



HIGHER SCHOOL CERTIFICATE EXAMINATION

**1996**

**ENGLISH**

**2 UNIT GENERAL**

**PAPER 1**

**USES OF ENGLISH AND  
TOPIC AREAS**

*Time allowed—Two hours  
(Plus 10 minutes' reading time)*

**SECTION I—READING TASK**

**QUESTION 1.** Use a *separate* Writing Booklet. (20 marks)

**DIRECTIONS TO CANDIDATES**

- Attempt ALL questions.

<b>Section I</b>	<b>Reading Task</b>	Question 1
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<b>Section II</b>	<b>Writing Task</b>	Question 2
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<b>Section III</b>	<b>Topic Areas</b>	Question 3
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- All questions are of equal value.
- Allow about 40 minutes for each question.
- Answer Questions 1 and 3 in *separate* Writing Booklets.
- You may ask for extra Writing Booklets if you need them.
- Answer Question 2 in the Question 2 Answer Booklet provided.

Allow about 40 minutes for this question.

Read the following passage, then answer the questions on page 3.

### PAST THE GARDEN GATE

By six years old I'd picked up a handful of stunts—bawling out for milk and porridge, recognising animals and visitors, responding to my parents with coyness, indifference, enthusiasm, whatever. Cause and effect were tumbling into a pattern. One thing puzzled me though. Mum and Dad and the few people who came to the house were all white. I knew no other children. I was certainly growing, but I stayed black. Would I fade, or what?

School had been mentioned off and on for maybe a year or so. It would be like this: every day I would get up early, just like Dad, and leave the house, a thing I'd never done, and Mum would take me to a castle full of kids, and someone would stand up in front of us and tell us how to live and what to do, and what had happened in the world so far, and how to read stories by ourselves, and draw even better than I could already, and count past fifty, and catch a ball. Also how to sing, if I was good. It sounded like a bargain to me. All this was now payable, the day had come.

Dad had shambled off to work with his kitbag full of tools and sandwiches, the dog had settled down again and Mum was stuffing apples and things into my new case. I had sharp crayons and hardly any patience. The chain came off the wooden gate. This on its own would have justified the circle on the calendar. Up till now the world beyond our hedge had been no more real than stuff in picture books. Then came the bombshell. I'd known there'd be a million brats in the street, kids in the same boat as me. But fancy dress hadn't been mentioned. Some had orange hair and spots like Dad, and there was yellow hair, and even the black-haired ones had white faces. They all had white skin. All sorts of bizarre combinations, but they all had white skin.

'You didn't tell me *this*, Mum!'

'What, dear?'

I was in no mood to be raw prawned.

'Why didn't you doll me up like them?'

'Don't be silly. Come on.'

I'd woken up to things by now of course. There was no grease paint, no powder. This crowd was white and I was the only black kid in the world. Imagine Mum and Dad keeping it under their hats so long, like it was a detail or something. I couldn't believe it. Tonight I'd run question time, but right now it was teacher's turn. We'd all been given bits of cardboard with pins through them. The teacher circled the room printing names on the cards and sticking them to our clothes. There were lots of Johns and Julies and Kevins but I was the only Wanda. Plus I'd written it myself, like Mum had shown me. Everyone laughed except the teacher. She seemed pleased.

We were allowed to draw for a while, then a rough-looking big kid delivered a crate of milk which we all had to help scoff, unless we had a note from home. Then there was more drawing until lunchtime.

## QUESTION 1. (Continued)

The afternoon was crammed with numbers and building blocks. By the time Mum came to get me the others weren't staring quite so much. I guess nothing's funny over and over again.

