

MATRICULATION AND SECONDARY EDUCATION CERTIFICATE EXAMINATIONS BOARD  
UNIVERSITY OF MALTA, MSIDA  
MATRICULATION EXAMINATION  
INTERMEDIATE LEVEL  
SEPTEMBER 2017

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<b>SUBJECT:</b>	ENGLISH
<b>PAPER:</b>	ORAL
<b>TIME:</b>	approx. 10 minutes

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**CANDIDATE'S PAPER**

**PART 1 – PASSAGE FOR READING**

For three days in March 2016, 10 London pigeons became famous. Seeing pigeons take to the sky from Primrose Hill in north London was not unusual in itself. But these pigeons were wearing backpacks. And the backpacks were monitoring air pollution. Once in the air, the backpacks sent live air-quality updates via tweets to the smartphones of the Londoners below. In almost all cases, the readings were not good. London's air pollution problem has been getting worse for years, and it often rises to more than three times the European Union's legal limit.

The pigeons and their backpacks were just the latest in a series of increasingly desperate attempts to monitor and control air pollution. According to the World Health Organisation (WHO), it is the world's biggest environmental risk to health, and it continues to rise at an alarming rate. It kills over three million people every year and is especially a problem in urban areas: only one in 10 people live in a city that complies with the WHO air quality guidelines. This goes for the developed and developing world alike. Air pollution in Delhi shortens the life expectancy of its residents by 6.3 years, and one in 12 deaths in London are linked to its dirty air.

Particulate matter, the tiny particles emitted in vehicle exhaust fumes, are the biggest air-borne killer. One of the finest of these particles can penetrate lung tissue and enter the blood stream, where they damage arteries and cause cardiovascular disease. Nitrogen dioxide (NO<sub>2</sub>) is the next deadliest component: by inflaming the lungs and rendering us susceptible to infection, it leads to 23,500 deaths annually in the UK alone. And so the fight is on to eradicate air pollution in our cities.

The battle for hearts and minds – to educate urban citizens of the dangers of air pollution – remains almost as hard as the science. The hope was that the pigeon patrol would encourage Londoners to be more aware of the air they were breathing. Pollution is invisible, so if we want to make it visible we have to find a way to grab people's attention, and noticing pigeons wearing back-packs will have brought the issue more to the public's attention.

*Adapted from: <http://www.bbc.com/>*

**(Total: 5 marks)**

*Please turn the page.*

**PART 2 – DISCUSSION ON A TOPIC (LONG TURN)**

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

- a) Pets are therapeutic but they need as much attention as you would give a child.
- b) Planning the next ten years of your life is nearly impossible.
- c) What strategies do people adopt in order to manage stress?
- d) Why should we learn new languages when there are automated translators?
- e) Are tablets damaging young children's speech development?
- f) Interviews are stressful but excellent opportunities both for employers and applicants.

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*This passage continues on the next page.*

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**PART 1 – PASSAGE FOR READING**

When I was a psychology student in the 1970s, there was a widespread view that the study of consciousness was a passport to irrelevance. Now many scientists grapple with it and anyone who cracks the problem can certainly expect a call from Stockholm.

Philosophers have pondered the issue for millennia and, understandably, they are not going to be shoved aside by newcomers armed with electrodes and MRI scanners. A physicist turned philosopher has been considering the evidence we use to determine whether other organisms are conscious for the last decade or so.

The physicist applies his method to animals, plants and robots. Because there is no accepted measure of consciousness, he resorts to what philosophers do best: rigorous thinking and logical argument. “Animal consciousness,” he says, “is just animal experience”. For this to be other than tautology, it must mean that consciousness equals experience equals sensation. That would imply that the simplest sensory system, capable of responding to external stimuli and modulating that response (that is, sensing and learning), is conscious.

If provable, this would indeed be a strong solution to the question of consciousness, but it is not one that the physicist adopts. Although he peppers his argument with descriptions of various neurons and brain structures, he operates with an obvious rule of thumb that is linked to apparent degrees of neuronal complexity. Thus he considers all vertebrates conscious, although one of his criteria, the existence of a certain class of pain receptor, does not fully apply to cartilaginous fish. He recognises the problem but skips away, leaving it unresolved.

