STUDENT NUMBER

ABBOTSLEIGH

2022 HSC TRIAL EXAMINATION

English Extension 1

Section I and Section II

General Instructions

- Reading time – 10 minutes
- Working time – 2 hours
- Write using black pen
- Write your student number as indicated

Total marks: 50

Section I: Literary Worlds (25 marks)

Attempt Question 1

Allow about 1 hour for this section

Section II: Electives (25 marks)

Attempt one question from Questions 2(a) – 2(e)

Allow about 1 hour for this section

Section I — Common Module: Literary Worlds

25 marks
Attempt Question 1
Allow about 1 hour for this section

Your answers will be assessed on how well you:

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

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Read Text 1, Text 2, Text 3, and Text 4.

Question 1 (25 marks)

(a) Use Text 1, or Text 2, or both to answer this part. **15**

How does Yan Ge invite the reader to explore new horizons and arrive at new insights by inviting them into a world different to their own?

(b) Use Text 3 and Text 4 to answer this part. **10**

Discuss how the critical extracts invite readers to consider the diverse reasons why literature is valuable.

In your response, demonstrate an understanding of Literary Worlds.

Question 1 continues on the next page

Text 1 – Novel Extract: *Strange Beasts of China,* by Yan Ge

兽 [shòu] – beast

Originally used to describe the act of hunting, the meaning of the word shifted over time to the object of the hunt, the prey. More than a neutral word for animal, 兽 denotes the absence of humanity, and carries the connotations of savagery and wildness.

SORROWFUL BEASTS

As the Splendid River flows through Yong'an City's centre and heads east, it separates into the Lotus and Peacock Rivers in Luoding District. The sorrowful beasts live in a housing development on the Peacock's southern bank, in the north-eastern quarter of the city. These old buildings, their walls thick with ivy, are known as the Leye Estate. They were originally built as dormitories for the Ping Le Cotton Mill, where many of the sorrowful beasts have worked for years, ever since they first came to Yong'an City from the south and settled here. Sorrowful beasts are gentle by nature, and prefer the cold and dark. They love cauliflower and mung beans, vanilla ice cream and tangerine pudding. They fear trains, bitter gourd and satellite TV.

The males of the species are tall, with large mouths and small hands, scales on the insides of their left calves and fins attached to their right ears. The skin around their belly buttons is dark green. Other than that, they're just like regular people. The females are beautiful – slender figures with reddish skin, long, narrow eyes, ears a little larger than normal. For three days at the full moon, they lose the ability of human speech and squawk like birds instead.

Otherwise, they're just like regular people.

Text 2 – Novel Extract: *Strange Beasts of China,* by Yan Ge

FLOURISHING BEASTS

All flourishing beasts are female. They reside in herds and are placid by nature. They have made their living as gardeners since ancient times, and are particularly skilled at raising rare species. A corruption of the word ‘flower’ gives rise to their name, ‘flourishing’.

The flourishing beasts live in the south-eastern corner of Yong’an City, in the Temple of the Antiquities. There, they grow all manner of plants in the back courtyard, filling it with fragrance all year round.

The flourishing beasts have delicate features that are etched perpetually with worry. They seldom speak. Their pale skin is marked with pale blue crescent moons, and they have six fingers on each hand, but otherwise they are no different from any human woman. Their markings grow more vivid with age, turning first dark blue, then black. After this comes death. When a flourishing beast’s life ends, her tribe cuts her into eight pieces, which are planted into the ground, and then watered with yellow rice wine. A month later, a flourishing stem appears, flawlessly white, firm and lustrous as jade. After another month, this stem sprouts four limbs; then, another month later, a face. Now beast-shaped, the wood continues to soften. One more month, and the stem snaps off: a new flourishing beast is born

It is hard for flourishing beasts to reproduce. Of every eight pieces that are planted, only one or two survive. Conditions need to be exactly right, and the saplings are particularly vulnerable during the early stage, when human merchants are wont to chop them down for their high-quality wood, to be manufactured into small, exquisite household objects and sold at astronomical prices.

Decades ago, there was an episode of unrest in Yong’an City that ended unpleasantly. After the government had restored order, strict new laws were introduced to prohibit this practice. But the profits were just too enticing, and flourishing wood continued to be chopped down.

Text 3 – Critical Extract: ‘Of Monsters, Men and Migration’, by Ksenia Shcherbino.

Read through the lens of colonialism, Yan Ge’s *Strange Beasts of China* explores questions of migration, acceptance, domination and hybridity in the body of a chimera, a creature of fantasy. The book keeps asking the readers to re-evaluate the ideas of power and possession, speech and silence. Who colonised who, are humans nothing but the former beasts who have conquered the land and re-written its history? Who has the right of speech? Is silence a way of telling a story by the marginalised (beasts)?

Yan Ge’s Yong’an is a postcolonial space where the story of subjugation of the beasts, or the struggle for de/re-territorialisation is already part of history, and the question that haunts both humans and beasts is the same that haunts in our day and time: how the interdependence of colonisers and the colonised has shaped – and continues shaping – our understanding of the world.

Text 4 – Critical Extract: ‘Otherworldly Encounters’, by Mandana Chaffa.

With Yan Ge’s poetic prose and limitless imagination, this would have been a satisfying novel even if it were solely a series of exquisite tales and allegories, but her scope and talent arrow far beyond such boundaries. Herein are mysteries, histories, love affairs, heartbreak, villains, and saviors. Often what appears to be a surety, with a twist of shadow or light, turns new and startling, causing readers to rethink the story—as well as their own stories—entirely. In this world, our world, humans are the strangest beasts of all.

