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NESA Student Number

2025 HIGHER SCHOOL CERTIFICATE TRIAL EXAMINATION

English Extension 1 Trial Examination

**General
Instructions**

- Reading time – 10 minutes
- Working time – 2 hours
- Write using black pen

**Total marks:
50**

Section I – 25 marks (pages 3–7)

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

Section II – 25 marks (pages 8–13)

- 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 on pages 2–12 of the English Extension 1 Writing 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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Question 1 (25 marks)

Read Texts 1, 2, 3 and 4 on pages 4–7. In your response to parts (a) and (b), draw on your understanding of the module Literary Worlds and the extracts provided.

- (a) Consider the ideas about Literary Worlds that are common to your choice of at least THREE of the four extracts. How do these texts resonate with your understanding of the purpose of literary worlds? **10**
- (b) Use the ideas in the extracts as the basis of an imaginative or discursive response which explores the distinctive connection between a reader and the world of a text. **15**

Question 1 continues on page 4

Question 1 (continued)

Text 1: Nonfiction Article

[Genre should be seen not] as a set of fixed boxes that one must fit into, but as an evolving conversation between form and content. When students say “I only write fiction” or “I’m not a poet,” we challenge them—gently—to try the opposite. Not to convert them, but to give them tools. We’ve watched prose writers learn concision through poetry. We’ve seen memoirists find emotional truth through fictional distance. The point isn’t to become a formalist or a hybridist. It’s to make the best possible choices for your material.

Genre, in this sense, is not unlike choreography or architecture. It gives shape and boundaries—but within those boundaries, anything can happen. And when a piece of writing doesn’t seem to be working, we often suggest switching containers. Take a scene from your memoir and try writing it as a flash fiction piece. Take an internal monologue and turn it into a poem. These shifts don’t always work, but they always teach. They make the writer more responsive to rhythm, more alert to gaps, more willing to experiment.

We see genre not as a test of loyalty, but a way of listening. As Mann puts it, the poem “asks” for something. So does the essay, the scene, the image. Understanding genre gives you the tools to respond. It helps you become a more agile writer—one who can pivot when the material demands it. Because the work always knows more than we do at first. And the more containers you’re comfortable reaching for, the more likely you’ll be able to catch it.

Even when writing “within” a genre, the best work often emerges from that same tension Mann and Jenkinson describe: between freedom and constraint. Writing becomes an act of containment—not confinement. And when the container fits, it doesn’t just hold the work. It enhances it. It makes it sing.

As we remind our students, genre is not a sports team. You don’t have to pick a side. But you do have to pick a form. And ideally, the one that can hold your weirdest, rawest, most demanding obsessions—the ones that won’t leave you alone until you’ve shaped them into something that lasts.

MATTHEW CLARK DAVISON & ALICE LAPLANTE
“Genre is a Container, Not a Cage”

Question 1 continues on page 5

Question 1 (continued)

Text 2: Poem

Buswell Library: 1995

The pleasant mustiness of old books,
the stiffened bindings of the new
and the smell of ink, paper, glue,
and you have found your way again.
The college stacks, the secluded
carrels, the whisper-squeak
of the librarian's cart.

Up the back stairs into the room
called Kilby, quiet with the hush
of study, the scratch of pen, the click
of laptop keys, a muffled rattle of ideas.

This is the place where words regain
their meaning, the books —Tolkien,
Chesterton — packed in like bricks—
Sayers, Lewis, MacDonald—
and parked on tabletops — Barfield,
Williams. Occasionally, a spray
of dust-moted sun
and through the windows a glimpse
of the unwritten world outside these words.

You have missed entire seasons
inside such spaces (the ripening of summer,
the blazing of fall), besotted with words,
breaking print into patterns,
tracing images, wrestling language
amidst the undiscipline of marginalia
in rooms like this filled with the whisperings
of words, not words that fall back inside
themselves like ice on a thawing pond,
but words that disperse to fill a space,
like breath that weaves the pliant silence
into the warp and woof of music.

JILL BAUMGAERTNER

Question 1 continues on page 6

Question 1 (continued)

Text 3: Prose Fiction Extract

It was one of those midsummer Sundays when everyone sits around saying, “I *drank* too much last night.” You might have heard it whispered by the parishioners leaving church, heard it from the lips of the priest himself, struggling with his cassock in the *vestiarium*¹, heard it from the golf links and the tennis courts, heard it from the wildlife preserve where the leader of the Audubon group was suffering from a terrible hangover. “I *drank* too much,” said Donald Westerhazy. “We all *drank* too much,” said Lucinda Merrill. “It must have been the wine,” said Helen Westerhazy. “I *drank* too much of that claret.”

