

HSC English Standard — Paper 1: Texts and Human Experiences

Practice Paper 1

Instructions

- This is a full HSC English Standard **Paper 1 — Texts and Human Experiences**. It is worth **40 marks** and, in the real exam, runs for **1 hour and 30 minutes** plus 10 minutes reading time.
- **Section I (20 marks)** contains several short unseen texts followed by short-answer questions. Answer using specific evidence and named language techniques. Marks for each question are shown in brackets.
- **Section II (20 marks)** is one extended response (essay) on a prescribed text for the Common Module.
- In the model answers, Section I responses quote the unseen texts exactly. Section II **names a real NESA Standard prescribed text** and analyses it with verified quotations; each of the 10 papers uses a **different** set text. If you study a different text, apply the same question framing and marking approach to your own text.
- Every model answer names the **syllabus outcome** it addresses and ends with a **Marker's logic** note explaining why the response would score well.

Section I

20 marks · Attempt Questions 1–4 · Read the texts on the previous pages and answer the questions below.

Question 1 (3 marks)

Explain how Text 1 represents the way memory connects people across generations.

Refer to: Text 1

Question 2 (4 marks)

Analyse how the poet uses language and form in Text 2 to convey the fear of forgetting.

Refer to: Text 2

Question 3 (6 marks)

Analyse how Text 3 represents the idea that the past cannot truly be recovered. In your response, refer to specific language features.

Refer to: Text 3

Question 4 (7 marks)

Compare how Text 1 and Text 3 represent the relationship between memory and human connection.

Refer to: Texts 1 and 3

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Section II

20 marks · Attempt Question 5 · Allow about 45 minutes for this section.

Question 5 (20 marks)

NINETEEN EIGHTY-FOUR by George Orwell. "The most confronting human experiences are those in which an individual is stripped of the freedom to think for themselves." To what extent does this view reflect your understanding of the text? In your response, make detailed reference to the text.

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Section I — Model Responses

Question 1 — (3 marks)

Outcome — EN12-7: explains and evaluates the diverse ways texts can represent personal and public worlds

Text 1 shows memory as something inherited through the body rather than the mind. The grandmother “kept the past in her hands,” and when the speaker rolls the dough, “my hands, moving without me, still know the shape of her hands.”

The personification of the hands as knowing, and the metaphor of remembering as a physical action, show that the grandmother's experience is passed on to the speaker even after she has died — “her childhood became mine.”

KEY TAKEAWAY Identifies memory as intergenerational and embodied (not just recalled); uses two pieces of specific evidence and names the techniques (personification, metaphor); links technique to the idea of connection — the 3-mark band wants technique + effect + idea.

Question 2 — (4 marks)

Outcome — EN12-3: analyses and uses language forms, features and structures of texts and justifies their appropriateness for purpose, audience and context

The poem makes forgetting tangible through the simile comparing a fading photograph to how “a name / goes soft when no one says it.” Forgetting is gradual and physical — “a slow smoke / of silver fading” — the sibilance slowing the line to imitate the slow loss.

Form reinforces meaning: the enjambment across “a name / goes soft” drops the reader over the line break, enacting the slippage. The final antithesis between the “blurred face” and the “clean white nothing of these walls” shows the speaker preferring an imperfect memory to none at all.

KEY TAKEAWAY Analyses BOTH language and form (the question demands both); names techniques precisely: simile, sibilance, enjambment, antithesis; connects each technique to the specific idea of the fear of forgetting.

Question 3 — (6 marks)

Outcome — EN12-7: explains and evaluates the diverse ways texts can represent personal and public worlds

Text 3 argues that what we lose is not places but former versions of ourselves. The writer opens by challenging a cliché — “they tell you that you cannot go back, and it is true, but not in the way they mean” — immediately signalling a more complex understanding of memory.

Concrete detail grounds the loss: the street is “shorter than I remembered, the fence repainted, a stranger's car in the drive.” The accumulation of small changes shows time moving on without the writer. Crucially, “what was gone was not the place but the person who had stood there.”

The extended metaphor of memory as “a country that keeps its shape only as long as we agree to remember it together” reframes memory as collective and fragile — dependent on others, and therefore always at risk of being lost.

KEY TAKEAWAY Sustains analysis across the whole text (a 6-marker wants development, not one point); uses at least three techniques: challenged cliché, accumulation of detail, extended metaphor; reaches an insight — that the true loss is of a former self — rather than merely paraphrasing.

Question 4 — (7 marks)

Outcome — EN12-1: responds to and composes increasingly complex texts for understanding, interpretation, analysis, imaginative expression and pleasure