MATRIC REVISION

MATRIC REVISION 2008

education
Department:
Education
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

TOP TIPS FROM THE EXPERTS: EDITION 2 OF 13

ENGLISH HOME LANGUAGE

MEET OUR ENGLISH EXPERT

A FACE YOU CAN TRUST: Janet Unterslak is well versed in the art of English

Janet Unterslak

Teaching is my life and the learners' success makes it all worthwhile

Janet has taught English at Greenside High School in Johannesburg for the last four years, but her career as an English teacher spans a total of 30 years.

During this time she has taught in private and government schools, both urban and rural; she has worked as an ABET (Adult Basic Education and Training) instructor for organisations such as De Beers and SAFTO; she has run educator workshops for an NGO called the Secondary Schools English Redevelopment Project; she has been a TV presenter on the Learning Channel for 18 years, she has taught at Star Schools for 23 years; and she has lectured 1st-year and 4th-year Education students at Wits University for two years.

"Teaching is my life and the learners' success makes all the effort worthwhile," says Janet.

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To B or not to B – these are the questions

TEAM EFFORT: The matrics at Glen High in Pretoria puts their heads together for a group study session

There are THREE papers in total for this examination. Paper 1 (Comprehension, Language and Summary Skills) will be written on Monday November 3 (2 hours); Paper 2 (Literature) will be written on Thursday November 13 (2 hours, 30 minutes); and Paper 3 (Writing) will be written on Tuesday November 25 (2 hours, 30 minutes).

When you are revising for English Home Language, it is very important to focus on your writing skills: of the 250 marks for your final examination, a total of 125 marks are for writing: 100 of these marks come from Paper 3, and 25 marks come the literary essay you have to write for Paper 2. This is a lot of marks for writing! Learners often place all their emphasis on Paper 2 (Literature) and then on Paper 1 (Language). Do not neglect Paper 3 (Writing).

Improve your writing skills by practising every day from now until your examinations, using the following method: Familiarise yourself with all the different forms of writing you could be asked to do in your exams (see the detailed notes on Paper 3 on the right). Select a different topic every day. Start off by brainstorming and planning what you are going to say (use a mind map, spider diagram or similar). Next, write a rough draft of your work. Don't worry too much about your grammar and punctuation at this stage – rather focus on trying to create the mood and atmosphere. Now revise and polish your work, focusing on using the best words possible to express your thoughts and emotions, and making sure your language, tenses, spelling and punctuation are all 100% correct. If possible, swop your work with a friend and discuss ways in which each of you could improve your writing. Write out your final version in neat.

General note:

1. You will be given 10 minutes of reading time before you start writing any examination. Use the time well.
2. Read through the whole paper before you begin to write.
3. Do not leave blank spaces. Try every question.
4. Look carefully at the mark allocation, and make sure you answer enough for the number of marks.
5. Essays and other written pieces must be paragraphed.
6. Apart from your summary, do not count the number of words in an essay or other piece of writing. You should know how many words you get on a line and so you can judge how many lines your piece of writing should be. Spend the time PLANNING, not counting words.
7. Answer in full sentences.
8. Write the number of the question in the centre of the page.
9. Leave a line open between one answer and the next.
10. Familiarise yourself with the exemplars the Department of Education has provided as examples of what you can expect in your final examinations.
11. Mark the key words in the questions so that you know exactly what you are being asked.

PAPER 1: COMPREHENSION, SUMMARY AND LANGUAGE SKILLS (2 hours: 70 marks)

Revise the following sections well: Propaganda; Satire and Irony; Sentimentality; Sensationalism; Mood, Atmosphere and Attitude; Intention, Tone and Style; Prefixes, Suffixes and Roots; and Dictionary Work

Question 1: Comprehension

Read the text through once. Then read ALL the questions. Then read the text again. You might think that you are "wasting time" doing this, but if you start answering before you really understand both the text and the questions, then you are actually wasting time.

Question 2: Summary

A summary tests our ability to select the important details and our competence in writing good English. As far as possible, use your own words, not the words of the original selection. You may be asked to write a point form summary first. Check the wording of the question paper carefully to see if these points should be written in fragments (words and phrases) or in full sentences. Your final summary should be one paragraph. The sentences must flow well. Work on logical connectors and links between sentences. Be careful of the style in which you write: the style must be appropriate for the purpose for which the summary is written. The summary in the exam will require you to use not more than a specific number of words. The number of words used must be stated in brackets at the end – for example [98 words]. DO NOT LIE! Count every word, including words such as "a", "an" and "the", and state the number accurately. Believe it or not, examiners often count the words you have used! Include the title in your word count unless the instructions state that you should not do this.

