basic education

Department:
Basic Education
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

SENIOR CERTIFICATE EXAMINATIONS
NATIONAL SENIOR CERTIFICATE EXAMINATIONS

ENGLISH HOME LANGUAGE P2

MAY/JUNE 2026

MARKING GUIDELINES

MARKS: 80

These marking guidelines consist of 25 pages.

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NOTE TO MARKERS

- These marking guidelines are intended as a guide for markers.
- The marking guidelines will be discussed with the marking panels before marking commences at the marking centres.
- Candidates' responses must be considered on their merits.

MARKING GUIDELINES

1. Wherever a candidate has answered more than the required number of questions, mark only the first answer/response. **(The candidate may not answer the essay and the contextual question on the same genre.)**
2. If a candidate has answered all four questions in SECTION A (prescribed poems), mark only the first two.
3. If a candidate has answered two contextual or two essay questions in SECTIONS B and C, mark the first one and ignore the second. If a candidate has answered all four questions (novel) and/or all six questions (drama), mark only the first answer in each SECTION, provided that one contextual and one essay have been answered.
4. If a candidate gives two answers, the first of which is wrong and the next one correct, mark the first answer and **ignore** the next.
5. If answers are incorrectly numbered, mark according to the marking guidelines.
6. If a spelling error affects the meaning, mark incorrect. If it does not affect the meaning, mark correct.
7. *Essay question*
   If the essay is shorter than the required word count, do not penalise, because the candidate has already penalised himself/herself. If the essay is too long, assess on merit and discuss with senior markers.
8. *Contextual questions*
   If the candidate does not use inverted commas when asked to quote, **do not penalise.**
9. For **open-ended questions**, no marks should be awarded for YES/NO or I AGREE/DISAGREE. The reason/substantiation/motivation/justification is what should be considered.
10. No marks should be awarded for TRUE/FALSE or FACT/OPINION. The reason/substantiation/motivation/justification is what should be considered.
11. Answers to contextual questions must be assessed holistically in the light of the discussion during the standardisation of the marking guidelines.

SECTION A: POETRY

PRESCRIBED POETRY

QUESTION 1: POETRY – ESSAY QUESTION

'TALK TO THE PEACH TREE' – Sipho Sepamla

- Use the following points, among others, as a guideline to marking this question. Responses might differ, depending on the candidate's sensitivity to and understanding of the poem.
- Refer to page 24 for the rubric to assess this question.

- The disintegration of meaningful communication between the apartheid government and oppressed people leads to a profound sense of isolation and disconnection.
- The speaker's solitary engagement with the peach tree reinforces the absurdity of communicating in a time and place where the voices of marginalised are unheard.
- The speaker interacts with various aspects of nature which are free, unlike the speaker. The absurdity of talking to inanimate objects highlights the need to open dialogue with the government.
- 'Swallows' symbolise freedom, contrasting with the restricted lives of the oppressed. Being migratory, the birds bring an awareness that the situation in South Africa is abnormal and that there are alternative systems of government.
- The 'shadow' suggests the encroaching darkness of oppression that stifles communication.
- The speaker feels that pets are more understanding and empathetic to his plight than the regime.
- The speaker feels that words have become meaningless. Their misuse means that messages lose impact and block effective communication.
- The image of 'paralysing heat' underscores the debilitating restrictions that the oppressed experience; the speaker wants to know how long they will have to suffer.
- The phrase, 'items from the rubbish heap' relates to the inhumane manner in which black South Africans are treated; 'stench' conjures images of decay and decline which must be addressed to ensure equal opportunities for all individuals.
- The speaker wants to know what it feels like to be grounded and have a sense of belonging because he feels disconnected from his own country.
- The 'moon' indicates the longevity of black people's suffering. The speaker implies that just 'eyeing' the cycle of oppression will never bring about change.
- The speaker's urging 'come on … it's about time' indicates that necessary action is long overdue, even though it means facing the embodiment of evil ('devil').
- The repeated mention of 'talk' emphasises the urgent need for active dialogue between the oppressor and the oppressed.
- The irregular structure created by the indented lines draws attention to the commentary offered by the speaker that despite the obstacles inherent in human communication, it is the only effective means of achieving freedom.
- While the overall tone is conversational, it is also multifaceted; it might be absurd/mocking/cynical/despairing/frustrated while also being urgent/imperative when the speaker encourages the opening up of negotiations.

[Credit valid alternative responses.] **[10]**

QUESTION 2: POETRY – CONTEXTUAL QUESTION

'SONNET 130' – William Shakespeare

2.1 The speaker indicates that his mistress's hair is coarse in texture/curly/ unkempt/untidy.

[Award 2 marks for two distinct points.] (2)

2.2 The speaker values his mistress's intellect and what she has to say, rather than worrying about the actual pitch/resonance of her voice./He enjoys talking to her and hearing her opinions rather than the aesthetic quality of her voice.

[Award 2 marks for two distinct points.] (2)

2.3 2.3.1 Metaphor/Alliteration (1)

2.3.2 The speaker compares his mistress to a goddess, traditionally a somewhat ethereal creature who would float or move lightly. The alliterative 'g' reinforces the idea of gliding gently over the surface. Instead, the speaker's loved one 'treads on the ground'; she walks with a heavy step and might lack grace/elegance. The image is effective because it highlights the contrast between the idealised, divine beauty and the more realistic, grounded nature of the speaker's mistress. She is a solid presence in his life.

[Award 2 marks for a comment on the effectiveness of the image.] (2)

2.4 **AGREE**
The speaker does not view his mistress as conventionally beautiful, but he loves her deeply nonetheless. The speaker ridicules idealised beauty such as eyes 'like the sun' and 'roses damasked' on a woman's cheeks. His appreciation of her goes beyond her physical characteristics and is based on his emotional connection to her. Beauty is subjective and true love is based on more meaningful qualities.

[A cogent 'Disagree' response is unlikely. However, treat all responses on their merits.]

[Award 3 marks for two ideas well discussed.] (3)
[10]

QUESTION 3: POETRY – CONTEXTUAL QUESTION

'PRAYER TO MASKS' – Léopold Sédar Senghor

3.1 The masks are imbued with the spirit of his ancestors (1) and therefore are considered alive/they are not regarded as inanimate objects (1). (2)

3.2 The need to guard 'this place' suggests that access is restricted (‘closed’). This creates a hostile, unwelcoming atmosphere./No 'laughter' or smiling is permitted in this sacred place hence the atmosphere is sombre/grave/serious. There is a sense of reverence/serenity as it is a spiritual place.

