



NSW Education Standards Authority

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Centre Number

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Student Number

2025 HIGHER SCHOOL CERTIFICATE EXAMINATION

English Standard

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 Centre Number and Student Number 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
-

Question 1 (4 marks)

Text 1 — Prose fiction extract

How does Pippas portray Lucky’s sense of hope for the future?

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

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2025 HIGHER SCHOOL CERTIFICATE EXAMINATION

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Centre Number

English Standard
Paper 1 – Texts and Human
Experiences

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Student Number

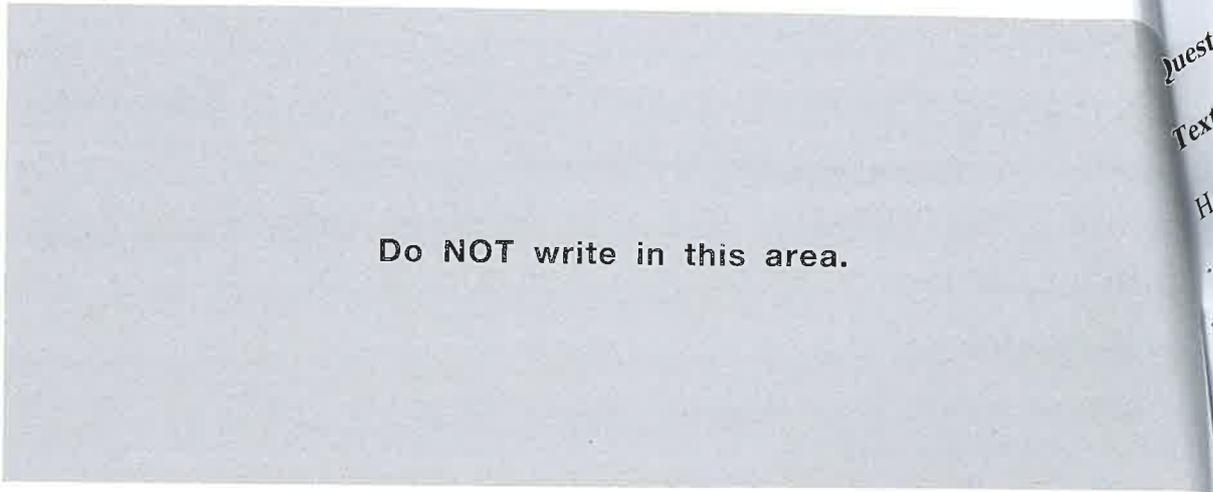
Section I (continued)

Attempt Questions 3–5

Answer the questions in the spaces provided. These spaces provide guidance for the expected length of response.

4

Please turn over



Do NOT write in this area.

Question 4 (4 marks)
Text 4 – Prose
How does Fern

Question 3 (3 marks)

Text 3 – Memoir extract

Explain how Jansson celebrates the process of creativity.

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If you need additional space to answer Question 3 use the lines below.

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English Standard

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
-

Question 6 (20 marks)

Analyse how the representation of particular lives in your prescribed text enriches your understanding of the endurance of the human spirit.

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

The prescribed texts are listed on pages 10–11.

The prescribed texts for Section II are:

- **Prose Fiction**
 - Anthony Doerr, *All the Light We Cannot See*
 - Amanda Lohrey, *Vertigo*
 - George Orwell, *Nineteen Eighty-Four*
 - Favel Parrett, *Past the Shallows*

- **Poetry**
 - Rosemary Dobson, *Rosemary Dobson Collected*
 - The prescribed poems are:
 - * *Young Girl at a Window*
 - * *Over the Hill*
 - * *Summer's End*
 - * *The Conversation*
 - * *Cock Crow*
 - * *Amy Caroline*
 - * *Canberra Morning*

 - Kenneth Slessor, *Selected Poems*
 - The prescribed poems are:
 - * *Wild Grapes*
 - * *Gulliver*
 - * *Out of Time*
 - * *Vesper-Song of the Reverend Samuel Marsden*
 - * *William Street*
 - * *Beach Burial*

- **Drama**
 - Jane Harrison, *Rainbow's End*
from Vivienne Cleven et al., *Contemporary Indigenous Plays*
 - Arthur Miller, *The Crucible*
 - William Shakespeare, *The Merchant of Venice*

Section II prescribed texts continue on page 11

Section II prescribed texts (continued)