Question 3: Visual Literacy – Advertising

Revise all the techniques of advertising, focusing on the visual as well as the verbal elements.

For this section of the examination, use print advertisements rather than TV or radio, but remember that you need to revise all advertising, in case you are asked to write the text for a print, TV or radio advert (in Paper 3). Revise the following:

Graphic elements: Pictures and/or Photos; Headlines; Fonts (sizes and styles); Spacing and Design (including the use of white space); and Logos

Language elements: Use of Punctuation; Slogans; Emotive Language; Rhetorical Techniques; Repetition; and Use of Figures of Speech

Question 4: Other types of graphic texts

Here you can expect a cartoon (either the syndicated 'funnies' or a political cartoon), a photograph, a postcard, a drawing or a graph. You need to revise all the various kinds of graphic texts with their individual techniques, including: Frames; and Speech Bubbles.

Question 5: Editing

This question tests all the knowledge you have of grammar and style. Revise the obvious aspects, including: Parts of Speech; Common Errors; Spelling; Punctuation; and Direct and Reported Speech.

PAPER 2: LITERATURE (2 hours and 30 minutes: 80 marks)

Section 1: Poetry

Unseen poetry (10 marks): These questions will either be contextual questions or mini-essay type questions, so be prepared for both.
Seen poetry (10 x 2 = 20 marks): You will be given four poems. You have to choose TWO.

Section 2: Drama (25 marks)

In this section, you will be given a choice of plays (for example, *Julius Caesar* OR *Macbeth*). Answer either the essay question OR the contextual question.

Section 3: The novel (25 marks)

In this section, you will be given a choice of novels (for example, *Maru, July's People, A Tale of Two Cities* OR *1984*). Answer either the essay question OR the contextual question – whichever you did not answer in the Drama section of the paper.

PLEASE NOTE:
In Sections 2 and 3, you need to answer a total of ONE essay question and ONE contextual question. For example, if you answer an essay question in the Drama section, then you have to answer a contextual question in the Novel section. Similarly, if you answer a contextual question in the Drama section, then you have to answer an essay question in the Novel section. In other words, you may NOT answer two essay questions or two contextual questions. If you do, the one that appears first in the exam will be marked; the other will simply be crossed out.

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PAPER 3: WRITING (2 hours and 30 minutes: 100 marks)

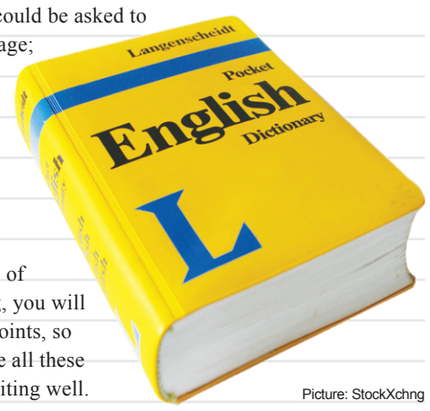
Each piece of your writing must have an introduction, a body and a conclusion. PLAN CAREFULLY and draft your work (if you are pressed for time, consider drafting only the introduction and conclusion).

Section A: Creative writing (about 400 words/4 paragraphs; 50 marks; 1¼ hours)
You must write ONE essay from a choice of about 8 topics. You may write a descriptive, narrative, reflective, argumentative, discursive, opinionative or expository essay.

Section B: Longer transactional writing (200 words; 30 marks; 45 minutes)
In all your transactional writing (i.e. when doing Sections B and C) you should focus on: The writer's point of view; Audience; Purpose; Tone and style; Format; and Context. In this section, you could be asked to write a letter (this could be a formal or an informal letter, a friendly letter, a business letter, a letter of application or a letter to the editor/press); a report (this could be a formal report or a police report, etc); a review; or the minutes of a meeting (select one only).

Section C: Shorter piece of writing (120-150 words; 20 marks; 30 minutes)
In this section, you could be asked to write a note or message; a diary entry; an advertisement (text only); a dialogue; a memorandum; or a set of instructions or directions.

If you know all the different formats of transactional writing, you will immediately score points, so make sure you revise all these different types of writing well.



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