



NSW Education Standards Authority

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Centre Number

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Student Number

2025 HIGHER SCHOOL CERTIFICATE EXAMINATION

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
- 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
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Question 1 (3 marks)

Text 1 – Memoir extract

Explain how Jansson celebrates the process of creativity.

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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 Advanced
Paper 1 – Texts and Human
Experiences**

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Student Number

Section I (continued)

Attempt Questions 4–5

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

Please turn over

English Advanced

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*

- **Shakespearean Drama**
 - 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



NSW Education Standards Authority

2025 HIGHER SCHOOL CERTIFICATE EXAMINATION

English Advanced

Paper 1 – Texts and Human Experiences

Stimulus Booklet

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Text 1 – 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 2 — 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*

Text 3 — Poem

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

Text 4 — Prose fiction extract

Garnett could still remember, from when he was a boy, a giant hollow log way back up in the woods on Zebulon Mountain. It was of such a size that he and the other youngsters could run through it single-file without even bending their heads. The thought made him smile. They had reckoned it to be theirs, for a ten-year-old boy will happily presume ownership of a miracle of nature, and then carve on it with his knife ...

A surprising fact occurred to Garnett then, for the first time in his nearly eighty years: the unfortunate fellow who'd chopped down that tree, miscalculating its size and then having to leave it, must have been his grandfather. How many times before had Garnett stood right here at the edge of his seedling field staring up at that mountainside, ruminating ...? But he'd never put the two facts together. That tree must have come down near a hundred years ago, when his grandfather owned the whole southern slope of Zebulon Mountain. It was his grandfather, the first Garnett Walker, who'd named it ... Who else could have felled that tree? He and his sons would have spent a whole day and more with their shoulders against the crosscut saw to bring down that giant for lumber. They'd have been mad as hornets, then, to find after all their work that the old chestnut was too huge to be dragged down off the mountain. Probably they took away tree-sized branches to be milled into barn siding, but that trunk was just too big of an old monster and had to be left where it lay. Left to hollow itself out from the inside till nothing was left of it but a game for the useless mischief of boys.

Mules, they had to use in those days for any kind of work that got done: mules or men. A tractor was a thing still yet undreamed of. A mule could be coaxed into many a steep and narrow place where a tractor would not go, it was true. But! Some things could be wrought with horsepower that were beyond the power of horseflesh ...

That was just it, the very thing he had been trying to tell [his neighbour] the Rawley woman for years. "Miss Rawley," he'd explained until he was blue in the face as she traipsed through her primitive shenanigans^[1], "however fondly we might recall the simple times of old, they had their limits. People keep the customs of their own day and time for good reason."

BARBARA KINGSOLVER
Prodigal Summer

[1] traipsed through her primitive shenanigans

discussed her old-fashioned ways

Text 5 – Nonfiction extract

The way into the underland is through the riven^[1] trunk of an old ash tree.

Late-summer heatwave, heavy air. Bees browsing drowsy over meadow grass. Gold of standing corn, green of fresh hay-rows, black of rooks^[2] on stubble fields. Somewhere down on lower ground an unseen fire is burning, its smoke a column. A child drops stones one by one into a metal bucket, *ting, ting, ting*.

Follow a path through fields, past a hill to the east ...

Over a stile^[3] in a limestone wall and along a stream to a thicketed dip from which grows the ancient ash. Its crown flourishes skywards into weather. Its long boughs lean low around. Its roots reach far underground.

Swallows curve and dart, feathers flashing. Martins criss-cross the middle air. A swan flies high and south on creaking wings. This upper world is very beautiful.

Near the ash's base its trunk splits into a rough rift, just wide enough that a person might slip into the tree's hollow heart – and there drop into the dark space that opens below. The rift's edges are smoothed to a shine by those who have gone this way before, passing through the old ash to enter the underland.

Beneath the ash tree, a labyrinth unfurls.

Down between roots to a passage of stone that deepens steeply into the earth. Colour depletes to greys, browns, black. Cold air pushes past. Above is solid rock, utter matter. The surface is scarcely thinkable.

The passage is taken; the maze builds. Side-rifts curl off. Direction is difficult to keep. Space is behaving strangely – and so too is time. Time moves differently here in the underland. It thickens, pools, flows, rushes, slows.

The passage turns, turns again, narrows – and leads into surprising space. A chamber is entered. Sound now booms, resonates. The walls of the chamber appear bare at first, but then something extraordinary happens. Scenes from the underland start to show themselves on the stone, distant from one another in history, but joined by echoes.

In a cave within ... a figure inhales a mouthful of red ochre dust, places its left hand against the cave wall – fingers spread, thumb out, palm cold on the rock – and then blows the ochre hard against the hand's back. There is an explosion of dust – and when the hand is lifted its ghostly print remains, the stone around having taken the red of the ochre. The hand is shifted, more dust is blown and another pale outline is left. Calcite^[4] will run over these prints, sealing them in. The prints will survive for more than 35,000 years. Signs of what? Of joy? Of warning? Of art? Of life in the darkness?

ROBERT MACFARLANE
Underland

[1] riven *split*
[2] rooks *crow-like bird*
[3] stile *stairs for climbing over a wall*
[4] calcite *a mineral*