

## Index No. ....

English II

### Three hours only

♦ This question paper consists of four questions. All questions are compulsory.

1. Write a composition on **ONE** of the following topics, paying attention to relevant facts and supporting evidence, structure, organization, coherent argument accurate language and expression. (30 marks)
1. Working Part time Jobs.
  2. Technology; How it decides our day to day life.
  3. Travelling and visiting new countries: an extremely new experience.
  4. A review of a film / teledrama dealing with Human Weaknesses.
  5. A report on steps taken to help the displaced after the adverse weather conditions in May, Sri Lanka
  6. Your friend wants to leave his/her home after having a conflict with his/her parents. Advise your friend regarding this decision.
2. Reading comprehension and précis
- (a) Read the following passage and answer the questions given below it. (10 marks)

The terms “intelligence augmentation” and “intelligence amplification” evoke images of human beings with computer chips embedded in their skulls or bizarre accoutrements attached to their heads. However, according to an article entitled *Get Smart* by Jamais Cascio, human beings’ ability to augment their intelligence is precisely the prowess which has empowered us to survive “a series of convulsive glacial events” evinced by the last ice age.

Neurophysiologist William Calvin asserts that the human species continues to evolve cognitively and to create its own cognitive evolution in two basic ways: external and internal.

Cascio states that humans have been externally augmenting their intelligence for millennia. By developing written language, we boosted our capacity to share information over space and time. Other advancements, such as agricultural and

industrial technologies, reduced the exigencies of manual labor. Current external digital systems augment human intelligence by allowing us to perform tasks that would be unfeasible with recourse only to the rational skills of a singular human brain. Cascio cites as examples the “powerful simulations and massive data sets (which) allow physicists to visualize, understand, and debate models of an – dimension universe, real–time data from satellites, global environmental databases, and high–resolution models (which) allow geophysicists to recognize the subtle signs of long–term changes to the planet,” and similar man–made interactions which have the functional effect of augmenting human intelligence. Conceivable potential software could incorporate individual “attention filters” or “focus assistants” which would discern and highlight your individual preferences in a computer display, permitting you to focus and direct your computer searches more efficiently than you do now. It could incorporate individualized planning and foresight systems which could allow people to play “what–if” with their life choices. Such systems could co–evolve with people to produce intimate technologies which would become “something akin to collaborative intuition,” through web–based information systems with personalized components, according to Cascio.

Somewhat more problematic in social terms might be pharmacological intelligence augmentation, evoking Brave New World nightmares – pharmaceutically placated people tranquilized to zombie–like subservience to the collective and a central bureaucracy dedicated to its own continued survival. However, as with external cognitive augmentation, the future has arrived — in the form of, for example, ADD drugs, pharmaceutical agents which mitigate sleep disorders, and antidepressants, all of which enhance human problem–solving ability and cognitive efficiency. According to Cascio, “people who don’t know about (such drugs) or don’t want to use them will face stiffer competition from people who do. From the perspective of a culture immersed in athletic doping wars, the use of such drugs may seem like cheating. From the perspective of those who find they’re much more productive using this form of enhancement, it’s no more cheating than getting a faster computer or a better education.”

Cognitive amplification, whether by external or internal means, may constitute evolution, if Calvin’s assertion is correct. Some societies may readily embrace it, while others may shy away. As science fiction writer William Gibson observes, “The future is already here; it’s just unevenly distributed.”

✦ Write the letter of the correct answer in your answer script against the number of the relevant question.

1. Computer chips are embedded in,
  - a.) Skulls of animals.
  - b.) Bizarre accoutrements
  - c.) Heads
  - d.) skulls of human beings
  
2. According to William Calvin,
  - a.) Human species continues to be external.
  - b.) Human species fail to create its own cognition.
  - c.) Externally and internally human beings create cognitive evolution.
  - d.) Internal cognitive evolution is more precise.
  
3. Agricultural and industrial technologies,
  - a.) are advances
  - b.) advancing the mental labour.
  - c.) reduced technologies.
  - d.) minimize high amount of manual labour.
  
4. The author is mainly concerned about
  - a) various dangers of intelligence augmentation.
  - b) the advantages of intelligence augmentation.
  - c) the basic methods of intelligence augmentation.
  - d) some scientists who are working on intelligence augmentation.
  
