

MATRICULATION AND SECONDARY EDUCATION CERTIFICATE EXAMINATIONS BOARD  
UNIVERSITY OF MALTA, MSIDA

MATRICULATION CERTIFICATE EXAMINATION  
INTERMEDIATE LEVEL  
SEPTEMBER 2012  
Candidate's Paper

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<b>SUBJECT:</b>	ENGLISH
<b>PAPER:</b>	ORAL

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**PART 1 – Passage for Reading (5 marks)**

**Stephen Hawking Trials Device that Reads his Mind**

Stephen Hawking is a famous British theoretical physicist famous, among other things, for his work on determining how the planet Earth first came to exist. He is an Honorary Fellow of the Royal Society of Arts, a lifetime member of the Pontifical Academy of Sciences, and in 2009 was awarded the Presidential Medal of Freedom, the highest civilian award in the United States. He has been awarded a whole host of medals and awards in recognition of his important contribution to science.

He suffers from a condition that has also affected his speech, causing him to use a computer in order to communicate. Technology has helped Stephen Hawking in many ways, and now it might allow him to communicate using thought alone. The cosmologist is trialling a device that monitors brain activity with the ultimate aim of transforming it into speech.

Hawking has motor neurone disease - nerve decay that has left him almost completely paralysed. He currently communicates using a series of cheek twitches to select words from a screen. "It is a very, very slow process," says Philip Low at Stanford University in California, who is founder of healthcare company NeuroVigil. As Hawking loses control of his cheek, Low hopes he might instead communicate using his company's portable device. The iBrain records brain activity from a single point on the scalp. An algorithm then extracts useful information from this activity. In a preliminary trial, Low's team asked Hawking to imagine moving his hands and feet while wearing the device. They were able to identify what movement he was imagining through changes in his brain activity.

They now hope to develop the technology to enable Hawking and others to use the imagined movements to instruct a computer to write or speak words. Low presented the work at the Francis Crick Memorial Conference in Cambridge, UK, on 8 July.

*New Scientist*

**PART 2 – Discussion on a Topic (Long Turn) (5 marks)**

Choose **ONE** topic from the list below and speak about it with the examiner for an extended period of time:

- a) Forms of prejudice
- b) Air pollution
- c) Gossip...innocent chit chat or spiteful commentary?
- d) Would you allow robots into your home?
- e) Diving
- f) The Mediterranean diet

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**PART 1 – Passage for Reading (5 marks)**

**A Farewell to Alternative Endings for Novels - Ernest Hemingway went through 47 Different Endings for *A Farewell to Arms***

The two endings that Charles Dickens wrote for *Great Expectations* are already disturbing enough, but I am utterly disturbed by the idea that Ernest Hemingway went through 47 endings for *A Farewell to Arms* before settling on: "After a while I went out and left the hospital and walked back to the hotel in the rain." And now Scribner is set to publish an edition containing each and every one.

The final line Hemingway eventually went for is bleak, matter of fact, and leaves almost everything unsaid, but the image of Henry walking away from Catherine is unforgettable, something which can't be said for the 39 variants the author claimed he went through before he was "satisfied." His US publisher Scribner has managed to come up with 47, which range from the grumpily nihilistic ("That is all there is to the story. Catherine died and you will die and I will die and that is all I can promise you") to the utterly bleak. This is evident in the ending suggested by F Scott Fitzgerald, in which Hemingway wrote that the world "breaks everyone," and those "it does not break it kills. It kills the very good and very gentle and the very brave impartially. If you are none of these you can be sure it will kill you too but there will be no special hurry."

Undoubtedly seeing the different options laid out makes Hemingway's characters somehow more fluid, less set in stone – and I don't like that. Part of the joy in rereading a favourite book is the impossible hope that things will somehow work out differently for the likes of Catherine and Henry, or poor fat Piggy, or poor crazy Heathcliff. The many ways in which things could have been otherwise may offer new critical perspectives, or give encouragement to aspiring authors, but these multiple alternatives undercut the tension between what might have been and what we know is coming, the strain on which that joy depends. As someone who just loves the story, I'm going to steer well clear. I'll stick with my vision of a wet and desolate Henry, walking back to the hotel in the rain.