Strikingly, he considers it “a great leap of faith” to think that worms, which do not have many neurons, can “genuinely feel pain”. The physicist highlights learning and behavioural plasticity by giving an example. A small dog that whines to be lifted onto an inaccessible bed has self-awareness because it knows it cannot reach its desire unaided.

*Adapted from: <https://www.newscientist.com/>*

**(Total: 5 marks)**

**PART 2 – DISCUSSION ON A TOPIC (LONG TURN)**

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

- a) Binge watching of TV series is the new addiction.
- b) Why study information that is readily available online?
- c) Pollution: a summer of BBQ ready food and disposable items
- d) The benefits of educating young citizens
- e) Motivation: the key to success
- f) Managing a healthy balance between studies and other activities

**(Total: 5 marks)**

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**PART 1 – PASSAGE FOR READING**

As a researcher on the culture and society of the inhabitants of Polynesia, I was thrilled to hear about a new Disney film being set in this context. The new Disney film *Moana* draws on elements of real-life events in the Pacific, although it is still told from a very Western perspective. People using Stone Age technology really did build voyaging canoes capable of travelling thousands of miles, then set forth against the winds and currents to find tiny dots of land in the midst of the largest ocean on Earth. And having found them, they travelled back and forth, again and again, to settle them — all this, 500 to 1,000 years ago.

Ever since Captain Cook landed in the Hawaiian Islands and realised that the inhabitants spoke a similar language to those of the South Pacific islands, scholars and others have researched and theorised about the origins and migrations of the Polynesians. But one huge mystery, sometimes called “The Long Pause”, leaves a gaping hole in the voyaging timeline.

Western Polynesia — the islands closest to Australia and New Guinea — were colonized around 3,500 years ago. But the islands of Central and Eastern Polynesia were not settled until much later. In fact, after arriving in Western Polynesia, the Polynesians took a break — for almost 2,000 years — before voyaging forth again.

Nobody knows the reason for The Long Pause, or why the Polynesians started voyaging again. Several theories have been proposed — from a favourable climate, to visible supernovas luring the stargazing islanders to travel, or even problems with the local crops being killed by disease. Enter *Moana*, set in what appears to be Samoa.

The leading character is chosen by the sea itself to return the stolen heart of Te Fiti, who turns out to be an island deity. An environmental catastrophe spreading across the island makes the mission urgent. And despite warnings from her father against anyone going beyond the protective reef, Moana steals a canoe and embarks on her quest. With the success of Moana's mission, her people start voyaging again.

*This passage continues on the next page.*

As someone who lectures on traditional oceanic navigation and migration, I can say resoundingly that it is high time the rest of the world learned this amazing story.

*Adapted from: <http://www.smithsonianmag.com/>*

**(Total: 5 marks)**

## **PART 2 – DISCUSSION ON A TOPIC (LONG TURN)**

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

- a) What is wrong with being lazy?
- b) Looking to the future is better than being trapped in the past.
- c) Food intolerance: one man's meat is another man's poison.
- d) Have we become more accepting of other people's cultures?
- e) Smartphones are both a blessing and a curse.
- f) Job shadowing should be part of a young adult's education.

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<b>SUBJECT:</b>	ENGLISH
<b>DATE:</b>	31st August 2017
<b>TIME:</b>	9:00 a.m. to 12:05 p.m.

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Answer **BOTH** sections

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

**SECTION A – LANGUAGE**

**1. ESSAY**

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

- a. Write a story entitled: ‘The dark figure in the painting’.
- b. Describe a scene from a park packed with young people celebrating an event.
- c. ‘The life of a celebrity: the grass is always greener on the other side.’ Discuss.
- d. ‘There are no boring things, only boring people.’ How far do you agree with this statement and why?
- e. Mindfulness
- f. You are responsible for securing next year’s lineup for the *Isle of MTV*. Write a report addressed to the Chair of the Organising Committee presenting an outline of the following items: target audience, total artist budget, securing the lineup, and designing promotional material.
- g. Write an email to your travel agent complaining about the tour you went on last month because the planned itinerary was disrupted.

**(Total: 30 marks)**

## 2. COMPREHENSION AND SUMMARY

Read the passage below and answer the questions that follow.

We know that Facebook keeps track of every *like*, *click* and *post* we make to its platform. If we often check in at airports, it is not surprising when we are shown airline advertisements on our devices. If we *like* a load of electronic music artists, we do not hesitate when we see a promotion for a festival where some of them are playing. We have grown **accustomed** to it, and there is some visibility about what is going on in the black box.

