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General Certificate of Education
Advanced Subsidiary Level and Advanced Level

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ENGLISH LANGUAGE

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Paper 1 Passages for Comment

May/June 2010

2 hours

Additional Materials: Answer Booklet/Paper

READ THESE INSTRUCTIONS FIRST

If you have been given an Answer Booklet, follow the instructions on the front cover of the Booklet.

Write your Centre number, candidate number and name on all the work you hand in.

Write in dark blue or black pen.

Do not use staples, paper clips, highlighters, glue or correction fluid.

Answer **two** questions.

You are reminded of the need for good English and clear presentation in your answers.

At the end of the examination, fasten all your work securely together.

The number of marks is given in brackets [] at the end of each question or part question.



This document consists of **7** printed pages and **1** blank page.



Answer two questions.

- 1 The following passage describes the writer's experience on an island off the coast of Australia.
- (a) Comment on the style and language of the passage. [15]
- (b) On his return home, Craig (the writer's friend) writes an article for a travel magazine. He offers a much more positive view than his friend of some aspects of his visit to the island. Write the opening to Craig's article (between 120-150 words). Base your answer closely on the material of the original extract. [10]

It is eight-thirty at night and we have finally arrived slap bang in the middle of a wild south-easterly squall, five hours north of Brisbane, Queensland, on the northern edge of Fraser Island. The maps call it Waddy Point, but I think *badlands* is more fitting. The ocean is a wasteland. The hundred miles of beach we have just banged our way up is a lunar landscape, and the coarse dune forest around us is a deafening wall of white-static noise. 5

The ferocious downpour does not let up as we struggle to shape the tarpaulin into a crude umbrella over the banksias*. We string the hammocks between the beach buggy's roll bar and the trees using twenty feet of rope tied with truck driver hitches, and yanked until the beds are as tight as guitar strings. By the time we have finished, we are drenched, as ravenous as bush pigs, and hover like solemn, dishevelled ghosts aimless as to what to do next. The buggy looks as though it has been looted by madmen. 10

Exhausted, we squelch into our slings as the rain clatters on the tarpaulin like a million shot nails, and occasionally flushes soaking waterfalls around our heads. 15

I fell into a doze, amazed that I actually felt sleepy, and wondered what would become of us tomorrow, in this place at the edge of the world. The winds that hung from our hammocks slammed through the ancient forest like a horde of spoilt children. The tarpaulin flapped as frantic as a beast trying to fly – but I was too tired to care, and slowly the rampage around me found a rhythm, and I drifted into gentle and rocking hands. 20

I woke on the coldness of pre-dawn to an odd greyness that had been cast down, as if from another world. The ocean shivered like no-man's land, cruel and unforgiving, and the magnitude of this island left me feeling somewhat frail and destitute. I glanced around the campsite, as if in a dreamland, and wondered what the hell I had let myself in for. The scrub dune the camp is burrowed into is a bunker of perfect lawn beneath a brittle skylight of banksias. The worn tarpaulin wobbled with lakes. My mate Craig stirred and smiled up from his cocoon, and I set to task for a heart-starter of coffee using every trick in the book to light a wet fire. I finally resorted to melting my eyebrows with a bucketful of petrol and a tossed match. 25 30

Shirtless, and in our damp and smelly jeans (and me reeking of scorched hair), we wandered like street kids onto the rim of the dunes. We squatted in the wet sand and drank from our hot metal mugs, and smoked, and watched the world become. The fumes from our fire were a paler blue-black trail in the morning's watercolors. It was like sitting on the edge of a prehistoric rawness. There was to be no going back today. The storms of the previous night had reduced the southern beach into a swamp. 35

At that time of day and staring into the surf it was easy to imagine the sight of a huge grey dorsal fin cruising through the shoreline gutter. This was big shark country and it would not be the first time that I had seen a fin glide effortlessly in the ocean rip, faster than any racehorse. Then, under a blanket of foam, it would be gone. I finished my smoke and contemplated the significance of the word *foodchain*. 40

"Tiger sharks cruise here," Craig whispers.

