



JAMES RUSE AGRICULTURAL HIGH SCHOOL

2025

TRIAL HIGHER SCHOOL CERTIFICATE
EXAMINATION

English (Extension I)

GENERAL INSTRUCTIONS:

- Reading Time – 10 minutes
- Working Time – 2 hours (**120 minutes**)
- Write using black pen
- Write on BOTH sides of the lined paper
- Hand in EACH SECTION STAPLED in a SEPARATE BUNDLE
- Staple the marking criteria on the back facing outwards on your response
- Write your candidate number on each page
- Attempt ALL QUESTIONS
- Indicate the SECTION you are attempting on each bundle

Total marks – 50

SECTION 1

Pages 2-7

25 marks

- Attempt BOTH parts of question 1
- Allow about 1 hour for this section

SECTION 2

Pages 8-13

25 marks

- Attempt ONE question from questions 2-6
- Allow about 1 hour for this section

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Section I — Common Module: Literary Worlds 25 marks
Attempt Question 1

Allow about 1 hour for this section
Question 1 (25 marks)

Answer the question in a SEPARATE writing booklet.

Your answer will be assessed on how well you:

-
- demonstrate an understanding of the ideas and values of Literary Worlds and how they are shaped and reflected in texts
 - craft a sustained composition appropriate to the question, demonstrating control of the use of language
-

Question 1: Literary Worlds (25 marks)

Read Texts 1 and Text 2 and answer both questions.

Part A (10 marks)

(a) Use Text 1 and Text 2 to answer this part. **10**

Critically evaluate how Text 1 and Text 2 provide insight into how Literary Worlds use postmodern language features to invite readers to participate in meaning-making rather than presenting authoritative truth.

Part B (15 marks) **15**

(b) Use Text 2 to answer this part.

Compose a narrative that uses one or more postmodern features to invite readers to participate in meaning-making.

Postmodern techniques include metafiction, fragmentation, pastiche, intertextuality, temporal distortion, irony, magical realism, metalepsis, minimal closure/open endings, ontological uncertainty.

Your response should draw on your knowledge and understanding of the module Literary Worlds.

Text 1: Marilyn Wesley (2002) *Truth and Fiction in Tim O'Brien's "If I Die in a Combat Zone" and "The Things They Carried"* College Literature, Vol. 29, No. 2 pp. 1-18

...critics have been astounded by O'Brien's apparent newness. His narratives of war have been variously labeled as postmodern; magic realism; "faction," a combination of fact and fiction; even "fictive irrationalism." But these metafictional labels stress his stunning epistemological effects at the expense of his troubling ethical achievement. In "The Vietnam in Me," an essay published in 1994 on the twenty-fifth anniversary of his tour of duty, he emphasizes the disturbing moral legacy of the American war in Vietnam. In addition to revealing the painful symptoms of his own continuing confusion—isolation, nightmares, depression, suicidal impulses—O'Brien expresses his outrage at the massacre at My Lai by soldiers of Charlie Company on March 16, 1968, two years before he served in the same region. But he reserves his severest condemnation for the moral abdication of the US in reaction to such incidents.

...It is the absolute necessity of moral evaluation that is the central issue of *The Things They Carried*. The moral certainty that assigns absolute righteousness to "us" and complete culpability to "them" the object of the war narrative Scarry describes is precisely what O'Brien's strategic sabotage of textual certainty in *The Things They Carried* is meant to forestall. For it is only through the unflinching willingness to evade the consoling simplicity built into the formulaic war narrative process that genuine responsibility can be attempted.

... Vietnam, mediated by the visual narrative of TV news, as Beidler notes despairingly, was received by its combatants in the narrative formulas of television melodrama: "cartoons, commercials, cowboys, comedians and caped crusaders . . . child-world dreams of aggression and escape mixed up with moralistic fantasies ..." (1982, 11). This mode of reception conforms to postmodernism, the representational practice, which, according to Peter Brooker's provisional definition, "splices high with low culture," "raids and parodies past art," "questions absolutes" and "swamps reality in a culture of recycled images" (1992, 3). The spirit of popularized representation Beidler deplores is actually the basis for the productive postmodern treatments of the Vietnam War by O'Brien.

Text 2: Extract from Tim O'Brien (2000) *The Things They Carried* pp59-62.

In many cases a true war story cannot be believed. If you believe it, be skeptical. It's a question of credibility. Often the crazy stuff is true and the normal stuff isn't, because the normal stuff is necessary to make you believe the truly incredible craziness.

