**English Paper 2 - Comprehension**

**(1128/2)**

Instructions:

| **Paper 2 Comprehension [50 marks]**  Duration of Paper 2: 1 hour 50 minutes  This paper is divided into three sections.  **Section A** [5 marks]  This section contains Text 1 which will include visuals. Based on the visual text, candidates are required to answer a variety of questions testing comprehension, and on the use of visuals as well as the use of language for impact.  **Section B** [20 marks]  This section contains Text 2, which is narrative in nature, based on which candidates are to answer questions testing comprehension, vocabulary in context and the use of language for impact.  **Section C** [25 marks]  This section contains Text 3, which is non-narrative in nature, based on which candidates are required to answer questions testing comprehension, vocabulary in context and the use of language for impact. Candidates are also required to write a summary of about 80 words (excluding the introductory words that will be provided).  Texts 2 and 3 together will be about 1200 words long. |
| --- |

| **Text 1: Visual text** |
| --- |

Analysis

| **Visual aspect** | **Linguistic aspect** |
| --- | --- |
| * Images (pictures, people, living things) * Colour * Logo * Typographical features (fonts, font size, text layout) | * Word choice (diction) * Repetition * Alliteration * Hyperbole * Text features (titles, headlines) |

Persuasive techniques

| Category | Meaning | Explanation |
| --- | --- | --- |
| 1. **Ethos** | Appeal to credibility / character | * Quoting experts in the field * Famous celebrities’ endorsement |
| 1. **Pathos** | Appeal to emotion | Evoke feelings of   * Pity, sympathy → support cause * Envy → need product to be happy |
| 1. **Logos** | Appeal to logic | * Statistics * Facts * Reference to experiments / studies |

**Question types:**

1. Purpose
2. Audience
3. Context → main sentence
4. Effectiveness (language for impact)

**Purpose**

* Interpret images and words to derive purpose
* Establish a cause and effect relationship

| **Message** | **Purpose** |
| --- | --- |
| * What the advertisement is about * What the advertiser is trying to say through the advertisement | * Why the advertisement was created * Reason for the advertisement |
| The advertiser is trying to say that the product / service is … | The purpose of the image / slogan / words is to (action verb) (targeted audience) about the (message) so that (intended outcome / impact). |

Action verbs:

* **persuade**
* **provide information**
* **warn**
* **teach / instruct**
* **convince**
* **entertain**
* **empathise**

**Audience**

* Specific group of people to convince
* Do not state a general category
* People can be grouped according to
  + Behaviour
  + Dressing
  + Age
  + Occupation
  + Gender
  + Economic status
  + Marital status
  + Physical health

**Main sentence**

Understand the most important information / phrase that gives greatest impression

| Visual type | Main sentence |
| --- | --- |
| 1. **Advertising product** | * Product’s most important feature * Period of sale |
| 1. **Campaign** | * Main message |
| 1. **Advertising service** | * Main message * Period of enrolment |
| 1. **Company webpage** | * Main philosophy * Summary of type of work |

**Language for impact**

Answering technique:

1. **Infer** message through contextual clues (identify relevant detail → heading / word / information / picture)
2. **Think** of possible word association → most relevant to text
3. **Express** answer clearly and concisely → explain how detail achieves intended effect (contains action verb)

2 types of questions:

* What is the intended effect of the words / picture on the reader?
* How does the image achieve the intended effect?

Effective

* Bring across message to target audience
* Influence audience’s thoughts, feelings and actions

Effects of details:

| Detail | Things to note |
| --- | --- |
| 1. **Picture** | * Traits of people (represent target group) * Features of object (represent product / company) * Aspects of background → attract reader / create atmosphere |
| 1. **Heading** | * Language features → greater impression * Identify relevant word from heading → analyse how heading addresses reader’s needs and company’s image * Explain how word leads to effect (The heading makes the reader feels …) |
| 1. **Words / info** | * Language used and how words are presented (language features, font sizes, bolded) * Elaborate on features that meet audience’s needs * Questions:   + Give reasons why the information will appeal to readers.   The information will appeal to readers because it addresses the readers’ need for … through the words … (quote)   * + What effect will the information have on the reader?   The information will make the reader think / feel / do … because the words …   * + How will the information attract the reader to consider …   The information will make the reader think / feel / do … because the words … |

**Persuasive techniques**:

| Techniques | Purpose |
| --- | --- |
| 1. **Personification** | Attribute human qualities to product / item to catch audience’s attention |
| 1. **Metaphor** | Create effective analogy to attract readers’ attention |
| 1. **Rhetorical question** | Establish feeling of personal involvement through direct address |
| 1. **Imperative** | Urge readers to take immediate actions by adding sense of urgency |
| 1. **Bandwagon** | Make consumers feel the need to fit in by purchasing product |
| 1. **Loaded language** | Appeal to emotions |
| 1. **Repetition** | Emphasise / reinforce certain idea |
| 1. **Hyperbole** | Convince that product is the best / has a particular quality |
| 1. **Use of logic** | Convince readers about making choices based on facts / statistics |
| 1. **Free / bargain** | Lure customers by promising better deal |
| 1. **Celebrity spokesperson / expert / plain folks** | Convince customers of product’s worth as it is endorsed by admirable / reliable / credible person |
| 1. **Pun** | Inject humour to make readers want to read on |
| 1. **Alliteration** | Make advertisement more catchy |