"Tiger shark?" I reply flatly. Craig giggles.

"Wild, isn't it?" he says.

"Frightening," I correct him again. He looks at me, laughs, and then stares back out to sea and says quietly, "You'll be right, though you could probably fill a football field with the number of four-wheel drives that are buried here." He sipped more coffee and after a while said, "Let's go fishing."

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I mumbled sourly, wondering what was on the box back home, and about the state of my lawns. I lit another smoke, thinking that I had heard it all before and not wanting to be here. An hour later, while we were scraping a panful of burnt bacon onto our blistered fried eggs and sandy-grit rolls, we watched as the first whales of the day blew geysers of steam within a hundred yards of shore. The day ablaze under a sapphire blue-fire sky, and utterly cloudless. The late October heat climbed into the high twenties. The energy-sapping humidity made me feel like I was staggering around in a sauna, and it was barely eight o'clock in the morning.

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**banksias*: evergreen bushes

- 2 The following passage is taken from a novel set at the start of the twentieth century. It describes how a group of immigrants search for work in the USA.
- (a) Comment on the style and language of the passage.
- (b) Write the opening (between 120-150 words) of another descriptive piece about a visitor's experience of arriving in a new city. Base your answer closely on the style and language of the original extract. [10]

It was in the stockyards* that Jonas's friend had gotten rich, and so to Chicago the party was bound. They knew that one word, Chicago, and that was all they needed to know, at least, until they reached the city. Then, tumbled out of the cars without ceremony, they were no better off than before; they stood staring down the vista of Dearborn Street, with its big black buildings towering in the distance, unable to realize that they had arrived, and why, when they said "Chicago," people no longer pointed in some direction, but instead looked perplexed, or laughed, or went on without paying any attention. They were pitiable in their helplessness; above all things they stood in deadly terror of any sort of person in official uniform, and so whenever they saw a policeman they would cross the street and hurry by. For the whole of the first day they wandered about in the midst of deafening confusion, utterly lost; and it was only at night that, cowering in the doorway of a house, they were finally discovered and taken by a policeman to the station. In the morning an interpreter was found, and they were taken and put upon a car, and taught a new word – "stockyards". Their delight at discovering that they were to get out of this adventure without losing another share of their possessions it would not be possible to describe.

They sat and stared out of the window. They were on a street which seemed to run on forever, mile after mile – thirty-four of them, if they had known it – and each side of it one uninterrupted row of wretched little two-story frame buildings. Down every side street they could see, it was the same – never a hill and never a hollow, but always the same endless vista of ugly and dirty little wooden buildings. Here and there would be a bridge crossing a filthy creek, with hard-baked mud shores and dingy sheds and docks along it; here and there would be a railroad crossing, with a tangle of switches, and locomotives puffing, and rattling freight cars filing by; here and there would be a great factory, a dingy building with innumerable windows in it, and immense volumes of smoke pouring from the chimneys, darkening the air above and making filthy the earth beneath. But after each of these interruptions, the desolate procession would begin again – the procession of dreary little buildings.

A full hour before the party reached the city they had begun to note the perplexing changes in the atmosphere. It grew darker all the time, and upon the earth the grass seemed to grow less green. Every minute, as the train sped on, the colors of things became dingier; the fields were grown parched and yellow, the landscape hideous and bare. And along with the thickening smoke they began to notice another circumstance, a strange, pungent odor. They were not sure that it was unpleasant, this odor; some might have called it sickening, but their taste in odors was not developed, and they were only sure that it was curious. Now, sitting in the trolley car, they realized that they were on their way to the home of it – that they had traveled all the way from Lithuania to it. It was now no longer something far off and faint, that you caught in whiffs; you could literally taste it, as well as smell it – you could take hold of it, almost, and examine it at your leisure. They were divided in their opinions about it. It was an elemental odor, raw and crude; it was rich, almost rancid, sensual, and strong. There were some who drank it in as if it were an intoxicant; there were others who put their handkerchiefs to their faces. The new emigrants were still tasting it, lost in wonder, when suddenly the car came to a

They were left standing upon the corner, staring; down a side street there were two rows of brick houses, and between them a vista: half a dozen chimneys, tall as the tallest of buildings, touching the very sky – and leaping from them half a dozen columns of smoke, thick, oily, and black as night. It might have come from the center of the world, this smoke, where the fires of the ages still smolder. It came as if self-impelled, driving all before it, a perpetual explosion. It was inexhaustible; one stared, waiting to see it stop, but still the great streams rolled out. They spread in vast clouds overhead, writhing, curling; then, uniting in one giant river, they streamed away down the sky, stretching a black pall as far as the eye could reach.

