

To the south of my city of the waterless river, in the valley of open secrets, where the very winds dread their own lament, behind a thin forest of sad all-knowing trees, lay the kingdom of death.

We arrived at Birkenau in the middle of August 1944, a summery morning like any other, yet not like any other at all. I can still see the troupe of unreal men in striped rags, lingering in a nearby field like an ensemble of resigned clowns on a condemned stage, raking grass. In my heart's innermost chamber, enveloped in tattered years, there still hang the pictures of my mother's terrified eyes, my father's bleak gesture of farewell, my sister Ida's numb paralysis, and the horror of my two little nieces, six and four, standing like adults in the queue with their arms up, awaiting Selection. And I cannot erase from my memory the sight of my sister Pola three days later, stretched out on the wires of the electric fence, her head shaved, her hands in supplication, her mouth kissing death...

Birkenau was the entry and selection point for the Auschwitz-Birkenau complex, and an extermination camp in its own right. We were welcomed by a man dressed in black. His manner was efficient but casual, as his white-gloved finger nonchalantly showed most of my family the way to the gas. Pola and me he directed to his right, into that crowded other universe of soulless bodies.

I was thin, but upright and passably fit. My hair, bleached by the sun, was combed back off my forehead. I was about two weeks short of my twenty-second birthday.

Within the blink of an eye I became bestially free, a lone caged animal on the prowl. Was this a prerequisite for survival? I am not trying to explain, there is nothing to elucidate. The shadows of a life cunningly hide from light. There is an irresistible will in all of us: the will to live at any cost. Yet such a thing can exist only where life has a meaning, and this place, unstable as water, graveyard of human decency, had no meaning, no meaning at all.

jacob g. rosenberg

Extract from *Sunrise West*

Rosenberg, Jacob G (2007), *Sunrise West*, Griffin Press, Melbourne, pp 13–14.

Text 4 – Feature article extract

I have felt hopelessness over climate change. Here is how we move past the immense grief.

‘Human society under urgent threat from loss of Earth’s natural life.’ ‘The planet has seen sudden warming before, it wiped out almost everything.’

These are some of the headlines that bombard us at ever-increasing rates.

Each day new reports and household names such as David Attenborough warn of “irreversible damage to the natural world and the collapse of our societies”. The United Nations says we have 12 years to avoid climate catastrophe. We are also amidst the world’s sixth mass extinction, the worst since the time of the dinosaurs.

This reality is taking its toll on our mental health, especially among younger people who are understandably losing hope for their futures on a hotter planet. We are seeing the rise of what is known as climate or ecological grief. This grief summarises feelings of loss, anger, hopelessness, despair and distress caused by climate change and ecological decline.

We are facing a state of continual unfolding loss, compounding impacts on our psyches. It could be loss of animals and plants we hold dear or lifestyles we have grown accustomed to such as eating whatever we want whenever we want. As the time length between loss and impacts shorten, personal recovery times reduce. At the same time there is anxiety about what is still to come.

Yet there is no way to do justice to the threats we face without it being scary and provoking anxiety. How do we face up to these warnings without falling into apathy, denial or being evangelically optimistic? How do we find a way to confront our climate and ecological reality and yet respond in a meaningful, purposeful way?

Former UN climate chief Cristiana Figueres [sic] has argued the only way we can save the planet is with relentless, stubborn optimism. This is the kind of attitude that many of us are culturally trained to adopt, to keep looking on the bright side and remain hopeful.

Climate change and environmental movements have long been criticised for trying to motivate the population through negative narratives and doomsday scenarios. It is obvious how such framings can turn people off or at worse encourages [sic] a state of denial. As a result, we have seen much of the movement shift in recent years towards more positive narratives of climate hope and telling stories of change.

People also need agency to act to avoid feelings of apathy and hopelessness.

Acknowledging this, the last decade has seen a focus on what the individual can do to tackle climate change in their own life. This has largely resulted in a politically passive eco-modern citizen that is more concerned with energy-efficient technologies, light bulbs and recycling than dissent, protest and structural change. Personal guilt comes to the fore when the virtuous lists and sustainable resolutions are not kept up with, and the issue is again pushed out of mind.

What is less encouraged is to make space for sorrow and grieving for losses already occurring at a rapid rate in the natural world.

Eco-psychologist Joanna Macy teaches useful frameworks for facing up to disturbing realities and finding capacity for action. First there is the gratitude stage, which focuses our attention on those aspects of life and the world that nourish us. Then there is a stage that honours the pain that we are experiencing. The third and fourth stages relate to exploring new possibilities and finding practical actions to take.

The second stage of “honouring the pain” is one that is often skipped over, as we naturally seek to protect ourselves from negative feelings. But making space for grief can help us confront the reality we face head on, and instead of just looking on the bright side, find a way to move forward.

It would seem that more of us are starting to acknowledge and accept our climate grief. By doing so we create new ways of connecting to one another, to mourn for what we all love and are losing day by day.

Having studied and worked on climate change professionally for over 15 years now, I have increasingly noticed this grief emerge within myself.

I have noticed that my own self-defences are starting to show cracks. More accurately, my intellectual

and rational understanding of climate change has shifted to much more of an emotional and personal one. There have been several instances lately where the impacts of climate change have hit me hard and unexpectedly. Perhaps this is because I am now a father or because scientific projections I learned about 15 years ago are now unfolding quicker than imagined.