Note:

| Steps | Questions to ask self |
| --- | --- |
| 1. **Describe** | * What can I see in the text? * Any colours used? What do the colours connote? * What is the font type and size used? * How are the various elements arranged? * Who created the advertisement? |
| 1. **Analyse** | * What ideas and feelings are associated with the images / words (connotation)? * Why is this particular type of font used? (e.g. large words for elderly) * What do the words mean? * How do the images and words relate to each other? * What does the organisation do? |
| 1. **Interpret** | * What does the arrangement of the different elements imply? * What is the purpose of the visual text? * Who is the target audience? * What is the culture of the audience? * What message is the visual text trying to convey? * How do you think the targeted audience will respond? |

**Example**:



1. In what way does the illustration in the poster highlight the message in the heading ‘YOU’LL NEVER WALK ALONE’? [1]

AT:

* Make a link between pictures & message / purpose
* MUST describe pictures (The illustration shows …)
* Explain message / purpose (This highlights the message of …)
* X lift

The illustration shows a person pulling another (one helping the other, not helping each other) up a slope / hill / mountain.

This highlights the message of unity and support / help for one another in times of need / difficulties.

1. Refer to the text below the headline. Who will stand to benefit from this campaign? [1]

The less fortunate in Singapore (affected by COVID-19).

1. Refer to the text below the headline.

Identify **two separate words** that convey the idea that the pandemic is worldwide in its spread. [1]

The words are ‘universal’ and ‘globe’.

1. Refer to the text below the QR code. What can people do to support the campaign? [2]

They can make a contribution / donate to the Community Chest by scanning the QR code.

They can use the hashtag, #YNWAbyComChest.

| **Text 2: Narrative comprehension** |
| --- |

**Question types:**

* Language for impact questions
* Unusual and effective questions
* Literary device questions
* Implication questions
* Technique-based questions
* Global questions

**Language for impact questions**

**Format**: ‘quote from passage’ suggests (explanation)

* Do not use words found in the quote and/or question as part of explanation
* 3 mark question → 3 pieces of evidence + appropriate explanation
* Need to get both correct for 1 mark

Answering steps:

1. Unpack given words in the question (adjectives, nouns)
2. Identify details in paragraph that have common idea
3. Explain how details convey the idea (explain key words, link to idea)

**Example**:

| The grass amongst which I stood was taller than I was. I had never been so close to grass before. It towered over me and all around me, each blade tattooed with tiger-skins of sunlight. It was knife-edged, dark and a wicked green, thick as a forest and alive with grasshoppers that chirped and chattered and leapt through the air like monkeys.  (*Adapted from GCE ‘O’ levels sample draft paragraph 2, qn5*) |
| --- |

At the beginning of this text, three-year-old Laurie Lee was lost in the tall grass. Explain how the language used in this paragraph makes the grass appear threatening.

Support your ideas with three details from the paragraph. [3]

Answer:

| Detail | Explanation |
| --- | --- |
| 1. ´It towered over me (and all around me)´ | how small/ vulnerable he feels |
| 1. ´each blade tattooed with tiger-skins (of sunlight)´ | wild animals / frightening pictures |
| 1. ´knife-edged´ | the grass is sharp and harmful |
| 1. ´(dark and) a wicked green´ | evil / cruelty |
| 1. ´thick as a forest´ | impenetrable / inescapable |
| 1. ´alive with grasshoppers … like monkeys´ | the grass is full of things / creatures that can attack him |

*Do not reward quotations without some explanation of how he feels threatened (main idea).*

| **Skeletons of trees lay fallen and half-buried in the sands**. **Nothing stirred, not even a lizard**. Ahead stretched a journey of 600 kilometres, **across soulless sands**, in temperatures that can soar to 50 degrees during the day, and drop to 7 degrees in the night.  (Adapted from *2020 CCHMS Sec 3 WA3*) |
| --- |

In the paragraph, the writer was confronted with a bleak desert landscape.

Explain how the language used in the paragraph emphasises the lifeless state of the desert. Support your ideas with **three** details from the paragraph. [3]

Bleak → bare, desolate, stark, dreary, no hope, depressing, gloomy, dismal, cold, empty, barren, no life

Answer:

| Detail | Explanation |
| --- | --- |
| 1. ´Skeletons of trees lay fallen (and half-buried)´ | Trees were dead and left wasted on the ground. (idea of dead) |
| 1. ´Nothing stirred (, not even a lizard)´ | Extreme emptiness / stillness of the desert where there is no movement to indicate the possibility of life. (idea of no movement) |
| 1. ´soulless sands´ | Utter barrenness that even the sand / desert was viewed as without energy or dead OR empty of any life / living thing (idea of no life in the sand / desert → no soul) |

**Unusual and effective questions**

**Format**: answer in 2 separate sentences (1 mark for each part)

| Portion | Sentence | Answering |
| --- | --- | --- |
| 1. **unusual** | It is unusual as … | * Show difference between the normal and situation in passage / phrase * What is surprising / odd about the usage of the word(s) or phrase? |
| 1. **effective** | It is effective as … | * Show impact of phrase / word has on your understanding of passage * What is the intended purpose or impression (thoughts and feelings) that the writer wants to leave in you? |

**Example**:

| From the daylight nightmare, I was awakened, as I had been many times before, by my sisters. They came scrambling and calling up the steep rough bank. Like shields between me and the sky, faces with grins and white teeth each to be called up with a loud cry, they brushed off terror with their broad scoldings of affection. They leaned over me – one, two, three – their mouths smeared with redcurrants and their hands dripping with juice.  (*Adapted from GCE ‘O’ levels sample draft paragraph 4, qn8*) |
| --- |

The paragraph begins ‘from this daylight nightmare I was awakened...’