Alison Flood  
*Guardian.co.uk*

**PART 2 – Discussion on a Topic (Long Turn) (5 marks)**

Choose **ONE** topic from the list below and speak about it with the examiner for an extended period of time:

- a. Me time
- b. Cousins
- c. Cooking programmes
- d. Online photos
- e. Studying in summer
- f. Flash mobs

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**PART 1 – Passage for Reading (5 marks)**

**Steinbeck's Journey of Rediscovery**

Debate about John Steinbeck's 1962 road book, *Travels with Charley*, often revolves around two questions: Why did he write it? And how much of it is true?

In the opening chapter, Steinbeck says that he decided to wend his lonesome way across America in a camper van, accompanied only by Charley, a sickly poodle, because he was an American writer who had been stuck in New York for too long and had thus grown unfamiliar with his subject. His son, though, tells a different story. The real motivation for the trip, he says, was that Steinbeck thought he was dying, and wanted to say farewell to his homeland.

It is true that the dialogue is perhaps too beautifully crafted to ring true. But this is to miss the point of one of the greatest travelogues ever written. It is unfair to hold beautifully crafted prose against *Travels with Charley*. Indeed, in a book with so much to commend it, the majesty of Steinbeck's writing is the single biggest draw.

From New York he first travels through New England and then across the Midwest to Montana. Along the way, Steinbeck finds two countries: one that he recalls and one that is changing and homogenising. In Seattle, he wonders why "progress looks so much like destruction." He remembers when Salinas, the town of his birth, proudly announced its 4,000th citizen. When he returns it is home to 80,000.

Having worked his way down through California, Steinbeck takes a left towards the racist South. This leg of the trip has been hanging, unspoken, over the story. He approaches it with the dread of the outsider. "When people are engaged in something they are not proud of, they do not welcome witnesses. In fact, they come to believe the witness causes the trouble."

"I early learned the difference between an American and the Americans," he writes. "They are so far apart that they might be opposites." In the course of its long journey, the book celebrates both: the underlying fabric of what it is to be an American, and the myriad contrasting individuals who make it up. Generally he still finds a country to love and admire.

*The Economist*

**PART 2 – Discussion on a Topic (Long Turn) (5 marks)**

Choose ONE topic from the list below and speak about it with the examiner for an extended period of time:

- a) Sports injuries
- b) Fair Trade
- c) Being healthy
- d) Frequent short breaks or one long holiday?
- e) Designer clothes...a waste of money?
- f) Endangered species

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**Girls Petition for *Teen Vogue* to Put an End to Airbrushed Photos**

Teenagers Carina Cruz and Emma Stydahar delivered a 28,000 signature petition to *Teen Vogue* to express their distaste for the common magazine practice of airbrushing images. A group of approximately 10 girls staged a protest fashion show outside the Condé Nast building in Times Square to deliver the petition. Smiling for the cameras, the teenagers walked up and down a makeshift runway (which consisted of a 15-foot long red carpet produced by one of the activists and rolled out on Broadway) holding placards like "Let's get real – all girls are beautiful" and "*Teen Vogue*...KeepItReal."

"I don't think girls should grow up in a world where beauty magazines dictate they should have a low self-esteem," said Emma, 17, a high school senior from New York. According to Emma, 75% of girls get depressed within three minutes of shuffling through a beauty magazine's pages because the beauty patterns they convey as ideal are unattainable. "Images that have been photoshopped have a bad effect and can really hurt young girls. We're looking for more diversity of girls and body types in these publications," added Emma.

