

MATRICULATION AND SECONDARY EDUCATION CERTIFICATE EXAMINATIONS BOARD

UNIVERSITY OF MALTA, MSIDA

MATRICULATION EXAMINATION
INTERMEDIATE LEVEL
SEPTEMBER 2015

SUBJECT:	ENGLISH
PAPER:	ORAL
TIME:	approx. 10 minutes

CANDIDATE'S PAPER

PART 1 – Passage for Reading (5 marks)

I am a German by birth and descent. But by education I am quite as much an Englishman as anyone else, and by affection even more so. My life has been spent pretty equally between the two countries, and I flatter myself to say that I speak both languages without any foreign accent.

I count England my headquarters now: it is 'home' to me. But a few years ago I was resident in Germany, only going over to London now and then on business. I will not mention the town where I lived. It is unnecessary to do so, and in the peculiar experience I am about to relate I think real names of people and places are just as well, or better, avoided.

I was connected with a large and important firm of engineers. I had been bred up to the profession, and was credited with a certain amount of talent; and I was considered – and, with all modesty, I think I deserved the opinion – steady and reliable, so that I had already attained a fair position in the house, and was looked upon as a 'rising man'. But I was still young, and not quite so wise as I thought myself. I came very near once to making a great mess of a certain affair. It is this story which I am going to tell.

Our house went in largely for patents – rather too largely, some thought. But the head partner's son was a bit of a genius in his way, and his father was growing old, and let Mr William – Moritz we will call the family name – do pretty much as he chose. And on the whole Herr William did well. He was cautious, and he had the benefit of the still greater caution and larger experience of Mr Gerard, the second partner in the firm.

Adapted from *The Man with the Cough*

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.

- Teenage years
- Winter or summer?
- Media
- Why can't everyone enjoy basic Human Rights?
- Staying healthy in Malta
- A favourite piece of music

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On an overcast spring day in 2013, Joe, a commercial photographer, and his son, Joey, were polishing off sandwiches at a wildlife refuge in Florida's Everglades. Joey, who was six at the time, had the day off from school, and Joe, 50, planned for the two of them to spend the day canoeing in the huge swamp, a 45-minute drive from their home. Joe had never before ventured into the muddy waters, which were famous for alligators.

Joe covered his son with sunscreen and just turned to scan the canoe rental terms and conditions, less than 20 feet from the water's edge. Seconds later, he heard a splash and a scream. Joey had slipped on snake-grass at the edge of the water and fallen in face-first. When Joe whipped around, he saw his son's right arm in the jaws of an alligator.

Time seemed to stop as Joe ran toward his son and into the water, which was almost three feet deep. As Joey thrashed and screamed, Joe wrapped his left arm across the boy's chest and began pulling him back toward the bank. With his right hand, Joe struck the alligator's snout as hard as he could. But it was like punching bricks. "It didn't even flinch," he says.

A young man in line at the concession stand ran over, screaming at Joe to pull his son out of the water. But Joe feared what would happen to Joey's arm if he pulled too hard. While Joe dealt blows to the beast's head, the other man kicked its belly. After three or four kicks, the alligator released its grip on Joey and slithered back into the water. Joe picked up his son and found that he'd suffered only a few cuts and scrapes from his shoulder blade to his wrist—surprisingly there were no puncture wounds. Joe thanked the stranger and sped home.

Adapted from a story in *Reader's Digest* online

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.

- Working with children
- Respect
- Are we becoming too individualistic in our society?
- My last holiday
- Adolescence
- My favourite gadget

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Expanding Universe is the latest book to showcase pictures taken by the Hubble Space Telescope. Colourful images of stars and galaxies spread across a glossy 260 pages serve as an ideal homage to remember the 25th anniversary of Hubble's launch.

The pictures take you further away from Earth as you progress through the book. Towards the end, they delve into the depths of the Universe to shed light on the earliest stars.

Aside from the photos, there are a couple of informative essays written by prominent people involved with the Hubble project. Each piece is written in English, French and German and covers a different aspect of the telescope's story. Owen Edwards' essay, reflecting on the unique relationship between science and art, is a nice prelude at the beginning of the book.

The book's thick, high-quality paper certainly gives it a sophisticated feel, making it at home on any coffee table. Lovely as it is, though, this isn't the cheapest Hubble book, and you'll have seen many of the pictures before in calendars and on posters. Furthermore, the book has numerous blank, dark pages. Although these enhance the impression that the majority of the Universe is dark, the space could perhaps have been used to further display the talents of the telescope.

Readers who skip past the different language sections could miss some of the images shown here, including pictures of the Spiral Planetary Nebula at different stages of processing, which provide a fascinating insight into how raw data is transformed into picturesque Hubble photos.