What is unusual and effective about the phrase ‘daylight nightmare’? [2]

Structure: Unusual because ... Effective because ...

Answer:

* It is unusual because nightmares usually happen at night / in the dark / when asleep.
* It is effective because it shows how unreal / strange / terrifying the experience can be.

**Literary device questions**

Types of literary devices

1. **Connotation**: equivalent ideas, feelings associated with particular words

e.g. ‘home’ → place of warmth, comfort and affection (infer the meaning)

1. **Denotation**: literal meaning of words

e.g. house, apartment → usual residence of person / family

1. **Personification**: attribution of human character to animals / inanimate objects

e.g. The brown grass was begging for water

The silence crept into the classroom

Still waters shivered in the wind

**Simile**:

explicit comparison of two unlike things using connectives (‘like’ and ‘as’)

**Metaphor**:

state that something is equivalent to another thing, not usually associated with (refer to simile for comparison)

* My heart was broken into many pieces when my girlfriend left me for another man.
* The journalist buried Lance Armstrong under an avalanche of questions when he confessed that he had taken banned substances to enhance his cycling performance.

**Hyperbole**:

use exaggeration to create a certain effect

**Allusion**:

make reference to something outside of text (people, places, events, literary work, myths or works of art)

* As the cave's roof collapsed, he was swallowed up in the dust like Jonah, and only his frantic scrabbling behind a wall of rock indicated that there was anyone still alive.
* Christy didn't like to spend money. She was no Scrooge, but she seldom purchased anything except the bare necessities.
* It has rained so long, it seems as though it has rained for 40 days and nights.

**Irony**:

* **Verbal irony**: express something that is opposite from its literal meaning
* **Situational irony**: situation odd / amusing because what actually happens is opposite of expected outcome

One would expect … [1]

But in reality, … [1]

**Implication questions**

Vocabulary + inferential skills

1. List possible definitions/ characteristics of word / phrase

→ choose the one most relevant to context

1. Link function of word / phrase to passage
2. Phrase answer clearly in terms of passage

**Example**:

| Whilst Lea read her way laboriously through the bee-keeping manual her uncle had given her, her fear of bees slowly disappeared, as she began to see the chaos of the tens of thousands of creeping bees that studded the honeycombs become a comprehensible whole. Two of the hives were purely for observation, where the bees’ daily life could be seen through the glass.  (*Adapted from GCE ‘O’ levels 2010*) |
| --- |

What does the word ‘laboriously’ tell us about the book that Lea’s uncle had given her? [1]

Answer:

There was a lot of information for Lea to read in the book. OR

The book was difficult for Lea to understand / Lea took a lot of effort to read the book.

| Our limited food supply was the main problem. **My companions had been far too free in their hospitality to travellers we had met on our way to the desert.** With a month´s journey ahead of us, that would mean only a quarter of a kilo of flour for each man per day. As for water, we could probably carry enough to last for twenty days. After that, we would have to start looking for wells. Otherwise, the camels would collapse. If this happened, death was certain for all of us.  (*Adapted from 2020 CCHMS Sec 3 WA3*) |
| --- |

´My companions had been far too free in their hospitality to travellers we had met on our way to the desert.´

What does this suggest about the writer's attitude towards his companions´ actions? [1]

´far too free´ → **overly** generous / kind (negative attitude towards a seemingly positive action)

´in their hospitality´ → offering food to other travellers

Hence, this has resulted in the problem of limited food supply.

The attitude is one of **disapproval**. OR

The writer **disapproves** of his companions’(overly generous / kind) action (of offering their food supply to other travellers). OR

The writer is **critical** of his companions´ action.

Disapproval: feeling of having a negative opinion of sbd / sth

Disapprove: feel that sbd / sth is wrong, bad

Hospitality → kindness

Not angry, just don't approve → disapproval / critical

Tone / attitude → X disapproving

| Going down the other side, this leading camel hesitated and veered off line … I shouted frantically to Muhammad. However, he was unable to halt the camel on the steep slope. Even as I watched, she collapsed on top of the water-skins, squashing them beneath her. Immediately, Muhammad was slashing at the head-rope. If the water-skins had burst, our journey across the Empty Quarter was as good as over. The fallen camel heaved herself to her knees. Hardly daring to hope, I bent over her as Muhammad said, ¨Praise be to God. The water-skins are all right!´ We relocated them onto the bull camel at the rear, trusting that his greater strength would be a safeguard in these slithering descents.  (*Adapted from 2020 CCHMS Sec 3 WA3*) |
| --- |