The girls were part of a similar fashion shoot outside the offices of *Seventeen* magazine in May, when a 15,000-signature petition requesting the magazine to promise one un-photoshopped spread a month was delivered to the magazine's editor-in-chief Ann Shoket. In *Seventeen's* August issue, the editor promised to limit photo-editing to things like stray hair and pimples, but not bodies.

*Teen Vogue* has an audience of more than 3.5 million readers, 93% of whom are female. Outside their offices, the makeshift photoshoot was meant to show the magazine what kind of girls they would want to see on the cover of the popular fashion magazine. In an official statement, *Teen Vogue* said: "*Teen Vogue* makes a conscious and continuous effort to promote a positive body image among our readers. We feature healthy models on the pages of our magazine and shoot dozens of non-models and readers every year and do not retouch them to alter their body size. *Teen Vogue* pledges to continue this practice."

Andrea Palatnik  
*Guardian.co.uk*

**PART 2 – Discussion on a Topic (Long Turn) (5 marks)**

Choose **ONE** topic from the list below and speak about it with the examiner for an extended period of time:

- a) A perfect moment
- b) Summer work
- c) Smart phone or tablet?
- d) Planning a holiday
- e) Olympic medals
- f) Binge drinking

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<b>SUBJECT:</b>	ENGLISH
<b>DATE:</b>	7th September 2012
<b>TIME:</b>	9.00 a.m. to 12.00 noon

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**ANSWER BOTH SECTIONS**

You are advised to spend about 1 hour on each task.

***SECTION A – LANGUAGE (60 marks)***

**1. ESSAY (30 marks)**

Write approximately 500 words on **ONE** of the following:

- a) Do you agree that nowadays people have forgotten how to appreciate the simple things in life and as a result are less happy?
- b) You are J. Borg, living at 1, Borg Lane, Hal-Borg. Write a letter of complaint to the editor of a local magazine aimed at tourists, in which you feel that a lead article describing your town/village contained too many inaccuracies.
- c) “S/He blinked several times but could not escape the fact that the scene in front of her/him was real.” Use and underline the sentence in quotation marks as part of a short story to be published in your college magazine.
- d) You have been approached by the Youth Commission to compile a report on the sports habits of 16-18 year-olds. Imagine that you have visited several sixth forms and youth centres in order to collect information on this topic. Write the report for the Youth Commission.
- e) You have spent the summer earning extra money as a pool/beach attendant. Describe a typical scene encountered while on this job.
- f) Fruit.

## 2. COMPREHENSION AND SUMMARY (30 marks)

Read the passage below and answer the questions that follow:

“*The problem with being punctual is that there’s nobody there to appreciate it.*”  
– Franklin P. Jones

5 You’re on your way out of the office to meet a friend for lunch when a co-worker stops you and asks for some help. You stop to help her, when you remember your manners, pull out your phone, and type an SMS message to your lunch companion:

10 “*Running ten minutes late. Order an appetizer. My treat.*”

It may seem a small thing, being late for an appointment, but it’s not an **anomaly** is it? It’s simply that more and more appointments come with a last minute call or a text or an email announcing a late arrival or a change of plan. And if it’s not you sending those texts, you’re probably on the receiving end of them.

15 Why are we taking greater and greater liberties with the ideal of punctuality? One reason is clear: *because we can*. The little rectangular devices in our pockets—our mobile phones— have given us near telepathic powers to stay in touch with one another as we **hurtle** through the contingencies in life. The result of being able to instantly communicate “sorry, running late” at any time allows a looser attitude towards being on time.

25 This looseness—recklessness, some would say—would have seemed unconscionable a few years ago. Punctuality was an unquestioned cultural value that held modern society together (“Punctuality is the soul of business,” as one writer put it), the building block of social, business and educational life. This shift in attitudes towards time and how we interact with it is a big deal, but it highlights a cultural division that is over a century old.

