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English A: language and literature – Standard level – Paper 1
Anglais A : langue et littérature – Niveau moyen – Épreuve 1
Inglés A: Lengua y Literatura – Nivel Medio – Prueba 1

7 May 2026 / 7 mai 2026 / 7 de mayo de 2026

Zone A afternoon	Zone B afternoon	Zone C afternoon
Zone A après-midi	Zone B après-midi	Zone C après-midi
Zona A tarde	Zona B tarde	Zona C tarde

1 h 15 m

Instructions to students

- Do not open this examination paper until instructed to do so.
- Write a guided analysis of text 1 or text 2.
- Use the guiding question or propose an alternative technical or formal aspect of the text to focus your analysis.
- The maximum mark for this examination paper is **[20 marks]**.

Instructions destinées aux élèves

- N'ouvrez pas cette épreuve d'examen avant d'avoir reçu l'autorisation de le faire.
- Rédigez une analyse dirigée du texte 1 ou du texte 2.
- Utilisez la question d'orientation ou proposez une autre manière d'aborder le texte en choisissant un aspect technique ou formel sur lequel concentrer votre analyse.
- Le nombre maximum de points pour cette épreuve d'examen est de **[20 points]**.

Instrucciones para el alumnado

- No abra esta prueba hasta que se lo autoricen.
- Escriba un análisis guiado del texto 1 o del texto 2.
- Utilice la pregunta de orientación o proponga otro aspecto técnico o formal del texto en el que centrar su análisis.
- La puntuación máxima para esta prueba de examen es **[20 puntos]**.

Write a guided analysis of **one** of the following texts.

1. This article is from *The Walrus*, a Canadian media organization invested in informing its citizens, promoting debate on relevant issues, and supporting local writers and artists.

Can you trust your dictionary?

The *Canadian Oxford* can be a writer’s best friend—if they understand its limitations

BY SARAH SWEET

Word nerd

I WOULD NOT BE able to do my job without my trusty *Canadian Oxford Dictionary*. For years, I made do with a softcover version, but I had to give it up after my cat chewed and then swallowed the entries for *transgress* and *transgression*¹. Now the magnificent 1,815-page hardcover version sits in the corner of my desk (I just used it to confirm that *softcover* and *hardcover* don’t need hyphens). But dictionaries, even when they are thorough, helpful, and 1,815 pages in length, should be approached with caution and used with care. They can do many things, but not everything—and they’re most useful when you understand their limitations.

For a long time, I thought dictionaries were like stern and infallible schoolmasters in book form: demanding and judgmental, but fair. If someone else used a stupid and obviously made-up word, I had full confidence that I could turn to a dictionary and find incontrovertible² proof that the word was stupid and made up. If someone used a word to mean something I was pretty sure it did not mean, I knew a dictionary would tell me what the word meant, what it had always meant, and what it would continue to mean for all time.

I had, of course, gotten dictionaries entirely wrong. They are not prescriptive resources—full of rules and unbreakable dictates—but descriptive ones: they respond (if belatedly) to the ways in which people are actually using language. And people have a tendency to use language “incorrectly”. Eventually, so many people use the same word incorrectly that its new meaning is added to the dictionary.

Both *Canadian Oxford* and *Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary* indicate—without any accompanying usage note—that it's fine to use *stunk* as the past form of *stink*. Those of us who studied grammar and memorized things very carefully and hoped very much that nothing would ever change were taught that while *stunk* is the past participle, *stank* is the past form: I stink right now; I stank for much of last year; I have stunk for much of my life. But “I stunk for much of last year” is now sanctioned³ by at least some authorities. I have no interest in fighting a rearguard action⁴ in defense of *stank*, but it's worth noting that dictionaries do include entries that grammarians would take issue with. “But it's in the dictionary!” will not save you from the sticklers⁵.

A good dictionary is invaluable. Irreplaceable. The kind of thing you should keep close by and refer to frequently and protect from cats. But if your plan is to write thoughtfully and well, it shouldn't be the only book on your desk: you should invest in style guides and grammar manuals, too—and spend at least some time finding the angriest commenters on the internet.

¹ transgression: an act that goes beyond the limits of what is socially, morally or legally acceptable

² incontrovertible: not able to be argued against

³ sanctioned: given official permission or approval

⁴ rearguard action: defensive action carried out by a retreating army

⁵ sticklers: people who insist on something being done in a certain way

– How and to what effect does the writer use voice in this text?

2. The following advertisement is from the Nebraska Tourism Commission, USA.



LUCKY FOR YOU, THERE'S NOTHING TO DO HERE.

In Nebraska, we believe that only boring people get bored. So we invent our own fun. Like when we realized that a livestock tank would float, and thought, “It’s a boat.” Soon, “tanking” became the preferred method of meandering* down our slow-moving rivers. It might not be everybody’s cup of tea, but if it sounds as good to you as it did to us, go to VisitNebraska.com for a free Travel Guide. And welcome aboard.

Nebraska
HONESTLY, IT'S NOT FOR EVERYONE.

* meandering: moving in a winding, indirect path

- How do text and image work together to create a sense of interest or intrigue?
-

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References/Références/Referencias:

1. Sweet, S., 2017. Can you trust your dictionary? *The Walrus*, [online] 21 August. Available at: <https://thewalrus.ca/can-you-trust-your-dictionary/> [Accessed 5 August 2025]. Source adapted.
2. AAA Explorer, 2022. Lucky for you, there's nothing to do here. *Kansas City Public Radio*, [online] Available at: <https://www.kcur.org/2022-08-31/midwest-states-kansas-nebraska-iowa-tourism-vacation-getaway-unpretentious> [Accessed 4 August 2025]. Source adapted.