

# **Study Guide**

for the

## **2022 National English Olympiad**

a joint project of the  
South African Council for English Education  
and the Grahamstown Foundation

**Compiled by**  
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**for the**  
**SOUTH AFRICAN COUNCIL FOR ENGLISH EDUCATION**

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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The 2022 English Olympiad is based upon the anthology

*A Brave New World*

compiled by Anne Peltason

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# INTRODUCTION TO THE 2022 STUDY GUIDE

In the anthology, *A Brave New World*, we have sought to set before young people preparing for the 2022 English Olympiad examination some ideas connected to the past, but focusing on a future, your future, and the part you will play in it, the visions you will share, and the paths you will choose.

The future appears to be broadly mapped out by three things: ‘big data’, endemic racism and other societal ills, and climate change. You, as the candidate, may wish to narrow your focus to one or other concept, explore it, and delight in expressing your own perspectives. The anthology should provide ample opportunities for you to explore what interests you most. You should not, however, focus too narrowly, because the Olympiad Examination will have two parts, each offering a choice of several questions, and you will be penalised if you choose to answer questions on the same material or using the same ideas in both Sections A and B.

The title of the anthology is rooted in the past. Shakespeare’s Miranda first used the expression ‘brave new world’, quite innocently and filled with hope, in *The Tempest*, while Aldous Huxley, in his *Brave New World*, uses the phrase in all its ironic glory. While the short excerpts in the anthology are from longer works, it is necessary to supply the reader with contexts that provided the ideas and theme for the 2022 English Olympiad. An understanding of context will enable you to appreciate fully the possibilities both for hope and for satire embedded in the title of the anthology.

Yuval Noah Harari in his post-Covid blog tells us, ‘Humankind is now facing a global crisis’, and what seemed like science-fiction a few short years ago is today ‘old news’. His blog, ‘The world after coronavirus’, is a free-to-read article that is well worth absorbing. The whole idea of governments abusing access to big data is a terrifying possibility.

(Big data is the kind of personal information about us that is collected, sometimes unscrupulously, by 'big tech' companies like Facebook and Amazon: information (about which sites we visit, where we go and what we buy) that may be passed on to interested parties for benign, or even sinister, reasons. Big data is so big that human beings would take hundreds of years to analyse what a computerized algorithm can do in a matter of seconds – and there you are, profiled, mapped and identified in a great big encyclopaedic record of every living human being.)

Another interesting inclusion is the novelette, *Eclipse Our Sins*, by Tlotlo Tsamaase. It is a futuristic, crudely fashioned, multi-themed and untamed story, but filled with poetry and passion.

We have not included the officially recognised address by Chief Seattle of the Squamish people to Washington, but instead the more poignant, unofficial version, 'We may be brothers after all', which, back in 1854, highlighted the impact that man had already had on the environment.

Covering the theme of endemic or systemic racism are two speeches: the inauguration address of United States President John F. Kennedy, and the 'I have a dream' speech of Dr Martin Luther King Jnr.

When reading the anthology, remember that literature is art, and that there are, therefore, no hard and fast rules that are evident in every literary creation. Nevertheless, an understanding of language and literary conventions can greatly enhance the reader's or the listener's understanding and enjoyment.

The Olympiad Team hopes that you will enjoy this year's theme and anthology.

**Anne Peltason**  
Chief Examiner

## **THE AIMS AND APPROACH OF THE OLYMPIAD**

The English Olympiad aims to enrich young people through the study of English, while at the same time encouraging learners to explore the English language and its literature beyond the scope of the school curriculum. By providing learners with an opportunity to prepare for the Olympiad through a process of self-study and self-motivation, the English Olympiad encourages learners:

- to take responsibility for their own learning;
- to be empowered through the rigours of academic writing;
- to think critically and creatively;
- to see the relevance of what they study – both to themselves and to the world around them;
- to question their assumptions and to explore alternative ways of thinking and of experiencing the world in which they live;
- to express those experiences in critically and creatively written responses to the English Olympiad examination questions; and
- to substantiate their opinions with close reference to the texts prescribed for the Olympiad.

## **DATE OF THE EXAMINATION**

The examination is due to be written on Tuesday, 8 March 2022 at your school. Should, however, there be any further changes in official term dates, the date of the Olympiad examination may have to be adjusted accordingly.

Schools may start the examination at any time between 11:00 and 14:00 on the examination day, provided candidates are allowed three hours to write (with a further 15 minutes at the beginning of the session for administration, and 15 minutes for reading time). The date of the examination is determined by the time needed to assess scripts and to process the results, so that the Top 12 Home Language (HL) and the Top 3 First Additional Language (FAL) candidates may be invited to attend the National Schools Festival in July 2022.

# RESULTS

The rank order of the Top 20 will be announced during the official English Olympiad prize-giving to be held during the National Schools Festival in July 2022. The Top 100 rank order will then be posted on the Olympiad website, and a copy will be posted to schools with their candidates' certificates during the third term of 2022.