- **Nonfiction**
 - Tim Winton, *The Boy Behind the Curtain*
The prescribed chapters are:
 - * *Havoc: A Life in Accidents*
 - * *Betsy*
 - * *Twice on Sundays*
 - * *The Wait and the Flow*
 - * *In the Shadow of the Hospital*
 - * *The Demon Shark*
 - * *Barefoot in the Temple of Art*
 - Malala Yousafzai and Christina Lamb, *I am Malala*
- **Film**
 - Stephen Daldry, *Billy Elliot*
- **Media**
 - Ivan O'Mahoney, *Go Back to Where You Came From*
The prescribed episodes are:
 - * *Series 1: Episodes 1, 2 and 3*
and
 - * *The Response*
 - Lucy Walker, *Waste Land*

End of paper



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2025 HIGHER SCHOOL CERTIFICATE EXAMINATION

English Standard

Paper 1 – Texts and Human Experiences

Stimulus Booklet

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• Text 4 – Prose fiction extract	5
• Text 5 – Poem	6

Text 1 – Prose fiction extract

Lucky travelled back to Australia with a Dutch-owned shipping company ... His dark berth smelled of old shoes and had the green metal atmosphere of an office bin. The tempo^[1] on board was domestic; some passengers made friends, swapped stories, played songs and crooned^[2] together in the lounge. Lucky did not enter into the ship's everyday life. He shared a cabin with two chatty Scotsmen and each day couldn't wait for the hour they left, somewhat reluctantly, to spend time with their families.

The ship passed tiny islands in the distance, as anonymous as clouds. During the three-week journey, Lucky felt as if he moved inside a huge diorama^[3] of the world. He often fell asleep by thinking about the pleasing scenarios that awaited: his wedding to Valia ... He and Valia on a beach in Sydney ... From his cabin, inside of which swung his coats and shirts, he felt able to picture her at any time of the day, working or eating or sitting in the closed cafe at night, her hand flicking up to distance a fly. In Australia, things would be simple, things were arranged: they'd marry in December and afterwards, for a few months, Lucky would work with Valia's father. Then the couple might see about starting their own business. If the economy improved. On the boat he had two gold rings hidden inside a flap he'd cut into the lining of his suitcase.

Circular Quay came into view, heavy with activity, the harbour's northern shore in repose^[4]. Little homes lay as if stamped over the bays. Lucky came down the steamship ramp into the frame of a camera shooting for a newsreel. He smiled, waved, and stepped onto the docks.

ANDREW PIPPOS
Lucky's

-
- [1] tempo *pace*
[2] crooned *sang*
[3] diorama *a three-dimensional model*
[4] repose *a state of peace*

An ode^[1] to our childhood idols

Where I grew up ... there was a channel dedicated to shows for kids – YTV. It was the go-to station for me and my older sister in the early 1990s and we'd always watch our favourite show: *She-Ra* ... the eight-foot-tall cartoon superhero with long blonde hair and a flying unicorn sidekick. She-Ra was *made* for me and my sister – freakishly blonde kids with unicorn obsessions. And I mean that kinda literally: her character came about in 1985 as a long-lost sister to an existing superhero, He-Man, to appeal to young girls. Cynical cash grab? Sure. But for a preschool-aged little me, it was revolutionary seeing a powerful woman get to do all the cool stuff reserved for guys, like use swords and have a personality.

She was the first superhero I remember learning about and her transformation from human Adora into hero She-Ra was the best part of the show. She'd raise her mighty sword in the air, cry "for the honour of Grayskull, I am She-Ra" and KABLAMMO! ... she was in superhero mode, ready to fight bad guys and talk to animals and SAVE THE KINGDOM. Or something. I don't really remember much of She-Ra's lore^[2], to be honest. But her impact was monumental in my household.

My sister and I were, like many girls in the '90s (and before then), unconsciously

desperate to see strong women – or more accurately, just women doing anything remotely interesting. The "token female character in a swarm of men" schtick^[3] is still very much around in entertainment; and back then it felt like every woman was a princess ... helpless, wearing pink frills and desperate to be saved. She-Ra didn't need saving; she had a freaking sword!

There wasn't much she couldn't do, and if there was, she'd recruit her hero brother, her sidekick Swift Wind (the unicorn) and whichever kindly character happened to be in the episode at that time. A team of goodies fighting the forces of evil – a childhood classic for a reason ...

Tragedy struck when the youth channel airing the show underwent scheduling changes and those crazy bigwigs decided to take *She-Ra* off the air. This was devastating. My mother ... encouraged us to speak truth to power in the only way children in the early '90s could: we hand-wrote letters to the station to express our disappointment. My sister's letter was articulate and polite, arguing for the importance of female role models on TV. Mine was more direct: "*Put back She-Ra. Do it ... NOW!!*" They didn't change their decision, but another lesson She-Ra taught me was that sometimes the good guys don't always win.

