

MATRICULATION AND SECONDARY EDUCATION CERTIFICATE EXAMINATIONS BOARD
UNIVERSITY OF MALTA, MSIDA
MATRICULATION EXAMINATION
INTERMEDIATE LEVEL
SEPTEMBER 2016

SUBJECT:	ENGLISH
PAPER:	ORAL
TIME:	approx. 10 minutes

CANDIDATE'S PAPER

PART 1 – Passage for Reading (5 marks)

Laurence Kemball-Cook seems like the kind of young man any mother would want her daughter to bring home. He has a neat, healthy, clean-cut appearance and a polite, even charming manner.

Yet this 30-year-old engineer, inventor, and entrepreneur is by his own admission an obsessive workaholic. “Some people would probably say that I’m a perfectionist, to a point that can be quite frustrating,” he says.

He’s also the creator of a paving tile that turns the force of people’s footsteps into clean, renewable energy. And Laurence wants to use it to change the world.

The idea first came to him while he was studying industrial design and technology at University. As part of his course, he was sent to work with an energy company.

“They said, ‘Laurence, can you design a street light that’s powered by solar or by wind?’ ” he recalls. “But when the sun’s not shining there’s no power and when the wind’s not blowing there’s no power. So I tried for a year and I failed. I was really upset. Then one day I was walking through Victoria Station in London and I thought about all the people there. I’d read that 38,000 people an hour walked through the station. What if we could harness that energy as a power source?”

Laurence admits, “The idea of generating energy from footsteps isn’t new and other people have tried it but the power is so low that you can never do anything meaningful with that energy.”

Laurence took a completely different route. The weight of a footstep on his tile makes a horizontal flywheel inside it rotate. Every pedestrian that passes over a tile generates around seven watts in energy. At the 2013 Paris Marathon, where the tiles were installed at the finish as part of a pop-up promotion, the runners crossed 176 tiles, enough to recharge 1,880 mobile phones or power an electric car for 15 miles.

But his ambitions are as much moral as commercial. Once the tiles are manufactured, the system requires no fossil fuels, generates no CO₂ and produces no pollutants, which is why he says, “Some people might define their aims as wealth or success, but for me it’s just, let’s get it out there and do good.”

Adapted from *Reader's Digest* UK Edition.

PART 2 – Discussion on a Topic (Long Turn) (5 marks)

Choose ONE topic from the list below and speak about it with the examiner for an extended period of time.

- a) Relaxing by the sea
- b) Your morning commute
- c) Your favourite social media
- d) What things do you find particularly typical of Malta?
- e) Living in the moment
- f) What's your idea of the work/life balance?

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On March 28th, 2014, a colleague published a somewhat shaky video of me talking, rather nervously, about how I came to learn each of the nine languages I speak fluently. I don't think any of us expected the response to be as overwhelming as it has been. The video has now been viewed over 10 million times in its various formats. That's a truly humbling thought.

Language learning has had a huge impact on my life. Since that video, I undertook the challenge to learn Turkish in one week with my twin brother, and am working ever more closely with universities and other educational institutions to investigate how digital platforms can enhance the learning process.

It probably won't come as a surprise to you that I'm something of a language geek. I love the academic, nerdy side of languages. For me, using a new grammar structure successfully is tantamount to beating my brother at Monopoly. Don't worry, though — I realize this isn't wholly normal, and I can empathize with people for whom language learning conjures images of dreary language classes stifled by dry grammar and vocabulary lists. I too was at school in the nineties.

However, there are so many good reasons for learning languages. So, the realization that you can get so much more out of vacations has been a huge motivator for me ever since. Yes, you're less likely to miss the ferry or end up paying through the nose for souvenirs, but the most striking difference you'll recognize is that you feel comfortable in new environments.

Speaking more than one language can also improve your job prospects even if you don't work in the areas of teaching and training, translating and interpreting, or proofreading and editing. For every highly specialized language expert, there are hundreds of non-experts using a second language on a daily basis at work.

Even if you now have your dream job in a foreign country surrounded by palm trees and happiness, it doesn't necessarily mean you want to stop learning. Even people who have accomplished their goals and feel confident in their jobs feel the need to keep challenging their minds. Language learning is a common way to do this.

Adapted from *www.babbel.com*

PART 2 – Discussion on a Topic (Long Turn) (5 marks)

Choose ONE topic from the list below and speak about it with the examiner for an extended period of time.

- a) Would you opt for a bike as your main transport?
- b) Wearable technology
- c) Desk job or outdoor job?
- d) Your favourite film this year
- e) Moving out
- f) Long distance travel

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On July 10, 1980, I was aboard a navy destroyer, in the Philippines. The day was gray and dreary, with threatening clouds all around us. The wind was blowing at 20 knots with about ten-foot swells and a typhoon 200 miles east of us was heading our way. All of us were looking forward to arriving in the Philippines as quickly as possible, but the lookout spotted an object adrift about ten miles to the east.