Adapted from *Focus* online

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.

- Describe your favourite spot in the Maltese Islands
- Rain or sun?
- Childhood
- Cars for the future
- Malta's places of entertainment don't entertain
- Staying in hotels

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Five of the world's seven richest countries have increased their coal use in the last five years despite demanding that poor countries slash their carbon emissions to avoid climate change, new research shows. Britain, Germany, Italy, Japan and France together burned 16% more coal in 2013 than 2009 and are planning to further increase construction of coal-fired power stations.

The news comes as nearly 200 countries met ahead of crunch climate talks in Paris and shows that G7 coal plants emit twice as much carbon dioxide, or CO₂, as the entire African continent annually, and 10 times as much as the 48 least developed countries put together.

The result, says Oxfam, will be that G7 coal emissions alone could cost African countries over £40bn a year in climate-related costs by the 2080s.

“The G7's addiction to coal is hiking up costs for developing countries and putting more and more people on the frontline of climate change at risk of hunger. If G7 coal plants were a country, it would be the fifth biggest emitter in the world. They are still burning huge amounts, despite efficient, affordable, renewable alternatives being available,” said the report.

At the Copenhagen climate summit in 2009, all countries agreed to prevent warming of more than 2 degrees centigrade to avoid runaway climate change, but the world is now on track to warm by at least 4 degrees centigrade.

The UK could feasibly stop burning coal for its energy supply by 2023, according to Oxfam's report. To do this, it would have to invest in smarter energy storage, reduce energy demand and improve energy efficiency, the report says.

Adapted from a story in *The Guardian* online

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.

- An ideal job
- Wintertime
- Easter or Christmas?
- Being European
- The gap between the rich and the poor is growing wider
- Gadgets help us be more efficient, but then we can't ever switch off

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TIME:	9.00 a.m. to 12.00 noon

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. You are abroad on a three month summer camp. Write an email to your family to give them your latest news and to persuade them to come and visit soon.
- b. Your local church/local council newsletter has invited people to write a short story illustrating the importance of the role of the elderly in the community. Write this short story.
- c. Floods
- d. First impressions are important. Imagine you are a reporter sent by your paper to cover a huge performance event. Describe the atmosphere as the star appears on stage.
- e. A study has been carried out to investigate student study habits in the run up to their exams. As part of the research team carrying out this study, you have been asked to write and present a report on how it was set up and carried out, and what some of the expected results might be. You do not need to invent fictitious results, as your report should only cover the preparation for the study, and its expected findings, but not the results.
- f. Malcolm X once said "If we don't stand for something we may fall for anything". Discuss this statement.

2. COMPREHENSION AND SUMMARY (30 marks)

Read the passage below and answer the questions that follow.

Aboard a No. 6 local train in Manhattan, Weill Cornell researcher Christopher Mason patiently rubbed a nylon swab back and forth along a metal handrail, collecting DNA in an effort to identify the bacteria in the New York City subway.

5 In 18 months of scouring the entire system, he has found germs that can cause bubonic plague uptown, meningitis in midtown, stomach trouble in the financial district and antibiotic-resistant infections throughout the boroughs.

Frequently, he and his team also found bacteria that keep the city livable, by sopping up hazardous chemicals or digesting toxic waste. They could even track the trail of bacteria created by the city's taste for pizza—identifying microbes associated with cheese and sausage at scores of subway stops.

10 The big-data project, the first genetic profile of a metropolitan transit system, is in many ways “a mirror of the people themselves who ride the subway,” said Dr. Mason, a geneticist at the Weill Cornell Medical College.

15 It is also a revealing glimpse into the future of public health. By documenting the **miniature** wildlife, microbiologists hope to discover new ways to track disease outbreaks—including contagious diseases like Ebola or measles—detect bioterrorism attacks and combat the growing antibiotic resistance among microbes, which causes about 1.7 million hospital infections every year.

20 Dr. Mason and his research team gathered DNA from turnstiles, ticket kiosks, railings and benches in a transit system shared by 5.5 million riders every day. They sequenced the genetic material they found at the subway's 466 open stations—more than 10 billion fragments of biochemical code—and sorted it by supercomputer.

25 In the process, they uncovered how **commuters** seed the city subways every day with bacteria from the food they eat, the pets or plants they keep, and their shoes, trash, sneezes and unwashed hands. As more and more scientists **probe** urban microbiology, they are also hoping to find ways to foster **beneficial** bacteria through building design and to learn how to eliminate construction practices that create living conditions for the germs that make people ill.

