



SUBJECT: **English**
DATE: 15th May 2023
TIME: 4:00 p.m. to 7:05 p.m.

Answer **ALL** sections. You are advised to spend about 1 hour on each task.

SECTION A: WRITTEN

(Total: 30 marks)

Choose ONE title and write 450 (+/- 10%) words.

1. Leaving your hotel room relatively early in the morning, you decided to visit one of the busiest parts of the city before the bustling streets came to life. Describe what you saw during the walk.
2. Write a story inspired by this quote from Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, 'The course of true love never did run smooth'.
3. 'Our culture influences the way in which we see the world. Living on a small island, may shape the personality, attitudes and perspectives of Maltese teenagers and/or young adults.' Discuss.
4. Most migrant children arriving in Malta are traumatised and disoriented. They find themselves in classrooms with little to no understanding of what Malta and Maltese culture are and are generally without the linguistic skills to immediately communicate with their teachers and peers. Write an essay showing how schools may facilitate the integration of migrant children in the community.
5. As part of a small business offering adventure holidays to young adults, you received a request for information about services, equipment, activities, and price packages from a scout group visiting Malta in the coming months. Write an email to the group scout leader giving the requested information.

Sender's details:

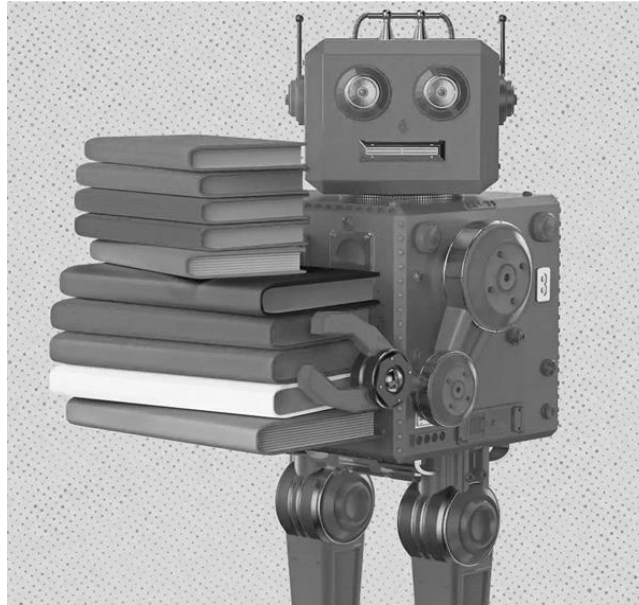
Use the fictional name Alex Camilleri

Recipient's details:

Use this email address: gsl@gmail.com

6. The directors of Shop Plus, the biggest shopping mall in your town have asked your company Insight to research visitors' experience at the mall. Your brief includes: identifying the mall's main strengths and weakness; highlighting any important distinctions for visitors between their actual shopping experience and non-shopping time spent at the mall, and making recommendations.

Write an assessment report satisfying this brief.

SECTION B: READING AND LANGUAGE AWARENESS**(Total: 30 marks)****Read the following passage and answer the questions given below.**

The week my eldest son finished nursery, I decided to clear out the playroom where he had spent much of his young life forming bonds with inanimate objects. Toys had kept him company whenever other duties or distractions had occupied his mother and me, and over the years we had amassed a truly crass number of them. As I sifted through pile after pile, I felt as though I

5 was in the pit of an immense archaeological dig. I had not considered us to be particularly pushy or indulgent parents; mostly, I wanted my children to grow up to be financially independent and live happily. But the artefacts in our playroom told another tale.

The heap of playthings was by no means atypical. American families spend, on average, around \$600 per year on toys; a typical 10-year-old child in the UK may possess 238 toys in her

10 short life, totalling about £6,500. That abundance bespeaks an entire world – of a postwar boom in plastics, babies and disposable income, of humans in Chinese factories and toy marketing agencies, of the not always benign neglect of parents with relentless careers and difficulty of spending time with children. Above all, perhaps, the glut of toys reveals a particular vision of what play and childhood are for.

15 During the past two centuries, educators, psychologists, toy companies and parents like us have acted, as if the purpose of play is to optimise children for adulthood. The dominant model for how to do that has been the school, with its reading, writing, and arithmetic. The more book learning we could camouflage as play, and then cram into our children, the better. Then, with the

20 rise of neuroscience in the second half of the 20th century, toys were increasingly marketed and purchased for the purpose of building better brains in order to build more competitive and successful grownups – to make Homo sapiens that were a little more sapient.