[Award 1 mark for atmosphere and 1 mark for an explanation.] (2)

3.3 3.3.1 Metaphor (1)

3.3.2 The act of writing is compared to praying which suggests that the speaker is humble/reverential in seeking guidance and wisdom from his ancestors to navigate the transition from colonial rule to freedom. Through his writing, the speaker wants to revive the dignity, pride, and cultural identity of oppressed Africans. This image effectively portrays the act of writing as a spiritual/sacred, creative and transformative endeavour.

[Award 2 marks for a comment on the effectiveness of the image.] (2)

3.4 **AGREE**

The speaker believes that the children of Africa are prepared to 'sacrifice their lives' for change. Africans will act as the catalyst ('leaven') for change and growth in the world. The western world is in disarray because of industrialisation and war; it has become hopeless ('torn hope') and disconnected from nature. The emphatic cry of 'here' and the repetition of 'who else' reinforces the speaker's belief that it is only Africans who can guide the world to a more peaceful and harmonious future. Despite the legacy of colonisation, the speaker believes that, by reclaiming their culture, Africans will feel a sense of ownership and belonging. They will transform the world.

[A cogent 'Disagree' response is unlikely. However, treat all responses on their merits.]

[Award 3 marks for two ideas well discussed.] (3)

[10]

QUESTION 4: POETRY – CONTEXTUAL QUESTION

'THE SHIPWRECK' – Emily Dickinson

4.1 The word 'boiling' suggests that the sand is being disturbed by the rough movement of the water./The sand is turbulent and churning in a chaotic manner.

[Award 2 marks for two distinct points.] (2)

4.2 The word 'Ring' suggests the mood is one of relief and subdued celebration. The community is grateful that four people have survived. However, the word 'toll' connotes a funeral bell, indicating the sorrow and grief for the many who have perished.

[Award 2 marks for the contrasting moods and an explanation of each.] (2)

4.3 4.3.1 Personification (1)

4.3.2 Winter's shaking the door refers to the cold and windy conditions outside. The security/safety of the home is threatened, creating a sense of vulnerability since the people inside cannot do anything to prevent winter from entering. The image is foreboding/ominous. This highlights the unpredictable strength of nature whether on land or at sea.

[Award 2 marks for a comment on the effectiveness of the image.] (2)

4.4 **AGREE**
The storm results in the loss of many lives. 'Neighbor and friend and bridegroom' emphasises the varied and intimate connections between members of the community and intensifies their bereavement. Every winter is a reminder of the shipwreck; their grief is re-lived in the telling of the story. The lack of explanation for their loss leads to their questioning the indiscriminate ruthlessness of nature. There is a constant reminder of people's vulnerability and the fragility of existence.

[A cogent 'Disagree' response is unlikely. However, treat all responses on their merits.]

[Award 3 marks for two ideas well discussed.] (3)
[10]

UNSEEN POETRY (COMPULSORY)

QUESTION 5: CONTEXTUAL QUESTION

'CITY PEOPLE' – Elaine Unterhalter

5.1 The woman is wealthy; not only might she wear expensive perfume but she conducts herself in a manner that displays her sense of superiority. However, she leads a life that is superficial, empty and devoid of real value; she spends her time shopping and engaging in idle chitchat; she does not have anything important to say.

[Award 2 marks for two distinct points.] (2)

5.2 The speaker presents a list of all the people that she observes in the city. She feels like a spectator and not a participant in city life. The repetition of 'I saw' reinforces how the city is inhabited by a wide cross-section of people from various walks of life.

[Award 2 marks for two distinct points.] (2)

5.3 5.3.1 Metaphor (1)

5.3.2 By comparing the lawyer's eyes to 'cents', his greed is evident. The image effectively implies that he is more focused on making money than in fighting for justice.

[Award 2 marks for a discussion of the effectiveness of the image.] (2)

5.4 The poem explores the alienating effects of living in the city. Despite being surrounded by a diversity of people, the speaker feels isolated and disconnected. She compares herself to all the people she sees who 'meant something to somebody' while she feels uncertain about herself. By asking 'what do I mean?', she is highlighting her search for identity and worth.

[Award 3 marks only if there is a critical discussion.] (3)
[10]

TOTAL SECTION A: 30

SECTION B: NOVEL

THE PICTURE OF DORIAN GRAY – Oscar Wilde

QUESTION 6: *THE PICTURE OF DORIAN GRAY* – ESSAY QUESTION

- Below is the basis for answering this essay. Use the following as a guideline only. However, also allow for answers that are different, original and show evidence of critical thought and interpretation.
- A range of examples should be used by the candidates to support their arguments.
- Refer to page 25 for the rubric to assess this question.

VALID

- Outwardly, Dorian Gray embodies a carefree, unrestrained life of pleasure-seeking and excess. While maintaining his beauty and eternal youth, he is seemingly immune to moral and social consequences. However, beneath this façade lies a darker reality of indulgence and moral decay.
- Dorian's extraordinary beauty captivates those around him, especially Basil Hallward. He paints the portrait, which becomes central to Dorian's downfall when he wishes to remain young while the portrait ages, connecting his soul to the canvas.
- Lord Henry's hedonistic philosophy heavily influences Dorian, steering him into a life of reckless indulgence. Dorian's initial innocence is corrupted by Henry's manipulation, making his carefree appearance deceptive.
- Dorian surrounds himself with luxury and lives a life of hedonism, reinforcing the illusion of a life free from consequences.
- The portrait changes with each of Dorian's sinful acts, symbolising the decay of his conscience and morality. It symbolises the split between outer appearance and inner reality. The constant degradation of the portrait represents the accumulation of Dorian's sins and the decay of his true self – highlighting the inescapable nature of moral consequences.
- Dorian's relationships illustrate the façade of his charm versus his true nature. His harsh rejection of his first love, Sibyl Vane, leading to her suicide, marks the first blemish on the portrait. In chasing hedonistic pleasure, Dorian leaves a trail of ruined reputations and broken lives. The harm Dorian causes to those around him shows his inner cruelty and lack of empathy.
- Dorian's outward life of pleasure conceals his psychological distress, self-loathing and paranoia. The portrait's reflection of his moral decay acts as a constant reminder of his sins, leading to the burden of his depravity weighing on him.
- Out of desperation, Dorian attempts to relieve his guilt through further excess and cruelty, none of which satisfy him or bring him contentment.
- The portrait reflects the reality of Dorian's life and in his attempt to escape his grotesque soul, he destroys it. This backfires tragically.
- The destruction of both Dorian and the portrait emphasises the futility of superficial pursuits and the inevitable reckoning everyone must face.
- Dorian's initial innocence and beauty slowly transform into a figure of pure corruption. He is bound by his addiction to experiencing various and more intense types of pleasures. The apparent freedom Dorian enjoys becomes a kind of prison, highlighting the lack of true liberation in his life of excess.