The writer tells us that the strength of the bull camel ´would be a safeguard in these slithering descents.´ What does ‘slithering’ tell us about the nature of the journey down the slope of the dunes? [1]

Answer:

It suggests that the journey down the slope of the dunes is **slippery / dangerous / treacherous**. OR

It is so steep that it is slippery / dangerous.

| Although we longed to sleep, we had to press on while the water was still holding out. After riding for another two hours, we were shivering uncontrollably in the cold night air. We would have given anything for a hot drink, but we knew that we must wait eighteen hours for our next ration of water. Finally, we stopped for the night. Yet, we slept little, for our thirst and worry about our precious water dripping away on the sand never left us.  (*Adapted from 2020 CCHMS Sec 3 WA3*) |
| --- |

What do these decisions suggest about the character of the travellers? [1]

AT:

* Be careful when analysing the question
* Break down key words in the question, instead of just doing a general inference

→ ability to rein in preferences & make decisions contrary to preferences

Answer:

**Self-disciplined / disciplined**

OR Self-controlled

OR Self-restrained

√ high tolerance

× determined (want to do sth and not allow anything / anyone to stop you)

× resilient (bounce back / recover quickly after been hurt)

× sensible / cautious / pragmatic / practical / logical / responsible / plan time well / think ahead / careful / strong-willed

× resist temptation (action, not a character)

| One vast dune, well over 300 metres high, with a steep, almost sheer face, blocked our path. Surely this meant the end of our journey across the Empty Quarter. Muhammad went ahead to reconnoitre. We waited patiently for Muhammad’s turn. What were we going to do if we could not get our camels over the high dune ahead? We had no margin of food for any lengthy diversion and our water was dangerously low. Still more urgent were the needs of the camels. We had to find a well soon or they would collapse. We simply had to get them over the monstrous dune, even if we had to carry their loads to the top ourselves.  (*Adapted from 2020 CCHMS Sec 3 WA3*) |
| --- |

Give two reasons why the writer thought it critical to get the camels over the dune. **Answer in your own words**. [2]

AT:

1. Search for answer in passage
2. Highlight **key words / phrases** that need to be paraphrased with own words
3. Provide appropriate synonyms / paraphrase

Answer:

| Text | Answer |
| --- | --- |
| 1. no margin of food for any lengthy diversion | no extra / spare / not enough food to cater for instances of long delay / detour |
| 1. water was dangerously low | water was very / severely / alarmingly / gravely / critically little / insufficient / meagre / scant |

| Thus we coaxed the unwilling beasts up these steep inclines metre by metre, while all the time the soft sand tugged at their feet as they struggled up them. Trembling violently each time we halted, I wondered how much more these struggling animals could stand.  (*Adapted from 2020 CCHMS Sec 3 WA3*) |
| --- |

The writer described the process of getting the camels up the steep slope ‘metre by metre’. What does this description suggest about the progress of the camels? [1]

Answer:

The progress is excruciatingly / extremely / painstakingly / incredibly / very slow OR tedious. (Intensity is required.)

| Suddenly the peacocks about us disappeared. I crawled forward and to my enormous relief, saw that we were on the edge of a very different landscape, one of shallow valleys and low, rounded hills. **The worst was over, at least for the time being.** Cautiously we led our animals forward and slithered down the soft sand to the valley floor below. Then we mounted once more and rode forward, the only moving things in that desolate, empty landscape.  (*Adapted from 2020 CCHMS Sec 3 WA3*) |
| --- |

‘The worst was over, at least for the time being.’

What does this sentence tell us about the writer’s state of mind? [1]

1st part: relief

2nd part: awareness / caution that things might still go wrong

Answer:  
The writer was relieved but cautious / worried / anxious / not completely relaxed as he was aware that things could still go wrong.

**Technique-based questions**

Writers vary sentences or capitalise certain words to create effects in writing.

| Sentence | Effect | Example |
| --- | --- | --- |
| 1. **Short + powerful** | * gets the point across powerfully and concisely without filler * sense of urgency | That night I sat on Tyan-yu’s bed and waited for him to touch me. But he didn’t. I was relieved.  (*The Joy Luck Club by Amy Tan*) |
| 1. **Complex + lengthy** | * investigate idea more thoroughly, give vivid description, develop tension * show moment of reflection → sense of nostalgia | They left me alone and I lay in bed and read the papers awhile, the news from the front, and the list of dead officers with their decorations and then reached down and brought up the bottle of Cinzano and held it straight up on my stomach, the cool glass against my stomach, and took little drinks making rings on my stomach from holding the bottle there between drinks, and watched it get dark outside over the roofs of the town.  (*A Farewell to Arms by Ernest Hemingway*) |

Common techniques:

* Shorter and shorter sentence → suspense, leading to shock
* Punctuation
* Sentence length → contrast between long & short
* Phrase / word
* Contrasting / complementary sentences
* Repetition

**Example**:

| There. That finished what I had to do; now I could be about earning my living. I put the laptop in its case, left my house, and drove to The Palms. Just like anyone else going to work. Ha.  (*The Incrementalists by Steven Brust and Skyler White*) |
| --- |

What is the intention of the author of using the last sentence “Ha.”?