The signalman looked at it through the large telescopic binoculars we called “the big eyes” and announced that it was a boat crowded with people. We all knew right then that they were refugees adrift in an area dangerous with reefs and shoals.

The ship came alive as everyone prepared for a possible rescue. I left the bridge, before grabbing a sandwich on the way to the mess deck, where I would help out. Along the way, I noticed that most of the crew members were complaining about assisting the boat people.

We got as close to the boat as we safely could to avoid the reefs before setting out the whaleboat with a small crew to check it out further. The situation was much worse than we'd expected. The whaleboat crew reported back that an old 25-foot wooden junk boat was jam-packed with about 50 men, women, and children. They were very weak and trying to keep the slowly sinking junk afloat.

We finally got alongside the junk, and the first thing I noticed was the strange sound of babies crying. Then came the sound of the men and women excitedly talking with pain in their voices.

The women sat holding their children and caring for the sick, while the men remained standing and stoic. But the faces of all the boat people reflected great fatigue. During those hours after the harrowing rescue, I noticed a big change in the attitude of the crew. Everyone was happy about the successful rescue effort and we discovered the obvious, that boat people were, of course, just as human as any of us.

Adapted from *Reader's Digest*

PART 2 – Discussion on a Topic (Long Turn) (5 marks)

Choose ONE topic from the list below and speak about it with the examiner for an extended period of time.

- a) Partying in summer
- b) Would you live on a boat?
- c) Travelling on a budget
- d) Internet-free days or online always?
- e) The sort of work I would never do
- f) Fear

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SUBJECT:	ENGLISH
DATE:	30th August 2016
TIME:	9:00 a.m. to 12:05 p.m.

ANSWER BOTH SECTIONS

You are advised to spend about 1 hour on each task.

SECTION A – LANGUAGE (60 marks)

1. ESSAY (30 marks)

Write approximately 500 words on **one** of the following:

- a) Technology has no place in the classroom. Discuss and give your opinion.
- b) Write a letter to an elderly relative who now lives in an old people's home, and who has not met you in the last few years. Share information about your life that you think will interest them, and try to find out more about their life at the moment.
- c) "The last time I caught a bus..." Use this sentence to continue with a description or a short story. This should be the first sentence in your essay.
- d) Laughter.
- e) You have spent the summer working in a fast food outlet, and your manager has asked you to write a report about customer behaviour. She has asked you to focus your report on the kind of shifts you worked, and which shifts were the busiest, what kind of food customers ordered at different times, and any other information that would help her organise her staff and the kitchens to work more efficiently. Write this report.
- f) My idea of a perfect dwelling place.

2. COMPREHENSION AND SUMMARY (30 marks)

Read the passage below and answer the questions that follow.

During the 1920s, the apocalyptic death tolls of the First World War and the Spanish Flu pandemic caused a widespread revival of Spiritualism – the controversial practice of purported psychic communication with the spirits of the dead.

5 Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, creator of the famously rational Sherlock Holmes, embraced Spiritualism and became its most strident and effective propagandist. But his influence was countered by the famed magician and escape artist Harry Houdini, who put together a team dedicated to **crusading** against the "ghost racketeers" that posed as spirit mediums to con money out of vulnerable, grieving people.

10 When Rose Mackenberg first encountered the master magician, she had already been working as a private detective for several years. Their initial meeting came about when she consulted with Houdini regarding one of her own investigations, which involved a case of "spirit fraud".

15 Impressed, Houdini invited Rose to join the team of salaried undercover investigators that he referred to as "my own secret service". This **clandestine** team travelled ahead of Houdini's touring schedule, visiting towns and cities where he was due to perform and infiltrating the local Spiritualist "scene" to gather evidence of fraud. These details were passed on to Houdini, who would then expose the fraudsters during his shows.

20 Inevitably, this tactic made Houdini and Rose many bitter enemies, angering both true believers who felt that they were attacking their religion and ghost racketeers who knew that they were threatening their livelihood. Sometimes the hostilities between pro- and anti-Spiritualists erupted into riots, and more than once Rose and other members of the "secret service" were caught up in the fray.

25 Partly as a safety precaution, Rose also became something of a mistress of disguise. Her first stop in a new town or city was to visit a department store and take detailed notes on the clothing worn by various local "types" of women, so she could plausibly pass muster as a rustic schoolteacher, a small-town matron or a smartly-garbed widow.

