

INTUITION EDUCATION

HSC 2026 · PREDICTED PRACTICE PAPER

2026 HSC English Extension 1

*Answers & marking notes***Paper total: 50 marks**

Sit the paper first. These are worked answers with the marking notes behind them — what earns the mark, and the traps the marking centre has flagged in past years. Where a note names a band, it describes what a top-band response does, not a guaranteed mark.

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Answers & marking notes

Marking guidance

(Outline guidance in the style of the NESA marking guidelines — criteria for the top band, with the discriminators the marking-centre feedback identifies.)

Question 1(a) — 15 marks

A response in the highest band will:

- craft a skilful, sustained narrative that constructs a coherent literary world appropriate to the question
- explore the quoted idea — 'every word arrives carrying someone else's luggage' — as a conceptual spine threaded through the piece, not cited once and abandoned
- realise the constraint structurally: the two characters' incompatible meanings organise the narrative (alternating focalisation, a contested object, a word repeated under changing pressure), rather than arriving as a closing twist
- demonstrate skilful control of the named form (narrative) and of language, voice and structure

Discriminators (from marking feedback 2022–2024): superficial stimulus engagement — a pre-prepared story with the phrase bolted on; one-dimensional voices, where the two characters do not genuinely mean differently; the divergence announced by the narrator rather than enacted in the world.

Question 1(b) — 10 marks

A response in the highest band will:

- analyse, not retell: name the choices of language, form and narrative perspective made in part (a) and explain their intended effect on the responder
- quote the candidate's own part (a) at least twice as evidence, treating the narrative as a constructed text
- explain how those choices construct the literary world and the incompatible meanings — connecting craft to the concerns of the Common Module
- use metalanguage precisely (focalisation, motif, syntax, register, structural juxtaposition)

Discriminators (from marking feedback 2024): recounting the story's events; generalised claims ('I used imagery to engage the reader') with no quotation from the candidate's own writing.

Question 2(a)–(e) — 25 marks (common criteria)

A response in the highest band will:

- present a sustained, evaluative argument in response to the statement and the question — a calibrated judgement ('to a great extent, but...'), not an implicit agreement
- synthesise TWO prescribed texts and ONE well-chosen related text into a single line of argument, rather than three sequential mini-essays
- analyse how form and context construct meaning and position the responder, distinguishing a text's themes from the values those themes serve
- draw judicious evidence from across the span of each text, not only openings and iconic moments
- integrate a related text that sits squarely within the elective's conceptual territory

Question-specific guidance:

- **2(a) Homelands:** the top band evaluates perspective and power — whose experience of home each text authorises, and how form (stage adaptation, poetic sequence, film narration) enacts or resists silencing. Character-journey recount caps in the middle bands.
- **2(b) Upheaval:** formal rupture must be treated as the argument — how the broken or innovative form itself constructs competing values — with context named precisely. The witness/activate distinction requires a judgement about what the text does to its responder, not only what it depicts.
- **2(c) Reimagined Worlds:** the invented world must be argued as a critique of the composer's own society; an inventory of imaginative features caps in the middle bands. Reward evidence beyond each text's celebrated set-pieces.
- **2(d) Mindscapes:** the top band separates composer from constructed voice and names the machinery of interiority — focalisation, stream of consciousness, lyric compression, fragmented chronology — and its effect on the responder's own sense of identity. Describing a character's psychology is not analysing its construction.
- **2(e) Intersecting Worlds:** the top band identifies competing valuations of nature (beauty, spiritual inspiration, resource, belonging) and evaluates whose voices the representation privileges, refusing the simple conservationist-versus-exploiter binary; fragmented prescriptions (poetry selections, essay collections) are handled as whole works.

Prediction provenance

Which consensus prediction each part of this paper realises. Full evidence panels:
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Paper item	Prediction	Agreement
Paper architecture (50 marks; 25 + 25; 2 hours)	topic-level consensus	0.93–0.99 · 6 (all)
Section I stimulus: writer-on-craft nonfiction extract	ee1-s1-writer-on-craft-extract	0.75 · 5 (fable, grok, opus, gpt-5.6-sol, deepseek)
Quoted phrase embedded in the task	ee1-s1-writer-on-craft-extract	0.75 · 4 (fable, opus, grok, gpt-5.6-sol)
Imaginative composing returns to Section I	ee1-s1-imaginative-composing-returns	0.61 · 6 (all)
Q1 split 15 + 10 with self-analysis part (b)	ee1-s1-split-15-10-self-reflection	0.44 · 5 (deepseek, gpt-5.6-sol, fable, opus, grok)
Incompatible-meanings constraint in 1(a)	ee1-s1-named-conceptual-constraint	0.50 · 5 (deepseek, gpt-5.6-sol, opus, fable, grok)
Evaluative directive ('evaluate the extent to which') in Q2	ee1-s2-evaluative-directive-returns	0.64 · 6 (all)
Short statement stimulus heading each Q2	topic-level consensus	~0.45–0.58 · 3 (opus, gpt-5.6-sol, fable)
Q2 as five elective questions (this paper's realisation)	watch list	~0.35 · 3 (fable, grok, opus) — <i>consensus favours one common stem (0.70, 6 models); realised as five so every elective can practise its predicted focus</i>
2(a) privileged/marginalised/recovered voices of home	ee1-s2-homelands-privileged-and-silenced-voices	0.63 · 6 (all)
2(b) formal rupture + 'activate change' clause	ee1-s2-upheaval-form-breaks-with-convention	0.64 · 6 (all)
2(c) familiar made strange to reappraise the real	ee1-s2-reimagined-familiar-made-strange	0.64 · 6 (all)
2(d) form constructs interiority	ee1-s2-mindscapes-form-constructs-interiority	0.65 · 6 (all)
2(e) competing valuations of nature	ee1-s2-intersecting-competing-valuations-of-nature	0.65 · 6 (all)
TWO prescribed + ONE related text requirement	ee1-s2-common-question-two-plus-one	0.93–0.99 · 6 (all)

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