Answer:

Using the terse sentence shows his lack of enthusiasm at going to work.

**Global questions**

There are very subtle differences between the words given

* put yourself in writer’s shoes and know the nuances of words given
* analyse and look out for the type of common idea in the group of paragraphs given (feelings, atmosphere, reactions, characteristics)
* tone → +ve / -ve
* focus on specific words / phrases in paragraph to figure out the answer
* If do not know meaning of the words, use elimination → complete questions you are confident of first

**Example**:

| 4  5 | From the daylight nightmare, I was awakened, as I had been many times before, by my sisters. They came scrambling and calling up the step rough bank. Like shields between me and the sky, faces with grins and white teeth each to be called up with a loud cry, they brushed off terror with their broad scoldings of affection. They leaned over me – one, two, three – their mouths smeared with redcurrants and their hands dripping with juice.  ‘There, there, Laurie, it’s all right, don’t you wail anymore. Come on home and we’ll stuff you with currants.’ And Marjorie, the eldest, lifted me into her long brown hair and ran me jogging down the path, and set me down on the cottage steps, which was our home, though I couldn’t believe it.  (*Adapted from GCE ‘O’ levels sample draft paragraphs 4 & 5*) |
| --- | --- |

The structure of the text reflects the main feelings of the child as he reacts to the events of the day.

Complete the flow chart by choosing one word from the box to summarise the main feeling described in each part of the text. There are some extra words in the box you do not need to use.

**Child’s feelings**

| Paragraph 4 - 5: Safety |
| --- |

Common **literary devices**:

| Literary device | Explanation |
| --- | --- |
| 1. **Alliteration** | * two or more words begin with same letter * e.g. The soul selects her own society. |
| 1. **Allusion** | * make reference to something outside the text (people, places, events, literary work, myths, works of art) * e.g. Chocolate is my Achilles heel. |
| 1. **Attitude** | * how writer feels → manner, disposition, feeling, position with regard to person / thing |
| 1. **Climax** | * protagonist’s fortunes reach crucial stage * turning point * moment of intense excitement / emotion |
| 1. **Colloquialism** | * everyday speech → informal   + slang   + relaxed, conversational, familiar tone * e.g. Could you fetch that for me?   I got to redd up my room before leaving my  house. |
| 1. **Connotations** | * ideas & feelings associated with particular words (contrast with denotations) * e.g. Jack is a snake; you need to be very careful whenever you are with him. (snake → evil, danger) |
| 1. **Denotations** | * literal meanings (contrast with connotations) |
| 1. **Diction** | * writer’s choice of word / use of vocabulary. |
| 1. **Figurative language** | * use words in imaginative way * e.g. similes & metaphors |
| 1. **Image / Imagery** | * Word-picture → appeal to senses |
| 1. **Irony** | * **Verbal irony**: opposite from literal meaning * **Situational irony**: what actually happens is opposite of what expected to happen |
| 1. **Dramatic irony** | * audience knows more characters → foresee possible consequences |
| 1. **Jargon** | * technical, professional language |
| 1. **Juxtaposition** | * ideas, words, incidents, characters next to one another → similarity / contrast / irony * e.g. Bernard uses black rocks on the white sand in order to form the words "S.O.S." |
| 1. **Literal language** | * literal expressions → common / dictionary usage |
| 1. **Metaphor** | * describe → another thing * comparison is not stated explicitly (unlike simile) |
| 1. **Extended metaphor** | * metaphor runs through several lines |
| 1. **Onomatopoeia** | * words sound like the noise they describe. * e.g. Water plops into the pond. |
| 1. **Oxymoron** | * contradictory / unexpected terms brought together * e.g. This is a seriously funny piece of old news. |
| 1. **Paradox** | * self-contradictory statement which on closer examination expresses a possible truth * e.g. Ignorance is strength. Nobody goes to that restaurant; it’s too crowded. |
| 1. **Pathos** | * strong feelings of pity, sorrow |
| 1. **Personification** | * attribute human nature → animals / objects |
| 1. **Point of view** | * narrator’s perspective through which events & characters are described |
| 1. **Pun** | * play on different meanings of a word * e.g. Our Geography teacher says that her globe means the world to her. |
| 1. **Simile** | * explicit comparison of two unlike things using connectives (‘like’ and ‘as’) |
| 1. **Symbol** | * Concrete object → represent / express abstract ideas * e.g. dove → peace |
| 1. **Syntax** | * words ordered → give rise to particular meaning |
| 1. **Tone** | * particular mood underlying a piece of writing which → affects the way in which it should be read * determined by author’s attitude → reader & subject matter |