30 Her training with Houdini **encompassed** all the tricks of the fake séance trade. Like her employer and mentor, Rose Mackenberg professed some sympathy for those mediums who genuinely believed in their own powers and who practised Spiritualism sincerely, devoid of conscious charlatanism, but like Houdini, she was contemptuous towards ghost racketeers who cynically took advantage of **vulnerable** people. At the time of Harry Houdini's untimely death in October of 1926, Rose Mackenberg had become one of Houdini's most experienced investigators, with a wealth of experience in busting all manner of clairvoyants, mediums and purveyors of "love and luck potions".

35 In 1932, Julien Proskauer, another investigator dedicated to exposing the ghost racket, estimated the number of people "suckered" by hoax séances, numerological and fortune telling sessions at 30 million per year, and their losses at \$125 million. Rose Mackenberg persisted in her unusual vocation throughout the Great Depression, investigating on behalf of insurance companies, law firms, Better Business Bureaus, newspapers and similar institutions. During mid-1945 she served as Chicago Tribune reporter E.W. Williamson's guide to the Spiritualist underworld of the Windy City; Williamson then revealed the mediums' **predatory** con-artistry through a series of articles. She also began performing lectures and demonstrations for service organizations, during which trumpets floated, tables tipped, glowing "spirit hands" materialized and Mackenberg generally did what she could to expose the tricks of the still-burgeoning spirit racket.

45 Interviewed in 1951, she estimated that there were then some 150,000 mediums active in the United States, and also noted that she expected that number to rise as long as the Korean War continued.

Despite frequent public exposés of prominent practitioners by reporters and skeptical investigators, as of 2013 the modern American "psychic services industry" was estimated to be worth slightly over two billion dollars.

50 Significantly, though, very few modern mediums attempt the sort of "physical manifestations", such as ectoplasm and ghostly materializations, because they were courageously and convincingly **debunked** as phantasmagoric tricks by Rose Mackenberg and her peers during the first half of the 20th century.

Adapted from an article by Tony Wolf

- a) Give the meaning of the following words as they appear in context: crusading (line 7); clandestine (line 13); encompassed (line 26); vulnerable (line 30); predatory (line 40); debunked (line 52). (6 marks)
- b) Describe the attitudes to Spiritualism held by Houdini and Conan Doyle. (3 marks)
- c) Why, do you think, did Mackenberg feel that wars render Spiritualism more popular? (3 marks)
- d) What led Mackenberg to become a 'mistress of disguise' (line 22)? (3 marks)
- e) Why do contemporary Spiritualists avoid 'physical manifestations' (lines 50-51) during séances? (3 marks)
- f) Use between 80-100 words to describe how Mackenberg was a woman who successfully dedicated her life to exposing fraudsters. (12 marks)

SECTION B – LITERATURE (30 marks)

Choose ONE of the texts below and answer ONE of the three questions set on the text. All answers must be supported by close reference to the text. Essays should be no less than 450 words.

Text 1: Graham Greene *The Heart of the Matter*

a. Love is a complex theme in *The Heart of the Matter*. Discuss.

Or

b. Both Yusef and Louise contribute in different ways to Scobie's downward spiral. Discuss.

Or

c. Write an essay on the importance of the following passage to the novel *The Heart of the Matter*.

These topics are being offered to you as guidelines:

- the relation of the passage to the plot or action of the novel;
- what the passage reveals about any of the characters in the novel;
- the relation of the passage to the central themes of the novel.

'Well, Ali,' he said, with the phantom of a smile which was all he could raise at this séance, 'Missus back. We're all together again.' Her rosary lay on the dressing table, and he thought of the broken one in his pocket. He had always meant to get it mended: now it hardly seemed worth the trouble.

'Darling,' Louise said, 'I've finished up here. Ali can do the rest. There are so many things I want to speak to you about....' She followed him downstairs and said at once, 'I must get the curtains washed.'

'They don't show the dirt.'

'Poor dear, you wouldn't notice, but I've been away.' She said, 'I really want a bigger bookcase now. I've brought a lot of books back with me.'

'You haven't told me yet what made you...'

'Darling, you'd laugh at me. It was so silly. But suddenly I saw what a fool I'd been to worry like that about the Commissionership. I'll tell you one day when I don't mind your laughing.' She put her hand out and tentatively touched his arm. 'You're really glad...?'

'So glad,' he said.

'Do you know one of the things that worried me? I was afraid you wouldn't be much of a Catholic without me around, keeping you up to things, poor dear.'

'I don't suppose I have been.'

'Have you missed Mass often?'

He said with forced jocularly, 'I've hardly been at all.'

'Oh, Ticki.' She pulled herself quickly up and said, 'Henry, darling, you'll think I'm very sentimental, but tomorrow's Sunday and I want us to go to communion together. A sign that we've started again – in the right way.' It was extraordinary the points in a situation one missed – this he had not considered. He said, 'Of course,' but his brain momentarily refused to work.

'You'll have to go to confession this afternoon.'

'I haven't done anything very terrible.'

'Missing Mass on Sunday's a mortal sin, just as much as adultery.'