## ASSESSMENT

### 4.1 Classification

Results will be classified as follows:

- Diamond 90 – 100%
- Gold 80 – 89%
- Silver 70 – 79%
- Bronze 60 – 69%
- Merit 50 – 59%
- Participation Under 50%
- Unclassified Examination incomplete

### 4.2 Certificate Categories

The following gives some indication of the criteria used in the assessment of examination scripts. There are, however, many other factors pertaining to the content of answers and the use of language that will be taken into account by the examiners. (See Section 4.3)

#### **Diamond:**

Diamond class certificates will be awarded to candidates who show exceptional academic skill, responding to questions with insight, maturity and imagination. Their writing is suitably formal, avoiding slang, colloquialisms, unnecessary idiomatic expressions and contractions. They set themselves apart in their economical but appropriate and effective use of an extensive vocabulary. It is evident that they have engaged with the texts thoroughly on many levels, and they are able to substantiate their arguments, quoting liberally and



correctly. Their responses to the questions in Section B show a critical and creative grasp of language and of appropriate writing conventions.

### **Gold:**

Gold certificates will be awarded to candidates who display excellent academic skill. Their writing will be suitably formal, avoiding slang, colloquialisms, idiomatic expressions and contractions. They use an excellent yet economical vocabulary. It will be evident that they have prepared thoroughly and have engaged with the text on many levels. They will be able to quote liberally, appropriately and correctly. In Section B, in addition to exceptional language use, candidates will have employed vocabulary that is appropriate to the task at hand and will have demonstrated accurate insight into the way language works.

### **Silver:**

In Section A, Silver Class candidates will be expected to write with academic skill. This means that the writing will be formal, avoiding colloquialisms (including most idiomatic expressions and contractions) and not using any slang. Their choice of words will set the candidates apart and show that they have a very good command of the English language while, at the same time, they write economically. They will also display a sense of having engaged with the text on many levels and will be able to quote appropriately and correctly. In Section B their language use will be uniformly appropriate to the task at hand and will show accurate insight into the way language works.

### **Bronze:**

Bronze certificates are awarded to competent candidates who can be justly proud of themselves. They are able to write academically and appropriately, and they rarely lapse into colloquialisms in the formal answers required for Section A. These candidates demonstrate very good vocabulary and write with verve and accuracy. They write competent P.E.E. (Point, Evidence, Explain) paragraphs and will probably go on to do exceptionally well in their chosen fields at tertiary level. In Section B their language use will be generally appropriate to the task at hand and their sentence construction will demonstrate an understanding of the way language works.

**Merit:**

These candidates show competence and have prepared thoroughly for the examination. They might slip up occasionally, allowing the odd colloquialism or slang expression into their writing. The candidates would probably do very well once they have been given the time to edit their work thoroughly. The content of the work of these candidates shows that they have engaged with the text in a real way. They might enjoy reading and know what to say, but have not yet acquired the skills to put their ideas across wholly successfully. Their writing may be a bit undisciplined at times, but it is generally sound although the odd non-sentence, cliché or slang expression may creep into their essays.

**Participation:**

These candidates have a point of view, but make few valid points in answering the questions. They rely too much on knowing (or telling) the story or text, often failing to substantiate their limited arguments with reference to the text. Their writing might lack discipline and it includes colloquial expressions and slang.

**Unclassified:**

Unclassified candidates have not completed the examination. There are likely to be few such candidates, as most learners who sign up for the Olympiad prepare well and enjoy writing the examination and expressing their opinions.

**4.3 Detailed Assessments**

The Call for Entries for the 2022 Olympiad made provision for a maximum of two candidates per school to apply for detailed written comment on their scripts. The fee for each detailed assessment was R180, over and above the normal R100 Olympiad entry fee.

These assessments will be sent to the candidates via their schools after the results have been released. **Please note that late applications for detailed assessments cannot be accepted.**

Note: Examination answer scripts are never returned to the schools.

## 4.4 Examiners' Evaluation

Candidates are assessed in accordance with the following criteria:

### Content:

Understanding	Does the candidate understand the question?
Coherence	logical structuring of answers
Relevance	how the answer relates to the question
Insight	whether the answer shows maturity and understanding of the text/s
Substantiation	whether statements and arguments are appropriately supported by textual reference
Creativity	originality and freshness of thought ('spark')
Critical thinking	whether the responses reflect the critical awareness associated with academic writing

### Language and Style:

Accuracy	grammar, punctuation, paragraphing and spelling (importantly, whether or not these detract from the answer)
Style	conciseness; appropriate register for the format of the question

### IMPORTANT TIPS FOR CANDIDATES

1. Please **READ THE QUESTIONS** very carefully to ensure that you understand them. In the past many candidates have written good essays, but have not fared well in the English Olympiad because they have not answered the actual questions.
2. Please **WRITE LEGIBLY**. Examiners cannot accurately award marks for answers that they cannot read. You will have three hours for the examination, so you will have sufficient time to write neatly.

## PRIZES AND AWARDS

Each candidate (unless 'Unclassified') will receive an English Olympiad certificate, which shows the classification of their scripts.

In 2022 the top three Home Language candidates will receive the following substantial cash prizes:

- 1st Prize: R35,000
- 2nd Prize: R30,000
- 3rd Prize: R25,000

The Top 12 Home Language exam candidates and the Top 3 First Additional Language candidates will be invited to attend the National Schools Festival in July 2022 in Makhanda/Grahamstown free of charge. (Please note that attendance at the Schools Festival will be dependent upon Covid-19 related restrictions.)