[A cogent 'Invalid' response is unlikely. However, treat all responses on their merits.]
[Credit valid alternative/mixed responses.] **[25]**

QUESTION 7: *THE PICTURE OF DORIAN GRAY* – CONTEXTUAL QUESTION

7.1 Basil has been looking for Dorian as Sibyl has been reported dead and he is concerned about Dorian's state of mind./Basil is there to offer his condolences as he assumes that Dorian is in mourning.

[Award 2 marks for two reasons.] (2)

7.2 These lines reveal Basil's protective nature; he is concerned about Dorian's well-being and always assumes the best of people. He is extremely sensitive and empathetic, particularly towards Dorian. He has a strong sense of morality and naïvely believes that Dorian is heart-broken and suffering. He is anxious on Dorian's behalf and is aggrieved that Dorian does not need him as much as Basil assumed he would.

[Award 2 marks for two distinct points.] (2)

7.3 These lines reveal that Dorian and Sibyl are from different social classes. Dorian is wealthy and lives an opulent lifestyle, whereas Sibyl lives in poverty ('sordid lodgings'). He does not have to work and can indulge in sophisticated activities like going to the 'Opera', while Sibyl has to work as an actress for a living.

[Award 2 marks for one point of contrast with an explanation.] (2)

7.4 Basil is horrified at Dorian's casual/indifferent attitude to Sibyl's death; he is cruel ('no heart') and lacks compassion ('no pity') for others. This is the beginning of Dorian's moral deterioration; he becomes increasingly heartless as he indulges in sinful behaviour. The brutal murder of Basil and his dismissive reference to Basil's body as 'the thing' underscores his evil nature.
His quick thinking in providing himself with an alibi illustrates his cold response to the murder; this is also reflected in his blackmailing of Alan Campbell. Dorian is callous in his response to James Vane's death. This is illustrative of his lack of empathy and insidious nature.

[Credit valid alternative responses.]

[Award 3 marks for two ideas well discussed.] (3)

7.5 Lord Henry's charming and charismatic nature draws people to him. His paradoxical and often controversial statements make him intriguing to others. Lord Henry's promotion of hedonistic values is compelling in an otherwise conservative society. His understanding of people's natures allows him to indirectly encourage them to disregard the consequences of their actions. His wealth and status in society place him in a position where he can influence people.

[Award 3 marks for two ideas well discussed.] (3)

7.6 Before leaving for Paris, Basil wants to confront Dorian regarding the unsavoury rumours circulating about him. They bump into each other on the street and Dorian reluctantly invites Basil to his home. Dorian shrugs off Basil's concerns and becomes angry at his moralising.

[Award 2 marks for two distinct points.] (2)

7.7 Readers might be disgusted/appalled/horrified/disturbed by Dorian's taking great pleasure in gloating about his secret, with the threat of revealing the portrait to Basil being done with utter condescension.

[Award 1 mark for the reader's response and 1 mark for an explanation thereof.] (2)

7.8 It is ironic that Dorian shifts the blame for his shameful lifestyle onto Basil, stating that Basil will be haunted by guilt for the rest of his life, yet Basil's life is cut short soon after./In addition, the burden is not Basil's to carry; it is Dorian who remains burdened by his guilt, haunted by both the portrait and the crime he commits.

[Award 3 marks for a clear understanding of irony.] (3)

7.9 The significance of comparing the portrait to a diary is that the portrait records the aspects of Dorian's life that he chooses to keep hidden, much as a diary would. The portrait is a visible manifestation of the consequences of his immoral choices – it reveals the utter degradation of his soul, hidden from everyone else. Like a diary, the portrait is kept hidden and 'never leaves the room'. Dorian hides his truth from the outside world, while keeping up the appearance of youthful innocence. The real cost of his actions remains locked away. This is indicative of Dorian's deceptive lifestyle.

[Award 3 marks only if a cogent comment is included.] (3)

7.10 Basil's accusations against Dorian would be considered unbelievable, especially in a society that values beauty and charm more than truth or morality. Dorian embodies the ideal of beauty standards and refinement, which allows him to maintain his social standing despite his moral decay. Victorian society's obsession with appearances means that Dorian's outward beauty shields him from scrutiny and judgement; moral corruption is ignored as long as it remains hidden beneath a polished surface. They believe that beauty equates to virtue, and prioritise appearance over moral substance. Dorian's awareness of his society's superficiality emboldens him; he understands that in a society dominated by aestheticism, people are more likely to admire him for his looks than to question his character. This reflects the shallow values of the time, where the pursuit of beauty and art for art's sake overshadows ethical considerations.

[Award 3 marks only if there is a critical discussion.] (3)

[25]

LIFE OF PI – Yann Martel

QUESTION 8: *LIFE OF PI* – ESSAY QUESTION

- Below is the basis for answering this essay. Use the following as a guideline only. However, also allow for answers that are different, original and show evidence of critical thought and interpretation.
- A range of examples should be used by the candidates to support their arguments.
- Refer to page 25 for the rubric to assess this question.

