

INTUITION EDUCATION

HSC 2026 · PREDICTED PRACTICE PAPER

2026 HSC English — Paper 1: Texts and Human Experiences

*Answers & marking notes***Paper total: 40 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 notes

Question 1 (3 marks)

Criteria	Marks
Explains effectively how the poet conveys the significance of the remembered place, supported by well-chosen textual evidence	3
Explains how the poet conveys the significance of the place, with some evidence	2
Describes an idea in the poem	1

Expect: the extended metaphor of the tree/house as a known, inhabited body ('the way you enter / a house you have lived in all your life'); tactile imagery of careful handling transferring from fruit to memory; the volta at 'The house is sold' converting nostalgia into loss; the closing paradox 'sweetness is a kind of grief / that has learnt to keep'. The trap the panel flags from 2019–2025 feedback: retelling the poem's story instead of linking a technique to the significance of place.

Question 2 (4 marks)

Criteria	Marks
Analyses skilfully how narrative voice reveals the dual experience of belonging and not belonging, with well-chosen evidence	4
Analyses how narrative voice reveals the character's experience, with evidence	3
Explains an aspect of the character's experience	2
Describes what happens in the extract	1

Expect: free indirect discourse collapsing narrator into Nadia ('And whose fault was that?'); the performance simile ('the way an actor performs a room'); the tide/shore conceit reframing choice as drift; the balanced antithesis of the close ('because it was funny, and because it wasn't'; 'belonging and not belonging, both at once'). Responses that only recount the lunch, or list techniques without linking them to the *dual* experience, stay in the lower bands (2023–2025 feedback).

Question 3 (4 marks)

Criteria	Marks
Analyses skilfully how the writer explores the stated paradox, engaging with both of its sides, with well-chosen evidence	4
Analyses how the writer explores the paradox, with evidence	3

Criteria	Marks
Explains the writer's ideas with some reference to the paradox	2
Describes the text's content	1

Expect: the paradox must be *defined* (unprecedented connection producing deeper isolation), then tracked through technique — the quantified opening ('one hundred and forty-three people in my pocket') against the silent kitchen; rhetorical question; the triadic escalation 'A message is not a conversation; a conversation is not a presence'; hearth simile; the antithesis 'never out of touch and rarely in it'. Per 2022–2023 feedback, responses that describe the writer's opinion without engaging the contradiction itself cap at 2.

Question 4 (4 marks)

Criteria	Marks
Assesses effectively, with a clear judgement, how well the writer represents the people–landscape connection, supported by well-chosen evidence	4
Makes a judgement about the representation with supporting evidence	3
Explains how the writer represents the connection	2
Describes ideas in the text	1

The verb is **assess**: a stated judgement ('effectively', 'powerfully', with a because-clause) is required, not just analysis — the failure mode NESA named in 2024 ('requirements of the key word assess') and 2025 ('presenting a judgement'). Expect: the diary/writing conceit for the flats and its inversion ('a landscape reads its people'); inherited embodied knowledge ('heels back, hurry gone') as intergenerational connection; the reversal of ownership ('You belong to them, or you sink').

Question 5 (5 marks)

Criteria	Marks
Compares skilfully how both texts represent holding on to lost places, with balanced treatment and well-chosen evidence from both	5
Compares how both texts represent the idea, with evidence from both	4
Explains how the texts represent the idea, with some comparison	3
Explains an idea in one or both texts	2
Describes one text	1

Expect comparative architecture, not two stapled answers (the weakness NESA flagged in 2019, 2020, 2022 and 2024): e.g. both texts literalise carrying a home away (the truck; 'I own nothing of it now but the knowing'), but the photograph's vectors — the woman's gaze and the road's horizontal pull towards the departing house, the letterbox as the last vertical of the cleared block — hold loss in a single suspended moment, where the poem converts loss into inherited skill and 'sweetness ... that has learnt

to keep'. Visual-grammar terms (framing, salience, vector, shadow-line towards the viewer) should meet poetic technique on equal footing.

Question 6 (20 marks)

Marking guideline summary (aligned to the standard NESA 20-mark common-module band descriptors):

Band	Descriptor
17–20	Skilfully evaluates the extent to which the statement reflects the prescribed text's representation of human experience; insightful analysis of how the gap between intention and action is constructed through form and language; a sustained, personal judgement; detailed, well-selected whole-text evidence
13–16	Effectively engages with the statement and makes a judgement of extent; sound analysis of representation with appropriate evidence
9–12	Engages with some terms of the statement; explains rather than evaluates; describes representation with some evidence
5–8	Limited engagement with the statement; recount with limited evidence
1–4	Attempts to describe the text

Marker priorities drawn from the clusters: (1) the *to what extent* judgement must be explicit and sustained — scripts that assert agreement and then describe cap in the 9–12 band (2019, 2020, 2023 feedback); (2) the response must name a **specific** inconsistency of behaviour in the prescribed text — a character or persona whose intentions and actions diverge — not restate the module rubric (2020, 2023, 2025 feedback); (3) form matters: how the text's construction (narrative voice, verse form, staging, film technique) *creates* the gap between intention and act; (4) the quoted statement must be negotiated, not topped-and-tailed (2023 feedback). The question is deliberately answerable by every prescribed text on both courses' lists — preparation should identify the studied text's sharpest contradictions in advance.

Prediction provenance

Which consensus prediction each part of this paper realises. Full evidence panels:

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Paper item	Prediction	Agreement
Q1	p1-q4-poem-opener-explain	0.68 · 9 (adv: grok, deepseek, gpt-5.6-sol, fable, gemini; std: opus, grok, gpt-5.6-sol, fable)
Q2	p1-q6-prose-fiction-voice-item	0.67 · 5 (adv: deepseek, fable; std: gpt-5.6-sol, grok, fable)
Q3	p1-q3-paradox-short-answer	0.59 · 9 (adv: fable, deepseek, gpt-5.6-sol, grok, opus, gemini; std: deepseek, fable, gemini)
Q4	p1-q5-evaluate-capstone	0.63 · 5 (adv: fable, gpt-5.6-sol, opus, deepseek, gemini; std: none — see validity note)
Q5	p1-q2-visual-comparison-returns	0.58 · 11 (all runs except adv-deepseek)
Q6	p1-q1-common-essay-paradox-strand	0.50 / 0.52 / 0.80 · 12 / 9 / 10
Section I shape (5 questions, 3/4/4/4/5)	p1-q7-single-common-essay-structure	0.80 · 10

Built by an AI panel and backtested against the hidden 2025 papers before publication — method at intuitioneducation.com.au/hsc-2026/how-we-did-it. Scored publicly in November 2026. Independent Intuition Education material from publicly available NESA documents; not affiliated with or endorsed by NESA.