Near the end of the book, the narrator writes: “all we have are stories.” But only an author of great skill, style, and soul creates stories as remarkable as these. I question our world, my life: what is illusory? What is real? And how would I ever know, given how easily we can be fooled into believing the safest narrative, even if it is not the most accurate?

It’s a more beautiful world because of these remarkable, unforgettable stories. That I’m sure of. That I know.

End of Section I

SECTION II: Electives

25 marks
Attempt ONE question from Question 2(a) – 2(e)
Allow about 1 hour for this section

Read the question carefully and then answer the question on the lined writing paper provided.

Your answers will be assessed on how well you:

- demonstrate an understanding of the ideas and values of your elective and how they are shaped and reflected in texts
- craft a sustained composition appropriate to the question, demonstrating control of the use of language

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Question 2(a) — Elective 1: Literary Homelands (25 marks)

How has your study of Literary Homelands provided insight into the tension between home and the unknown?

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

The prescribed texts are:

- **Prose Fiction** – Aravind Adiga, *The White Tiger*
  – E M Forster, *A Passage to India*
  – Colm Tóibín, *Brooklyn*
- **Poetry** – Eileen Chong, *Burning Rice*
  * *Burning Rice*
  * *Mid-autumn Mooncakes*
  * *My Hakka Grandmother*
  * *Shophouse, Victoria Street*
  * *Chinese Ginseng*
  * *Winter Meeting*
  * *Singapore*
- **Drama** – Andrew Bovell, *The Secret River*
- **Film** – Sarah Gavron, *Brick Lane*

Question 2(b) — Elective 2: Worlds of Upheaval (25 marks)

How has your study Worlds of Upheaval provided insight into the tension between certainty and change?

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

The prescribed texts are:

- **Prose Fiction** – Elizabeth Gaskell, *North and South*
  – Mary Shelley, *Frankenstein*
  – Madeleine Thien, *Do Not Say We Have Nothing*

- **Poetry** – Seamus Heaney, *Opened Ground: Poems 1966−1996*

  The prescribed poems are:

  * *Digging*
  * *The Strand at Lough Beg*
  * *Casualty*
  * *Funeral Rites*
  * from *Whatever You Say Say Nothing*
  * *Triptych*

- **Drama** – Samuel Beckett, *Waiting for Godot*

- **Film** – Fritz Lang, *Metropolis*

Question 2(c) — Elective 3: Reimagined Worlds (25 marks)

How has your study of Reimagined Worlds provided insight into the tension between the familiar and the new?

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

- **Prose Fiction** – Italo Calvino, *If on a Winter's Night a Traveller*
  - Ursula Le Guin, *The Left Hand of Darkness*
  - Jonathan Swift, *Gulliver's Travels*

- **Poetry** – Samuel Taylor Coleridge, *Samuel Taylor Coleridge: The Complete Poems*
    * *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner* (1834)
    * *The Eolian Harp*
    * *Kubla Khan*
    * *Christabel*
  - Tracy K Smith, *Life on Mars*
    * *Sci-Fi*
    * *My God, It's Full of Stars*
    * *Don't You Wonder, Sometimes?*
    * *The Universe: Original Motion Picture Soundtrack*
    * *The Universe as Primal Scream*

- **Film** – Guillermo Del Toro, *Pan's Labyrinth*

Question 2(d) – Elective 4: Literary Mindscapes (25 marks)

How has your study of Literary Mindscapes provided insight into the tension between the external world and internal desires?

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

The prescribed texts are:

• **Prose Fiction** – William Faulkner, *As I Lay Dying*
– Gail Jones, *Sixty Lights*
– Katherine Mansfield, *The Collected Stories*

* *Prelude*
* *Je ne Parle pas Français*
* *Bliss*
* *Psychology*
* *The Daughters of the Late Colonel*

• **Poetry** – Emily Dickinson, *The Complete Poems*

The prescribed poems are:

* I felt a Funeral, in my Brain
* This is my letter to the World
* I died for Beauty – but was scarce
* I had been hungry, all the Years
* Because I could not stop for Death
* My Life had stood – a Loaded Gun
* A word dropped careless on a Page

• **Drama** – William Shakespeare, *Hamlet*

• **Film** – Sofia Coppola, *Lost in Translation*

Question 2(e) — Elective 5: Intersecting Worlds (25 marks)

How has your study of Intersecting Worlds provided insight into the tension between nature and human activity?

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

The prescribed texts are:

- **Prose Fiction** – Melissa Harrison, *Clay*
  – Alex Miller, *Journey to the Stone Country*
  – Annie Proulx, *The Shipping News*
- **Nonfiction** - Tim Winton, *Island Home*
- **Poetry** – William Wordsworth, *William Wordsworth: The Major Works*

  The prescribed poems are:

  * *Lines written a few miles above Tintern Abbey*
  * *Three years she grew in sun and shower*
  * *My heart leaps up when I behold*
  * *Resolution and Independence*
  * *The world is too much with us*
  * *Ode ('There was a time')*
  * *The Solitary Reaper*
  * *The Prelude* (1805) – Book One, lines 1−67, 271− 441
- **Film** – Daniel Nettheim, *The Hunter*

End of paper