DEIRDRE FIDGE
HOLDING OUT FOR A HERO

[1] ode

tribute

[2] lore

a body of tradition or knowledge

[3] schtick

stereotype

Text 3 – Memoir extract

I love rock – sheer cliffs that drop straight into the ocean, unscalable mountain peaks, pebbles in my pocket. I love prising stones out of the ground, heaving them aside and letting the biggest ones roll down the granite slope into the water. As they rumble away, they leave behind an acrid^[1] whiff of sulphur.

Searching for building stones or just for pretty rocks to make mosaics, bulwarks^[2], terraces, supports, smoke ovens, strange unusable structures made just for the sake of constructing, and for making piers which the sea will carry away next autumn and which I'll rebuild better for the sea to carry away all over again.

I am a sculptor's daughter, but Tooti's papa was a carpenter, so she loves wood, whether she's working with beautiful, heavy lumber or playing with featherweight balsa. We searched for juniper in the woods. Along the shore we managed to find unfamiliar hardwoods with unknown names. From these, Tooti carved the kinds of tiny objects that take time and infinite patience – for example, the smallest salt spoon ever made.

But, says Tooti, when you're building big, that's completely different. You need determination and total confidence in your ability to estimate and measure and get things right, down to the centimetre. No, to the millimetre.

Sometimes we build things to be solid and lasting, and sometimes to be beautiful, sometimes both.

TOVE JANSSON
Notes from an Island

[1] acrid *unpleasantly bitter*

[2] bulwarks *defensive walls*

Text 4 – Prose fiction extract

We traveled through Naples in the green Fiat 500, going first to Cavone,^[1] where Aunt Anna lived, then to the Campi Flegrei, where Uncle Nicola lived, then to Pozzuoli, to Aunt Rosetta.

I realized that I barely remembered these relatives, maybe I had never actually known their names. I tried to hide it, but Vittoria noticed and immediately started saying mean things about my father, who had deprived me of the affection of people certainly without education, not smooth talkers, but warmhearted. How important to her the heart was ... which she struck with her broad hand and gnarled fingers. It was in those situations that she began to suggest to me: look at what we're like and what your father and mother are like, then tell me. She insisted forcefully on that matter of looking. She said I had blinders^[2] like a horse, I looked but didn't see the things that could disturb me. Look, look, look, she hammered into me.³

In fact, I let nothing escape me. Those relatives, their children a little older than me or my age, were a pleasant novelty. Vittoria flung me into their houses without warning, and yet aunts and uncles, nieces and nephews welcomed me with great familiarity, as if they knew me well and had been simply waiting, over the years, for my visit. The apartments were small, drab, furnished with objects that I had been brought up to judge crude if not vulgar. No books, only at Aunt Anna's house did I see some mysteries. They all spoke to me in a cordial^[3] dialect mixed with Italian, and I made an effort to do the same, or at least I made room in my hypercorrect Italian for some Neapolitan cadences.^[4] No one mentioned my father, no one asked how he was, no one charged me with saying hello to him ... but they tried in every way to make me understand that they weren't angry with me. They called me Giannina, as Vittoria did and as my parents never had. I loved them all, I had never felt so open to affection. And I was so relaxed and funny that I began to think that that name assigned to me by Vittoria – Giannina – had miraculously brought forth from my same body another person, more pleasant or anyway different from the Giovanna by which I was known to my parents.

ELENA FERRANTE
The Lying Life of Adults

[1] Cavone,
Campi Flegrei,
Pozzuoli } *Italian place names*

[2] blinders *covers that restrict side vision*

[3] cordial *friendly*

[4] Neapolitan cadences *rhythms of speech in Naples, Italy*

A Letter in October

Dawn comes later and later now,
and I, who only a month ago
could sit with coffee every morning
watching the light walk down the hill
to the edge of the pond and place
a doe there, shyly drinking,

then see the light step out upon
the water, sowing reflections
to either side — a garden
of trees that grew as if by magic —
now see no more than my face,
mirrored by darkness, pale and odd,

startled by time. While I slept,
night in its thick winter jacket
bridled the doe with a twist
of wet leaves and led her away,
then brought its black horse with harness
that creaked like a cricket, and turned

the water garden under. I woke,
and at the waiting window found
the curtains open to my face;
beyond me, darkness. And I,
who only wished to keep looking out,
must now keep looking in.

TED KOOSER