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**stockyards*: yards where livestock are kept before being sold, slaughtered, or shipped on

3 The following speech was delivered by Thabo Mbeki (later to become President of South Africa) in 1996.

- (a) Comment on the style and language of the passage.
- (b) Write the opening (between 120-150 words) of a speech in which a public figure (real or imaginary) from a different country describes her or his sense of pride and identity. Base your answer closely on the style and language of the original extract. [10]

So, let me begin.

I am an African.

I owe my being to the hills and the valleys, the mountains and the glades, the rivers, the deserts, the trees, the flowers, the seas and the ever-changing seasons that define the face of our native land. 5

My body has frozen in our frosts and in our latter day snows. It has thawed in the warmth of our sunshine and melted in the heat of the midday sun. The crack and the rumble of the summer thunders, lashed by startling lightening, have been a cause both of trembling and of hope.

The fragrances of nature have been as pleasant to us as the sight of the wild blooms to the citizens of the veld.* 10

The dramatic shapes of the Drakensberg, the soil-coloured waters of the Lekoa, iGqili noThukela, and the sands of the Kgalagadi, have all been panels of the set on the natural stage on which we act out the foolish deeds of the theatre of our day.

At times, and in fear, I have wondered whether I should concede equal citizenship of our country to the leopard and the lion, the elephant and the springbok, the hyena, the black mamba and the pestilential mosquito. 15

A human presence among all these, a feature on the face of our native land thus defined, I know that none dare challenge me when I say I am an African!

I owe my being to the Khoi and the San whose desolate souls haunt the great expanses of the beautiful Cape – they who fell victim to the most merciless genocide our native land has ever seen, they who were the first to lose their lives in the struggle to defend our freedom and independence and they who, as a people, perished in the result. 20

Today, as a country, we keep an audible silence about these ancestors of the generations that live, fearful to admit the horror of a former deed, seeking to obliterate from our memories a cruel occurrence which, in its remembering, should teach us not and never to be inhuman again. 25

I am formed of the migrants who left Europe to find a new home on our native land. Whatever their own actions, they remain still, part of me. 30

In my veins courses the blood of the Malay slaves who came from the East. Their proud dignity informs my bearing, their culture a part of my essence. The stripes they bore on their bodies from the lash of the slave master are a reminder embossed on my consciousness of what should not be done.

I am the grandchild of the warrior men and women that Hintsa and Sekhukhune led, the patriots that Cetshwayo and Mphephu took to battle, the soldiers Moshoeshoe and Ngungunyane taught never to dishonour the cause of freedom. 35

My mind and my knowledge of myself is formed by the victories that are the jewels in our African crown, the victories we earned from Isandhlwana to Khartoum, as Ethiopians and as the Ashanti of Ghana, as the Berbers of the desert. 40

I am the grandchild who lays fresh flowers on the Boer graves at St Helena and the Bahamas, who sees in the mind's eye and suffers the suffering of a simple peasant folk, death, concentration camps, destroyed homesteads, a dream in ruins.

I am the child of Nongqause. I am he who made it possible to trade in the western
markets in diamonds, in gold, in the same food for which my stomach yearns.

I come of those who were transported from India and China, whose being
resided in the fact, solely, that they were able to provide physical labour, who taught
me that we could both be at home and be foreign, who taught me that human
existence itself demanded that freedom was a necessary condition for that human
existence.

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Being part of all these people, and in the knowledge that none dare contest that
assertion, I shall claim that – I am an African!

**veld*: open grassland

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