...Again there was some silence as Mitchell Sanders looked out on the river. The dark was coming on hard now, and off to the west I could see the mountains rising in silhouette, all the mysteries and unknowns.

"This next part," Sanders said quietly, "you won't believe."

"Probably not," I said.

"You won't. And you know why?" He gave me a long, tired smile.

"Because it happened. Because every word is absolutely dead-on true."

Sanders made a sound in his throat, like a sigh, as if to say he didn't care if I believed him or not. But he did care. He wanted me to feel the truth, to believe by the raw force of feeling. He seemed sad, in a way.

"These six guys," he said, "they're pretty fried out by now, and one night they start hearing voices. Like at a cocktail party. That's what it sounds like, this big swank gook cocktail party somewhere out there in the fog. Music and chitchat and stuff. It's crazy, I know, but they hear the champagne corks. They hear the actual martini glasses. Real hoity-toity, all very civilized, except this isn't civilization. This is Nam.

... "The guys can't cope. They lose it. They get on the radio and report enemy movement—a whole army, they say—and they order up the firepower. They get arty and gunships. They call in air strikes. And I'll tell you, they fuckin' crash that cocktail party. All night long, they just smoke those mountains. They make jungle juice. They blow away trees and glee clubs and whatever else there is to blow away. Scorch time. They walk napalm up and down the ridges. They bring in the Cobras and F-4s, they use Willie Peter and HE and incendiaries. It's all fire. They make those mountains burn.

"Around dawn things finally get quiet. Like you never even heard quiet before. One of those real thick, real misty days—just clouds and fog, they're off in this special zone—and the mountains are absolutely dead-flat silent. Like Brigadoon—pure vapor, you know? Everything's all sucked up inside the fog. Not a single sound, except they still hear it.

...And then again, in the morning, Sanders came up to me. The platoon was preparing to move out, checking weapons, going through all the rituals that preceded a day's march. Already the lead squad had crossed the river and was filing off toward the west.

"I got a confession to make," Sanders said. "Last night, man, I had to make up a few things."

"I know that."

"The glee club. There wasn't any glee club."

"Right."

"No opera."

"Forget it, I understand."

"Yeah, but listen, it's still true. Those six guys, they heard wicked sound out there. They heard sound you just plain won't believe."

Sanders pulled on his rucksack, closed his eyes for a moment, and let out a short, throat-clearing sigh. I knew what was coming.

"All right," I said, "what's the moral?"

"Forget it."

"No, go ahead."

For a long while he was quiet, looking away, and the silence kept stretching out until it was almost embarrassing. Then he shrugged and gave me a stare that lasted all day.

"Hear that quiet, man?" he said. "That quiet—just listen. There's your moral."

In a true war story, if there's a moral at all, it's like the thread that makes the cloth. You can't tease it out. You can't extract the meaning without unraveling the deeper meaning. And in the end, really, there's nothing much to say about a true war story, except maybe "Oh."

True war stories do not generalize. They do not indulge in abstraction or analysis.

For example: War is hell. As a moral declaration the old truism seems perfectly true, and yet because it abstracts, because it generalizes, I can't believe it with my stomach. Nothing turns inside.

It comes down to gut instinct. A true war story, if truly told, makes the stomach believe.

End of Question 1

Section II — Electives

25 marks

Attempt ONE question from Questions 2 (a) – 2 (e)

Allow about 1 hour for this section

Your answer will be assessed on how well you:

- demonstrate an understanding of the ideas and values of Literary Worlds and how they are shaped and reflected in texts
 - craft a sustained composition appropriate to the question, demonstrating control of the use of language
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Question 2 (a) — Elective 1: Literary Homelands (25 marks)

“There’s nothing sweeter than a man’s own country, his own parents, even if he lives in a rich house, far away in a foreign land.”

Homer, *The Odyssey*

Evaluate this statement in relation to your study of TWO prescribed texts and at least ONE related text of your own choosing.

Elective 1: Literary Homelands

The prescribed texts are:

- Prose Fiction – Aravind Adiga, *The White Tiger*
– E M Forster, *A Passage to India*
– Colm Tóibín, *Brooklyn*
- Poetry – Eileen Chong, *Burning Rice*
The prescribed poems are:
 - *Burning Rice*
 - *Mid-autumn Mooncakes*
 - *My Hakka Grandmother*
 - *Shophouse, Victoria Street*
 - *Chinese Ginseng*
 - *Winter Meeting*
 - *Singapore*
- Drama – Andrew Bovell, *The Secret River* [by Kate Grenville – An adaptation for the stage by Andrew Bovell]
- Film – Sarah Gavron, *Brick Lane*

OR

Question 2 (b) — Elective 2: Worlds of Upheaval (25 marks)

“When the structures of society are crumbling, the strong must create new values.”
Frederich Nietzsche

Evaluate how the texts you have studied represent how crisis drives collective transformation in light of the statement above.