More insidious, though, is when Facebook is quietly surveilling our online activity to **deduce** our emotional state, and sharing that information with advertisers – particularly when dealing with teens. Such an activity was first reported by Australia where Facebook showed advertisers – in this case, one of Australia’s top banks – how it has the capacity to identify when teenagers feel “insecure”, “worthless” and “need a confidence boost”.

Jess who is 19 years old – this is not her real name – complained that Facebook is overstepping its boundary. She frequently sees links to counselling sites on her feed, and insists that Facebook should be a safe space, but it seems they are trying to invade that. Jess was concerned about the idea that Facebook was trying to categorize teens’ mental health, and concluded that Facebook seems to be trying to diagnose mental illness, which is considered outrageous. Facebook insists the information was designed to help marketers understand how people express themselves, and is not incorporated into any advertisement targeting tools. Nonetheless, the capability is certainly there.

In 2014, Facebook published a study detailing a huge psychological experiment it secretly conducted on almost 700,000 users to see how **manipulations** of the news feed altered their emotional state. The study was widely criticized as unethical, and Facebook announced a new set of guidelines for how the company would approach research in the future, including a more rigorous ethical review process. However, the study provided a window into Facebook’s ability to mine the data of its almost 2 billion users – something the company is reluctant to admit to its users but keen to highlight to advertisers.

In the wake of the US presidential election, Mark Zuckerberg, the co-founder of Facebook, dismissed the notion that fake news on Facebook influenced the outcome as a “crazy idea”. At the same time, Facebook’s advertising sales team was bragging about a targeted campaign that was able to “significantly shift voter intent and increase favourability” for one of the U.S. Senate candidates.

In February, Facebook’s data science team examined people going through breakups on Facebook. They analysed the behaviour of people in five different countries and noticed that people tend to take a little time between breaking up in the real world and changing their relationship status to “single”. This was deduced based on the language used in posts – terms like “healing”, “drowning sorrows” and “suffering” – and the 40% increase in accepting invitations from friends. For Facebook, this represented an opportunity for advertisers. In a blog post about the research, there is a subsection titled “what it means for marketers”, which says: “People who have just gone through a breakup want to invest in new experiences” (the newly single make 25% more travel-related purchases a month after the breakup) and could be targeted with “messaging that empathises”.

Facebook has denied creating tools to target depressed or **vulnerable** teens with advertisements, but there is clearly a link between understanding the emotional states of Facebook users and creating messaging that can target them, even if proxy behaviours, such as an increased interest in travel, are used.

“We know they track and target us, but we don’t know to what extent,” said Irina Raicu of the Markkula Centre for Applied Ethics. It is only when reports like this are leaked that people find out. She explains that most people do not know this level of analysis is being done on them and there is an imbalance of power coming from an imbalance of information. When users do find out, as happened with the teen research, they experience something web psychologist Nathalie Nahai refers to as “psychological reactance”: the “aversive emotional state we experience in response to perceived threats to our freedom and autonomy”. In other words: we are made to feel uneasy.

Raicu said studies showed Facebook knows people better than their own family or friends. “I find that totally dystopian. The reason your friends or parents don’t know everything about you is because they respect you and have some boundaries.” As a result, Raicu would like Facebook to be more transparent about how it processes people’s data so members of the public can debate whether they are comfortable with it.

Luke Stark, a postdoctoral fellow in Dartmouth’s sociology department, said Facebook is “constantly running behavioural experiments”. This is how rapidly evolving digital platforms make decisions about new features – they introduce small groups of users to different versions of the same feature and observe how they perform. He said that the extent of Facebook’s data collection warrants new consumer protections. Citing a 2016 study conducted at Harvard that claimed to predict depression in Instagram users from the filters and colour content of their images, Stark explained that Facebook data collection is approaching something much more **akin** to medical data or psychiatric data than advertising data.

It is a view that is echoed by the Pew Research Centre, which has surveyed Americans about their views on data and privacy. The centre’s director said that people would like the laws to be tightened up, and he adds that there is a palpable hunger among the general public for more oversight, more clarity and more availability of opportunities to amend the record.

Ben, a teacher and father of four, wanted to know what Facebook was doing with the information gathered from its users. He expresses his concern by claiming that if Facebook is using it to target vulnerable teenagers for commercial purposes, then that is simply unacceptable. Normally, there is a shared understanding and reasonable expectation among parents that Facebook is not exploiting their children.