Candidates placed in the Top 10 First Additional Language examination and between 4th and 20th in the Home Language exam will receive book and/or cash prizes.

The Top Home Language Gr 9 pupil will be awarded a prize of R1000, provided a Gold Certificate or higher has been achieved.

The Top 50 Home Language candidates and the Top 10 First Additional Language candidates will be offered free tuition scholarships for their first year of any course of study at Rhodes University immediately upon successful completion of their matriculation examination, and subject to their meeting the University's entry requirements.

### TROPHIES

During the prize-giving ceremony, FLOATING TROPHIES will be presented to the top candidate in each of the HL and FAL competitions. Unfortunately the trophies are fragile, so they may not be removed from the prize-giving venue, but these two winners will receive miniature trophies that they may keep as mementos of their achievements.

# THE SYLLABUS

## The Anthology: A Brave New World

The title of the 2022 Olympiad anthology is *A Brave New World*, and its sub-title is 'The Future: Utopia or Dystopia?'

The syllabus for Home Language (HL) candidates includes all the works in the anthology.

The syllabus for First Additional Language (FAL) candidates includes all the works in the anthology EXCEPT *The Tempest*.

# THE EXAMINATION

## 7.1 Rules

On Tuesday, 8 March 2022 (the day of the exam), candidates will be required to obey the following examination rules that their invigilators will be required to enforce:

You may bring the following into the examination venue:

- pens, pencils, rulers, erasers
- your clean copy of the anthology, *A Brave New World*
- a dictionary.

Because this will be an open-book examination, You may only underline and highlight or place labels or Post It markers on the text already printed in the anthology or in your dictionary. You may not make any other notes or annotations of any kind in the anthology, or in the dictionary that you take into the exam venue. If the school cannot supply you with a dictionary, you may bring your own.

**You may not bring this Study Guide into the examination venue.**

You may not bring any other papers, documents, cell phones or digital retrieval devices into the exam venue.

## **7.2 The Examination Question Paper**

The examination will require you to answer:

- one question from Section A (60 marks)
- one question from Section B (40 marks)

See previous papers at <http://www.saenglisholympiad.org.za/> to get an idea of the kinds of questions you can expect.

### **Section A: 60 marks**

This is the literature essay section.

The recommended length of your essay will be 450 to 550 words.

Each of the questions will require an answer in the form of a formal essay with an introduction, logical argument/reasoning, and a conclusion, as well as sensible paragraphing, and substantiation (quoting) from the texts to support the ideas presented by you.

### **Section B: 40 marks**

This section requires you to compose a creative and/or transactional writing piece related to one or more texts in the anthology.

The recommended length will be 200 to 300 words.

The kinds of writing that you may be expected to present may include letters, poems, emails, dialogues, diary entries, newspaper reports and/or reviews.

# HOW TO WRITE A LITERATURE ESSAY

A literature essay is a formal piece of academic writing. To write a strong literature essay, you should consider the following:

## A. Language conventions

- Always refer to a text (for example a poem, play, short story) in the present tense. Written words can never be considered 'dead' or 'past tense' because every time one reads the words they become 'alive' and the story 'happens' at that moment.
- Do not use clichés, slang or colloquialisms. This kind of language only really belongs in dialogues or in the direct speech of characters in narratives.
- Do not use contractions (eg "can't") as they are too informal for writing of this kind.
- Avoid second person pronouns (you and your). Using them seems as though you are 'preaching' to your reader and, again, they are too informal.
- Titles of texts must be written as they appear and must be underlined, not in quotation marks (except the titles of poems, articles and speeches).
- Make sure that you spell the names of characters and authors/poets correctly.
- Make use of connectors or signposting (for example: first, furthermore, in addition, in conclusion, etc.) to add structure and flow to your essay.
- Introduce quoted words. Do not insert them randomly – even though they are relevant. Ways to introduce quotations include:

We can see this when the Savage says, '...'

This is revealed in her words, '...'

When Mary says, '...', it shows that ...

The narrator reveals that '...'

## **B. Structure**

### **Introduction:**

A basic introduction should include a restructuring of the (main) essay question, so that it reads like a statement, including the title of the text as well as the writer's full names. In essence, the introduction is a general statement of the topic.

### **Body:**

- This will consist of about three or four paragraphs. Each paragraph should contain only one main idea.
- To structure your paragraphs, you may want to use the PEE (Point, Evidence, Explanation) or MEAL (Main idea, Evidence, Analysis, Lead out/Link) methods.

Essentially, for both of these methods, this means:

Open your paragraph with your Main idea/Point, and get evidence from the text (a quotation OR a specific example).

Explaining or Analysing means that you give your insight and say why you wrote your main idea/point.

Leading out/Linking means referring to your next point.

Be careful, when leading out/linking, not to 'give away' too much of your next paragraph. Leading out/linking is not required in structuring a paragraph, and only the more experienced candidates would feel comfortable to do this.

- Use signposting/connectors (as mentioned) to help your essay to flow from one paragraph to the next.

### **Conclusion:**

- The conclusion is a basic summary of the main points of your essay.
- There should be no new information in a conclusion.



# QUALITIES OF A SHORT STORY

What is a short story?

Besides being short (a few pages long), a short story employs every word, much like a poem, to lead the reader on a journey, usually to some sort of epiphany. No self-respecting short story lacks a twist in the plot, an 'Aha!' moment, an anti-climax or a cliff-hanger ending.