VALID

- Pi's stable adulthood contradicts the stresses he endured while growing up and the traumatic experience he endured while on the lifeboat. Pi's adult life is greatly influenced by his challenging and life-changing childhood experiences.
- He overcomes the bullying he received because of his name. His peers and teachers admire his resilience and, by re-inventing himself, Pi creates a happier path for himself.
- Pi's pluralistic religious convictions set him apart from his community, and make him a subject of ridicule by some. Despite this, Pi is steadfast in his beliefs.
- Notwithstanding these challenges to the identity Pi is creating for himself, his life in Pondicherry is generally comfortable and privileged. His family accepts his curiosity and religious exploration, and he is allowed to live his life on his own terms.
- This is in stark contrast to the horrors he faces when he is stranded on a lifeboat.
- His ordeal is marked by physical deprivation and emotional trauma. The loss of his family, the lack of food and his isolation force Pi to take extreme means to ensure his survival. He has to face the harshness of nature, to kill and eat fish, and later, he resorts to cannibalism to survive. Pi compromises his principles and contravenes his belief that all of God's creatures are sacred. His endurance is tested.
- In the animal story, he witnesses the savagery of the hyena when it attacks and kills the other animals, and Richard Parker when he kills the hyena, and later, the blind Frenchman.
- Pi creates the animal story in which Richard Parker is his alter ego as a coping mechanism. He distances himself from the more brutal realities of his ordeal.
- In the human story, Pi is forced to acknowledge the brutality of the French cook and his own savagery when he kills the French cook in retaliation for the cook's killing of Pi's mother.
- It would be natural for these traumatic experiences to leave deep emotional scars on Pi. However, the adult Pi appears to be content and unaffected by the trauma he endured on the lifeboat. He has a family, a career and a life of stable domestic routine. His re-telling of his experience is characterised by self-reflection, touches of humour and a balanced perspective, which suggests that he has processed his trauma and come to terms with his past. His enduring faith is pivotal in helping him to process, and find meaning in his suffering.
- There are elements of his earlier suffering that have stayed with Pi: his hoarding of food; his keeping his home warm; the sad look in his eyes when he talks about his mother and his sadness when talking about Richard Parker. They are part of Pi but do not control his life.
- Pi's well-adjusted life in Canada is an unexpected outcome of the traumatic experience he endured. His ability to live a fulfilling life is a result of his faith, resilience and adaptability.

[A cogent 'Invalid' response is unlikely. However, treat all responses on their merits.]
[Credit valid alternative/mixed responses.] **[25]**

QUESTION 9: *LIFE OF PI* – CONTEXTUAL QUESTION

9.1 While Mr Patel appears to be a harsh/strict parent, he loves his sons and is concerned about their well-being. His authoritarian approach to parenting is evident in his commanding tone. His hesitation before he begins the lesson suggests that he is aware of the trauma it might cause but he understands the value of the lesson.

[Award 2 marks for two distinct points.] (2)

9.2 After the shipwreck Orange Juice climbs aboard the lifeboat, joining Pi, Richard Parker, a zebra, and a hyena. The hyena violently attacks Orange Juice and despite her brave attempt to defend herself, she is no match for the hyena and is swiftly killed.

[Award 2 marks for two distinct points.] (2)

9.3 The lesson proves to be invaluable later in Pi's life, particularly during his time stranded on the lifeboat with Richard Parker. This early experience establishes Pi's understanding of the need for firm boundaries between humans and animals, as well as the importance of predicting and managing animal behaviour. By forcing Pi to witness the brutal killing, Mr Patel demonstrates the wild, instinctive nature of animals and the very real danger they pose. Pi is fully aware that Richard Parker is not a companion but a predator, capable of killing him. Pi's survival depends on asserting his dominance over Richard Parker. Using the knowledge imparted by his father, Pi trains Richard Parker through conditioning techniques, marking his territory, and establishing himself as the alpha.

[Award 3 marks for two ideas well discussed.] (3)

9.4 Mother's 'trembling' indicates that she is anxious and worried on behalf of her sons who might be traumatised by what they are about to witness. In these lines she is presented as timid and nervous. Later, on the lifeboat, when she is confronted by the evil French cook, she also displays maternal protectiveness. However, she is more resilient and is willing to make a sacrifice to defend her values. She proves to be fearless, courageous and steadfast.

[Award 3 marks only if the change in Pi's mother is well discussed.] (3)

9.5 Richard Parker is indifferent to/disinterested in the tanker's failure to rescue them. He does not understand why Pi is so frantic. As a tiger he does not recognise the significance of what has just happened. He is 'cranky' and irritated at having been disturbed.

[Award 2 marks for two distinct reasons.] (2)

9.6 Pi is experiencing a multitude of emotions. He feels deep despair and despondency at not being rescued. He feels isolated and alone.

[Award 1 mark for state of mind and 1 mark for an explanation thereof.] (2)

9.7 Pi did not always feel affection/love for Richard Parker. When he encouraged Richard Parker to climb aboard the lifeboat, he was concerned about the tiger's survival but he quickly realises the danger that Richard Parker's presence poses for him. He is afraid and anxious until he formulates a plan to protect himself.

[Award 1 mark for Pi's earlier feelings and 1 mark for a discussion thereof.] (2)

9.8 The tiger perceives Pi as the alpha male because Pi has established his authority over Richard Parker. He trains Richard Parker by providing food, using a whistle and other strategies to show dominance. This creates a sense of respect from the tiger, that acknowledges the balance of power by adhering to the boundaries established by Pi.

[Award 3 marks for two ideas well discussed.] (3)

9.9 In the human story, the promise that Pi makes is actually a promise to himself that he will survive. He assumes Richard Parker as his alter ego, which allows him to distance himself from the acts of brutality he is forced to commit to survive. By creating Richard Parker, Pi is motivated to endure this ordeal.

[Award 3 marks only if a cogent comment is included.] (3)

9.10 Pi's multi-faith approach to life indicates that it is faith, rather than religion, that gives his life meaning and sustains him through his ordeal. Pi is a deeply spiritual person and even at his lowest points, he is able to appreciate the glory of God's creation as he sees life as being filled with wonder and purpose. He connects with God consistently, regardless of the circumstances he is facing. In moments of despair and hopelessness, Pi turns to his faith to give him the strength to persevere. He practises daily rituals to distract himself from the harsh reality he faces. His faith is strengthened by his experience at sea which is evident when he leaves the algae island as it represents a shallow spirituality. There is evidence of his on-going commitment to his faith in his life in Canada.

[Award 3 marks only if there is a critical discussion.] (3)
[25]

TOTAL SECTION B: 25

SECTION C: DRAMA

HAMLET – William Shakespeare

QUESTION 10: *HAMLET* – ESSAY QUESTION

- Below is the basis for answering this essay. Use the following as a guideline only. However, also allow for answers that are different, original and show evidence of critical thought and interpretation.
- A range of examples should be used by the candidates to support their arguments.
- Refer to page 25 for the rubric to assess this question.

