NATIONAL SENIOR CERTIFICATE EXAMINATION
MAY 2025

ENGLISH HOME LANGUAGE: PAPER II

Time: 3 hours 100 marks

PLEASE READ THE FOLLOWING INSTRUCTIONS CAREFULLY

1. This question paper consists of 8 pages. Please check that your question paper is complete.

2. Utilise your reading time carefully, ensuring that the selections made showcase your ability to share your response to the texts.

3. Questions must be answered in **BOTH SECTIONS**. In **SECTION A**, Question 1 is **compulsory** and then answer **ONE** question on the selected novel. In **SECTION B**, Question 6 is **compulsory**, and then answer **either** Question 7 **or** Question 8.

4. Number your answers exactly as the questions are numbered.

5. **Begin each QUESTION on a new page.** Do not copy down headings for your answers. Copy down **only** the question numbers, making sure they are accurate.

6. You may answer the questions in whatever order you wish, but number your answers exactly as the questions are numbered.

7. **No word count is required for ANY QUESTION.**

8. You are encouraged to give your own judgements. Attempt to create space in which your **own voice** will be evident. The examiners will judge your answers on your understanding of, and insight into, given texts. They will also assess the competence with which your answers are expressed.

9. Follow instructions in each question with meticulous care.

10. Answers must be written only in the Answer Book supplied.

11. It is in your own interest to write legibly and to present your work neatly.

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SECTION A LITERATURE

QUESTION 1

SHAKESPEARE: *OTHELLO*

THIS QUESTION IS COMPULSORY.

Study the quotation below and then write a literary essay in response to the topic that follows.

> *Othello* 'contains the most claustrophobic and fixated[1] language [of] anywhere in Shakespeare. For such linguistic devastation to occur, either Iago is [dishonourably] clever, or Othello is […] insecure and susceptible.'
>
> – Peter Hollindale
>
> [Adapted from: 'Othello and Desdemona' (1989) <https://www.jstor.org/stable/41556462>]

TOPIC:

Critically discuss whether the **devastating impact of language** in the play is a result of Othello's **insecurity** or Iago's **dishonourable cleverness**.

Glossary:

1. fixated: cause (someone) to develop an obsessive attachment to someone or something

Please note:

- Your response must be in the form of a well-structured literary essay.
- The length of your response must be **approximately 600 words**.
- Your knowledge of Shakespeare's text, *Othello,* and your ability to structure and substantiate your stance in order to develop a **tightly constructed argument** will be assessed.
- **Close** and **relevant** reference to the play is **essential**.
- Do **NOT** provide a word count at the end of your essay.

[30]

AND

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NOVELS

THE HANDMAID'S TALE OR *THE THEORY OF FLIGHT*

Answer **ONE** question on your selected novel.

Answer **EITHER**

Question 2 (*The Handmaid's Tale*)

OR

Question 3 (*The Handmaid's Tale*)

OR

Question 4 (*The Theory of Flight*)

OR

Question 5 (*The Theory of Flight*)

Please note:

- Your response must be in the form of a well-structured literary essay.
- Your essay should be **approximately 600 words** in length.
- Your ability to select detail from the novel, in order to develop a **succinct argument**, which is clearly focused and perceptive, **will be assessed**.
- **Close** and **relevant** reference to the text in the question is **essential**.
- Do **NOT** provide a word count at the end of your essay.

EITHER

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QUESTION 2

THE HANDMAID'S TALE: MARGARET ATWOOD

Read the following:

'One of the themes fundamental to dystopian[2] fiction is that of control and how it is achieved and maintained within chaotic and complex human societies. In complete opposition to notions of control are those of restlessness – humanity's drive towards creativity and imagination.'

– Ben Wheeler

[Adapted from: 'Reality is What You Can Get Away With: Fantastic Imaginings, Rebellion and Control in Terry Gilliam's *Brazil*' (2005) <https://www.jstor.org/stable/41556096>]

TOPIC:

Critically discuss to what extent characters in *The Handmaid's Tale* possess a **restless humanity** in which **imagination** opposes **control**.

You must refer to a minimum of **TWO** characters in your response.

[30]

Glossary:

2. dystopian: relating to an imagined world or society in which people lead dehumanised, fearful lives

OR

QUESTION 3

THE HANDMAID'S TALE: MARGARET ATWOOD

Read the following:

'[By] listening and watching in art and literature for silences, the nameless, [and] the unspoken, we will find the true knowledge of women. And in breaking those silences, naming ourselves, [and] uncovering the hidden, we begin to define a reality that belongs to *us*.'

– Adrienne Rich

[Adapted from: 'Taking Women Students Seriously' (1985) <http://www.jstor.org/stable/20709173>]

TOPIC:

Argue to what extent **breaking silences** and **uncovering** what has been hidden allows characters in *The Handmaid's Tale* to define a **shared reality**.

You must refer to a minimum of **TWO** characters in your response.

[30]

OR

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QUESTION 4

THE THEORY OF FLIGHT: SIPHIWE GLORIA NDLOVU

Read the following:

'One of the themes fundamental to dystopian[3] fiction is that of control and how it is achieved and maintained within chaotic and complex human societies. In complete opposition to notions of control are those of restlessness – humanity's drive towards creativity and imagination.'

– Ben Wheeler

[Adapted from: 'Reality is What You Can Get Away With: Fantastic Imaginings, Rebellion and Control in Terry Gilliam's *Brazil*' (2005) <https://www.jstor.org/stable/41556096>]

TOPIC:

Critically discuss to what extent characters in *The Theory of Flight* possess a **restless humanity** in which **imagination** opposes **control**.

