



General Certificate of Secondary Education
November 2023

Centre Number

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Candidate Number

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English Language

Unit 4

Personal or Creative Writing
and Reading Literary and
Non-fiction Texts



[GEN41]

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MONDAY 20 NOVEMBER, MORNING

TIME

1 hour 45 minutes.

INSTRUCTIONS TO CANDIDATES

Write your Centre Number and Candidate Number in the spaces provided at the top of this page.

You must complete the tasks in the spaces provided.

Do not write outside the boxed area on each page or on blank pages.

Complete in **black ink only**. Do not write with a gel pen.

Complete **four** tasks: **one** task in **Section A** and the **three** tasks in **Section B**.

If needed, you can ask for Supplementary Answer Sheets.

INFORMATION FOR CANDIDATES

The total mark for this paper is 150.

Section A (Writing) **One** task marked out of **88** marks. Spend **55** minutes on this section.

Section B (Reading) **Three** tasks marked out of **62** marks. Spend **50** minutes on this section.

This paper contains an insert for use with Task 2.

Pay attention to the suggested timings shown at the beginning of each task; these will enable you to complete all the tasks within the time limit.

Figures in brackets printed at the end of each task indicate the marks available.

Examiners can only credit what they can read. Keep your work legible.

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Section A: Personal or Creative Writing

Task 1: Spend 55 minutes on your response. **Mark allocation: 88 marks**

Up to **58 marks** are available for an **organised and engaging** piece of writing that matches **form and purpose with audience**.

Up to **30 marks** are available for the use of a **range of sentence structures** and **accuracy in spelling, punctuation and grammar**.

Complete only one task.

EITHER

- (a) **Personal writing:** Write a personal essay for the examiner describing the best weekend you have had, explaining why it was memorable.

OR

- (b) **Creative writing:** Write a story for entry in a creative writing competition. The audience is young adults. The picture below is to be the basis for your creative writing. You may provide your own title.



Source: © Getty Images





You are advised to spend:

- **15 minutes** thinking and planning your response
- **30 minutes** writing your response
- **10 minutes** checking your response

Planning space:

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Reading Non-fiction

Tasks 3 and 4 are based on two extracts from a newspaper article:

“Lord of the Pings!”

Task 3: Spend **12 minutes** on this task. Total **15 marks**

The text below is the beginning of the article.

Explain how the writer has gained and held the interest of the reader.

“Lord of the pings!”

It all started during that hateful stretch of time – the first lockdown – when negative news notifications were at an all-time high. I was swamped with infection information, online quiz requests and vomit-inducing viral memes.

I wanted an ‘off switch’ for the world. Instead, I switched off my notifications. The reasons for turning off notifications are numerous: improved focus and concentration, better sleep, and regaining control of your life.

When pals (who are still at the mercy of pings, rings and push notifications) ask me how I did it, I impart some words of wisdom. “Just check your phone for the important stuff,” I declare. My friends look horrified! Their brains going into meltdown! “Surely everything is important?” they insist.

In this era of 24-hour communication, allowing yourself to become panicked by the absence of pings is the equivalent of having a voice whispering in your ear that you are missing out.

I have enough self-doubt without my phone adding more, thanks very much.

Source: © Guardian News and Media Ltd. Adapted from
“Lord of the pings: how I turned off my phone notifications, and got my life back.” by Georgina Lawton



Task 4: Spend 12 minutes on this task. Total 15 marks

The text below is part of the same article.

Explain how the writer has developed her negative view of phone notifications.

I still remember doing an internet search on “how to read a message without people knowing”, which involved putting my phone on ‘Flight Mode’ then opening the message, to ensure the ticks did not appear. Excuse me, am I a normal functioning adult or what?

No more of this staggering hypocrisy! The notifications are off and they’re staying off.

It seems this paranoia is not limited to just me. My sister still has a disproportionate sense of duty to respond to all messages immediately. I can see the sweat form on her furrowed brow as she nervously mutters, “But they’ve seen that I’ve seen it now.”

Who cares?

I tell her to switch off ‘read receipts’ but she refuses. She simply can’t bring herself to untick that button. The temptation of the ticks is too strong. She has truly become a slave to her phone.

Can you believe that help is now available for those who suffer with notification addiction? Mark my words – fling the ping!

Source: © Guardian News and Media Ltd. Adapted from
“Lord of the pings: how I turned off my phone notifications, and got my life back.” by Georgina Lawton





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Rewarding Learning

General Certificate of Secondary Education

November 2023

English Language

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MONDAY 20 NOVEMBER, MORNING

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TEXT A

(Rainsford is being attacked on his yacht and has to swim to safety.)

Rainsford sprang up quickly to the handrail of the boat. He strained his eyes in the direction from which the shots had come, but it was like trying to see through a blanket.

Suddenly he slipped, and a hoarse cry came from his lips. The cry was cut short as the blood-warm waters of the Caribbean smothered him.

He struggled to the surface and tried to cry out, but the waves slapped his face, and the salt water made him gag. Desperately he struck out with strong strokes – but suddenly stopped.

A cool-headedness came over him; it was not the first time he had been in a tight place. He would have to swim to safety.

Ten minutes of determined effort brought another sound to his ears – the most welcome he had ever heard – the muttering and growling of the sea breaking on the shore.

He was almost on the rocks before he saw them; on a night less calm he would have been shattered against them.

With his remaining strength he dragged himself from the swirling waters. Jagged crags appeared to jut up into the darkness; he forced himself upward, hand over hand. Gasping, his hands raw, he reached the top.

All he knew was that he was safe from his enemy, the sea, and that utter weariness was on him.

Reaching the safety of the sand, he flung himself down and fell into the deepest sleep of his life.

© Adapted from © 'The Most Dangerous game' by Richard Connell
printed in the *Collier's Magazine* in 1924.

TEXT B

(Farquhar is trying to escape from soldiers who have captured him.)

He had come to the surface facing down the stream; in a moment the visible world seemed to spin. That's when he saw them! The soldiers upon the bridge... his executioners.

They were in black silhouette against the cold, grey sky. They shouted and pointed toward him. The captain ordered his men into position. Their movements were grotesque and horrible.

"Attention! . . . Ready! . . . Aim! . . . Fire!"

The man in the water saw the eyes of the men on the bridge gaze into the sights of their rifles.

Something struck the water close to his head, spattering his face with spray.

Farquhar dived – dived as deeply as he could. The water roared in his ears like the voice of Niagara Falls, yet he heard the dull thunder of the volley of shots and, rising again toward the surface, met shining bits of metal, spiralling past him. Some of them brushed his face and hands but one lodged between his collar and neck; the pain was brutal – intense.

As he rose to the surface, gasping for breath, he saw that he was much further downstream – nearer to safety.

The soldiers had almost finished reloading; the metal ramrods flashed all at once in the sunshine as they were drawn from the barrels, turned in the air, and thrust into their sockets.

The guards fired again.

Once more he dived into the safety of the dark!

© Adapted from © 'An Occurrence at Owl Creek Bridge' by Ambrose.
Published by The San Francisco Examiner, 1890