AGREE

- Claudius's desire for power is so strong that it has a negative impact on many characters: he murders his brother, King Hamlet, seizes the throne and marries Gertrude, his sister-in-law. Once Claudius has the throne, he becomes obsessed with maintaining his position at all costs.
- After the Ghost appears to Hamlet, he feels duty bound to avenge his father's murder. Instead of openly confronting Claudius, he uses deception ('an antic disposition') and subterfuge (the staging of *The Mousetrap)* to determine the veracity of the Ghost's claim.
- His mother's being easily seduced by Claudius and their hasty marriage, regarded as incestuous, leads Hamlet to doubt women's loyalty and to judge them harshly.
- While Hamlet tries to establish Claudius's guilt, he treats his mother coldly and cruelly lashes out at Ophelia.
- Hamlet's rash killing of Polonius and his lack of remorse for sending Rosencrantz and Guildenstern to their deaths highlight his moral decline.
- Although Hamlet's desire for revenge is noble, his actions, such as delaying justice and causing others' deaths, compromise his honour.
- Polonius is corrupt and self-serving; he seeks to gain the favour of Claudius and cement his position as Lord Chamberlain.
- His spying on Hamlet and his children, particularly using Ophelia as bait, reveals his lack of integrity.
- Polonius's death, caused by his own penchant for espionage, is a direct result of his unscrupulous actions.
- Ophelia's reporting her interactions with Hamlet and allowing herself to be used by her father raises questions about her morality. Ophelia's being used as a pawn by Claudius and Polonius, Hamlet's cruel treatment of her and her father's death result in her madness and subsequent death.
- Rosencrantz and Guildenstern's betrayal of their friendship with Hamlet is dishonourable. They allow themselves to be used by Claudius to spy on Hamlet, motivated by material gain. This ultimately leads to their death.
- Laertes's collusion with Claudius to kill Hamlet, including his poisoning of the sword, is shameful, as is his hypocrisy when he feigns acceptance of Hamlet's apology before the duel.
- Laertes redeems himself when he confesses the treachery, absolves Hamlet, and asks for forgiveness before his death.

[A cogent 'Disagree' response is unlikely. However, treat all responses on their merits.]
[Credit valid alternative/mixed responses.] **[25]**

QUESTION 11: *HAMLET* – CONTEXTUAL QUESTION

11.1 Hamlet has requested that Claudius allow him to return to Wittenberg. Claudius and Gertrude deny Hamlet's request and criticise his reaction to his father's death, encouraging him to look to the future.

[Award 2 marks for two distinct points.] (2)

11.2 Hamlet idealises his parents' marriage, viewing it as perfect. He believes that his father protected and loved his mother. In return, Gertrude doted on her husband. They appeared to be devoted to each other and truly in love.

[Award 2 marks for two distinct points.] (2)

11.3 Hamlet has to keep his opinions to himself as Claudius and Gertrude are the new King and Queen. If he publicly criticises them, it would be seen as treason. As Claudius has the support of the courtiers, Hamlet realises he needs to be cautious and 'hold (his) tongue'.

[Award 2 marks for two distinct points.] (2)

11.4 The word, 'frailty' implies that women are seen as morally weak, easily tempted and untrustworthy. They are inferior and reliant on men to maintain their social standing. This view of women is indicative of a society that is patriarchal and misogynistic.

[Award 3 marks only if a cogent comment is included.] (3)

11.5 Hamlet's tone might be one of disgust/shock/anger/revulsion. He might clench his hands and pound a fist into his other hand or cross his arms. This would emphasise Hamlet's view that Gertrude and Claudius's hasty marriage is a betrayal of his father and is morally corrupt.

[Credit valid alternative responses.]

[The candidate's response should be convincing in context.]

[Award 3 marks only if the candidate refers to both body language and tone, and includes a motivation.] (3)

11.6 Polonius was spying on Gertrude and Hamlet's conversation. Gertrude, afraid of Hamlet's aggression towards her, shouts out for help which, in turn, causes Polonius to call out in bewilderment. This alerts Hamlet to his presence and, assuming that it is Claudius, he stabs through the arras, killing Polonius.

[Award 2 marks for two distinct points.] (2)

11.7 Claudius is suspicious/wary of Hamlet and feels threatened by him. Claudius is concerned that Hamlet's irrational and reckless behaviour will put him (Claudius) in danger. Hamlet's killing of Polonius has just presented Claudius with an opportunity to justify his actions of sending Hamlet away.

[Award 1 mark for attitude and 1 mark for an explanation thereof.] (2)

11.8 Ophelia is initially presented as cheerful, witty, logical, and even assertive at times. However, after her father's death, she becomes distraught and confused. She has lost her grip on reality and this leads to her tragic end. The adjective, 'poor' evokes sympathy/pity. Ophelia is presented as a victim of circumstances beyond her control. Her vulnerability and helplessness are emphasised. The word 'divided' reflects Ophelia's mental breakdown and her descent into madness. Ophelia's mind and emotions are in conflict; she is bewildered and incapable of overcoming her grief. The phrase, 'fair judgement' refers to the ability to think rationally and with clarity; the implication here is that Ophelia is unable to think clearly or make sound decisions.

[Award 3 marks only if the change in Ophelia's character is well discussed.] (3)

11.9 Upon hearing of his father's death, Laertes assumes Claudius is responsible. He is controlled by his emotion and decides to take swift action without waiting for further evidence. Laertes's actions demonstrate that he is impulsive, confrontational and not morally restrained.

[Award 3 marks only if a cogent comment is included.] (3)

11.10 The people of Denmark are unsettled/disturbed ('muddied') by the recent events at the Royal Court. Their overwhelming ('thick') thoughts and conversations are 'unwholesome' as speculation about Polonius's death and Claudius's legitimacy spreads among the people. They are agitated and ready to revolt. Turmoil and unrest are prevalent in Denmark. Claudius's awareness of his diminishing power underscores the tense political climate.

[Award 3 marks only if there is a critical discussion.] (3)
[25]

OTHELLO – William Shakespeare

QUESTION 12: *OTHELLO* – ESSAY QUESTION

- Below is the basis for answering this essay. Use the following as a guideline only. However, also allow for answers that are different, original and show evidence of critical thought and interpretation.
- A range of examples should be used by the candidates to support their arguments.
- Refer to page 25 for the rubric to assess this question.