You must refer to a minimum of **TWO** characters in your response.

[30]

Glossary:

3. dystopian: relating to an imagined world or society in which people lead dehumanised, fearful lives

OR

QUESTION 5

THE THEORY OF FLIGHT: SIPHIWE GLORIA NDLOVU

Read the following:

'Traditionally, science fiction is a genre characterised by ideals of expansion and colonisation[4], but it also has the great potential to imagine 'otherness' and other ways of being.'

– Michelle Reid

[Adapted from: <https://www.sf-foundation.org/postcolonial-science-fiction-dr-mic>]

TOPIC:

Argue to what extent Ndlovu **challenges colonisation** in *The Theory of Flight* by presenting **otherness** and **other ways of being**.

You must refer to a minimum of **TWO** characters in your response.

[30]

Glossary:

4. colonisation: the process of establishing control over foreign territories or peoples for the purpose of exploitation and possibly settlement

60 marks

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SECTION B TRANSACTIONAL WRITING: SHORT PIECES

Please note:

- Answer **TWO** of the following questions.
- You must answer **Question 6 (compulsory)** and answer **either Question 7 OR Question 8**.
- The body of your response should be **approximately 250 to 300 words** in length.
- Remember to pay attention to the **register** and **purpose** of your text.
- It is essential that the **appropriate format** is used.

QUESTION 6

THIS QUESTION IS COMPULSORY.

Read the text below and answer the question that follows.

The Incredible Power of Friendship

Aristotle writes that there are three different kinds of friendship:

1. Friendships based on utility, in which one or both of the parties gain something as a result of the friendship (think: becoming friends with someone because you think they can help you).
2. Friendships based on pleasure, or those centred around pleasant experiences (think: people with whom you can have a good, carefree time).
3. Friendships based on virtue, in which both individuals share the same values (think: people whom you admire and respect, and with whom you align on what you find most important in life).

Ask yourself: in which categories do your relationships fall? It's OK to have some (perhaps even most) friendships mainly for utility and pleasure, but it's important to realise that these fill a different purpose and are likely to have a shorter lifespan than the ultimate kind of friendship – one built upon shared virtue. And it is these latter friendships that are worth protecting and cherishing.

– Brad Stulberg (2018)

[Adapted from: <https://medium.com/personal-growth/the-incredible-power-of-friendship-b061833959c2>]

As a matriculant about to leave school, you wish to **emphasise the importance of friendships** during the formative years of high school. Write a sincere **speech** to be delivered to the Grade 8 group of your school in which you encourage the audience to develop friendships based on **virtues** during times of **trial and success**.

[20]

AND

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BOTH QUESTION 7 AND QUESTION 8 ARE BASED ON THE EXTRACTS BELOW.

Read the texts below and then answer ONE of the questions that follow on page 8.

The End of the English Major

During the past decade, the study of English and History at the collegiate level has fallen by a full third. Humanities[5] enrolment in the United States has declined overall by seventeen per cent, Townsend found. What's going on?

Sazi Bongwe, a Harvard freshman from Johannesburg, collaborated with three friends in high school during the pandemic on a magazine called *Ukuzibuza*. On arriving in Cambridge, he had to consider that the F1 visa, for international students, allows for a stay of a year in the U.S. after graduation—except for majors in a STEM field, in which case one year of grace becomes three. Bongwe had come to Harvard with thoughts of a humanities major. But, like several international students with whom I spoke, he worried that the choice would be naïve.

'Am I just putting myself in a position where, in four years' time, I'm going to be earning significantly less money than people I went to school with?' he asked.

– Nathan Heller (2023)

[Adapted from: <https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2023/03/06/the-end-of-the-english-major>]

AND

End of the English Major? Hardly!

The problem isn't that people aren't interested in the humanities; it's that governments have disinvested in higher education and civil society, leaving universities scrambling for resources and emphasising STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics) because it brings in grant money and investors and creates wealthier alumni. In a world in which people read and write all day on their phones and computers, we need to teach people to read and write well, and that's what English as a discipline does.

People are reading and writing more than ever in today's digital world, so the English major is more crucial than it has ever been. Surrounded as we are by misinformation, conspiracy theories, social media, chatbots, we desperately need what English offers: mastery of texts. English teaches how to decode language, how to produce effective rhetoric, how to recognise genres and representations, and how to imagine oneself into alternative cultural ideas. These are the skills we need to be mentally healthy today. So, it is nothing short of tragic that the state has slashed funding for English.

– Graduate Centre New York (2023)

[Adapted from: <https://www.gc.cuny.edu/news/end-english-major-hardly>]

Glossary:

5. Humanities: academic disciplines that study aspects of human society and culture, such as literature, language, history, and philosophy

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Answer **EITHER** Question 7 **OR** Question 8.

QUESTION 7

Write an **open letter** addressed to the Minister of Employment and Labour, Mr TW Nxesi in which you **criticise** or **praise** the **prioritisation of STEM over the Humanities** when funding job creation in South Africa.

[20]

OR

QUESTION 8

You are a writer for the online student magazine, *Ukuzibuza,* which explores the changing nature of education. Write a **blog** in which you **reflect** on your own educational journey and consider how you have been **equipped** for tomorrow's **digital world** through your engagement with the **Humanities**.

[20]

40 marks

Total: 100 marks

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