Here are **the typical characteristics of a short story**:

<b>Point of view</b>	a single point of view, either autobiographical or in the third person
<b>Setting</b>	usually a single time and place
<b>Theme</b>	usually one theme
<b>Characters</b>	generally few characters, with a dynamic main character and a few 'flat' or not fully-rounded characters
<b>Structure</b>	<p>The plot is a single story line.</p> <p>The <b>exposition/introduction</b> is very short, introducing the theme and main character, and establishing the setting and the situation.</p> <p><b>An event usually starts the plot.</b></p> <p>The <b>rising action</b> is not very complicated, with a clear focus building towards the <b>climax</b>.</p> <p>The <b>falling action</b> brings the plot to an end:</p> <p>It may be very short – sometimes just a sentence – and sometimes there is no <b>dénouement</b> (tying up of loose ends) and the story usually ends on the climax, as a cliff-hanger, or a twist, or steeped in irony, with an implied meaning which readers must work out for themselves.</p>

A **Narrative Essay** is really a rudimentary and rather brief short story – a plot-driven piece of action with plenty of dialogue. It tells a story, either from a first- or a third-person point of view, and these stories are usually driven by conflict, between characters, or values, or attitudes. This is often the most satisfying type of short story as the reader feels they have been somewhere in their minds.

The **Descriptive Essay** genre differs from the Narrative Essay, not by its number of adjectives and similes, but rather by explaining that, while the narrative gives more plot, the descriptive piece zooms in on a moment, and gives so much detail that it becomes quite evocative. This type of short story may be accused of being static, in terms of the limited action, where the reader may come away feeling cheated: 'But nothing happened!' An answer to that may be, 'Ah, but that is the point – now dig for meaning!'

Then there is the **Reflective Essay**, always from the first-person point of view, where the writer can express thoughts, feelings and ideas regarding events, memories, or issues. This genre is becoming increasingly acceptable as a philosophical and insightful memoir-like short story.

A good short story has either a protagonist with issues, or two (or three) characters at odds with one another. The ending is crucial (When is it not?) as it leaves much to the reader's imagination or powers of deduction – a frustrating but seldom futile exercise.

## USEFUL TERMINOLOGY

### Utopia

Sir Thomas More (1477 – 1535) wrote *Utopia* in which he imagined a perfect world where all people lived in harmony, sharing a way of life common to all people. No one was treated differently or discriminated against because of class.

The word 'utopia' has become part of an English speaker's vocabulary to denote a perfect place/age.

## **Dystopia**

From Google Oxford Languages:

Adjective -

relating to or denoting an imagined state or society where there is great suffering or injustice.

‘the dystopian future of a society bereft of reason’

Noun -

a person who imagines or foresees a state or society where there is great suffering or injustice (typically one that is totalitarian or post-apocalyptic)

‘a lot of things those dystopians feared did not come true’

With reference to Yuval Noah Harari’s blog, it may be possible to add ‘post-Covid’ to ‘totalitarian or post-apocalyptic’. Many might argue that the pandemic *was* (let us be positive and use the past tense here) apocalyptic, and in many countries around the world people are living under totalitarian rule. We have only to consider the treatment of legitimate opposition to government by administrations like those of Russia and Myanmar.

## **Pantheism**

From Google Oxford Languages:

Noun -

1. a doctrine which identifies God with the universe, or regards the universe as a manifestation of God.
2. the worship or tolerance of many gods.

‘Pantheism, the doctrine that identifies God with the universe (sees it as a manifestation of God), or conversely, that there is no God but the combined substance, forces and laws that are manifested in the existing universe. The cognate doctrine of pantheism asserts that God includes the universe as part though not the whole of his being.’ (William L. Reese, Professor of Philosophy, State University of New York at Albany.)

## SECTION 1 – Drama

### ‘The Tempest’ by William Shakespeare

(NB - *The Tempest* is part of the syllabus for Home Language (HL) only.)

*The Tempest* is one of Shakespeare’s last plays and is part of the group of Romance plays that include *Pericles, a Prince of Tyre*, *A Winter’s Tale*, *The Tempest* and *Cymbeline*. The Romance plays form a crown to a body of work, and show the evolution of Shakespeare’s thought and philosophic genius. The Romance plays often span generations, and highlight issues like jealousy, rebellion, envy and war, all of which are resolved in the denouement of the play. The plays all have tragi-comic qualities. At the heart of *The Tempest* is forgiveness, justice and reconciliation.

For group discussion:

1. Is Miranda naïve when she observes a ‘brave new world that has such people in it’?
2. Alonso, Ferdinand’s father, feels the need to ask his own son’s forgiveness. In terms of the anthology as a whole, for what should the parents of this generation be begging forgiveness?
3. How do Prospero’s words to Alonso, ‘Let us not burden our remembrances with / A heaviness that’s gone’ suggest the need to forgive and forget if we are to create the brave new world of which Miranda speaks?

On your own:

1. Consider the hope for the future inherent in the union between the two young people, Ferdinand and Miranda, and write about your own feelings for the future. As you move towards adulthood, do you feel equally optimistic? Why?
2. Should the older generation be blamed, forgiven or praised for what has happened to the world?