The only saving grace is that, as far as teenagers are concerned, Facebook is rapidly declining in popularity, but where one social network goes, others will follow.

*Adapted from: ‘This oversteps a boundary’ in The Guardian*

***This component continues on the next page.***

- a. Give the meaning of the following words (in **bold**) as they appear in the context:
- (i) **accustomed** (line 4),
  - (ii) **deduce** (line 6),
  - (iii) **manipulations** (line 19),
  - (iv) **vulnerable** (line 38),
  - (v) **akin** (line 60). (5)
- b. How do we know that Facebook monitors what its users follow? (2)
- c. Why does Jess use the phrase “overstepping its boundary” (lines 11-12) when describing Facebook’s actions? (3)
- d. The author of this article highlights Facebook’s unethical approach to data collection. How does the author try to convince the reader that this accusation is true? (4)
- e. What information did Facebook collect from people who broke up a relationship, and how did Facebook use this information (use your own words)? (4)
- f. Limiting your answer to lines 42-72, use between 80 and 100 words to summarise the different reactions and concerns to the level of surveillance that Facebook conducts on its users and how, as a result, privacy is threatened. (12)

**(Total: 30 marks)**



## SECTION B – LITERATURE

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

**EITHER**

- a. Discuss the theme of failure in *The Heart of the Matter*.

**OR**

- b. ‘It was as if he had shed one responsibility only to take on another.’ Discuss Scobie’s relationship with Louise and Helen in the light of this quotation.

**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.

The police sergeant pointed to the picture rail that Butterworth had meticulously fitted – no Government contractor would have thought of it. A picture – an early native king receiving missionaries under a State umbrella – leant against the wall and a cord remained twisted over the brass picture hanger. Who would have expected the flimsy contrivance not to collapse? He can weigh very little, he thought, and he remembered a child’s bones, light and brittle as a bird’s. His feet when he hung must have been only fifteen inches from the ground.

‘Did he leave any papers?’ Scobie asked the clerk. ‘They usually do. Men who are going to die are apt to become garrulous with self-revelations.’

‘Yes, sah, in the office.’

It needed only a casual inspection to realize how badly the office had been kept. The filing cabinet was unlocked: the trays on the desk were filled by papers dusty with inattention. The native clerk had obviously followed the same ways as his chief. ‘There, sah, on the pad.’

Scobie read, in a hand-writing unformed as the face, a script-writing which hundreds of his school contemporaries must have been turning out all over the world: *Dear Dad, – Forgive all this trouble. There doesn’t seem anything else to do. It’s a pity I’m not in the army because then I might be killed. Don’t go and pay the money I owe – the fellow doesn’t deserve it. They may try and get it out of you. Otherwise I wouldn’t mention it. It’s a rotten business for you, but it can’t be helped. Your loving son.* The signature was ‘Dicky’. It was like a letter from school excusing a bad report.

He handed the letter to Father Clay. ‘You are not going to tell me there’s anything unforgivable there, Father. If you or I did it, it would be despair – I grant you anything with us. We’d be damned because we know, but he doesn’t know a thing.’

‘The Church’s teaching...’

‘Even the Church can’t teach me that God doesn’t pity the young...’ Scobie broke abruptly off.

**(Total: 30 marks)**

**Text 2: *Purple Hibiscus* Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie**

**EITHER**

- a. 'Religion plays an important role in shaping the identity of Kambili and Jaja.' Discuss.

**OR**

- b. *Purple Hibiscus* highlights the position and role of women in Nigerian society. Discuss how Ifeoma and Beatrice represent different types of women.

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

It was during family time the next day, a Saturday, that the coup happened. Papa had just checkmated Jaja when we heard the martial music on the radio, the solemn strains making us stop to listen. A general with a strong Hausa accent came on and announced that there had been a coup and that we had a new government. We would be told shortly who our new head of state was.

Papa pushed the chessboard aside and excused himself to use the phone in his study. Jaja and Mama and I waited for him, silently. I knew he was calling his editor, Ade Coker, perhaps to tell him something about covering the coup. When he came back, we drank the mango juice, which Sisi served in tall glasses, while he talked about the coup. He looked sad; his rectangular lips seemed to sag. Coups beget coups, he said, telling us about the bloody coups of the sixties, which ended up in civil war just after he left Nigeria to study in England. A coup always began a vicious cycle. Military men would always overthrow one another, because they could, because they were all power drunk.