'Adultery's more fun,' he said with attempted lightness.

'It's time I came back.'

Text 2: Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie *Purple Hibiscus*

- a. Discuss the various aspects of religion as they are presented in the novel *Purple Hibiscus*.

Or

- b. The characters of Ifeoma, Father Amadi, and Papa Nnukwu give Kambili and Jaja alternative examples of life and living and may have helped the two children to break away from their situation. Discuss the characteristics of at least two of these characters in the novel *Purple Hibiscus* to show how they helped Kambili and Jaja.

Or

- c. Write an essay on the importance of the following passage to the novel *Purple Hibiscus*. These topics are being offered to you as guidelines:
- the relation of the passage to the plot or action of the novel;
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 - the relation of the passage to the central themes of the novel.

I meant to say I am sorry Papa broke your figurines, but the words that came out were, "I'm sorry your figurines broke, Mama."

She nodded quickly, then shook her head to show that the figurines did not matter. They did, though. Years ago, before I understood, I used to wonder why she polished them each time I heard the sounds from their room, like something being banged against the door. Her rubber slippers never made a sound on the stairs, but I knew she went downstairs when I heard the dining room door open. I would go down to see her standing by the étagère with a kitchen towel soaked in soapy water. She spent at least a quarter of an hour on each ballet-dancing figurine. There were never tears on her face. The last time, only two weeks ago, when her swollen eye was still the black-purple colour of an overripe avocado, she had rearranged them after she polished them.

"I will plait your hair after lunch," she said, turning to leave.

"Yes, Mama."

I followed her downstairs. She limped slightly, as though one leg were shorter than the other, a gait that made her seem even smaller than she was.

Text 3: Robert Bolt *A Man for All Seasons*

- a) Giving examples with reference to a number of characters in *A Man for All Seasons*, discuss the different attitudes to the law in this play.

Or

- b) Discuss the theme of corruption in *A Man for all Seasons*.

Or

- c) Write an essay on the importance of the following passage to the play *A Man for All Seasons*. These topics are being offered to you as guidelines:
- the relation of the passage to the plot or action of the play;
 - what the passage reveals about any of the characters in the play;
 - the relation of the passage to the central themes of the play.

Margaret In any state that was half good, you would be raised up high, not here, for what you've done already.

More All right.

Margaret It's not your fault the State's three-quarters bad.

More No.

Margaret Then if you elect to suffer for it, you elect yourself a hero.

More That's very neat. But look now ... If we lived in a State where virtue was profitable, common sense would make us good, and greed would make us saintly. And we'd live like animals or angels in the happy land that *needs* no heroes. But since in fact we see that avarice, anger, envy, pride, sloth, lust and stupidity commonly profit far beyond humility, chastity, fortitude, justice and thought, and have to choose, to be human at all ... why then perhaps we *must* stand fast a little – even at the risk of being heroes.

Margaret (*emotional*) But in reason! Haven't you done as much as God can reasonably *want*?

More Well ... finally ... it isn't a matter of reason; finally it's a matter of love.

Text 4: Ian McEwan *Atonement*

a. Ian McEwan's *Atonement* is a novel about different perceptions and misjudgments. Discuss.

Or

b. Social class distinctions are at the heart of the relationships among characters in Ian McEwan's *Atonement*. Discuss.

Or

- c. Write an essay on the importance of the following passage to the novel *Atonement*. These topics are being offered to you as guidelines:
- the relation of the passage to the plot or action of the novel;
 - what the passage reveals about any of the characters in the novel;
 - the relation of the passage to the central themes of the novel.

Even without their attention and praise and obvious pleasure, Briony could not have been held back from her writing. In any case, she was discovering, as had many writers before her, that not all recognition is helpful. Cecilia's enthusiasm, for example, seemed a little overstated, tainted with condescension perhaps, and intrusive too; her big sister wanted each bound story catalogued and placed on the library shelves, between Rabindranath Tagore and Quintus Tertullian. If this was supposed to be a joke, Briony ignored it. She was on course now, and had found satisfaction on other levels; writing stories not only involved secrecy, it also gave her all the pleasures of miniaturisation. A world could be made in five pages, and one that was more pleasing than a model farm. The childhood of a spoiled prince could be framed within half a page, a moonlit dash through sleepy villages was one rhythmically emphatic sentence, falling in love could be achieved in a single word – a *glance*. The pages of a recently finished story seemed to vibrate in her hand with all the life they contained. Her passion for tidiness was also satisfied, for an unruly world could be made just so. A crisis in a heroine's life could be made to coincide with hailstones, gales and thunder, whereas nuptials were generally blessed with good light and soft breezes. A love of order also shaped the principles of justice, with death and marriage the main engines of housekeeping, the former being set aside exclusively for the morally dubious, the latter a reward withheld until the final page.