EXAM PAPER

Reading Year 10 — Practice Paper 1

PREVIEW
This file has the first 16 of the 39 questions in this paper. The rest is locked: it comes with a PrepNest plan, or with the paper itself for VCE.

Total time: 65 minutes

SECTIONS IN THIS PAPER

- What the River Kept
- The Tyranny of the Reasonable Voice
- Salvage
- The Museum of Objects Nobody Wanted
- Short texts

INSTRUCTIONS

Answer every question you can. Write your working in the space provided for long-answer questions. Marking guidance and full explanations are provided in the separate answer key.

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Read ***What the River Kept*** and answer questions 1 to 8.

WHAT THE RIVER KEPT

My grandfather worked the dredge for thirty-one years and never once, in all that time, described what he did as looking for anything.

The distinction mattered to him. Looking implied you knew what you were after. The dredge simply took what the riverbed held and laid it out on a screen, and what came up was whatever the river had been carrying for as long as there had been a river. Bicycle frames. A cash register. Four hundred and some shopping trolleys. A Roman coin, once, which turned out not to be Roman.

And, twice in thirty-one years, a person.

He told me about the first one when I was nineteen, in the flat unhurried voice he used for everything, and I understood partway through that he was not telling me a story about a body. He was telling me a story about a wallet. The man had been in the water eleven months, and in his jacket was a wallet, and in the wallet, entirely legible, was a photograph of a woman on a beach.

"Eleven months," he said. "And you could see her face."

What he wanted me to take from this was not that the river preserves things, though it does. It was something about proportion. He had spent three decades hauling up the discarded weight of a city, and the object he could still describe in detail forty years on was four inches of card.

I have thought about this more since he died than I did when he was alive, which I suspect is the general rule. The dredge is gone now; they use a suction system that does not lay anything out on a screen, and so nothing is looked at on the way past. Everything the river holds still comes up. It simply comes up unseen, and goes into a hopper, and is not the kind of thing anyone tells their grandchild about thirty years later.

1. Why does the grandfather reject the word "looking"?

A. He thought the work was too difficult to describe

B. He did not want to discuss his job

C. Looking implies knowing what you are after, and the dredge took whatever was there

D. He was not permitted to search for specific items

2. The list "Bicycle frames. A cash register. Four hundred and some shopping trolleys." is written as fragments rather than a full sentence. This has the effect of

A. conveying the sheer accumulated randomness of what came up

B. making the objects seem carefully catalogued and valued

C. suggesting the writer has forgotten most of the details

D. implying the objects were dangerous

3. Why is the detail that the Roman coin "turned out not to be Roman" included?

A. To show the grandfather was often mistaken

B. To suggest the river was older than people thought

C. To explain why the dredge was eventually replaced

D. To undercut the one glamorous item in the list and keep the tone unromantic

4. The single-sentence paragraph "And, twice in thirty-one years, a person." is set apart in order to

A. show how rarely the dredge was used

B. give the fact the weight the list denied it

C. suggest the narrator is unsure of the number

D. indicate a change of narrator

5. What does the narrator realise partway through the grandfather’s account?

A. That the story was invented

B. That the story was really about the wallet, not the body

C. That his grandfather had been frightened by the work

D. That his grandfather wanted him to take up the same work

6. "What he wanted me to take from this was... something about proportion." What does proportion mean here?

A. That the river was larger than people realised

B. That the grandfather had worked longer than most people

C. That photographs last longer than other materials

D. That thirty years of heavy objects mattered less than one small surviving thing

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7. What is the effect of the final paragraph’s description of the suction system?

A. It suggests that efficiency has removed the act of noticing

B. It celebrates a safer and more efficient method

C. It explains why the grandfather retired

D. It implies the river is now cleaner

8. Which best describes the narrator’s tone throughout?

A. Bitter and accusing

B. Nostalgic and sentimental

C. Restrained and reflective

D. Detached and uninterested

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Read ***The Tyranny of the Reasonable Voice*** and answer questions 9 to 16.

THE TYRANNY OF THE REASONABLE VOICE

There is a particular way of speaking that is very difficult to argue with, and it has almost nothing to do with being right.

It goes like this. The speaker is calm. They concede a point early, which costs them nothing and purchases a great deal. They use the passive voice for anything uncomfortable — mistakes were made, concerns have been raised — so that no one is ever the person who did it. They describe their own position as pragmatic and the other as emotional, which is a neat trick, because the more strongly you object to being called emotional, the more emotional you appear.

None of this is lying. That is what makes it worth noticing. Every individual sentence can be true while the whole performance is engineered to produce a conclusion the evidence does not support.

We are trained to read tone as evidence of character. A raised voice suggests someone losing an argument; an even one suggests someone who does not need to win it. But volume is a choice, and the person with the least at stake in a dispute will always find calm easiest. The tenant facing eviction and the company lawyer are not equally free to be measured, and treating the lawyer's composure as a sign of the better case mistakes comfort for correctness.

I am not arguing for shouting. Anger is not an argument either, and a great deal of nonsense arrives at high volume. The claim is narrower: that we routinely credit a manner as though it were a reason, and that the manner is cheapest for whoever has the most power in the room.

The test is uncomfortable but simple. Take the calm speaker's claims and write them out flatly, stripped of the concessions and the passive constructions, in the plainest language you can manage. Then do the same to the person who sounded upset. Very often the flattened versions say something quite different from what you concluded while listening — and the difference is the size of the effect the voices had on you.

9. According to the writer, what does conceding a point early achieve?

A. It shows genuine open-mindedness

B. It confuses the opposing speaker

C. It shortens the argument

D. It costs the speaker nothing and buys a great deal of credibility

10. Why does the writer describe the passive voice as useful to this kind of speaker?

A. It sounds more formal and educated

B. It removes the person who did the thing

C. It makes sentences shorter

D. It is harder to understand

11. Why does the writer call the pragmatic-versus-emotional framing "a neat trick"?

A. Because both words mean the same thing

B. Because pragmatic speakers are usually correct

C. Because objecting to the label appears to confirm it

D. Because it ends the discussion immediately

12. "None of this is lying. That is what makes it worth noticing." Why does the writer emphasise this?

A. Because a lie would be easier to identify and answer

B. To defend the speakers being described

C. To show the writer is being fair-minded

D. Because lying is a separate topic

13. What point does the example of the tenant and the company lawyer make?

A. That composure is easiest for whoever has least at stake

B. That lawyers are better trained at arguing

C. That tenants are usually in the right

D. That legal disputes are decided unfairly

14. What concession does the writer make?

A. That the calm speaker is usually right after all

B. That tone should always be ignored

C. That anger is not an argument either

D. That the test proposed is unreliable

15. What does the writer’s proposed test involve?

A. Recording the speakers and comparing their volume

B. Rewriting both speakers’ claims flatly and comparing them

C. Asking a neutral third party to judge

D. Reading the arguments rather than hearing them

16. What is the writer’s central argument?

A. That calm speakers are dishonest

B. That emotional arguments are more truthful

C. That public debate should be conducted in writing

D. That we credit manner as though it were reasoning, and manner favours the powerful

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23 questions locked, up to question 39.

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PREVIEW

That’s the end of the preview

You’ve seen the first 16 of the 39 questions in Reading Year 10 — Practice Paper 1. The full paper is worth 39 marks.

STILL TO COME	QUESTIONS	MARKS
Salvage	8	8
The Museum of Objects Nobody Wanted	8	8
Short texts	7	7

The full paper comes with

- Every question, printed exactly like the ones in this preview
- The complete answer key, with the working behind every mark
- A topic report after marking, showing what to practice next

Get the full paper at

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