Nothing much was said on the way home. Mum seemed a bit tense, but I wasn't feeling helpful. I'd wait till Dad got back, and corner them together. The dog kicked up as usual when the gate squeaked. Mum went inside to shell the peas. I mucked around behind the shed disturbing spiders and stuff. All sorts of theories occurred to me. What if I stayed black for ever? It seemed possible, even likely. Maybe I wouldn't ever grow up. What then? Could I stay here with Mum? And what about school? Clearly I'd be taken there every day. What for? Boys went to school until they turned into blokes, like Dad. Girls turned into their mums in the end, but would I do that? And if not? My education had begun but there were even more questions than I'd had the day before. Hard ones too.

Dad was making cubes and pyramids out of his mashed potato. He knew it wasn't an ordinary day, but he wouldn't break the silence, I could tell. Same with Mum—apart from saying grace, nothing. They didn't even ask about school. I knew guilt when I saw it close up.

'No-one else is black, Mum.'

Dad jumped up straight away. For months he'd been meaning to oil that gate.

'Mum?' I'd never seen her this pale.

'Go into your room dear, I'll be with you directly.' She meant after the dishes.

'Tell me Mum.' She started clearing the table. Pretty slowly it seemed. Anyway, it got done. She took off her apron and sat down with me. I didn't push any more, I knew she was trapped.

WANDA KOOLMATHRIE, *My Own Sweet Time*  
Magabala Books 1994

**Marks**

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|-----|--|----------|
| (a) | 'All this was now payable, the day had come.' (lines 11–12)  | <b>3</b> |
|     | Explain in your own words what is happening on this day.   |          |
| (b) | In what ways does the writing convey the child's point of view in this passage?                                      | <b>5</b> |
| (c) | How does the writer show us Wanda's different moods in the passage?  | <b>6</b> |
| (d) | 'My education had begun but there were even more questions than I'd had the day before. Hard ones too.' (lines 47–8) | <b>6</b> |

What do you think Wanda has learned after her first day at school?

## SECTION II—WRITING TASK

### QUESTION 2. (20 marks)

Answer the question in the Question 2 Answer Booklet provided.

Allow about 40 minutes for this question.

Imagine this.

Students have been training for the athletics carnival for at least a term. The school dag,\* it turns out, is really good at long distance running. When the race is run, the dag is way ahead of the rest of the runners, but just before crossing the finish line he/she stops, turns around, and walks back along the track.

In about 300 words, explain the circumstances that might have led up to this refusal to win. Write from the point of view of anyone who might have been there at the time.

\**dag*                      A dag is a dag is a dag. A nerd, a nigel, a dork.  
                               You wouldn't want to know a dag.  
                               A dag has no idea.

*dag definition*        A person who does not belong to the main group because of difference in attitude, behaviour, personality . . .

### SECTION III—TOPIC AREAS

**QUESTION 3.** Use a *separate* Writing Booklet. (20 marks)

Allow about 40 minutes for this question.

The Topic Areas for 1996 are (a) Aboriginal Experience and (b) Crossing Boundaries.

*EITHER*

**(a) Aboriginal Experience**

‘Being Aboriginal means you never let go of who you are and where you come from.’

In what ways do the text and supplementary material you have studied demonstrate this to be true of Aboriginal experience?

In your answer, refer to a variety of supplementary materials.

The texts set for study are:

Jack Davis, Stephen Muecke, Mudrooroo Narogin, Adam Shoemaker (eds.), *Paperbark: A Collection of Black Australian Writings*.  
 Ruby Langford, *Don't Take Your Love to Town*.  
 Sally Morgan, *My Place*.  
 Mudrooroo Narogin (Colin Johnson), *Wild Cat Falling*.

*OR*

**(b) Crossing Boundaries**

‘When you cross boundaries, you have to be prepared to let go of who you were and where you were. And yet your old self goes along with you.’

In what ways do the text and supplementary material you have studied demonstrate this?

In your answer, refer to a variety of supplementary materials.

The texts set for study are:

Nadine Gordimer, *July's People*.  
 Melina Marchetta, *Looking for Alibrandi*.  
 Beryl Markham, *West with the Night*.  
 Willy Russell, *Educating Rita*.

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