## SECTION 2 – A Selection of Poetry

### **'The World is Too Much with Us' by William Wordsworth**

In this poem Wordsworth, living and writing in the 19th Century, is already very aware of the smear left upon the natural landscape by the First Industrial Revolution. By then, human urban populations were all too focused on materialism. The 'getting and spending' of life was contrary to the poet's worldview, which is unashamedly pantheistic.

For group discussion:

1. Why would Wordsworth rather be a 'Pagan'? Discuss what you know or can find out about classical Roman and Greek gods.
2. Why does the speaker say 'We have given our hearts away'? Why does he use the personal pronoun 'we'?
3. What is the 'sordid boon' that we have gained?
4. Compare Wordsworth's statement 'Little we see in Nature that is ours' with what the character in 'Eclipse Our Sins' describes. Do you think the world is moving from a time when people cared about the natural world to a time when they do not? If so, what has caused the swing?

On your own:

1. Consider some of the other pieces in the anthology and see whether you can draw any parallels to the thinking of other writers. Compile a dialogue with these writers exchanging views. You may find the exercise more exciting than you anticipated.

## **‘Composed Upon Westminster Bridge, September 3, 1802’ by William Wordsworth**

When you read the other material in the anthology you will probably be struck by the pessimistic outlook for man’s future on this planet. Here is one of three poems that compose a mood that is both grand and hopeful.

William Wordsworth was a man who loved nature above all else and spent most of his writing life in the Lake District, a very beautiful, verdant place, quite separate from the hustle and bustle of city life. Nevertheless, in this poem, Wordsworth, loving as he did the quiet places, is able to capture a sense of the beauty of the city before its inhabitants awake and start their daily business.

Wordsworth is one of the early Romantic poets who composed a manifesto or creed that summarises the spirit of Romanticism, writing in the language ‘really used by men’.

For group discussion:

1. What are Wordsworth’s feelings for the scene before him? What in particular makes him feel as he does?
2. Wordsworth does not find the urban scene at this time of the day in any way at odds with its surroundings? What evidence can you find to prove this?
3. Wordsworth found the view ‘touching in its majesty.’ Chief Seattle would not have agreed. In what ways would the two men have differed on the subject of cities? Discuss this at some length, examining Wordsworth’s obvious pride in English achievement and English culture epitomised in the resplendent ancient domes and towers of the city.
4. Since then, when we look around at our cities today, what has changed?

On your own:

1. Have you ever tried to write a poem in the style of another poet? Here is a challenging and useful task you can try. Using the same genre, structure, metre and rhyme scheme, and without trying too hard, write a Wordsworth-style sonnet on the subject of some or other aspect of nature.

This may prove excellent practice for the exam, especially when you are asked to generate your best words under some considerable pressure. Enjoy!

### **‘God’s Grandeur’ by Gerard Manley Hopkins**

While Hopkins is technically a Victorian poet, many believe his distinctive and original thought places him way ahead of his time. He was very aware of the immanence (indwelling) of God in nature and coined the term ‘inscapes’ to describe the essential attributes or essence of things. In 1873 he wrote in his diary that a beautiful ash tree had been felled in the garden and when he saw it being cut down he felt a ‘great pang and [he] wished to die and not to see the inscapes of the world destroyed anymore’.

For group discussion:

1. The octave in a sonnet often puts forward an argument or a set of questions, while the sestet might address the argument or set of questions. How does ‘God’s Grandeur’ conform to this convention?
2. The word ‘reck’ in line 4 means ‘to take heed of’. It is the opposite of ‘reckless’. Explain the meaning of the question in line 4.
3. How does Hopkins capture the sense that man has lost sight of the inscapes of nature in the second quatrain of the octave?
4. How would you describe the tone with which Hopkins ends his poem? Justify your answer.
5. Do you think Hopkins would end on this same tone in our contemporary twenty-first century? Is man taking better care of the world now?

## **‘The Horses’ by Edwin Muir**

This poem was published in 1956 in a collection of poems entitled *One Foot in Eden*. From the title of the anthology it can safely be supposed that the poem is one filled with hope and positivity. It was written and published after two world wars; after the atomic bombs were dropped on Nagasaki and Hiroshima; after the Berlin Wall had separated East from West, at the time when NATO huddled on border posts presupposing an imminent attack from the mighty Soviet Union. This was a time when people anticipated World War Three and believed it would be a nuclear war ending civilization as we know it.

The world really needed hope then, as it does today. In the poem ‘The Horses’ we are told about a terrible war that ‘put the world to sleep’. At first, when the war came to an end, people experienced a silence that completely unnerved them. When the horses came back a year after the war ended, human beings, survivors, were fearful of them, but the horses persisted in their attempts to make contact with man, and eventually people accepted the horses, once again using them to farm the lands.

If carefully read it is not a difficult poem, and the part of the poem that transcends the ordinary is the suggestion that human beings have been given a second chance. Hopefully, they will not allow anything to bring back ‘That old bad world that swallowed its children quick / At one great gulp’.

For group discussion:

1. In a group, listen to ‘Heavy Horses’ by Jethro Tull, a musical composition with wonderful lyrics that dates back to the sixties. It is not difficult to see how evocative the subject of the horse is: a noble creature, the stuff of legend, found in heraldry, and central to the subject of many iconic paintings.
2. Man’s connection with horses dates back a long time, but not everyone feels comfortable around them. Have you ever ridden a horse? How do you feel about them?