30 The ethnographer Edward Teller observed in the 1960s that cultures around the world have one of two very different modes of interacting with time. The first is the kind we’re so accustomed to—time as a resource to be carefully managed. This is what Teller called “monochronic time,” which is something to be saved and spent, because we don’t want to use it up, especially on **frivolous** activities. Industrial societies are naturally focussed on organizing people around efficiency, and moving them from one task to another in a carefully engineered sequence. Train timetables, clocking in for work, appointment books are all artifacts of monochronic time and the cultures that employ it.

40 The second mode, the default of many balmy Latin and Mediterranean cultures, is “polychronic time.” It means engaging in multiple activities at once, sustaining a deep involvement in each other’s lives. Polychronic time is fluid, multi-tasking is a given, and personal relationships **trump** transactions. As a result, work progress is often unpredictable.

45

In this mode being “on time” is less important than being immersed in what they’re doing. Polychronic time prioritizes context over process, and makes it difficult for people to abruptly end conversations in **mid-stream** when the clock strikes the hour.

50

Monochronic societies like the United States have tended to frown on people living in the polychronic mode (notable exceptions include Hawaii, whose residents famously practise “Aloha Time”). After all, the well-oiled machinery of industrial life would break down if we let people show up whenever they wanted.

55

It is only the artist that we except from this rule, accepting that they’ll jump from activity to activity in “**erratic**” ways, and allowing a degree of “flakiness,” two qualities we abhor in anyone hoping to be taken seriously in the professional world.

60

Yet we are living through a remarkable transformation in this attitude. Social media and mobile phones are creating a strong tidal pull towards the polychronic behaviours. Our phones are always on, interrupting us with notifications about what others are doing and saying. This forces us to embrace more multi-tasking, more fluidity in our daily activities. We’re able to be more involved in the nitty

65

gritty of each other’s lives, which on the one hand is a distraction from our scheduled tasks but on the other hand the very means to adjust to the disruption.

These many small changes all add up to a potentially massive shift in how we engage with time itself.

*How Mobile Phones and Social Media Are Changing Our Relationship to Time* by Thor Muller

- a. Give the meaning of the following words as they appear in context:
  - (i) anomaly (line 11);
  - (ii) hurtle (line 19);
  - (iii) frivolous (line 34);
  - (iv) trump (line 43);
  - (v) mid-stream (line 48);
  - (vi) erratic (line 56). (6 marks)
  
- b. In your own words, explain the meaning of the quotation at the beginning of the text, “*The problem with being punctual is that there’s nobody there to appreciate it.*” (3 marks)
  
- c. According to the text, why can we afford to be less punctual nowadays? (line 16) (3 marks)
  
- d. Explain Edward Teller’s view that world cultures deal with time in two different ways (line 30). (3 marks)
  
- e. Why might work progress be unpredictable with a ‘polychronic’ attitude to time? (line 44) (3 marks)
  
- f. In a paragraph of between 80 and 100 words, write a summary explaining the difference between ‘monochronic’ and ‘polychronic’ time and illustrate how mobile devices are encouraging the use of polychronic time. (12 marks)

**SECTION B – LITERATURE (30 marks)**

Choose one of the texts below and answer **ONE** of the three questions set on the text. All answers must be supported by close reference to the text.

**Text 1: Graham Greene *The Heart of the Matter***

- a. “Even self-pity was denied him because he knew so exactly the extent of his guilt.” Discuss the character of Major Scobie in the light of this quotation.

**OR**

- b. Greene’s *The Heart of the Matter* explores various forms of love. Discuss.

**OR**

- c. Write an essay on the importance of the following passage to the novel *The Heart of the Matter*. These topics are being offered to you as guidelines:
- The relation of the passage to the plot or action of the novel.
  - What the passage reveals about any of the characters in the novel.
  - The relation to the central themes of the novel.

“‘Why don’t you leave him?’

‘I am leaving him. I told you. I’m going to South Africa.’

‘I love you, Louise,’ he said again.