This was at the edge of the Westerhazys’ pool. The pool, fed by an artesian well with a high iron content, was a pale shade of green. It was a fine day. In the west there was a massive stand of cumulus cloud so like a city seen from a distance—from the bow of an approaching ship—that it might have had a name. Lisbon. Hackensack. The sun was hot. Neddy Merrill sat by the green water, one hand in it, one around a glass of gin. He was a slender man—he seemed to have the especial slenderness of youth—and while he was far from young he had slid down his banister that morning and given the bronze backside of Aphrodite on the hall table a smack, as he jogged toward the smell of coffee in his dining room. He might have been compared to a summer’s day, particularly the last hours of one, and while he lacked a tennis racket or a sail bag the impression was definitely one of youth, sport, and clement weather. He had been swimming and now he was breathing deeply, stertorously² as if he could gulp into his lungs the components of that moment, the heat of the sun, the intenseness of his pleasure. It all seemed to flow into his chest. His own house stood in Bullet Park, eight miles to the south, where his four beautiful daughters would have had their lunch and might be playing tennis. Then it occurred to him that by taking a dogleg to the southwest he could reach his home by water.

His life was not confining and the delight he took in this observation could not be explained by its suggestion of escape.

He seemed to see, with a cartographer’s eye, that string of swimming pools, that quasi-subterranean stream that curved across the county. He had made a discovery, a contribution to modern geography; he would name the stream Lucinda after his wife. He was not a practical joker nor was he a fool but he was determinedly original and had a vague and modest idea of himself as a legendary figure. The day was beautiful and it seemed to him that a long swim might enlarge and celebrate its beauty.

JOHN CHEEVER
From “The Swimmer”

Question 1 continues on page 7

¹ Vestiarium: wardrobe

² Stertorously: in a noisy or laboured way

Question 1 (continued)

Text 4: Prose Poem

there were so many books. she had to separate them to avoid being overwhelmed by the excessive implications of their words. she kept hundreds in a series of boxes inside a wire cage in a warehouse. and hundreds more on the shelves of her various rooms. when she changed houses she would pack some of the books into the boxes and exchange them for others that had been hibernating. these resurrected books were precious to her for a while. they had assumed the patinas of dusty chthonic³ wisdoms. and thus she would let them sit on the shelves admiring them from a distance. gathering time and air. she did not want to be intimate with their insides. the atmospherics suggested by the titles were enough. sometimes she would increase the psychic proximities between herself and the books and place a pile of them on the floor next to her bed. and quite possibly she absorbed their intentions while she slept.

if she intended travelling beyond a few hours she would occasionally remove a book from the shelves and place it in her bag. she carried ‘the poetics of space’⁴ round india for three months and it returned to her shelves undamaged at the completion of the journey. every day of those three months she touched it and read some of the titles of its chapters to make sure it was there. and real. chapters called house and universe, nests, shells, intimate immensity, miniatures and, the significance of the hut. she had kept it in a pocket of her bag together with a coloured whistle and an acorn. she now kept this book in the darkness of her reference shelf. and she knew that one day she would have to admit to herself that this was the only book she had need of, that this was the book she would enter the pages of, that this was the book she was going to read.

JOANNE BURNS
“Reading”

End of Question 1

³ Chthonic: relating to the underworld

⁴ A reference to Gaston Bachelard’s 1958 philosophical book *The Poetics of Space* about the relationship between art and architecture

Section II — Electives

25 marks

Attempt Question 2

Allow about 1 hour for this section

Answer the question on pages 14–24 of the English Extension 1 Writing 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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Question 2 (25 marks)

‘Literary texts strive for answers that will relieve the turmoil of doubt and uncertainty’.

Evaluate how this idea is realised in the texts you have studied in your elective.

In your response, refer to TWO of your prescribed texts and at least ONE related text of your own choosing.

The prescribed texts for Section II are listed on pages 9–13.

Section II continues on page 9

The prescribed texts for Section II (continued)

◆ **Elective 2: Worlds of Upheaval**

The prescribed texts are:

- **Prose Fiction** – Elizabeth Gaskell, *North and South*
 – Mary Shelley, *Frankenstein*
 – Madeleine Thien, *Do Not Say We Have Nothing*
- **Poetry** – Seamus Heaney, *Opened Ground: Poems 1966–1996*
 The prescribed poems are:
 - * *Digging*
 - * *The Strand at Lough Beg*
 - * *Casualty*
 - * *Funeral Rites*
 - * from *Whatever You Say Say Nothing*
 - * *Triptych*
- **Drama** – Samuel Beckett, *Waiting for Godot*
- **Film** – Fritz Lang, *Metropolis*

Section II prescribed texts continue on page 11