AGREE

- Iago's desire for power and control, which is immediately evident, has a negative impact on many characters. As Othello's ancient/ensign, Iago feels slighted when Cassio is promoted to lieutenant instead of him. This perceived injustice is the catalyst for Iago's vengeful actions; he becomes consumed by his desire for power, manipulating and deceiving everyone around him in his determination to destroy Othello and Cassio.
- Iago's thirst for control is not only driven by ambition but also by a need to assert superiority over others. His corruption of Roderigo, his manipulation of Othello's jealousy, and his creation of false evidence are all driven by his desire to control those around him. He views the people around him as pawns in his malevolent scheme for revenge.
- Iago exploits Roderigo's lack of integrity by encouraging him to buy Desdemona's love and break up her marriage. He is complicit in the plan to destroy Cassio's reputation and later murder him. Roderigo's willingness to follow Iago's instructions leads to his death.
- Iago's actions reveal how the desire for power can corrupt one's morality, as he feels no guilt for ruining lives in his pursuit of dominance. His manipulation of Othello shows the depth of his corruption, as he destroys Othello's life and mind, pushing him towards murder to satisfy his own need for power and revenge.
- Iago feels disempowered in his marriage because he suspects that Othello has slept with his wife; this fuels his hatred of Othello and strengthens his desire to ruin Othello.
- Othello's insecurities about his race and outsider status in Venetian society make him susceptible to Iago's scheming. When Iago plants the seed of doubt in Othello's mind regarding Desdemona's fidelity, Othello becomes consumed by jealousy and a desire to assert control over his wife. Othello's need to control the situation leads him to relinquish his judgement to Iago, thereby allowing himself to be manipulated. The more Othello believes Iago's lies, the more he desires to exercise power over Desdemona. This eventually leads him to murder her.
- Cassio's fall from favour is a result of Iago's pursuit of power. He allows himself to get drunk while on duty and engages in a brawl that is unbecoming of his high rank.
- Iago has power over his wife, Emilia. She is so desperate to win his approval that she compromises her morals and steals Desdemona's handkerchief for him. However, he is unable to maintain his power and control over her as she is determined to reveal his deception and speak out against injustice even at the expense of her life.
- In her innocence and love for her husband, Desdemona is unaware of the malicious power struggles unfolding around her. She does not want to tarnish Othello's reputation or bring dishonour to him so she takes the blame for her own murder. Her submission to her husband's authority results in her tragic demise.

[A cogent 'Disagree' response is unlikely. However, treat all responses on their merits.]
[Credit valid alternative/mixed responses.] **[25]**

QUESTION 13: *OTHELLO* – CONTEXTUAL QUESTION

13.1 Iago's instruction to call Brabantio is his attempt to create alarm and chaos, knowing that Brabantio will react angrily upon hearing of his daughter, Desdemona's elopement. This will drive a wedge between Othello and Brabantio's relationship, advancing Iago's plan to destroy Othello.

[Award 2 marks for two distinct points.] (2)

13.2 Iago is angry with Othello for appointing Cassio as lieutenant because he believes that he has more experience. He is jealous because he suspects that Othello has cuckolded him by sleeping with Emilia, his wife. Iago is also a racist who does not want to follow Othello as a leader.

[Award 2 marks for two distinct points.] (2)

13.3 Iago and Roderigo's relationship is based on manipulation and deceit. Iago is using Roderigo's infatuation with Desdemona to further his own agenda. Roderigo, desperate to win Desdemona's love, blindly follows Iago's suggestions without realising that he is being manipulated for Iago's personal gain. Iago sees Roderigo as a pawn in his larger scheme, exploiting his emotions and naivety.

[Award 2 marks for two distinct points.] (2)

13.4 Roderigo's comment ('thick-lips') reflects the racial prejudice that some members of Venetian society have towards Othello. As a Moor, he is viewed with suspicion and disdain, despite his military prowess and achievements. Iago regards him as an outsider and his race makes him a target for mockery. His marriage to Desdemona is seen as an unnatural or suspicious act by Brabantio. Desdemona, the Duke and others, however, look beyond Othello's race, and treat him with respect and honour.

[Award 3 marks for two ideas well discussed.] (3)

13.5 The words, 'poison', 'plague' and 'flies' have connotations of disease and corruption. Iago is like a poison, sharing his venomous ideas first with Roderigo and then with Othello. He manipulates Othello into thinking the worst of Desdemona. Othello's mind becomes diseased/corrupted by Iago and the deterioration of his language reflects how successful Iago is at spreading doubt and chaos. The words, 'rouse' and 'incense' are indicative of Iago's desire to instigate others in the pursuit of his own goals. The relationship between Othello and Desdemona is poisoned and the tragic loss of their, and others' lives is the result of the torment that Iago unleashes as a result of his desire for revenge.

[Award 3 marks only if the significance is well discussed.] (3)

13.6 Othello confronts Desdemona in their bedchamber, accusing her of adultery which she denies. She pleads for mercy, but Othello is unmoved and smothers her.

[Award 2 marks for two distinct points.] (2)

13.7 Othello's interaction with Emilia shows his distracted/confused/disorientated state of mind as he is overwhelmed by his emotions and the consequences of his actions. He is consumed by his feelings of betrayal and anger towards Desdemona, and he is grappling with his own guilt.

[Award 1 mark for state of mind and 1 mark for an explanation thereof.] (2)

13.8 Desdemona's words highlight her innocence and the tragic misunderstanding that has led to her murder. Despite being falsely accused, she maintains her dignity and refuses to implicate Othello in her death. Her calm acceptance of her fate, without seeking revenge or blaming others, reflects her purity and steadfastness, even in the face of death.

[Award 3 marks only if a cogent comment is included.] (3)

13.9 Othello might point to himself or put his hands on his hips; as a man of honour, Othello takes responsibility for his actions. As such, his tone might be defiant/ calm/resigned/unrepentant. He is arrogant and is not afraid of admitting that he has murdered Desdemona. He believes justice has been served.

[Credit valid alternative responses.]

[The candidate's response should be convincing in context.]