‘How old are you, Wilson?’

‘Thirty-two.’

‘A very young thirty-two, and I am an old thirty-eight.’

‘It doesn’t matter.’

‘The poetry you read, Wilson, is too romantic. It does matter. It matters much more than love. Love isn’t a fact like age and religion...’

Across the bay the clouds came up: they massed blackly over Bullom and then tore up the sky, climbing vertically: the wind pressed the two of them back against the station. ‘Too late,’ Louise said, ‘we’re caught.’

‘How long will it last?’

‘Half an hour.’

A handful of rain was flung in their faces, and then the water came down. They stood inside the station and heard the water hurled upon the roof. They were in darkness, and the chickens moved at their feet.

‘This is grim,’ Louise said.

He made a motion towards her hand and touched her shoulder. ‘Oh, for God’s sake, Wilson,’ she said, ‘don’t let’s have a petting party.’ She had to speak loud for her voice to carry above the thunder on the iron roof.

‘I’m sorry...I didn’t mean...’

He could hear her shifting further away, and he was glad of the darkness which hid his humiliation. ‘I like you, Wilson,’ she said, ‘but I’m not a nursing sister who expects to be taken whenever she finds herself in the dark with a man. You have no responsibilities towards me, Wilson. I don’t want you.’

‘I love you, Louise.’

‘Yes, yes, Wilson. You’ve told me. Do you think there are snakes here – or rats?’”

**Text 2: Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie *Purple Hibiscus***

- a. *Purple Hibiscus* is a novel portraying the dangers of religious fanaticism and intolerance. Discuss.

**OR**

- b. How and to what extent is Amaka essential in Kambili's journey towards self-discovery?

**OR**

- c. Write an essay on the importance of the following passage to the novel *Purple Hibiscus*. These topics are being offered to you as guidelines:
- The relation of the passage to the plot or action of the novel.
  - What the passage reveals about any of the characters in the novel.
  - The relation to the central themes of the novel.

“I looked at him and then away. I wondered if Amaka would ever paint him, would ever capture the clay-smooth skin, the straight eyebrows, which were slightly raised as he watched me. ‘I played volleyball in class one,’ I said. ‘But I stopped playing because I...I was not that good and nobody liked to pick me.’ I kept my eyes focused on the bleak, unpainted spectator stands, abandoned for so long that tiny plants had started to push their green heads through the cracks in the cement.

‘Do you love Jesus?’ Father Amadi asked, standing up.

I was startled. ‘Yes. Yes, I love Jesus’.

‘Then show me. Try and catch me, show me you love Jesus.’

He had hardly finished speaking before he dashed off and I saw the blue flash of his tank top. I did not stop to think; I stood up and ran after him. The wind blew in my face, into my eyes, across my ears. Father Amadi was like blue wind, elusive. I did not catch up until he stopped near the football goal post.

‘So you don’t love Jesus,’ he teased.

‘You run too fast,’ I said, panting.

‘I will let you rest, and then you can have another chance to show me you love the Lord.’

We ran four more times. I did not catch him. We flopped down on the grass, finally, and he pushed a water bottle into my hand. ‘You have good legs for running. You should practise more,’ he said.”

**Text 3: Robert Bolt *A Man for All Seasons***

- a. "Impose suffering, and offer him – escape." Explain the significance of Rich's words in the play *A Man for All Seasons*.

**OR**

- b. "If you could just see facts flat on, without that horrible moral squint; with just a little common sense, you could have been a statesman." Discuss Wolsey's description of More.

**OR**

- c. Write an essay on the importance of the following passage to the play *A Man for All Seasons*. These topics are being offered to you as guidelines:
- The relation of the passage to the plot or action of the play.
  - What the passage reveals about any of the characters in the play.
  - The relation to the central themes of the play.

WOLSEY Yes. All right. Good. Pray. Pray by all means. But in addition to prayer there is effort. My effort's to secure a divorce. Have I your support or have I not?

