

**2017 ENGLISH OLYMPIAD EXAM**  
**Theme: Then and Now**

**HOME LANGUAGE PAPER**

DATE: Tuesday, 7 March 2017

TIME ALLOCATION: 3 HOURS

TEXT: *Staying Alive*

TOTAL MARKS: 100

---

You may have with you in the examination venue:

- pens, pencils, rulers and erasers
- the anthology *Staying Alive* (may contain underlining or highlighting but no notes)
- your dictionary

You may **not** have the Study Guide or any other papers, documents, cell phones or information retrieval systems of any kind.

**INSTRUCTIONS:**

1. All answers are to be written in the Examination Booklet.
2. Write the section and number of the question above each answer, and start each question at the top of a new page.
3. On the cover of the Examination Booklet, please clearly indicate:
  - your school's Olympiad Centre Number
  - your personal Examination Number
  - each **section** and the **number of the question** that you have answered from that section (e.g. Section A: 4 & Section B: 3)
  - **Do NOT write your name, your address or your school's name on the cover, or anywhere in your Examination Booklet.**
4. Answer:
  - a) one question from **SECTION A**
  - b) one question from **SECTION B**
  - c) ALL the questions from **SECTION C**

Regarding **SECTION A**

We invite you to express your own ideas in response to the questions, using your own voice – there are no 'right' answers in the strict sense of the word. In other words, there are no 'model' answers. However, the better responses tend to refer to the anthology, and quote from it.

**WE VALUE YOUR ANSWERS, SO ENJOY THE EXPERIENCE!**

**DO NOT TURN OVER THIS PAGE UNTIL THE INVIGILATOR GIVES YOU PERMISSION.**

Select ONE of the following options and write an essay - not longer than 500 words - in response to your chosen topic.

1. Richards Gere once said, *"I am old but I am forever young at heart. We are always the same age inside."*

Henrietta Rose-Innes put this in a different way in the following statement:

*"It's always disconcerting to look back and realise how little the mental furniture has changed"*.

Discuss these comments with reference to the work of Henrietta Rose- Innes as found in this anthology. (50)

2. 'A good storyteller is the conscience-keeper of a nation' Gulzar, poet, lyricist and film director (born 1934). Do you agree? Discuss with reference to *Safe Home* by Nadia Davids. (50)

3. "The early poetry of Jeremy Cronin and Jon Keevy is sentimental, and bears no relation to the hard-hitting writing of their later years". Although some critics may accuse the early works of the writers featured in the anthology of being sentimental and immature, it can be argued that often their youthful writing is also characterised by refreshing insight and awareness of the world around them. Discuss with reference to the work of Jeremy Cronin and Jon Keevy. (50)

4. While some of the early works of the writers show youthful idealism about the state of the country, a note of despondency and cynicism starts to creep in even at this stage. One feels that the dream of the perfect country is fading! Later, this cynicism seems to deepen. What is your opinion of this statement? Use examples from the work of at least two of the writers in the anthology to substantiate your point of view. (50)

5. *Come mothers and fathers  
Throughout the land  
And don't criticize  
What you can't understand  
Your sons and your daughters  
Are beyond your command  
Your old road is rapidly aging  
Please get out of the new one if you can't lend your hand  
Cause the times they are a-changing*

These are the words of a famous song, written by Bob Dylan in 1964. To what extent are the themes of youthful rebellion and the belief that "the times they are a-changing" expressed by

the authors featured in the Olympiad anthology? How do these ideas and feelings change as the writers become older – or do they change at all? In your discussion, support your opinion by discussing examples from the work of at least two of the writers in the anthology.

(50)

6. *My life still means nothing –  
without you.*

(From *Mathematician* by Karen Jennings)

We expect love to be an overriding theme in the works of young writers, particularly in their poetry. Therefore, it may be surprising that there is relatively little about romantic love in this anthology. With this comment in mind, explore the theme of love found in the work of Karen Jennings. How does the perspective change (if at all) in her later short story, *Sarah Begins*?

(50)

7. *Not a superstar, actor or model  
Not a face to 'launch a thousand ships'  
No starched collars, ties or jackets  
Not afraid of eating boerewors and chips*  
(From *Madiba* by Karen Jeynes)

The writers featured in this anthology show that it is possible to be light-hearted even when discussing serious issues or famous and revered public icons. Some people may think that this is disrespectful. What do you think? Using the two poems about Mandela in this anthology as your starting point, discuss the use and purpose of this humorous tone. You may also refer to other examples found in the anthology, provided you use the poems about Mandela as the basis of your argument.

(50)

8. Sometimes when our youthful dreams come true, we no longer want what we wished for. Show how this theme is explored in *The Happy Factory*. In your answer, trace the development of the character of Sam and explain why she came to her final decision.

(50)

9. *To learn how to speak  
With the voices of the land*  
(From *To learn how to speak* by Jeremy Cronin)

The writers in this anthology have a love-hate relationship with the South African landscape (this includes cityscapes). In the light of this statement, discuss at least three poems or passages from the anthology that reflect or refute this ambivalent attitude.