3. Why are horses not as connected to human beings as they used to be?
4. How do you feel about the plight of horses today?
5. What are your thoughts on 'the seven-day war that put the world to sleep'?
6. Do people fear the future? Why?
7. If the world were to face a sudden failure of everything technological, what would you miss the most? How would you be able to face the 'silence'?
8. Imagine if there were no news, fake or otherwise. How do you see humankind restarting life on earth?
9. Try to imagine a post-apocalyptic world. Do you think small groups of people would try to usurp control (as in the dystopian novel *The Mark* by Edyth Bülbring, studied by HL Grade 10s for literature), or would people have learned from their mistakes and attempted to restart a more democratic world?

On your own:

1. Write a poem on a theme of hope for the future/for a time beyond the immediate.
2. Why is this poem particularly inspiring? How does the poem reveal our humanity?
3. How does the poem 'The Horses' capture the central questions posed by other texts in the anthology?
4. The imagery of the world immediately after the war is captured economically and dramatically in just a few lines, but how many survivors there are is not clear. What is your impression of the remnant of human civilization of which the speaker forms a part?

## **‘A 20th Century semi-love story’ by Jordan Selous**

How does this poem fit in with the themes of this anthology?

People today have expectations for their relationships that involve constant text messages as reassurance of connectedness. It is as if happiness and affirmation rely on receiving a text, no matter what the time of day or night. There seems to be quite a lot of pressure on the recipient to reply in a witty way. This kind of relationship is built and maintained at a distance.

For group discussion:

1. Can you identify with this poem? Is it possible to feel both the joy of receiving a message from a partner, and the pressure to answer?
2. Has anyone ever questioned how unnatural a text relationship is? Is it possible to get to know someone using only a media platform?

On your own:

1. Do you think the reliance on social media for communication will increase in the next fifty years? Is the next generation in any way at risk as a result of over-exposure?

## **‘The Traveller’ by Lunga Dlovu**

Explain why you think this poem was included in the anthology.

The young person writing the poem has created a speaker who experiences the ongoing struggle of human life. It seems as though nothing ever changes. You may wish to evaluate the truth of that.

For group discussion:

1. Do things really change, or do they stay the same?
2. Is life fair? Do all people get an equal chance at success?

On your own:

1. Is the future really a ‘treacherous trail’ that must be negotiated by the weak and the strong? Which of the other texts support this world view?

## **‘The Taste of the World around me’ by Ntandokazi Ntame**

This poem has been included because the speaker addresses the depressing reality of everyday life, but ends on a hopeful note.

For group discussion:

1. Would you call this a patriotic poem? Justify your answer.
2. Are things really as bad as the speaker claims? Give a reason for your response.

On your own:

1. Do the poet’s grammar and diction (choice and use of words) enhance the poem? Discuss.
2. Are there any aspects of the poem with which you would take issue with the writer?
3. Do you believe she is justified in projecting the ideas that she does in the poem? Give a reason for your response.

## **‘On behalf of the bornfrees’ by Ngobile Leruo Mmope**

Why has this poem been included in this anthology?

Note that the speaker claims she is only 16. This means that she is very much a part of the generation that will shape the next fifty years.

For group discussion:

1. Do you agree that the speaker is ‘not telling you / How to live your lives’?
2. Which issues raised by the speaker do you agree with; and which do you disagree with?

On your own:

1. Can you find any ideas in the rest of the anthology that link with the speaker’s ideas? Look particularly at the speeches.

## SECTION 3 – A Novel

### Excerpts from *Brave New World* by Aldous Huxley

The dystopian future suggested in Huxley's novel is made even more interesting in the conversation it suggests today, and which Harari explores in his blog: that one of the outcomes of the next fifty years will be the initiation of a grassroots revolution leading to greater and greater control of the minds and hearts of the population of the world. After reading the excerpts, answer these questions posed by Huxley in his novel *Brave New World*.

For group discussion:

1. Is it right for a government to decide for its people what is good and what is bad?
2. If a drug is able to take away all suffering and pain, is it morally right to insist on administering such a drug to the entire population?
3. What is the group's view on the suggestion that loving someone/something too much brings out feelings of nobility and heroism?
4. What is the group's view on allowing the free play of natural impulses?
5. What is the group's view on what makes the world of Huxley's novel dystopian rather than utopian, judging from these excerpts?

On your own:

1. Discuss the truth of Harari's statement that what seemed like science fiction ten years ago is today old news – in relation to *Brave New World*.
2. Try to take the idea of a dystopian future a bit further. In your opinion, what would make a state a perfect place to live; a perfect place offering a happy future for all? What sacrifices would the individual perhaps have to make in order for this to be possible?

3. Under what circumstances can nobility and heroism be considered bad for society?
4. Do you uphold John's right to choose cancer, pain, and God above indifference?
5. What would be the 'divided allegiance' of which the Controller speaks?

