Captivate
EDUCATION

English

Task Book

Practice examination 1 – 2027

Student name _____

Teacher _____

- Reading time is 15 minutes
- Writing time is 3 hours

Approved materials

- An English and/or bilingual printed dictionary

Materials supplied

- Task Book
- Answer Book

Instructions

- Write your responses in English.
- Follow all instructions on your Answer Book.
- You may keep this Task Book.

Students are not permitted to bring mobile phones and/or any unauthorised electronic devices into the examination room.

Contents

Section A (1 question, 20 marks)

Section B (1 question, 20 marks)

Section C (1 question, 20 marks)

Assessment criteria

SAMPLE

Practice material in the layout of the 2025 VCAA paper – generated 2027. Not a VCAA examination.

Section A – Analytical response to a text

Instructions

- You must write an analytical response to a selected text on one of the topics (either i or ii) provided for that text.
- Your response should engage with the ideas, concerns and values raised by the topic and be supported by close reference to the text.
- If your selected text is a collection of poetry or short stories, you may write on several poems or stories, or on at least two in close detail.
- In the Answer Book, indicate which text you have chosen to write on and whether you have chosen to answer i or ii.
- Refer to the assessment criteria at the end of this book.
- Section A is worth one-third of the total marks for the examination.
- Text list
- 1. Bad Dreams and Other Stories by Tessa Hadley
- 2. Born a Crime by Trevor Noah
- 3. Chronicle of a Death Foretold by Gabriel García Márquez
- 4. False Claims of Colonial Thieves by Charmaine Papertalk Green and John Kinsella
- 5. Flames by Robbie Arnott
- 6. Ghost Wall by Sarah Moss
- 7. Go, Went, Gone by Jenny Erpenbeck
- 8. High Ground directed by Stephen Johnson
- 9. Jane Eyre by Charlotte Brontë
- 10. My Brilliant Career by Miles Franklin
- 11. New and Selected Poems, Volume One by Mary Oliver
- 12. Oedipus the King by Sophocles
- 13. Rainbow's End by Jane Harrison
- 14. Requiem for a Beast by Matt Ottley
- 15. Sunset Boulevard directed by Billy Wilder
- 16. The Complete Stories by David Malouf
- 17. The Erratics by Vicki Laveau-Harvie
- 18. The Memory Police by Yōko Ogawa
- 19. Twelfth Night by William Shakespeare
- 20. We Have Always Lived in the Castle by Shirley Jackson

Question 1 (20 marks)

1. *Bad Dreams and Other Stories* by Tessa Hadley

i. In Hadley's stories, the most significant events are the ones that happen inside a character's mind. Do you agree?

OR

ii. How does Hadley use ordinary domestic settings to expose the fragility of relationships in *Bad Dreams and Other Stories*?

SAMPLE

2. *Born a Crime* by Trevor Noah

i. ‘We tell people to follow their dreams, but you can only dream of what you can imagine …’

In *Born a Crime*, Noah suggests that poverty limits imagination more than it limits opportunity.
Discuss.

OR

ii. To what extent is *Born a Crime* a tribute to Noah’s mother rather than a story about himself?

3. *Chronicle of a Death Foretold* by Gabriel García Márquez

i. ‘On the day they were going to kill him, Santiago Nasar got up at five-thirty in the morning …’

In *Chronicle of a Death Foretold*, everyone knows what is going to happen, yet no one is responsible.
Do you agree?

OR

ii. How does García Márquez use the narrator’s fragmented investigation to explore the unreliability of memory in *Chronicle of a Death Foretold*?

4. *False Claims of Colonial Thieves* by Charmaine Papertalk Green and John Kinsella

i. *False Claims of Colonial Thieves* shows that genuine dialogue is possible only when difference is acknowledged.
Discuss.

OR

ii. In *False Claims of Colonial Thieves*, the poets suggest that the land holds memories that official histories leave out.
To what extent do you agree?

5. *Flames* by Robbie Arnott

i. In *Flames*, Arnott suggests that love is most powerful when it lets go.
Do you agree?

OR

ii. To what extent is *Flames* a novel about the relationship between people and place?

6. *Ghost Wall* by Sarah Moss

i. In *Ghost Wall*, Moss shows that silence is a form of complicity.
Discuss.

OR

ii. How does Moss use the re-enactment camp to explore the ways power is maintained within a family in *Ghost Wall*?

SAMPLE

7. *Go, Went, Gone* by Jenny Erpenbeck

i. In *Go, Went, Gone*, Erpenbeck suggests that listening is the beginning of responsibility.
Discuss.

OR

ii. *Go, Went, Gone* shows that a sense of home depends more on people than on place.
Do you agree?

8. *High Ground* directed by Stephen Johnson

i. In *High Ground*, revenge offers no path to justice.
Do you agree?