(50)

[50]

Select ONE of the following options. Remember that your answer will be assessed based on your appropriateness of register and diction. Your answer may be between 180-220 words in length.

**CAUTION: You may not answer a question on an author whose writing you discussed in Section A. If you do so, your answer will not be marked.**

1. Imagine that you are the co-ordinator of the 2017 English Olympiad and have sent an email to Jeremy Cronin, asking permission to publish his work in the English Olympiad anthology. You received the following reply: "No, please don't publish my early work! The thought makes me cringe!"  
Write an email to Jeremy, trying to persuade him to change his mind. Give convincing reasons, based on the author's work featured in the anthology. (20)
2. You are the director of your school play, *The Happy Factory*. You realise that some sections are difficult to stage! Two of the main actors have also asked for guidance on how to interpret the characters assigned to them. Write stage directions for the cast, giving very brief guidelines on the characterisation of two of the main characters, and showing how you plan to overcome what you consider is the most serious of the staging problems. You may include diagrams, but must have at least 120 words of written direction. (20)
3. Pretend that you are Mamma in *Sarah Begins*. Write a letter to Sarah, trying to explain your view of what happened. (20)
4. "I remember you – do you still like writing, or have you grown out of it?" Write a dialogue between Nadia Davids and a previous classmate whom she meets at a school reunion. (20)
5. What happened in Cape Town? Imagine that you are a passenger in one of the taxis at the petrol station described in *Poison* by Henrietta Rose-Innes. Write in your diary, describing how you escaped from the city and giving an account of what is happening at the petrol station. Express your feelings and give your opinion on the cause(s) and meaning of this catastrophe. (20)
6. You have been inspired by *English Alive* and would like to advertise it at your school – and encourage contributions from your schoolmates. Design an advertisement, **especially for your school**, to be placed on the school's noticeboard. (NB Do not copy the advertisement on the back page of the anthology). Give some details about authors featured in *English Alive* as well as in the anthology, and why their work should be an inspiration to other young writers. (20)
7. You read the following tweet from @getwithreallife ... "@ilovereadng. Get real. Why do u want to read abt low lifes and misery? That's all u ever get in books, poetry is the worst. English Olympiad – eish! What for?"  
Write a series of tweets in response to this post, defending your opinion and citing appropriate examples from the Olympiad anthology. Include at least two more tweets from @getwithreallife and two from @ilovereadng. (20)

**NB: There is no choice in this section. Answer ALL questions.**

1. Rank each of the following sets of sentences from the **most formal** to the **least formal** in register. Simply write down the letters in that order.

1.1

- A. We regret to inform you that ...
- B. We are sorry to inform you that ...
- C. We are sorry to say that ...

1.2

- A. Thanks a lot for telling me about this.
- B. Thanks for bringing this to my attention.
- C. I appreciate your bringing this matter to my attention.

1.3

- A. I am very unhappy about the service they gave me.
- B. I am extremely dissatisfied with the service I received.
- C. I'm not happy with the service I received.

1.4

- A. I have masses of experience in this area.
- B. I have considerable experience in this area.
- C. I have a lot of experience in this area.

1.5

- A. How's life?
- B. How are you?
- C. How's it going?

(5 x1 = 5)

2. Consider the following telephone conversation snippets and then identify two things:
1. what type of relationship each conversation represents (whether the people know each other or not);
  2. whether the language is formal or informal.

Set out your answers in the format below and indicate your choice of answers with a cross:

	<b>Known person</b>	<b>Unknown person</b>	<b>Formal</b>	<b>Informal</b>
2.1				
2.2				
2.3				
2.4				
2.5				

Here are the conversations:

- 2.1 How you doing? I was just wondering if you used the photocopier earlier today?
- 2.2 Listen, Moira, I saw that email earlier and I replied, so don't worry about it!
- 2.3 If you would like to leave your name and number, sir, I will ensure Mr Dlamini gets your message.
- 2.4 If you will just hold the line for one minute, please, I will check if she is at her desk.
- 2.5 Hi there, are you free to come round for drinks tonight?

(5 x 1 = 5)

3. Imagine that you are lucky enough to be an English teacher. You have set your class an assignment which required them to write a letter of application for a job. Below is part of one of the letters you receive to mark. Copy the extract onto your script and then do the following:
  - (a) Ring six words or phrases that are inappropriate in terms of style. (6)
  - (b) Write a comment of 20 - 30 words to the learner explaining why you have ringed those items. (5)

*Dear Sir / Madam*

*I'm applying for the job you people advertised in the paper last week. It really appeals to me because it offers nice hours and suits my talents.*

*I have a degree in engineering and a diploma in marketing. I have tons of experience in the field.*

4. Imagine that your school has just scored a surprising sports victory. You then comment on the event (with basically the same content)
  - A. to your school principal, who missed the event;
  - B. to you grandmother;
  - C. in a report written for the school newspaper.

Each comment must be between 40 and 60 words. Make sure that you label the comments A, B and C respectively. (9)

[30]

**GRAND TOTAL MARKS = 100**