[Award 3 marks only if the candidate refers to both body language and tone, and includes a motivation.] (3)

13.10 Emilia's statement contrasts Desdemona's innocence with Othello's guilt, pointing out the tragedy that the one who is truly virtuous (Desdemona) is murdered, while the one who has been consumed by jealousy and deception (Othello) is the actual villain. As much as Othello is the perpetrator of evil, he is also a victim of Iago's machinations. Othello's transformation from the esteemed general of the Venetian army to an insecure, murderous husband is tragic.

[Credit valid alternative responses.]

[Award 3 marks only if there is a critical discussion.] (3)
[25]

THE CRUCIBLE – Arthur Miller

QUESTION 14: *THE CRUCIBLE* – ESSAY QUESTION

- Below is the basis for answering this essay. Use the following as a guideline only. However, also allow for answers that are different, original and show evidence of critical thought and interpretation.
- A range of examples should be used by the candidates to support their arguments.
- Refer to page 25 for the rubric to assess this question.

AGREE

- Abigail is manipulative and power-hungry. She is the catalyst for the mass hysteria, the wrongful execution of innocent people and the destruction of many lives. She is a dissembler, using deceit and fear in her reign of terror.
- Having had an affair with John, she is determined to win him back and is willing to send innocent people to their deaths to do so.
- She is driven by her desire for social dominance: she manipulates the other girls into dancing in the forest, taking advantage of their fear of punishment to coerce them into silence and compliance. When Abigail realises that Tituba's accusing people of witchcraft elevates Tituba's position, she quickly takes over that role.
- Abigail's manipulation of the court is indicative of her growing power in Salem. She enjoys the elevated position she holds and is regarded as saintly. She considers herself above the law and is happy to perpetuate the impression for as long as she can, that she is a victim.
- When she senses that she is losing her power, she runs away rather than facing the consequences of her actions.
- John Proctor faces a moral dilemma as a result of his affair with Abigail. He initially struggles to expose her lies about the girls' behaviour in the woods because he does not want to reveal his adultery. Later, he confesses his sins to discredit her, knowing that his reputation will be compromised. He is conflicted between saving his life or protecting his integrity and the family name.
- Elizabeth is the target of Abigail's jealousy. Abigail's false accusations of witchcraft against Elizabeth are motivated by her desire to remove Elizabeth as her rival for John's love.
- Mary Warren is swept up by Abigail's manipulation and is pressured into falsely accusing others of witchcraft. She does attempt to stand up to Abigail and expose her lies but Abigail threatens and coerces her into recanting her confession.
- Abigail's desire for power has an impact on her community. Villagers turn on one another and the trials are used to settle personal vendettas: Ann Putnam is emboldened to accuse the pious Rebecca Nurse of the 'supernatural murder' of her babies and Martha Corey is accused of bewitching Walcott's pigs. Order in society degenerates; children are orphaned and farms are abandoned.
- Reverend Parris uses the accusations of witchcraft to evaluate his authority in the village. Ironically, this eventually exposes his self-centred and hypocritical nature and the villagers turn against him.
- Danforth's arrogance and determination to preserve the reputation of the court have fuelled the witch trials. Furthermore, his refusal to hear evidence tars him as a judge who lacks integrity and justice.

[A cogent 'Disagree' response is unlikely. However, treat all responses on their merits.]
[Credit valid alternative/mixed responses.] **[25]**

QUESTION 15: *THE CRUCIBLE* – CONTEXTUAL QUESTION

15.1 John has been working on the farm all day and has returned home. He has just eaten his dinner and has reprimanded Elizabeth for allowing Mary Warren to attend the trial in Salem when she should be at work.

[Award 2 marks for two distinct points.] (2)

15.2 Elizabeth is aware that Abigail and the girls are covering up their rebellious behaviour in the forest by claiming that they are victims of witchcraft. She is concerned about the impact of the girls' lying as innocent people are being arrested as witches. She realises that the trials are based on false claims and deception. She is shocked by their audacious behaviour because of her integrity/inability to lie.

[Award 2 marks for two distinct points.] (2)

15.3 The relationship between John and Elizabeth is tense and strained, because of John's affair with Abigail. They are nervous in each other's company and Elizabeth is still hurt and distrustful of her husband; she is 'cold' and not yet able to forgive him. While they care for each other, there is a sense of distance and a lack of emotional connection, reflecting the tension that exists in their marriage. This is aggravated by John's withholding the information that he saw Abigail alone in Salem.

[Award 2 marks for two distinct points.] (2)

15.4 The response of the villagers to the girls' accusations is one of reverence and fear. The girls, especially Abigail, are believed to be speaking the truth and have been elevated to the status of saints. People in Salem are quick to accept their claims because of the religious fervour and superstition that govern the town. There is little questioning of the girls' accusations, as they think the girls are the voice of God, and any scepticism is quickly suppressed as people are afraid of being labelled as witch sympathisers.

[Award 3 marks only if a cogent comment is included.] (3)

15.5 Elizabeth might put her hands on her hips or cross her arms over her chest. Her tone might be upset/hurt/shocked/accusatory/angry because John has lied to her about being alone with Abigail.

[Credit valid alternative responses.]

[The candidate's response should be convincing in context.]

[Award 3 marks only if the candidate refers to both body language and tone, and includes a motivation.] (3)

15.6 Mary has been brought to court under duress by John Proctor to refute the claims of witchcraft. She initially attempts to stand up against the girls, but the intense social and emotional pressure, particularly from Abigail and the other girls, overwhelms her; they create the impression that she is sending out her spirit to attack Abigail. Mary is trying to protect herself by retracting her confession and aligning with Abigail, who has the power to destroy her. Her fear of being accused and punished for opposing the group leads her to make this statement; she chooses self-preservation over the truth.

[Award 2 marks for two distinct reasons.] (2)

15.7 Danforth is dismissive and increasingly hostile towards Reverend Hale. Danforth is committed to the witch trials and believes that the court is right in its meting out of justice, while Hale has begun to have doubts about the integrity of the proceedings. Danforth views Hale's questioning and disillusionment as a threat to the authority of the court. Danforth disregards Hale's concerns and he refuses to admit that there has been a miscarriage of justice in his court.

[Award 1 mark for attitude and 1 mark for an explanation thereof.] (2)

15.8 The phrase, 'pulling Heaven down' suggests that Abigail is undermining truth and morality, while 'raising up a whore' refers to her self-serving actions and immoral behaviour. Abigail has manipulated the villagers by falsely accusing innocent people of witchcraft, leading to executions and widespread panic. In doing so, she is abusing her perceived power, which she gained through lies and manipulation. The phrase highlights Abigail's corruption and the evil she spreads through the trials.