In your response, make close reference to Samuel Beckett’s play *Waiting for Godot*, ONE other prescribed text and at least ONE related text of your own choosing.

Elective 2: Worlds of Upheaval

The prescribed texts are:

- Prose Fiction – Elizabeth Gaskell, *North and South*
– Mary Shelley, *Frankenstein*
– Madeleine Thien, *Do Not Say We Have Nothing*
- Poetry – Seamus Heaney, *Opened Ground: Poems 1966–1996*
The prescribed poems are:
 - *Digging*
 - *The Strand at Lough Beg*
 - *Casualty*
 - *Funeral Rites*
 - *Whatever You Say Say Nothing*
 - *Triptych*
- Drama – Samuel Beckett, *Waiting for Godot*
- Film – Fritz Lang, *Metropolis*

OR

Question 2 (c) — Elective 3: Reimagined Worlds (25 marks)

“Who looks outside, dreams; who looks inside, awakes.”

Carl Jung

Evaluate this statement in relation to your study of TWO prescribed texts and at least ONE related text of your own choosing.

Elective 3: Reimagined Worlds

The prescribed texts are:

- Prose Fiction – Italo Calvino, *If on a Winter's Night a Traveller*
 - Ursula Le Guin, *The Left Hand of Darkness*
 - Jonathan Swift, *Gulliver's Travels*

- Poetry – Samuel Taylor Coleridge, *Samuel Taylor Coleridge: The Complete Poems*

The prescribed poems are:

 - *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner* (1834)
 - *The Eolian Harp*
 - *Kubla Khan*
 - *Christabel*

– Tracy K Smith, *Life on Mars*

The prescribed poems are:

 - *My God, It's Full of Stars*
 - *Sci-Fi*
 - *Don't You Wonder, Sometimes?*
 - *The Universe: Original Motion Picture Soundtrack*
 - *The Universe as Primal Scream*

- Film – Guillermo Del Toro, *Pan's Labyrinth*

OR

Question 2 (d) — Elective 4: Literary Mindscapes (25 marks)

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“The mind is its own place, and in itself / Can make a Heaven of Hell, a Hell of Heaven.”

John Milton *Paradise Lost*

Evaluate this statement in relation to your study of TWO prescribed texts and at least ONE related text of your own choosing.

Elective 4: Literary Mindscapes

The prescribed texts are:

- Prose Fiction – William Faulkner, *As I Lay Dying*
 - Gail Jones, *Sixty Lights*
 - Katherine Mansfield, *The Collected Stories*
 - Prelude
 - Je ne Parle pas Français
 - Bliss
 - Psychology
 - The Daughters of the Late Colonel
- Poetry – Emily Dickinson, *The Complete Poems*
 - The prescribed poems are:
 - I felt a Funeral, in my Brain
 - This is my letter to the World
 - I died for Beauty – but was scarce
 - I had been hungry, all the Years
 - Because I could not stop for Death
 - My Life had stood – a Loaded Gun
 - A word dropped careless on a Page
- Drama – William Shakespeare, *Hamlet*
- Film – Sofia Coppola, *Lost in Translation*

OR

Question 2 (e) — Elective 5: Intersecting Worlds (25 marks)

“The meeting of two personalities is like the meeting of two chemical substances: if there is any reaction, both are transformed.”

Carl Jung

Evaluate this statement in relation to your study of TWO prescribed texts and at least ONE related text of your own choosing.

Elective 5: Intersecting Worlds

The prescribed texts are:

- Prose Fiction – Melissa Harrison, *Clay*
 - Alex Miller, *Journey to the Stone Country*
 - Annie Proulx, *The Shipping News*
 - Tim Winton, *Island Home*
- Poetry – William Wordsworth, *William Wordsworth: The Major Works*

The prescribed poems are:

- Lines written a few miles above Tintern Abbey
 - Three years she grew in sun and shower
 - My heart leaps up when I behold
 - Resolution and Independence
 - The world is too much with us
 - Ode (‘There was a time’)
 - The Solitary Reaper
 - The Prelude (1805) – Book One, lines 1– 67, 271– 441
- Film – Daniel Nettheim, *The Hunter*

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