## SECTION 4 – A Novelette

### ***Eclipse Our Sins* by Tlotlo Tsamaase**

*Eclipse Our Sins* by Tlotlo Tsamaase is a novelette published in *Clarkesworld*, Issue 159. It is set in a world in which Mother Earth seeks revenge for the sins committed against her. In this world, physical illnesses can be caused by violent thoughts and actions. The world seeks to protect itself by punishing those who pollute it with xenophobia, rape, racism, and homophobia. The story follows a protagonist struggling to survive in this fallen world, which is trying to revive itself, as she searches for a way to help her fragile and vulnerable family members. *Eclipse Our Sins* is a rich, complex and well-told story that stands as a warning of a bleak but likely future, should we choose not to heed the cries and warnings of Mother Earth.

Why was this particular story included in the anthology?

The text was chosen for its connection to the theme of this anthology. Dystopian literature is rare among our people, although allegory is not. Tsamaase is an African writer who has used both allegory and science fiction in forging her story.

You, as potential young writers, may relate positively or negatively to futuristic, science fiction or dystopian writing, but you will find threads in the story that connect with many young people's fears for the future. In her novelette Tsamaase explores a number of themes, but the prevailing idea is that one day humankind may be connected to a great big web and that our inmost thoughts will be known and judged. Tsamaase takes a step beyond the suspicion that the manipulators of big data already know our every move, to suggest that the earth itself is our judge and jury, and that every act or negative thought impales us with punishment in the form of disease. This idea links with Huxley's character John, the Savage, who chooses illness and disease above state-approved mind control.

For group discussion:

1. Are the ideas presented in the story sufficiently coherent?
2. What single theme are you able to trace throughout the story?
3. Explain why you liked or disliked the story.
4. Do you like dystopian literature? Science fiction? Give a reason for your answer.
5. Is there a valuable message in the story? What is it?

On your own:

1. Are Tsamaase's ideas similar to Huxley's or do they differ from them?
2. What are the qualities that you value in a short story?
3. Does this story make use of all or some of the qualities of a short story? Evaluate the story accordingly.

## SECTION 5 – A Blog

### **‘The world after coronavirus’ by Yuval Noah**

Why was this blog by Harari included in the anthology?

There is so much commentary in the media on these topics that it is difficult to sort fact from disinformation. It was thus necessary to include the comments and opinions of a respected source. Yuval Noah Harari is a respected university professor and a writer of considerable standing. For those who have not yet been introduced to his thinking and research, we refer you to *Sapiens*, *Homo Deus* and *21 Lessons for the 21st Century* – all remarkable books on the history of being human and the projected future of the human race. These are all worth reading when you have the time.

The reference to ‘Big Brother’ is a reference to the surveillance system set up in George Orwell’s dystopian novel *Nineteen Eighty-Four* in which the terrifying notion of a 24-hour surveillance of the individual’s every move monitored and judged by an all-powerful state is personified by a ‘benign’ Big Brother that supposedly had the individual’s best interests at heart. Even in 1948 Orwell, a British journalist, anticipated the horrors of state control.

The idea was later incorporated into a reality show of the same name in which several individuals were placed together in a house in which surveillance cameras have been installed. *Big Brother* was one of the first very popular TV reality shows because of its potential entertainment value.

A definition of big data was offered in the introduction of this anthology. To further your knowledge, we suggest that you Google ‘Red Hat’ for basic insight. ‘Data is valuable, but only if it can be protected, processed, understood and acted upon. The goal of harnessing big data is to offer real-time information that you can use to improve your business’. ([redhat.com/en/topics/](https://redhat.com/en/topics/)) The worrying information is that, in the course of normal business and the use of media platforms, dark data that should be stored confidentially is sifted and stored and can ‘yield valuable insights that you can use to



improve your business'. (Red Hat) There are data lakes, sometimes data swamps, that are repositories of information about users. The question arises: is this data protected? (The POPI Act was promulgated in South Africa quite recently and protects individuals from the unscrupulous use of personal information.)

For group discussion:

1. Do you think that the intentions of the powers collecting big data are benign or not?
2. The connotation of 'Big Brother' is of an older brother who is strong and protective. Do you think that this is true of governments that collect and store information about your movements, likes and dislikes, sites you visit and your on-line purchases? Will such authorities act only in your best interests or do they have another agenda?
3. What is Harari most concerned about?
4. Write your own blog about one of the issues, ideas or themes found in Harari's blog.

On your own:

1. Do you think the world is facing a 'global crisis'? What are the biggest threats to your own future? Write about them.
2. Why is global cooperation not possible? To what extent is Harari being idealistic?
3. What possible advantages, if any, resulting from the Covid-19 pandemic have there been for the ordinary citizen?

## SECTION 6 – Short Stories

### **‘Sugared Almonds’ by Angela Graham**

Why ‘Sugared Almonds’ has been included:

‘Sugared Almonds’ is a very well-told short story. The reason for its choice is that it echoes the pain and loss faced by many over recent years when losing a loved one prematurely to the pandemic that has swept the globe. Many of us will be able to identify with the anger and pain that Mary felt on losing her beloved Andy. As a bus driver, Andy was on the front line. Many like him, working in close contact with the public, found it impossible to remain safe and to protect themselves and their families from exposure to the coronavirus.

For group discussion:

1. Why is the story called ‘Sugared Almonds’? Is the title a good one? Explain.
2. Show how the stones on the beach are symbols of the relationship between Mary and Andy.
3. What protocols most upset Mary about Andy’s funeral?
4. Why does Mary feel that the future ‘stretches ahead as empty as the shore’? Is this a temporary effect that the death of Andy has on Mary or will she always feel this way?