The pressure to do that has been felt most intensely with the youngest kids, aged five and under, and in recent decades the market has given us such brands as Baby Einstein and Baby Genius. By 2020, the broad category of educational toys was making nearly \$65bn (£55bn)

25 worldwide, a figure that is forecast to double within the decade. Toys that teach – from the Speak & Spell and the See 'n Say to an entire army of teaching robots – now pervade many young lives. 'This generation of parents is asking toys to provide an end product, and that end product is prosperity,' Richard Gottlieb, an influential toy industry consultant, told me. 'They want toys to get their children into universities.'

30 Although the explicit educational intention of modern toys is relatively novel in human history, playthings have always seemed to provide a toehold on the climb towards maturity. A ram-shaped

pull toy from the 3rd-millennium BC likely encouraged a child to practise crawling along the floor and then toddling down the lane; in the Kalahari desert, the child-size bow and arrow must have helped to prepare the child for his eventual role in the hunt. Following the spread of capitalism, play in much of the western world was frowned upon unless it was seen as a form of physically, mentally and morally productive work. However, in the 1960s, researchers studying laboratory rats, cats and monkeys found that mammals needed relevant stimulation early in their lives in order to develop crucial faculties such as sight. They also discovered that young creatures had a superabundance of brain connections that were dramatically “pruned back” as they developed. Animals reared in environments where they could interact with toys and other members of their species had more brain connections than those raised in isolation. This research on brain connections in young animals added to an already widespread idea of ‘infant determinism’ – the belief that early experiences irrevocably shape a person’s behaviour and abilities.

By the late 1990s, when the importance of the first three years was fully permeating American culture, the educational toy segment grew faster than any other part of the industry, and at more than twice the rate of the US economy as a whole. Buying educational toys had become “a form of ritual magic whose practice is believed to ensure optimal development of the infant brain,” the communications scholar Majia Nadesan wrote in the early 2000s. By that time, the myth had taken hold of society at almost every level, from government policy down to the Toys “R” Us aisle.

But the idea that we need electronic toys to teach children to name colours or count to 10 is not necessarily true. Alison Gopnik, a leading developmental psychologist argues that, while the understanding so far has been that if toys do schoolish things, then that’s good, this is not what developmental science is telling us. Indeed, the evidence is that young children are far more cognitively sophisticated than most of the toys on Amazon or shelves. For decades, we have been getting our children, and their toys, all wrong. The irony of many so-called educational toys is that they do not leave much for children to do or figure out on their own. You spin the arrow, pull the cord, and a pig oinks, end of story. “The way I like to put it, the best toys are 90% the kid, 10% the toy,” said Kathy Hirsh-Pasek, a psychologist at Temple University, who has led some of the most widely cited research into the effects of play on child development. “If it’s 90% the toy, and 10% the kid, that’s a problem.”

Instead of playing with educational toys that dispense information the way a funfair dispenses cotton candy children could be exploring the fascinating complexity of the world. They could be spending time figuring out, before they can ever speak about it, the basics of mechanics and interpersonal dynamics. In the first research programme of its kind, a decade-long study at the Center for Early Childhood Education at Eastern Connecticut State University looked at the sorts of play elicited by different kinds of toys. “Back in 2010, when we started this, there wasn’t a lot of research on toys,” Julia DeLapp, who now directs the centre, told me.

After watching kids play with more than 100 different types of toy, the researchers concluded that simple, open-ended, non-realistic toys with multiple parts, like a random assortment of Lego, inspired the highest-quality play. While engaged with such toys, children were “more likely to be creative, engage in problem solving, interact with their peers, and use language,” the researchers wrote. Electronic toys, however, tended to limit kids’ play: “A simple wooden cash register in our study inspired children to engage in lots of conversations related to buying and selling – but a plastic cash register that produced sounds when buttons were pushed mostly inspired children to just push the buttons repeatedly.”

As a result of such research, it is increasingly acknowledged that the best new toys are the best old ones – sticks and blocks and dolls and sand that follow no pre-programmed routines, that elicit no predetermined behaviours. “I don’t think electronic toys are a horror, but what often happens in the industry is that we kind of overdo the toys, and we take over the kids’ experience,” Hirsh-Pasek said. “Then after the kids play with the toy once or twice, they’re more interested in the box.”