**Common punctuations**

| Punctuation | Explanation | Usage |
| --- | --- | --- |
| 1. **Colon**   ( : ) | * follows an independent clause * introduces information that balances or explains that clause | 1. After an independent clause to introduce a list   e.g. The students included three pieces of writing into their portfolios: a narrative, an argumentative and a discursive.   1. After an independent clause to introduce an explanation or elaboration   e.g. The author has performed a remarkable feat: she has maintained suspense to the last page.   1. Followed by a capital letter to introduce a rule / principle   e.g. The main principle of public speaking is simple: Look at the audience. |
| 1. **Semicolon**   ( ; ) | * separates independent clauses with finality * provides less distinct separation, indication more to come * ideas in two independent clauses are closely connected → want readers to expect more | 1. Connect two independent clauses to avoid a run-on sentence or a comma splice.   e.g. I have a big test tomorrow; I can’t go out tonight.   1. Separate items in a list containing internal commas   e.g. Good morning Mr Jack Lee, Principal; Mr Nelson Tan, Vice-Principal; teachers; and fellow schoolmates. |
| 1. **Dashes**   ( – ) |  | 1. change of pace → alert readers to something unexpected   e.g. Armed with one weapon – his courage – he step onto the stage to face the crowd.   1. unfinished sentence   e.g. The accused gasped, “But I never –“ and fainted   1. set off appositives phrases when the phrase itself contains commas even though commas can be used   e.g. The content of this closet – torn jeans, frayed jackets, and suits shiny on the seat and elbows – made him reassess his priorities. |
| 1. **Question mark** (?) |  | **Rhetorical** → obvious answer (There is no surprise that ... )   * Do we need more Covid19 infections? * Do we need to send more of our young men to death? (CONTEXT: importance of peace) |
| 1. **Exclamation mark** (!) |  | **Strong feelings / emotion** → shock, anger / frustration  'I looked at Charlotte, my pet spider as she ate up Carla, my pet fly. 'How could you!' [shock]  What a distortion of resilience! [frustration] |

| **Text 3: Expository comprehension** |
| --- |

**Question types:**

* Inferential questions
* Vocabulary questions
* Direct and inferential questions
* Summary question

**Inferential questions**

| Skill | Example | Approach |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Recognising**  **inferences**   * Read between the lines and make connections about ideas in text | Suggest a reason why / how...  What / why / how do you think... | * Do not lift * Answer is not explicitly evident in passage → require to express idea in own words * Use words in passage to convey ideas |
| **Recognising**  **state of mind,**  **attitude, tone**   * state of mind – mental condition / mental state / mood at that particular time * attitude – settled way of thinking / feeling about something * tone – author’s attitude towards the situation | What is the author’s state of mind / attitude / tone | * Identify / describe the state of mind / tone / attitude by providing one-word adjective * Explain why → link to passage * Prepare a plethora of adjectives to describe tone / attitude |
| **Recognising**  **implications**  (vocabulary +  inference) | What does X suggest / imply / tell you / reveal about Y? | * List possible definitions / characteristics of X → choose one most relevant to context * Infer word / phrase to Y * Phrase answer clearly in terms of Y + closely associated with X |

When attempting inferential questions, put yourself in the author’s shoes and use the **S-L-A** strategy to tackle questions:

* **S**tudy the question (‘WH’ question – Key words – Rephrase the question)
* **L**ook out for clues in the text that answer the question
* **A**nalyse the clues and make your best guess.

**Tone**: author’s attitude towards topic (express through words used)

| Examples:   1. This place may be shabby, but since both of my children were born while we lived here, it has a special place in my heart.   → The tone is sentimental. “It has a special place in my heart,” expresses tender emotions.   1. This isn’t the greatest apartment in the world, but it’s not really that bad.   → The tone is tolerant. The words “not really that bad” show that the writer accepts the situation while recognizing that it could be better.   1. If only there were some decent jobs out there, I wouldn’t be reduced to living in this miserable dump.   → The tone is bitter. The writer resents a situation that forces him or her to live in a “miserable dump.”   1. This place does need some repairs, but I’m sure the landlord will be making improvements sometime soon.   → The tone is optimistic. The writer is expecting the apartment to be improved soon.   1. When we move away, we’re planning to release three hundred cockroaches and mice, so we can leave the place exactly as we found it.   → The tone is humorous. The writer claims to be planning a comic revenge on the landlord by returning the apartment to the terrible condition it was in when the tenants moved in.   1. This is the apartment we live in. It provides shelter.   → The tone is objective. The writer does not express feelings about the apartment. He simply states facts. |
| --- |

**Example**:

| *In the text below, a National Radio commentator and author describes his visit to his homeland, Vietnam.*  In Ho Chi Minh City, still popularly known as Saigon, you can have your pick: Wander around any small neighbourhood and you may still run into old men sitting on small wooden stools in alleys drinking coffee and smoking; or, in the evening, hang out at the Chill Sky Bar on top of the AB Tower to watch the sunset over city boulevards running like golden rivers swift and furious below.  So much has changed, yet my homeland remains an astonishing beauty, a country shaped by mountains and rivers and the eternal sea lapping at her shores. She’s also made up of smiles and laughter, of leisure and of celebrations. What I think is odd for a communist country: Vietnam’s temples and churches are always full of worshippers on religious holidays. |
| --- |

Why does the writer think that it is odd for a communist country to have its temples and churches always full of worshippers? [1]

Answer:

* This is because citizens of communist countries do not believe in any religion;
* hence, it is abnormal / weird that religious places are constantly filled with worshippers.