OR

ii. How does Johnson use the landscape of Arnhem Land to shape the audience's understanding of conflict in *High Ground*?

9. *Jane Eyre* by Charlotte Brontë

i. 'I am no bird; and no net ensnares me: I am a free human being with an independent will …'
Jane Eyre suggests that true freedom requires both self-reliance and belonging.
Discuss.

OR

ii. In *Jane Eyre*, Brontë condemns those who use religion to control others.
To what extent do you agree?

10. *My Brilliant Career* by Miles Franklin

i. 'I have too often faced the music of life to the tune of hardship to waste time in snivelling and gushing over fancies and dreams …'
My Brilliant Career celebrates Sybylla's defiance more than it mourns her disappointments.
Do you agree?

OR

ii. How does Franklin use Sybylla's narrative voice to challenge the expectations placed on young women in *My Brilliant Career*?

11. *New and Selected Poems, Volume One* by Mary Oliver

i. In Oliver's poems, the natural world offers comfort but never certainty.
Do you agree?

OR

ii. 'Tell me, what is it you plan to do
with your one wild and precious life?'
Oliver's poetry suggests that paying attention is a form of devotion.
Discuss.

SAMPLE

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English

Marking scheme – teacher copy

Practice examination 1 – 2027

Not for distribution to students.

Section	Questions	Marks available	Marks awarded
Section A	1	20	
Section B	1	20	
Section C	1	20	
Total		**60**	

SAMPLE

Section A

Question 1. (20 marks)

To be awarded full marks, students were required to:

General comments (all sections)

- Each section is assessed holistically against the four criteria printed in the Task Book and three interconnected expected qualities: the quality of the ideas (which sets the level of challenge), the way those ideas are structured, elaborated and substantiated, and the proficiency of the language. The expected qualities are always applied in relation to the topic, framework or material: sound ideas or fluent prose that do not address the task cannot score highly.
- Exam writing is first-draft writing under timed conditions. Fluency is not equated with perfection; clarity and the purposeful use of sophisticated language are rewarded, polysyllabic vocabulary for its own sake is not.
- Section A topics are narrow topics about specified ideas and values, not broad prompts. The conceptual focus of a topic cannot be dismissed; its relationship, its absolute term or its degree can be challenged. Students should read the verb (*Discuss.* / *Do you agree?* / *To what extent do you agree?* / *How does …?* / *To what extent is …?*), the authorial verb (suggests, shows, condemns, celebrates, mocks, depicts) and every modifier, and bring a dictionary into the examination.
- Section B is assessed on the quality of Framework ideas connected to the title and stimulus, the capacity to develop and explore them through a voice that achieves a clear purpose, and the linguistic structures that carry them. The title is fixed and selects the framework. All four pages of this paper share a thread of technology, media and the natural world; that thread is an opportunity, not a requirement — a text about play that never mentions a screen is entirely acceptable.

- Section C rewards the capacity to explain the strategic sequencing of ideas to persuade, the ways argument, language and visuals function together on the audience inferred from the Background information, and selective rather than exhaustive analysis. The material this year is a speech later posted as a transcript, so spoken-mode features (direct address, the shape of the room, the slide-like chart "behind me") are analysable. Identification of a device, a tone or an image is not an assessment criterion.
- There is no preferred structure or content in any section. No percentages or averages in these notes are cohort data; this is a practice paper and no cohort has sat it.

Students were required to write an analytical response to one topic for one text, engaging with the ideas, concerns and values the topic names, taking a position on its proposition or question, and supporting that reading with close reference to the whole text. The response was marked holistically against the four Section A criteria.

High: a reading of the text's ideas and values that addresses every concept the topic names and the relationship between them; a position that challenges the proposition where warranted without dismissing its conceptual focus; strategically sequenced paragraphs with summary sentences and genuine links; substantiation drawn from the interplay of linguistic elements, structure, setting, character and (for film and graphic novel) visual and cinematic choices across the whole text; a conclusion that resolves the tensions in the topic by showing the interplay of the author's context, audience and purpose; precise, purposeful language and metalanguage.
Mid: a sound reading that treats the concepts somewhat separately or settles for the easier one; paragraphs that illustrate a contention with examples rather than develop an argument; evidence described rather than analysed, with quotations tacked on as proof; linking words ("initially, later, finally") standing in for connections; a conclusion that restates; appropriate rather than precise language.
Low: plot or character summary; one concept of a pair, or a familiar concept substituted for the one set; a single part of the text, or back-story and context in place of the text; memorised quotations unrelated to the topic; no conclusion; vocabulary and grammar that impede communication.

