

Name:
(do not write your name on any writing booklet)

Teacher:
(do not write your teacher's name on any writing booklet)



2025 TRIAL HIGHER SCHOOL CERTIFICATE EXAMINATION

English Extension 1

General Instructions

- Reading time – 10 minutes
- Working time – 2 hours
- Write using black pen
- Write your NESA number ONLY on BOTH writing booklets

Total marks:
50

Section I – 25 marks (pages 2-4)

- Attempt Question 1
- Allow about 1 hour for this section

Section II – 25 marks (pages 6-7)

- Attempt Question 2
- Allow about 1 hour for this section

Section I — Common Module: Literary Worlds

25 marks

Attempt Question 1

Allow about 1 hour for this section

Answer the question in the Section I booklet. Extra writing booklets are available.

Your answer will be assessed on how well you:

- demonstrate an understanding of the ideas and values of Literary Worlds and how they are shaped and reflected in texts
 - craft a sustained composition appropriate to the question, demonstrating control of the use of language
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Read Texts 1 and 2 to answer Question 1.

Text 1

Fiction generally claims to represent “reality” (this is known as representation or mimesis) in some way; however, because any narrative is presented through the symbols and codes of human meaning and communication systems, fiction cannot represent reality directly, and different narratives and forms of narrative represent different aspects of reality, and represent reality in different ways.

This awareness that fiction is not merely a window onto the real but a mode of constructing meaning is central to literary study. Every element in a text—its plot, characterisation, imagery, even punctuation—is an intentional act of representation, shaped by cultural norms, ideological frameworks, and historical contexts. Thus, fiction becomes a site where assumptions about reality can be reinforced or dismantled. When we read fiction critically, we engage in the work of decoding its symbolic architecture. We ask: Whose reality is being represented? Whose voices are privileged, and whose are silenced? What ideologies underpin the narrative structure?

The literary world, then, is not only a reflection of the real world—it is a reconstruction, a space where power, identity, and truth are negotiated through narrative form. Critical reading recognises this complexity, treating fiction as an epistemological act: a way of knowing, interpreting, and even remaking the world. As readers, we must move beyond passive consumption and begin to question the aesthetic and ethical implications of what we read. Fiction, far from being mere escapism, becomes a critical lens through which we explore—and complicate—our understanding of reality.

JOHN LYE

Extract from *Critical Reading: A Guide*

Question 1 continues on page 3

Text 2 — Prose fiction extract

I remember the light is hot and gold, spilling across our faces. That daytime sunshine has burnt our cheeks and foreheads, but now the sun is dying, cooling, seeping like a wound across the skyline. Our three little bodies sweat. The air has stayed thick: humid and unmoving.

Then the sprinklers erupt suddenly with a tired hiss. Crumbs of water scatter in sharp rivulets against the red of the sky. They pelt down over us. Droplets are like cold metal coins against our chests, dripping down our arms, from our fingertips. Our laughter punctures the drowsy neighbourhood; the shrieks and hoots and squeals skid between the eucalypts, through parched flower bushes, across the road.

We dance as our skin slides against each other, slimy and soft, and I am aware that I can feel it all.

I am eight and outside myself, like the heat has shimmered the world into memory and this moment of my life is as frail as a mirage. I can see my grandmother. She sits next to my grandfather on their red-brick porch, both squinting into the sunset as they supervise. I can see the grass underneath me, orange and scorched and stinging the skin of my bare feet. It is softening under the sprinklers; the dirt that nests the blades thickened to mud. My brother yelps as he extricates a small prickle that has burrowed between two of his toes. I can hear this yelp and the giggling of my sister and the sluggish moan of blowflies licking our sweat. I can taste the aridity of December, of suburbia a year before the country drips officially into drought. I can smell it, too: the trembling asphalt roads and wilting buildings. I tilt my head back and extend my tongue and let sweet, grass-flavoured water run down my throat.

I drink like it is forever and it feels like it is, this summer, all those summers; long yellow days stretching into infinite orange nights that skip together into the length of a heartbeat that is no time at all. I look up at the magpies, lined up on my grandmother's roof, croaking in silence with their dry, watchful eyes.

Maybe it started then. The vicious throb inside me. It was an awareness: of the slipping over my skin, the passings. I clutched desperately with my fingers but still it left me. Even at eight years old, there was such futility in all that water-sprinkler joy. I understood. I knew.

Question 1 continues on page 4

Text 2 (continued)

For as long as I can remember, I have collected things. When I was younger, it was more severe, ambient: old shoelaces, the envelopes of birthday cards, empty toilet paper rolls. They cluttered my room and filled me with a strange, claustrophobic grief, but it was better than the alternative: of memories being lost, becoming irretrievable. It seemed I was afflicted with a blistering impulse to preserve and document. It was an inability to release, or maybe to surrender. So I attached meaning to peculiar pieces of junk and stored them all inside my bedroom.

The walls of the childhood bedroom I still sleep in are blue. My parents painted it for me: the colour of the ocean and of sleep and the sky and melancholy. By the window, my wardrobe presses into itself with clothes: basketball singlets from each team I have played in; winter and summer uniforms from both primary and secondary school; two shirts I wore on grade five camp. At the bottom of the cupboard, there is a shoebox full of all my old phones and computers. On the other side, there is an unstable, accumulating stack of retired basketballs, the leather collapsing in on itself through lack of use. Under my bed, another box is filled with to-do lists and unused diaries and obsolete calendars and flattened toothpaste tubes and empty water bottles and cheap posters I am too old to have hanging on my walls so have folded up along with other, smaller boxes containing even smaller boxes. I cannot throw out any of it.

After I finished school, I chose the only career that could both indulge and provoke the fear of forgetting: the writer. Sometimes I write so late into the morning, I lose myself. There is no sensation in my body; it has leaked from me, and I wonder absently at my realness.

SARAID TAYLOR
Extract from *The Intricacy of Magpies*

Question 1 (25 marks)

- (a) Use Text 1 and Text 2 to answer this part.

10

How do literary texts shape our understanding of reality, memory, and identity through the worlds they create?

- (b) Compose a piece of imaginative writing that depicts ‘a blistering impulse to preserve and document’.

15

End of Question 1