In New York City, the Cornell scientists and student volunteers gamely **dodged** rats and gingerly worked around discarded pregnancy tests, used condoms, puddles of vomit and rotting food to swab surfaces in every subway station. On more than one occasion, suspicious police stopped them and escorted them to the street.

30 Researchers are learning that quirks of building materials, ventilation systems, humidity and interior design affect the kinds of bacteria people encounter indoors. Upholstery fabric can make a difference. Drug-resistant throat-infection germs can live for up to a week on materials used for airplane seat pockets, while E. coli can last 96 hours on the covering used for an airliner armrest, researchers at Auburn University said at a meeting of the American Society of Microbiology last
35 year.

Air conditioning matters too. Studies of indoor air quality at shopping centers in Singapore and homes in the United Arab Emirates revealed up to 300 distinct species of airborne bacteria, fungi and viruses carried through ventilation systems.

40 “Unintentionally, architects and engineers are creating ecosystems without much thought at all as to whether they are healthy or harmful to humans,” said biologist Jessica Green, director of the University of Oregon’s ‘Biology and The Built Environment Center’. “Different urban conditions might promote the growth of different microbial ecosystems.” Jack Gilbert, an environmental microbiologist who is involved in the project, explained, “We are now in a position where we can go into a city and characterize its microbial wildlife. We can see the genomes of thousands of different species, millions of different species.”

45 On a quiet morning in New York this past spring, commuters waiting for the No. 6 train at the 68th Street subway station paid little attention to the three student interns from Cornell intently stroking the platform benches and railings with small nylon-tipped swabs. The team boarded the Lexington Avenue local train. They spread out through the car and started **swabbing** overhead handholds and passenger seats. Each sample took about three minutes to collect. They sealed each one in a plastic bag, then photographed and logged the location.

50 Michael Rivera, 16, in an orange T-shirt and camo pants, was taking the subway uptown to Harlem. He gawked at them. At 96th Street, he finally asked: “What’s going on?” As Dr. Mason explained the work, Mr. Rivera nodded appreciatively. On other occasions, commuters have been suspicious. “We’ve been accused of spreading HIV or collecting alien DNA,” Dr. Mason said. “People get very fearful and say they don’t want to know what we find.”

In New York, the Metropolitan Transportation Authority, which runs the subway system, declined to comment on the Weill Cornell study or discuss its subway sanitation procedures.

60 The subway project has been a proving ground for the new technology of public-health genomics. “If you can sequence a city, you can sequence anything and everything,” said James Kaufman, who runs the public-health research project at IBM’s ‘Almaden Research Center’ in California.

The subway findings might unsettle some people, Dr. Mason acknowledged, but he said they illustrate the remarkable microbial diversity of a healthy city. “I don’t want people to be terrified,” he said. “I want them to be intrigued.”

Adapted from an article by Robert Lee Hotz

- a. Give the meaning of the following words as they appear in context: miniature (l. 13); commuters (l. 21); probe (l. 23); beneficial (l.24); dodged (l. 26); swabbing (l. 49). (6 marks)
- b. What do you think the author is suggesting when he says that "commuters seed the city subways every day with bacteria" (l. 21)? (3 marks)
- c. According to this article, how do architects and engineers contribute to the ways in which a city's ecosystem may develop? (3 marks)
- d. Describe and account for some of the negative reactions from the public that the team of researchers has sometimes received while trying to collect their DNA samples from public places. (3 marks)
- e. Why might people be “intrigued”, rather than “terrified” by what the research has discovered (l. 63-64)? (3 marks)
- f. In a paragraph of between 80-100 words, summarise the research project and some of its findings, as presented in the article. (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. Essays should be no less than 450 words.

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

a. “He entered a territory of lies without a passport for return.” Discuss the treatment of lies in *The Heart of the Matter*.

Or

b. Yusef and Ali are two contrasting characters that have a significant role in *The Heart of the Matter*. 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.

‘Look down there,’ Harris said, ‘look at Scobie.’

A vulture flapped and shifted on the iron roof and Wilson looked at Scobie. He looked without interest in obedience to a stranger’s direction, and it seemed to him that no particular interest attached to the squat grey-haired man walking alone up Bond Street. He couldn’t tell that this was one of those occasions a man never forgets: a small cicatrice had been made on the memory, a wound that would ache whenever certain things combined – the taste of gin at mid-day, the smell of flowers under a balcony, the clang of corrugated iron, an ugly bird flopping from perch to perch.

‘He loves ’em so much,’ Harris said, ‘he sleeps with ’em.’

‘Is that the police uniform?’

‘It is. Our great police force. A lost thing will they never find – you know the poem.’

‘I don’t read poetry,’ Wilson said. His eyes followed Scobie up the sun-drowned street. Scobie stopped and had a word with a black man in a white panama: a black policeman passed by, saluting smartly, Scobie went on.