Of course, Papa told us, the politicians were corrupt, and the *Standard* had written many stories about the cabinet ministers who stashed money in foreign bank accounts, money meant for paying teachers' salaries and building roads. But what we Nigerians needed was not soldiers ruling us, what we needed was a renewed democracy. *Renewed Democracy*. It sounded important, the way he said it, but then most of what Papa said sounded important.

**(Total: 30 marks)**

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

**EITHER**

a. Write about the importance of Christian morals and Catholic dogma in *A Man for all Seasons*.

**OR**

b. Write about the various methods employed by Cromwell in his effort to trap More.

**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.

*Enter MORE, a little sheepish. Goes to ROPER*

**MORE** (*kindly*) Roper, that was harsh: your principles are (*can't resist sending him up*) excellent – the very best quality. (*ROPER bridles. Contrite.*) No truly now, your principles are fine. (*Indicating the stairs, to all*) Look, we must make a start on all that food.

**MARGARET** Father, can't you be plain with us?

**MORE** (*looks quickly from daughter to wife. Takes ALICE's hand*) I stand on the wrong side of no statute, and no common law. (*Takes MARGARET's hand too*) I have not disobeyed my sovereign. I truly believe no man in England is safer than myself. And I want my supper. (*He starts them up the stairs and goes to ROPER*) We shall need your assistance, Will. There's an excellent Burgundy – if your principles permit.

**ROPER** They don't, sir.

**MORE** Well, have some water in it.

**ROPER** Just the water, sir.

**MORE** My poor boy.

**ALICE** (*stopping at the head of the stairs, as one who will be answered*) Why does Cromwell collect information about you?

**MORE** I'm a prominent figure. Someone somewhere's collecting information about Cromwell. Now no more shirking; we must make a start. (*Shepherding ROPER up the stairs*) There's a stuffed swan if you please. (*ALICE and MARGARET exit above*) Will, I'd trust you with my life. But not your principles. (*They mount the stairs*) You see, we speak of being anchored to our principles. But if the weather turns nasty you up with an anchor and let it down where there's less wind, and the fishing's better. And 'look' we say 'I'm anchored!' (*Laughing, inviting ROPER to laugh with him.*) 'To my principles!'

**(Total: 30 marks)**

*Please turn the page.*

**Text 4: *Atonement* Ian McEwan**

**EITHER**

a. Discuss the theme of crime and punishment in Ian McEwan's novel *Atonement*.

**OR**

b. Discuss Robbie and Cecilia's relationship in *Atonement*.

**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.

All her own. No one else could have written it. Keeping a carbon copy for herself, she wrapped her story (such an inadequate word) in brown paper, took the bus to Bloomsbury, walked to the address in Lansdowne Terrace, the office of the new magazine, *Horizon*, and delivered the package to a pleasant young woman who came to the door.

What excited her about her achievement was its design, the pure geometry and the defining uncertainty which reflected, she thought, a modern sensibility. The age of clear answers was over. So was the age of characters and plots. Despite her journal sketches, she no longer really believed in characters. They were quaint devices that belonged to the nineteenth century. The very concept of character was founded on errors that modern psychology had exposed. Plots too were like rusted machinery whose wheels would no longer turn. A modern novelist could no more write characters and plots than a modern composer could a Mozart symphony. It was thought, perception, sensations that interested her, the conscious mind as a river through time, and how to represent its onward roll, as well as all the tributaries that would swell it, and the obstacles that would divert it. If only she could reproduce the clear light of a summer's morning, the sensations of a child standing at a window, the curve and dip of a swallow's flight over a pool of water. The novel of the future would be unlike anything in the past. She had read Virginia Woolf's *The Waves* three times and thought that a great transformation was being worked in human nature itself, and that only fiction, a new kind of fiction, could capture the essence of the change. To enter a mind and show it at work, or being worked on, and to do this within a symmetrical design – this would be an artistic triumph. So thought Nurse Tallis as she lingered near the dispensary, waiting for the pharmacist to return, and gazing across the Thames, oblivious to the danger she was in, of being discovered standing on one leg by Sister Drummond.

Three months had passed, and Briony had heard nothing from *Horizon*.

**(Total: 30 marks)**