On your own:

1. Discuss the resolution of the story in terms of the impact on you as the reader, and in terms of what it reveals about Mary’s character.
2. How does Mary’s reaction to the young woman out walking her dog represent a much deeper anger? Is her reaction partially fair or totally unfair, or a little of both? Explain why you have answered as you did.
3. In a well-developed answer, try to come to terms with the depth and extent of Mary’s feelings.

## **‘Humanity on the Edge’ by Rosa Kahanovitz**

It is very satisfying to be able to include the work of young writers in the anthology for the 2022 Olympiad. This story was published in *English Alive* in 2019, so the young and talented contributor may even be among the candidates sitting the English Olympiad this year.

‘Humanity on the Edge’ links very neatly with the theme of the environment, and the young writer impresses with an admirably gentle touch. She does not protest the plight of the last Knysna elephant stridently, but she makes a cogent objection.

This is a superbly well-told story, which we hope you will enjoy.

For group discussion:

1. Did this story raise any feelings of guilt or responsibility in you? Was the story relatable? Explain your responses.
2. Did you enjoy the story? Try to say why or why not.

On your own:

1. Evaluate the story on the strength of its message.
2. Discuss the effectiveness of the writer’s diction.

## SECTION 7 – Speeches

### **‘We may be brothers after all’ by Chief Seattle**

Why did we include the address ‘We may be brothers after all’ by Chief Seattle of the Squamish and Duwamish tribes?

The environment and global warming are already subjects of serious discussion throughout the world. This very beautiful plea on behalf of the environment was made more than a hundred and fifty years ago by a chief representing a Native American tribe that valued the natural environment and did not want it spoiled. This chief could see and understand the impact that indiscriminate hunting, the cutting down of trees, and building would have on the environment. Respect for the ancestors equated with respect for the land. Their ancestral fathers would not wish to see the land desecrated.

The world view of the Native American was pantheistic rather than monotheistic. This put the belief system of the Native American at odds with the European pioneers who brought with them their belief in a single God. The Europeans had come with the intention of building a future in the New World (America).

Pantheism (see note) is a belief that God is in the universe and that every leaf that buds, and every stream that flows is a manifestation of God. Pantheism is extremely tolerant of the religions of others simply because it is so all-embracing. If you have read the poetry of William Wordsworth, you will realise that pantheism is not restricted to parts of the world like the Americas and India, but can spring up in the hearts of poets anywhere.

For group discussion:

1. How fair is the contract offered to the Native American peoples by the government in Washington? Explain why Chief Seattle says that Washington is asking too much of his people.
2. What was it that the Native American appreciated about nature that the European settlers did not?

On your own:

1. What does 'living' mean to Seattle, as opposed to mere survival?
2. What has the world done to the planet that has improved the lives of people? What have we done that has spoiled things for future generations?

### **'I have a dream ...' by Martin Luther King Jnr**

This speech by Martin Luther King Jnr has become famous and is much quoted. The iconic civil rights leader gave this address on the occasion of a march in Washington, USA, in August 1963, standing before the Lincoln Memorial, facing a crowd of a quarter of a million people. The speech called for an end to racism – a direct result of the stalling of the Civil Rights' Act in Congress. The intention of the march was to make the Kennedy administration aware of the need for both freedom and jobs. President John F. Kennedy endorsed the march reluctantly because he believed that it might end in violence, and then the passing of his Civil Rights Bill in Congress would be made more difficult.

### **Inaugural address by President John F. Kennedy**

John F. Kennedy's inaugural presidential address has been included because, like all inaugural addresses, it makes promises of improved living standards and freedoms for many.

It is worth noting that the idealism inherent in the above three speeches are by men who were either assassinated or marginalised. Idealism, noble though it is, does not find favour with the machinations of policy makers.

Group activity:

Amanda Gorman, at 15, was declared National Youth Poet Laureate of the United States. She began writing and speaking in 2013 as part of the Write Girl mentorship initiative. At age 22, this accomplished young woman addressed the people of the United States at the inauguration of President Joe Biden. Find her contribution to the

programme for Biden's inauguration on *YouTube* and listen to her poem-rap-address presented with so much passion and power. Listen carefully to the words (more than once, perhaps) and enjoy!

Group discussion:

1. Discuss how hopeful and positive these speeches are, by searching for common threads.
2. Are you at all concerned or perhaps annoyed because of the absence of female voices for freedom and equality in this section? Discuss possible reasons for your view.
3. Which speech do you like most? Why?
4. What rhetorical and other persuasive techniques are employed by speechmakers?
5. What political changes to entrenched attitudes on equality can be seen in the world?
6. How do these speakers deal with issues of race? How successful have they been, looking back over the past seventy years?
7. Is it possible for a political leader to promise a change in the hearts and minds of a population group? Explain your response.

On your own:

1. Why were these speeches included? In answering, consider how promises are often made repeatedly without visible or measurable change.
2. A good orator can make people feel positive about the future in the moment, but these promises may be hollow. Do these three speeches support this statement?



# **Study Guide**

## for the 2022 English Olympiad

(Not to be taken into the examination venue.)