MORE (Sits) A dispensation was granted so that the King might marry Queen Catherine, for state reasons. Now we are to ask the Pope to dispense with his dispensation, also for state reasons?

WOLSEY I don't like plodding, Thomas, don't make me plod longer than I have to - Well?

MORE Then clearly all we have to do is approach His Holiness and ask him.

(The pace becomes rapid)

WOLSEY I think we might influence His Holiness' answer

MORE Like this? (Indicating the dispatch)

WOLSEY Like that and in other ways--

MORE I've already expressed my opinion on this-

WOLSEY Then, good night! Oh, your conscience is your own affair; but you're a statesman! Do you remember the Yorkist Wars?

MORE Very clearly.

WOLSEY Let him die without an heir and we'll have them back again. Let him die without an heir and this "peace" you think so much of will go out like that! (He extinguishes the candle)

Very well then . . . England needs an heir; certain measures, perhaps regrettable, perhaps not- (Pompous) there is much in the Church that needs reformation, Thomas- (MORE smiles) All right, regrettable! But necessary, to get us an heir! Now explain how you as Councillor of England can obstruct those measures for the sake of your own, private, conscience.

MORE Well . . . I believe, when statesmen forsake their own private conscience for the sake of their public duties . . . they lead their country by a short route to chaos. (During this speech he relights the candle with another) And we shall have my prayers to fall back on.

WOLSEY You'd like that, wouldn't you? To govern the country by prayers?

MORE Yes, I should.

**Text 4: Ian McEwan *Atonement***

- a. *Atonement* is a tragic love story, but it is also much more than that. Write an essay discussing the validity of this view about Ian McEwan's *Atonement*.

**OR**

- b. 'Briony misunderstands as she tries to make sense of the world around her.' Write an essay analysing the character of Briony Tallis in Ian McEwan's *Atonement*.

**OR**

- c. Write an essay on the importance of the following passage to the novel *Atonement*. These topics are being offered to you as guidelines:

The relation of the passage to the plot or action of the novel.

What the passage reveals about any of the characters in the novel.

The relation to the central themes of the novel.

'There was a crime. But there were also the lovers. Lovers and their happy ends have been on my mind all night long. As into the sunset we sail. An unhappy inversion. It occurs to me that I have not travelled so very far after all, since I wrote my little play. Or rather, I've made a huge digression and doubled back to my starting place. It is only in this last version that my lovers end well, standing side by side on a South London pavement as I walk away. All the preceding drafts were pitiless. But now I can no longer think what purpose would be served if, say, I tried to persuade my reader, by direct or indirect means, that Robbie Turner died of septicaemia at Bray Dunes on 1 June 1940, or that Cecilia was killed in September of the same year by the bomb that destroyed Balham Underground station. That I never saw them in that year. That my walk across London ended at the church on Clapham Common, and that a cowardly Briony limped back to the hospital, unable to confront her recently bereaved sister. That the letters the lovers wrote are in the archives of the War Museum. How could that constitute an ending? What sense or hope or satisfaction could a reader draw from such an account? Who would want to believe that they never met again, never fulfilled their love? Who would want to believe that, except in the service of the bleakest realism? I couldn't do it to them. I'm too old, too frightened, too much in love with the shred of life I have remaining. I face an incoming tide of forgetting, and then oblivion. I no longer possess the courage of my pessimism. When I am dead, and the Marshalls are dead, and the novel is finally published, we will only exist as my inventions. Briony will be as much of a fantasy as the lovers who shared a bed in Balham and enraged their landlady. No one will care what events and which individuals were misrepresented to make a novel. I know there's always a certain kind of reader who will be compelled to ask, But what *really* happened? The answer is simple: the lovers survive and flourish. As long as there is a single copy, a solitary typescript of my final draft, then my spontaneous, fortuitous sister and her medical prince survive to love.'