[Award 3 marks for two ideas well discussed.] (3)

15.9 Hale's decision reveals the moral transformation he has undergone. Initially, Hale was an ardent supporter of the witch trials, believing they were a necessary action to root out evil. However, after witnessing the corruption, injustice, and the execution of innocent people, Hale experiences a crisis of conscience. The line reflects his guilt, shame, and realisation that he has contributed to an unjust system. Hale's departure signifies his rejection of the court's actions and his recognition that he can no longer be part of a system that condemns people based on lies, thus demonstrating his integrity.

[Award 3 marks only if a cogent comment is included.] (3)

15.10 These lines reflect the hypocrisy at the heart of the Salem witch trials. It is ironic that, as a strict Puritan society, the actions of many people contradict their Christian principles. Proctor is referring to the innocent people who are being condemned to die, while the real sinners, like Abigail, remain free. The line highlights how the community, driven by fear and hysteria, are willing to sacrifice the innocent while allowing the truly corrupt to prosper. The witch trials, which were supposed to purify the community, actually serve to condemn the pure and protect the guilty. This highlights the moral corruption and hypocrisy within Salem, where false piety and personal vendettas determine life and death.

[Award 3 marks only if there is a critical discussion.] (3)
[25]

TOTAL SECTION C: 25
GRAND TOTAL: 80

SECTION A: Assessment rubric for literary essay: Poetry (10 Marks)

Criteria	Exceptional	Skilful	Moderate	Elementary	Inadequate
CONTENT **6 MARKS** Interpretation of topic. Depth of argument, justification and grasp of text.	**5-6**	**4**	**3**	**2**	**0-1**
	83% - 100%	**67%**	**50%**	**33%**	**0% - 17%**
	-In-depth interpretation of topic -Range of striking arguments; extensively supported from poem -Excellent understanding of genre and poem	-Shows understanding and has interpreted topic well -Fairly detailed response -Sound arguments given, but not all of them as well motivated as they could be -Understanding of genre and poem	-Fair interpretation of topic -Some good points in support of topic -Some arguments supported, but evidence is not always convincing -Basic understanding of genre and poem	-Unsatisfactory interpretation of topic -Hardly any points in support of topic -Inadequate understanding of genre and poem	-No understanding of the topic -No reference to the poem -Learner has not come to grips with genre and poem
STRUCTURE AND LANGUAGE **4 MARKS** Structure, logical flow and presentation. Language, tone and style used in the essay	**4**	**3**	**2**	**1**	**0-1**
	100%	**75%**	**50%**	**25%**	**0% - 25%**
	-Coherent structure -Arguments well-structured and clearly developed -Language, tone and style mature, impressive, correct -Virtually error-free grammar, spelling and punctuation	-Clear structure and logical flow of argument -Flow of argument can be followed -Language, tone and style largely correct	-Some evidence of structure -Essay lacks a well-structured flow of logic and coherence -Language errors minor; tone and style mostly appropriate	-Structure shows faulty planning -Arguments not logically arranged -Language errors evident -Inappropriate tone and style	-Poorly structured -Serious language errors and incorrect style

NOTE: If a candidate has ignored the content completely and written a creative response instead, award a 0 mark for both Content and Structure and Language.

SECTIONS B AND C: Assessment rubric for literary essay: Novel and Drama (25 Marks)

Criteria	Exceptional	Skilful	Moderate	Elementary	Inadequate
CONTENT **15 MARKS** Interpretation of topic. Depth of argument, justification and grasp of text.	**12-13-14-15**	**9-10-11**	**6-7-8**	**4-5**	**0-1-2-3**
	80% - 87% - 93% - 100%	**60% - 67% - 73%**	**40% - 47% - 53%**	**27% - 33%**	**0% - 7% - 13% - 20%**
	-Outstanding response: 14-15 -Excellent response: 12-13 -In-depth interpretation of topic -Range of striking arguments extensively supported from text -Excellent understanding of genre and text	-Shows understanding and has interpreted topic well -Fairly detailed response -Some sound arguments given, but not all of them as well motivated as they could be -Understanding of genre and text evident	-Mediocre interpretation of topic; not all aspects explored in detail -Some good points in support of topic -Some arguments supported, but evidence is not always convincing -Partial understanding of genre and text	-Scant interpretation of topic; hardly any aspects explored in detail -Few points in support of topic -Very little relevant argument -Little understanding of genre and text	-Very little understanding of the topic -Weak attempt to answer the question. -Arguments not convincing -Learner has not come to grips with genre or text
STRUCTURE AND LANGUAGE **10 MARKS** Structure, logical flow and presentation. Language, tone and style used in the essay	**8-9-10**	**6-7**	**4-5**	**2-3**	**0-1**
	80% - 90% - 100%	**60% - 70%**	**40% - 50%**	**20% - 30%**	**0% - 10%**
	-Coherent structure -Excellent introduction and conclusion -Arguments well-structured and clearly developed -Language, tone and style mature, impressive, correct	-Clear structure and logical flow of argument -Introduction and conclusion and other paragraphs coherently organised -Language, tone and style largely correct	-Some evidence of structure -Logic and coherence apparent, but flawed -Some language errors; tone and style mostly appropriate -Paragraphing mostly correct	-Structure shows faulty planning. -Arguments not logically arranged -Language errors evident. -Inappropriate tone and style -Paragraphing faulty	-Lack of planned structure impedes flow of argument -Language errors and incorrect style make this an unsuccessful piece of writing -Inappropriate tone and style -Paragraphing faulty
MARK RANGE	**20-21-22-23-24-25**	**15-16-17-18-19**	**10-11-12-13-14**	**5-6-7-8-9**	**0-1-2-3-4**
PERCENTAGES	**80%-84%-88%-92%-96%-100%**	**60%-64%-68%-72%-76%**	**40%-44%-48%-52%-56%**	**20%-24%-28%-32%-36%**	**0%-4%-8%-12%-16%**

NOTE: If a candidate has ignored the content completely and written a creative response instead, award a 0 mark for both Content and structure and Language.
There must not be more than two categories' variation between the Structure and Language mark and the Content mark.

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