Common errors recorded in the reports: answering one concept of a pair; swapping in a familiar concept (the patriarchy, colonisation, surveillance, Hollywood in general); treating "To what extent" as a contention to prove; conflating topics i and ii; ignoring the authorial verb ("condemns", "celebrates", "mocks", "depicts") by reducing every verb to "presents"; ignoring a limiting modifier ("only when", "more than", "rather than", "official"); one character, story or poem per paragraph as the structure; quotations as proof that something happened; back-story and context in place of the text; only the opening or one or two poems; stopping without a conclusion or merely restating the contention.

Responses could have included:

- **1.i** (*Bad Dreams and Other Stories*, Do you agree?) — absolute "the most significant"; concepts *event* and *interior life*. Hadley's stories often turn on small external incidents — a child's night-time wandering in "Bad Dreams", a car ride in "An Abduction", a house-sitter's discovery in "Experience" — whose significance is made by perception, memory and reinterpretation. A strong reading weighs whether the outer event matters only through the mind that registers it, or whether some events (a sexual encounter, a death, a marriage) carry weight the characters cannot fully process. The free indirect style, the shifts in time and the late re-readings of an earlier scene are the evidence of "how". Listing plots without weighing "most" is limited.

SAMPLE

- **1.ii** (*Bad Dreams and Other Stories*, How does …?) — how an idea is conveyed through *setting*: *ordinary domestic settings* are the required vehicle, the *fragility of relationships* the required idea. Kitchens, bedrooms, borrowed houses (“Experience”), the dressmaker’s workroom (“Silk Brocade”) and the family home rearranged in the night (“Bad Dreams”) can be analysed for what their objects, thresholds and disorder reveal about marriages, friendships and families held together by habit. Range across at least two stories in close detail is expected; a survey of characters without the settings misses the “how”.
- **2.i** (*Born a Crime*, Discuss., quotation-led) — relationship “more than” between *poverty*, *imagination* and *opportunity*. The quotation points to Noah’s claim that circumstance narrows what people can even picture; a strong reading tests this against his mother’s refusal to accept limits (the white-owned spaces she walks into, the English she insists on, the books she buys), the hustle in Alexandra, and Andrew’s and the friends’ stalled ambitions. The “more than” may be qualified: apartheid’s laws limit opportunity directly. Both concepts must be addressed; a response about apartheid in general substitutes a familiar concept.
- **2.ii** (*Born a Crime*, To what extent is …?) — degree; the *rather than* sets *tribute to his mother* against *story about himself*. The dedication, the framing of chapters around Patricia, the closing account of her shooting and survival and Noah’s statement of her influence favour the tribute; the comic set pieces, Noah’s adolescence, the CD business and the jail episode favour self-portrait. A high response weighs how the two are entangled — Noah tells his own story as the product of her choices — and resolves the extent, rather than proving one side.
- **3.i** (*Chronicle of a Death Foretold*, Do you agree?, quotation-led) — the absolute “no one is responsible” against “everyone knows”. The opening sentence announces the death before it happens, so the novella becomes an inquiry into why foreknowledge did not prevent it: the twins announce their intent to anyone who will listen, Clotilde Armenta and Colonel Aponte half-act, Father Amador forgets, Plácida Linero bolts the door. A strong reading argues that responsibility is so widely shared it dissolves — or that García Márquez condemns a community that chose not to know. The concept of collective knowledge must be kept; “fate” alone cannot replace responsibility.
- **3.ii** (*Chronicle of a Death Foretold*, How does …?) — how a *structural device* (the narrator’s *fragmented investigation*, decades later) conveys an idea (*the unreliability of memory*). Contradictory testimony about the weather, the competing versions of who warned whom, the narrator’s admitted gaps, the legal brief’s marginal notes and the non-linear chronology are the evidence. A response must analyse the form and tie it to what memory does — protect, excuse, mythologise; a retelling of the plot in order cannot answer the “how”.
- **4.i** (*False Claims of Colonial Thieves*, Discuss.) — relationship “possible only when” between *genuine dialogue* and *acknowledging difference*. The collection’s call-and-response structure is the central evidence: Papertalk Green writes from Yamaji Country and lived experience of dispossession; Kinsella writes as a settler descendant reckoning with what his presence on stolen land means. A strong reading shows how the poems answer, sometimes resist and never merge with one another, so the dialogue depends on the gap being named. Treating the poets as interchangeable, or writing about one poet only, is limited.
- **4.ii** (*False Claims of Colonial Thieves*, To what extent do you agree?) — degree; concepts *land*, *memory* and *official histories*. Poems on colonial place names, mining and clearing, massacre sites, family and Country set against the records and maps that erase them are the evidence. A high response weighs whether land “holds” memory in itself or through the people who keep it, and how the poets differ on this; the limiting phrase “official histories” must be engaged, not swapped for a general discussion of colonisation.

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