(Adapted from The Guardian)

Answer all the questions. With the exception of Question 1, use your own words at all times. Write accurately and with clarity.

1. Read the sentence below and attempt the three tasks (a, b and c). Write each of your answers on a separate line.

'The week my eldest son finished nursery, I decided to clear out the playroom where he had spent much of his young life' (lines 1-2).

- a) Write all the verbs in this sentence.
b) The main verb in this sentence is active. Briefly, explain why.
c) Is this sentence Simple, Complex or Compound? Briefly, explain your answer.

(4)

2. In a single sentence, and using your own words as far as possible, give **THREE** reasons why the author describes the collection of toys in his son's nursery as 'by no means atypical' (line 8). (4)

3. An influential toy industry consultant observes that parents expect toys to provide 'prosperity' (line 28). What does he mean? (2)

4. Explain the change in the text marked with the word 'But' (Paragraph 7, line 50). (2)

5. The image graphically represents key ideas found in the text. Using your own words, write **TWO** separate sentences to show how the image synthesises these ideas. (3)

6. Majia Nadesan describes parents' buying toys for their children as 'a form of ritual magic' (line 46-47). What do these words suggest about Majia Nadesan's attitude towards this assumption by the parents? (3)

7. According to the author, why do 'educational toys' not really deliver what they promise? (2)

8. Limiting your answer to paragraphs 8, 9 and 10 (lines 61-81) of the text, summarise in a single paragraph of between 80 and 100 words the more recent thinking about toys for young children. (10)

SECTION C: LITERARY AWARENESS**(Total: 30 marks)****Choose only ONE question. The response must amount to a total of 500 words (+/- 10%).****EITHER**

1. In narrative, active characters behave in a manner that they contribute to the direction of the plot. In contrast, passive characters tend to not actively influence the story through their decisions. Do you consider 'The Drover's Wife' as an active or passive character? Explain why. (30)

OR

2. It was Rakesh who brought him his morning tea, not in one of the china cups from which the rest of the family drank, but in the old man's favorite brass tumbler, and sat at the edge of his bed, comfortable and relaxed with the string of his pajamas dangling out from under his fine lawn night-shirt, and discussed or, rather, read out the morning news to his father. It made no difference to him that his father made no response apart from spitting. It was Rakesh, too, who, on returning from the clinic in the evening, persuaded the old man to come out of his room, as bare and desolate as a cell, and take the evening air out in the garden, beautifully arranging the pillows and bolsters on the divan in the corner of the open verandah. On summer nights he saw to it that the servants carried out the old man's bed onto the lawn and himself helped his father down the steps and onto the bed, soothing him and settling him down for a night under the stars.

All this was very gratifying for the old man. What was not so gratifying was that he even undertook to supervise his father's diet. One day when the father was really sick, having ordered his daughter-in-law to make him a dish of soojie halwa and eaten it with a saucerful of cream, Rakesh marched into the room, not with his usual respectful step but with the confident and rather contemptuous stride of the famous doctor, and declared, "No more halwa for you, papa. We must be sensible, at your age. If you must have something sweet, Veena will cook you a little kheer, that's light, just a little rice and milk. But nothing fried, nothing rich. We can't have this happening again."

The old man who had been lying stretched out on his bed, weak and feeble after a day's illness, gave a start at the very sound, the tone of these words. He opened his eyes—rather, they fell open with shock—and he stared at his son with disbelief that darkened quickly to reproach. A son who actually refused his father the food he craved? No, it was unheard of, it was incredible. But Rakesh had turned his back to him and was cleaning up the litter of bottles and packets on the medicine shelf and did not notice while Veena slipped silently out of the room with a little smirk that only the old man saw, and hated.

Halwa was only the first item to be crossed off the old man's diet. One delicacy after the other went—everything fried to begin with, then everything sweet, and eventually everything, everything that the old man enjoyed.

- a. Limiting your answer to the given passage, explain how Anita Desai uses language to reflect the father-son relationship at this point in the narrative. (12)
- b. A common theme in Anita Desai's literature is disconnection in family relationships. Discuss how this theme is explored in 'A Devoted Son'. (18)