I am not alone. I have had numerous conversations where colleagues have broken down about the losses unfolding, whether it's the bleaching of the Great Barrier Reef, the fire ravaged forests of Tasmania, the fish deaths in the Murray, or more localised impacts.

In March I went to my local train station to watch 500 schoolkids gather to commute to Melbourne for the big school strike. I was surprised that I found myself moved to tears and overcome with emotion, and that I wasn't alone among the other adults there.

Last month I found myself crying when a platypus appeared in the creek down from our house. Standing on the bridge with my two young boys we watched it swim in a creek that has been tirelessly regenerated by the local friends group over at least 15 years. A creek, which for the past 150 years, flowed through a highly degraded landscape decimated by goldmining and agriculture.

What I find curious is that both these instances were essentially positive, inspiring moments. Yet they seemed to bring forth sadness or internalised grief that had been buried out of sight. But they provoked a different kind of hope, a hope stemming from witnessing the power of activated groups.

There are many reasons to feel that we are at a critical turning point. A turning point where we can create a positive vision for the future and are engaged in shaping it, rather than feeling disempowered and watching as an inevitable future of loss unfolds.

rob law

Extract from *I have felt hopelessness over climate change. Here is how we move past the immense grief.*

Law, Rob (2019), 'I have felt hopelessness over climate change. Here is how we move past the immense grief', *The Guardian*. Accessed June 2020 <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2019/may/09/i-have-felt-hopelessness-over-climate-change-here-is-how-we-move-past-the-immense-grief>

SECTION I

20 marks

Attempt Questions 1– 4

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

Question 1 (3 marks)

Text 1 – Poem

How is symbolism used in *At the Funeral* to represent the human experience of grief? 3

Question 2 (4 marks)

Text 2 – Nonfiction extract

In what ways has the author explored language as an analogy for the human experience in this extract? 4

Question 3 (5 marks)

Text 3 – Autobiography extract

Discuss how the experience of trauma has been depicted in this extract by the author. 5

Question 4 (8 marks)

Text 4 – Feature article extract and Text 1, Text 2 or Text 3

To what extent is the significance of hope explored in the feature article and ONE other text? 8
In your response, refer to the feature article and ONE other text from the Stimulus Booklet.

End of Question 4

SECTION II

20 marks

Attempt ONE question from Questions 5(a) – 5(n)

Allow about 45 minutes for this section

Answer the question in the Paper 1 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
-

Question 5 (20 marks)

Prose Fiction

(a) **Anthony Doerr, *All the Light We Cannot See***

How does *All The Light We Cannot See* illuminate the role of fate in the human experience?

OR

(b) **Amanda Lohrey, *Vertigo***

How does *Vertigo* illuminate the role of the environment in the human experience?

OR

(c) **George Orwell, *Nineteen Eighty-Four***

How does *Nineteen Eighty-Four* illuminate the role of fear in the human experience?

OR

(d) **Favel Parrett, *Past the Shallows***

How does *Past the Shallows* illuminate the role of relationships in the human experience?

OR

Poetry

(e) **Rosemary Dobson, *Rosemary Dobson Collected***

How does Dobson's poetry illuminate the role of shared perspectives in the human experience?

The prescribed poems are:

- * *Young Girl at a Window*
- * *Over the Hill*
- * *Summer's End*
- * *The Conversation*
- * *Cock Crow*

OR

(f) Kenneth Slessor, *Selected Poems*

How does Slessor's poetry illuminate the role of loneliness in the human experience?

The prescribed poems are:

- * *Wild Grapes*
- * *Gulliver*
- * *Out of Time*
- * *Vesper-Song of the Reverend Samuel Marsden*
- * *William Street*
- * *Beach Burial*

OR

Drama

(g) Jane Harrison, *Rainbow's End*, from Vivienne Cleven et al., *Contemporary Indigenous Plays*

How does *Rainbow's End* illuminate the role of culture in the human experience?

OR

(h) Arthur Miller, *The Crucible*

How does *The Crucible* illuminate the role of hysteria in the human experience?

OR

Shakespearean Drama

(i) William Shakespeare, *The Merchant of Venice*

How does *The Merchant of Venice* illuminate the role of justice in the human experience?

OR

Nonfiction

(j) Tim Winton, *The Boy Behind the Curtain*

How does *The Boy Behind the Curtain* illuminate the role of memory in the human experience?

The prescribed chapters are:

- * *Havoc: A Life in Accidents*
- * *Betsy*
- * *Twice on Sundays*
- * *The Wait and the Flow*
- * *The Demon Shark*
- * *Barefoot in the Temple of Art*

OR

(k) **Malala Yousafzai and Christina Lamb, *I am Malala***

How does *I Am Malala* illuminate the role of beliefs in the human experience?

OR

Film

(l) **Stephen Daldry, *Billy Elliot***

How does *Billy Elliot* illuminate the role of passion in the human experience?

OR

Media

(m) **Ivan O'Mahoney, *Go Back to Where You Came From***

How does *Go Back to Where You Came From* illuminate the role of compassion in the human experience?

OR

(n) **Lucy Walker, *Waste Land***

How does *Waste Land* illuminate the role of perspective in the human experience?