



Killara
HIGH SCHOOL

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Student Number

TRIAL HSC EXAMINATION 2020

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
- Write your student number in all writing booklets used

Total Marks:

40

Section I – 20 marks

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

Section II – 20 marks

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

Section II

20 marks

Attempt Question 6

Allow about 45 minutes for this section

Answer the question in the writing booklets provided. Extra 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)

What does your prescribed text suggest about the personal experience of seeking contentedness?

Respond with detailed reference to your prescribed text, *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, by George Orwell.

End of paper



TRIAL HSC EXAMINATION 2020

English Advanced

Paper 1 – Texts and Human Experiences

Stimulus Booklet

Section I

Text 1 - Illustration



'Happiness Kit' by John Holcroft

Text 2 – Magazine Article

An excerpt from **Pursuing Happiness** by John Lanchester

It is the year 100,000 B.C., and two hunter-gatherers are out hunter-gathering. Let's call them Ig and Og. Ig comes across a new kind of bush, with bright-red berries. He is hungry, as most hunter-gatherers are most of the time, and the berries look pretty, so he pops a handful in his mouth. Og merely puts some berries in his goatskin bag. A little later, they come to a cave. It looks spooky and Og doesn't want to go in, but Ig pushes on ahead and has a look around. There's nothing there except a few bones. On the way home, an unfamiliar rustling in the undergrowth puts Og in a panic, and he freezes, but Ig figures that whatever is rustling probably isn't any bigger and uglier than he is, so he blunders on, and whatever was doing the rustling scuttles off into the undergrowth. The next morning, Og finally tries the berries, and they do indeed taste O.K. He decides to go back and collect some more.

Now, Ig is clearly a lot more fun than Og. But Og is much more likely to pass on his genes to the next generation of hunter-gatherers. The downside to Ig's fearlessness is the risk of sudden death. One day, the berries will be poisonous, the bear that lives in the cave will be at home, and the rustling will be a snake or a tiger or some other vertebrate whose bite can turn septic. Ig needs only to make one mistake. From the Darwinian point of view, Og is the man to bet on. He is cautious and prone to anxiety, and these are highly adaptive traits when it comes to survival.

We are the children of Og. For most of the time that anatomically modern humans have existed—a highly contested figure, but let's call it a million years—it has made good adaptive sense to be fearful, cautious, timid. As Jonathan Haidt, a professor of psychology at the University of Virginia, puts it, "bad is stronger than good" is an important principle of design by evolution.

This is one of the reasons that human beings make heavy weather of being happy. We have been hardwired to emphasize the negative, and, for most of human history, there has been a lot of

the negative to emphasize. Hobbes's description of life in the state of nature as "nasty, brutish and short" is so familiar we can forget that, for most of the people who have ever lived, it was objectively true. Most humans have had little control over their fate; a sniffle, a graze, or a bad piece of meat, let alone a major emergency such as having a baby—all were, for most of our ancestors, potentially lethal.

Philosophers have expounded on happiness for a long time, but only relatively recently have psychologists taken much of an interest. One of the key questions is whether happiness is a default setting of the brain. That is to say, are we, left to our own devices, and provided with sufficient food and freedom and control over our circumstances, naturally happy?

The answer proposed by positive psychology seems to be: It depends. The simplest kind of unhappiness is that caused by poverty. People living in poverty become happier if they become richer—but the effect of increased wealth cuts off at a surprisingly low figure. Looking at the data from all over the world, it is clear that, instead of getting happier as they become better off, people get stuck on a "hedonic treadmill": their expectations rise at the same pace as their incomes, and the happiness they seek remains constantly just out of reach.

If you want to be happy, don't ever ask yourself if you are. A person in good health in a Western liberal democracy is, in terms of his objective circumstances, one of the most fortunate human beings ever to have walked the surface of the earth. Risk-taking Ig and worried Og both would have regarded our easy, long, riskless lives with incredulous envy. They would have regarded us as so lucky that questions about our state of mind wouldn't be worth asking. It is a perverse consequence of our fortunate condition that the question of our happiness, or lack of it, presses unhappily hard on us.

Text 3 – Poem

Learning to Leave

The streetlamps pass us like the years:
my father is driving me away

from our house on that street where
I learned about the shyness of the mimosa

plant, whose eyelids close
even in the faintest breeze.

This was where I learned to wait
for the bus to arrive to grow up

and patiently counted to a hundred
before going in search of the hidden.

This was when we crossed oceans
under tables to invented countries

but sought permission to go to the park.
I have packed my future in these boxes

that sit in the boot of the car now,
as we drive past the market that has since

been torn down. In its place is a lonely patch
of grass. On this night the roads seem wider

and emptier though I see a thousand tiny lights
ahead. In the car the anger of the traffic

cannot reach us. As the light turns green,
I wonder what my father catches in his rearview

mirror as I focus on the road we're moving along
wishing we'd never get there or return where

we were, wishing we could go traveling

as the streetlamps pass and mimosas
open and shut their tiny palms

conquering their fears, as a song plays
on the radio, which will soon pass on to another song.

- Carol Chan

Text 4 – Discursive Extract

An excerpt from *The Architecture of Happiness* by Alain de Botton

A terraced house on a tree-lined street. Earlier today, the house rang with the sound of children's cries and adult voices, but since the last occupant took off (with her satchel) a few hours ago, it has been left to sample the morning by itself. The sun has risen over the gables of the buildings opposite and now washes through the ground-floor windows, painting the interior walls a buttery yellow and warming the grainy-red brick façade. Within shafts of sunlight, platelets of dust move as if in obedience to the rhythms of a silent waltz. From the hallway, the low murmur of accelerating traffic can be detected a few blocks away. Occasionally, the letter-box opens with a rasp to admit a plaintive leaflet.

The house gives signs of enjoying the emptiness. It is rearranging itself after the night, clearing its pipes and cracking its joints. This dignified and seasoned creature, with its coppery veins and wooden feet nestled in a bed of clay, has endured much: balls bounced against its garden flanks, doors slammed in rage, headstands attempted along its corridors, the weight and sighs of electrical equipment and the probings of inexperienced plumbers into its innards. A family of four shelters in it, joined by a colony of ants around the foundations and, in spring time, by broods of robins in the chimney stack. It also lends a shoulder to a frail (or just indolent) sweet-pea which leans against the garden wall, indulging the peripatetic courtship of a circle of bees.

The house has grown into a knowledgeable witness. It has been party to early seductions, it has watched homework being written, it has observed swaddled babies freshly arrived from hospital, it has been surprised in the middle of the night by whispered conferences in the kitchen. It has experienced winter evenings when its windows were as cold as bags of frozen peas and midsummer dusks when its brick walls held the warmth of newly baked bread.

It has provided not only physical but also psychological sanctuary. It has been a guardian of identity. Over the years, its owners have returned from periods away and, on looking around them, remembered who they were. The flagstones on the ground floor speak of serenity and aged grace, while the regularity of the kitchen cabinets offers a model of unthreatening order and discipline. The dining table, with its waxy tablecloth printed with large buttercups, suggests a burst of playfulness which is thrown into relief by a sterner concrete wall nearby. Along the stairs, small still-lives of eggs and lemons draw attention to the intricacy and beauty of everyday things. On a ledge beneath a window, a glass jar of cornflowers helps to resist the pull towards dejection. On the upper floor, a narrow empty room allows space for restorative thoughts to hatch, its skylight giving out onto impatient clouds migrating rapidly over cranes and chimney pots.

Although this house may lack solutions to a great many of its occupants' ills, its rooms nevertheless give evidence of a happiness to which architecture has made its distinctive contribution.