‘Probably in the pay of the Syrians too, if the truth were known.’

‘The Syrians?’

‘This is the original Tower of Babel,’ Harris said. ‘West Indians, Africans, real Indians, Syrians, Englishmen, Scotsmen in the Office of Works. Irish priests, French priests, Alsatian priests.’

‘What do the Syrians do?’

‘Make money. They run all the stores up-country and most of the stores here. Run diamonds too.’

Text 2: Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie *Purple Hibiscus*

a. “In *Purple Hibiscus*, silence is both a form of communication and the lack of speaking.” Discuss.

Or

b. “I meant to say I am sorry that Papa broke your figurines, but the words that came out were, ‘I’m sorry your figurines broke, Mama.’” Explain how this quote captures Kambili’s internal struggle with her father.

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;
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The words in my textbooks kept turning into blood each time I read them. Even as my first-term exams approached, even when we started to do class reviews, the words still made no sense.

A few days before my first exam, I was in my room studying, trying to focus on one word at a time, when the doorbell rang. It was Yewande Coker, the wife of Papa’s editor. She was crying. I would hear her because I had never heard crying that loud before.

‘They have taken him! They have taken him!’ she said, between throaty sobs.

‘Yewande, Yewande,’ Papa said, his voice much lower than hers.

‘What will I do, sir? I have three children! One is still sucking my breasts! How will I raise them alone?’ I could hardly hear her words; instead what I heard clearly was the sound of something catching in her throat. Then Papa said, ‘Yewande, don’t talk that way. Ade will be fine, I promise you. Ade will be fine.’

I heard Jaja leave his room. He would walk downstairs and pretend that he was going to the kitchen to drink water and stand close to the living room door for a while listening. When he came back up, he told me soldiers had arrested Ade Coker as he drove out of the editorial offices of the *Standard*. His car was abandoned on the roadside, the front door left open. I imagined Ade Coker being pulled out of his car, being squashed into another car, perhaps a black station wagon filled with soldiers, their guns hanging out of the windows. I imagined his hands quivering with fear, a wet patch spreading on his trousers.

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

a. Discuss Bolt's treatment of loyalty in *A Man for All Seasons*.

Or

b. Discuss Cromwell's character and his role in *A Man for All Seasons*.

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.

Alice Young Roper! I've just seen young Roper! On *my* horse.
More He'll bring it back, dear. He's been to see Margaret.
Alice Oh – why you don't beat that girl!
More No, no, she's full of education – and it's a delicate commodity.
Alice Mm! and more's the pity!
More Yes, but it's there now and think what it cost. (*He sneezes*).
Alice (*pouncing*) Ah! Margaret – hot water.

Exit Margaret

More I'm sorry you were awakened, chick.
Alice I wasn't sleeping very deeply, Thomas – what did Wolsey want?
More (*innocent*) Young Roper asked for Margaret.
Alice What! Impudence!
More Yes, wasn't it?
Alice Old fox! What did he want, Thomas?
More He wanted me to read a dispatch.
Alice Was that all?
More A Latin dispatch.
Alice Oh! Won't you talk about it?
More (*gently*) No.

Text 4: Ian McEwan *Atonement*

a. Discuss the theme of innocence in *Atonement*.

Or

b. Write about the instrumental roles of Lola Quincy and Paul Marshall in *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.

But friendships were not easy to cultivate. The probationers worked their shifts in the wards, studied three hours a day in their spare time, and slept. Their luxury was teatime, between four and five, when they took down from the wooden slatted shelves their miniature brown teapots inscribed with their names and sat together in a little dayroom off the ward. Conversation was stilted. The Home sister was there to supervise and ensure decorum. Besides, as soon as they sat down, tiredness came over them, heavy as three folded blankets. One girl fell asleep with a cup and saucer in her hand and scalded her thigh—a good opportunity, Sister Drummond said when she came in to see what the screaming was about, to practise the treatment of burns.

And she herself was a barrier to friendship. In those early months, Briony often thought that her only relationship was with Sister Drummond. She was always there, one moment at the end of a corridor, approaching with a terrible purpose, the next, at Briony's shoulder, murmuring in her ear that she had failed to pay attention during preliminary training to the correct procedures for blanket-bathing male patients: only after the *second* change of washing water should the freshly soaped back flannel and back towel be passed to the patient so that he could "finish off for himself." Briony's state of mind largely depended on how she stood that hour in the ward sister's opinion. She felt a coolness in her stomach whenever Sister Drummond's gaze fell on her. It was impossible to know whether you had done well. Briony dreaded her bad opinion. Praise was unheard of. The best one could hope for was indifference.