| *The text below describes the author’s interview with a boy who survived a genocide.*  We were sitting in the church where he had seen his parents murdered, where he had seen children’s heads smashed and pregnant woman disemboweled, where he had seen what no child should ever see. And as I have done before in other zones of conflict, in other ruined countries, I listened, asked questions and recorded. He was patient with me. Most survivors are incredibly patient. But it was at the end of a day of stories, a day when the stories seemed to get worse and worse and by the end, sitting there in the church, I think I had started to lose my concentration. This is not by way of an advance apology for the mistake I made, but rather an exception of how one can lose the sense of what one is doing. |
| --- |

‘And as I have done before in other zones of conflict, in other ruined countries, I listened, asked questions and recorded.’ What is the tone here? [1]

Answer:

Detached / objective / aloof / indifferent / disinterested / impersonal / neutral.

| *In the text below, the writer describes the dark world of organ trafficking.*  In the bright new world of transplants, the darkest imaginings have been of organs plucked from unwilling or poverty-driven live donors. Once the stuff of pulp novels and scandal sheets, such fears are now real. Shuddering at the details of an organ-for-profit scheme, Britain last week was considering emergency legislation to stop the practice. The scandal began to unfold last month when a Turkish newspaper published the story of Ahmet Koc, a peasant who was lured to London by a compatriot who promised him a job. After he arrived, he was taken to a hospital where he signed papers in English, a language he does not know. He was given an injection and awoke to find that he was missing a kidney. Later he learned that the organ had been transplanted into a wealthy Libyan doctor; Koc was paid $4,700 for his trouble. In Turkey, police arrested Tunc Ay Kunter, the man who brought Koc to London and it turned out, he had arranged other kidney-for-profit deals before. |
| --- |

What does the word “shuddering” (line 3) reveal about how people felt about the organ-for-profit scheme? [1]

‘shuddering’: tremble convulsively, typically as a result of fear or revulsion

Link: Given that the people were physically shaking shivering because of fear, I can

infer that they are incredibly fearful of the organ-for-profit scheme.

Answer:

They were horrified / incredibly fearful.

| *The text below describes reviving the golden age of steam locomotives, a very special train service that runs very slowly between Pretoria and Cape Town in South Africa.*  The journey was a classic ride of one’s life if they possess the riches for it. Serenely, with no unseemly haste, the train travels between Pretoria and Cape Town. Nearly 1,000 miles, each one savoured the full length, as if from a silver spoon. To those who have the privilege of stepping on board, the train offers the breath-taking natural beauties of South Africa passing by as though in a movie. A forest, a desert, a street with children playing, washing hanging out to dry, a cloud of pink flamingos over a shimmering lake. |
| --- |

What do these descriptions suggest about the experience of travelling in the steam locomotives and the view from it? [2]

| **Description** | **Experience of travelling** |
| --- | --- |
| ‘from a silver spoon’ (line 3) | Experience of travelling:  Luxurious experience |
| ‘as though in a movie’ (lines 4 – 5) | The view:  Beautiful / breathtaking / surreal scenery |

**Vocabulary questions**

| Skill | Examples | Approach |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Analyse style / Use of language**   * Paraphrasing skills + ability to use own words in expressing ideas * Understand literary devices (e.g. metaphor, simile, irony) | In your own words...”  “Give another word in the paragraph that has the same meaning as...”  “Quote a phrase...” | * USE YOUR OWN WORDS * Do not use other forms of words that appear in passage * Consider tone and subtle nuances of meaning when substituting given words |
| **Deduce meaning of unfamiliar lexical items through contextual clues** |  | * Words come from different parts of speech (e.g. noun, adjective, adverb, verb) * Pay special attention to how each word is used in passage * Provide answer in same form as word provided (e.g. noun should be explained with noun / noun phrase) * Replacement words should fit into passage grammatically |

Explain what the author means by the phrase ‘...’.

* Use full sentences rather than a word or a phrase to explain phrase
* Explain full contextual meaning – do not give word-for-word paraphrase / definition

Things to take note of:

| Note | Explanation |
| --- | --- |
| **Using your own words** | * Writing answers without lifting key words from passage * Instead of simply substituting each key word with another that has similar meaning |
| **Precision of meaning** | When explaining word / phrase, answer has to be precise + accurate with regard to context, tone and degree  **Context**   * Give meaning as used in passage, not just dictionary definition * Words have slightly different shades of meaning depending on usage * Use of ‘outrageous’:  1. She made a dramatic entrance to the party, wearing the most outrageous dress I have ever seen.   (extravagant, excessive, or immoderate, i.e. the dress has been purposely designed to shock in order to draw attention)   1. The soldiers attacked several villages and committed outrageous acts on the defenceless.   (cruel and unlawful, refers to the atrocities committed by the soldiers)  **Tone**   * Retain positive / negative meaning in explanation → use word with similar tone * E.g. He had frugal habits.   (‘frugal’: positive connotation, implying approval)   * + Inaccurate explanation: ‘stingy’, ‘miserly’   (negative connotation)   * + Preferred explanation: ‘thrifty’   (positive connotation)  **Degree**   * Take note if word is extreme / moderate in meaning   e.g. An earthquake struck the city, and this terrible catastrophe left thousands of people dead or homeless.   * + Inaccurate explanation: ‘unlucky happening’, ‘mishap’   (not strong enough in meaning)   * + Preferred explanation: "disaster"   (same degree of seriousness)   * Be alert to subtle but significant differences in meaning. * Word-for-word substitution is clumsy → better to rephrase entire sentences (especially when figurative / proverbial expression is used)   e.g. ‘jump the gun’   * + Incorrect explanation: leap over the weapon   + Preferred explanation: gain an advantage by setting off before the starting signal is given   e.g. ‘The promises made by the advertisement were more fiction than fact.’   * + Incorrect explanation: The vows of the commercial were more literature than actual reality   (‘promises’ ≠ ‘vows’, ‘fiction’ ≠ ‘literature’)   * + Preferred explanation: The writer means that the real quality of the product did not live up to the exaggerated claims of the commercial. (explain metaphorical + contextual meaning of both words) |
| **Noticing images** | **Metaphor**: imaginative way of describing something by referring to something else which has same qualities   * Steps to explain how image illustrates idea  1. Establish context 2. Establish literal meaning 3. Consider metaphorical application 4. Link metaphorical meaning → context  * For example:   “The communist ideology condemns the hawks of capitalism as an oppressive influence.”   * + Step 1: Opposing ideologies (communism and capitalism) and negative view that communists had of capitalists.   + Step 2: Hawks are menacing birds of prey   + Step 3: In this context, capitalists are merciless and exploitative, feeding off others   + Step 4: portray them as …   Full explanation:  By comparing capitalists to menacing birds of prey (hawks), communists were portraying them as merciless and exploitative.  **Simile**: warns you that it is an image – preceded with signaling phrase (like / as)   * An animal fits into its environment like one cog-wheel into another. * The highways run like arteries through the city. |

Important tips:

* All significant words in the given phrase must be your own. For example, "integral part of a new world order" – if you write "essential part of a new world order", you will not have used your own words sufficiently.
* Metaphorical, figurative or proverbial expressions should be explained in plain language. Do not simply substitute another metaphor / image.

**Example**:

| In the former Liangzhou nursery, where pandas were once presented as gifts to foreign heads of state, British-born Jill Robinson and her team are leading one of the biggest captive rescues. Over the next 18 months, 500 endangered and malnourished Asiatic black bears – affectionately known as “Moon bears” for their golden crescent chests – will pass through this converted rescue and rehabilitation centre, en route to a sanctuary in China’s southern Sichuan Province. Some will die before they reach it.  Adapted from “Bear Witness” by Paul Hilton for Asian Geographic |
| --- |

Quote the word that suggests that the Asiatic black bears had been caged. [1]

Answer: ‘captive’

**Direct and inferential questions**

Skills tested

| Skill | Examples | Approach |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Identify main / supporting / relevant ideas and**  **elaborating on them**   * Pick out specific factual details or ideas provided in text * Further elaborate answer to link it back to question | Explain fully … | * Can lift, but only points relevant + necessary * Elaborate further → use inferential skills to show how details from paragraph answer question * Steps to answer  1. Identify key words 2. Follow steps for direct question 3. Elaborate further (inference) |

**Example**:

| Water deficiency in the brain tissue cuts down its energy supply and thereby depresses many of its vital functions. A low level of brain energy negatively affects one’s ability to meet personal and social challenges. Hence, depression is a common result of a dehydrated brain.  *Adapted from “Timeless Secrets of Health & Rejuvenation” by Andreas Moritz* |
| --- |

Explain fully how low levels of brain energy can lead to depression. [2]

Step 1: Key words: Explain fully, how

Step 2: Direct: It will cause one to have difficulties meeting personal and social challenges.

Link: “difficulties meeting personal and social challenges” → depression

Step 3: Inferential: As a result, anxiety / fear / anger / frustrations / emotional problems may set in, which will eventually lead to depression.

Answer:

It will cause one to have difficulties meeting personal and social challenges. [1]

As a result, anxiety / fear / anger / frustrations / emotional problems may set in, which will eventually lead to depression. [1]

**Summary question**

Basic consideration

* 15 marks (8 m content + 7 m language)
* Rubrics
  + pick out relevant points to answer question
  + arrange and express points within word limit
  + avoid mistakes in grammar, spelling, punctuation
* Planning
* End with summary, do not try it before other questions

Time management (Time frame: 30 mins)

| Stage 1 (< 5 mins)  Analyse question requirements | * Analyse question requirements + mark out clearly different parts of question (may contain more than 1 criteria) * Ensure that points are evenly split between criteria * Re-read paragraphs covered by summary question |
| --- | --- |
| Stage 2 (10 mins)  Search for points | * Start marking out points (number your points as you find them). Include only main + relevant points. * Do a linking check with question requirements to ensure all points answer question * Choose points that are shorter / easier to paraphrase |
| Stage 3 (10 mins)  Paraphrase | * Paraphrase points (use your own words)  1. Substituting keywords 2. Change sentence structure  * Ensure all the points make sense (some points cannot exist without the other) |
| Stage 4 (5 ~ 10 mins)  Writing | * Use conjunctions, transitional words / time markers (e.g. however, moreover, furthermore, next, then, yet, since, because) * Check punctuation, grammar, spelling * Make final adjustments and do a word count + write down no. of words (max: 80) |