



General Certificate of Secondary Education
November 2025

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

MV18

[GEN41]

MONDAY 17 NOVEMBER, MORNING

Time

1 hour 45 minutes, plus your additional time allowance.

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 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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(Questions start overleaf)

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 speech for your classmates about your favourite television show.

Or

(b) Creative writing: Write a story for entry in a creative writing competition.

The audience is young adults. The picture opposite is to be the basis for your writing. You may provide your own title.



You are advised to spend:

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

Planning space:

Reading Non-fiction

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

“I would argue water isn’t wet”

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.

I would argue water isn’t wet

I have my fair share of flaws, just like anyone else. I admit that my insistence on the perfect temperature for coffee or my obsession with news events is annoying, but these are small-fry compared with my biggest character fault — my overwhelming desire to win every argument and be right. About everything!

I argued about what colour to paint the kitchen; I argued about what height the hedges should be; I argued about what to have for dinner. I loved to argue. Stubborn as a mule, I was always ready to pick a fight with anyone unlucky enough to strike up a conversation with me, including my children, my wife, friends and even strangers. During these debates, I could be playfully teasing or passionately opposing. But what was clear was that I was never really listening to the other person’s opinion. It didn’t count. All that mattered was that I won.

When I tried to keep my cool, I would fail. I’ve heard that old habits die hard. Well, my habit seemed immortal. Eternal.

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

The text below is from the same article.

Explain how the writer has developed his views on the positives of being more agreeable.

During a Monopoly game my granddaughter took an extra turn. When I cautioned her, she smiled, shaking her head. “Grandpa, why are you so fussy?” she asked. “It’s just a game. We’re here to have fun, aren’t we?”

Her words really hit home.

Afterwards my son made some absurd comment. Previously, I would have hurled myself headfirst into a heated debate with him. But this time, I stopped myself. As I listened to him, I developed a newfound desire to understand him. This experience brought me a joy that far outweighed the fleeting satisfaction of winning an argument.

My drive to win had been about showing I was superior. I found I no longer missed being Mr Mastermind Champion-of-the-year-every-year. By letting go, I gained more than I ever did by pushing back.

With more practice, I perfected the art of keeping quiet. I noticed the most immeasurable improvement in my overall happiness. By listening calmly and not interrupting, I had transformed into a tolerant adult, but it took a child to help me get there. After all, we’re here to have fun, aren’t we?

This is the end of the question paper

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SOURCES

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Tasks 3 and 4 . . . © Adapted from "My passion for an argument was relentless – and damaging. Then my granddaughter intervened" | Sergey Maidukov "Copyright Guardian News & Media Ltd 2025"

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Rewarding Learning

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Text A

Lonely figures lingered in the mist, watching us leave the house. The lamps marked out our journey in the early morning as the city awoke. I followed my father as we turned corner after corner, walking down cobbled street after cobbled street. The brightness of dawn filtered down in streaks of slanting light that dissolved before touching the ground. At last, my father stopped in front of a large door of carved wood, blackened by time. Before us loomed an imposing building, a palace of intrigue and shadows.

“Daniel, you mustn’t tell anyone what you’re about to see today. No one.”

A smallish man with sharp features opened the door.

“Good morning, Isaac. This is my son, Daniel,” my father announced. “He’ll be eleven soon, and one day all of this will be his. It’s time he knew this place.”

The man nodded and beckoned us in. A blue-tinted gloom obscured the twisting outline of a marble staircase. We followed Isaac along a grand corridor and arrived at a sprawling round hall where a high glass dome revealed a dancing beam of light. As I gazed around me, a labyrinth of passageways and crammed bookshelves rose like an enormous beehive, woven with tunnels, steps, platforms and bridges that formed an immense library of seemingly impossible design. I looked at my father, stunned.

He smiled at me. “Welcome to the Cemetery of Forgotten Books, Daniel.”

Text B

We rushed along the main street, bypassing the market that was usually full of people, until we reached the park in the heart of the town. The entire area was filled with light and heat. Acrid smoke stung our eyes and attacked our nostrils.

A towering inferno of books roared, shooting jets of sparks into the night sky like a demented and chaotic firework display. A crowd had gathered around the spectacle of the furnace, yet the unit of Memory Police officers lurked like shadows among the trees just beyond the town square.

“What an incredible sight,” said an old man beside us, his voice barely audible over the crackling, snarling flames.

Above the streetlights, beyond the telephone poles and higher than the rooftops, the fire was a colossal, living beast, clawing at the sky. When the wind whispered through the square, a flurry of burning pages pirouetted into the air. The ice and snow were defeated by the heat, melting into the scorched pages of the books, leaving the ground a wet marsh that clung to our shoes.

An orange glow bathed the slide, the seesaw, the park benches, and the walls of the buildings that imprisoned the square. The moon and stars had vanished, as if banished by the brilliance of the flames, leaving only the smouldering embers of books to light the sky.

SOURCES

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Text B . . . Adapted from © "The Memory Police" by Yōko Ogawa (2018) Harvill Secker