5. The author's use of the phrase "somewhat more problematic in social terms" refers to
  - a) the difficulty of making cognitive enhancement widely available.
  - b) the difficulty of making pharmacological enhancement socially acceptable.
  - c) equalizing cognitive competitive advantages among social groups.
  - d) bureaucracies which hamper cognitive enhancement activities.
  
6. As it is used in the underlined word , the word placated most closely means
  - a) deprived.
  - b) enhanced.
  - c) cured.
  - d) quieted.

7. In the context of the passage, which of the following best articulates the author's opinion?
- Intelligence amplification by external means might be more difficult to achieve than by internal means.
  - Cognitive augmentation does not really constitute evolution.
  - Some people consider intelligence enhancement to be a form of cheating.
  - External and internal intelligence enhancement might constitute evolution in cultures that accept them.
8. The primary purpose of the passage is to
- describe different kinds of intelligence enhancement.
  - discuss society's reactions to pharmacological cognitive augmentation.
  - examine the differences between external and internal intelligence enhancement.
  - dispel misgivings about humanity's attempts at creating its own evolution.
9. A more suitable title to this passage would be,
- Cognitive Development.
  - Human Intelligence.
  - Internal Intelligence.
  - External Augmentation.
10. The Overall presentation of the passage is,
- Descriptive.
  - Argumentative.
  - factual.
  - Opinionated.
- (b). Write a **précis** summarizing the passage given in question number 2 above, following the instructions given below. Use your **own words** as far as possible. (20 marks)
- Begin the précis on a **new sheet**. Divide your page into **5 columns**, number the lines.
  - Write the précis in approximately **200** words.
  - State the **number of words** you have used.
3. Read the following passage and answer the questions given below it, using your **own words** as far as possible. (20 marks)

Lida sat outside her great aunt's hotel watching the steam engines go by and listening to the clop-clop of horses as they pulled wagons down the cobbled road. She was taking a short break from her chores at the inn: mopping the ballroom, fixing cornbread for the guests, and tending the fire in the wood-burning stove. She enjoyed working there and was happy to help her illustrious aunt bolster her growing business and notoriety around the city. Lida had always had an **assiduous** nature and applied

herself to almost any task unremittingly. Today, however, she took this quick **respite** to daydream about the dance she would be attending that evening. At 17, it would be her first. Her friends had all purchased brightly colored, ornate dresses to wear. Lida, as a reflection of her **demure** personality, had chosen a modest, yet elegant dress in a charcoal gray. “Are you ready, Miss Lida?” Hattie asked as she burst through the parlor doors and into the kitchen. Mary and Florence were in step right behind her. “Hattie, I done told you never to come in that way. You disturb the guests having cocktails in the parlor!” “Oh, hush, Lida. You worry too much. Let’s go.” “I need to put a few more logs in the stove so Auntie can boil water for the dishes,” Lida said. “Then we can go.” Hattie gave a sigh, but did not bother to argue. She knew that when Lida had something to do, she didn’t rest until it was done. “Let’s take the tracks,” Hattie said when they finally headed out to the party. Daylight was turning into dusk. “Naw, Hattie,” Lida said. “You know that’s too dangerous in the night.” “Look, Lida,” Hattie said impatiently. “We’re runnin’ late ‘cause of you. The tracks will take 15 minutes off our walk.” Mary and Florence both mumbled in agreement. “We can take the carri. The girls clumsily navigated the moonlit tracks and talked excitedly about the dance: who would be there, who was the best-looking, who was the smartest, and if anyone had remembered money for a carriage ride home. Then Lida heard a whistle in the distance. It seemed to get louder as it persisted and then cut out in a shock of tender silence. “We’ve gotta get off the tracks. Train’s coming,” said Lida. age back.” Against her better judgment, Lida agreed to take the train tracks. After all, it was her first real dance ever. Why adulterate it with acrimony?

The girls scurried to the side but found the decline too precipitous. They made their way forward along the tracks and finally found a suitable place to descend. Lida tiptoed nimbly from the precipice. Finding herself safely below, she heard a sudden thud. She gasped and turned about. “Help!” she heard a voice cry, “Help...down here!” Hattie had fallen in the ash pit, an 8 foot trench between the rails, about 20 feet long, where trains stopped to empty ashes from the engine’s fire box when they pulled through town. Hattie screamed and tried frantically to climb out, but the pit was too deep. Lida scrambled to the edge, grabbing for her hand, the train getting closer, the whistle growing evermore piercing. Not wanting to appear scared herself, Lida’s calm voice **belied** the panic-stricken beating of her heart. “Just give me your hand, Hattie, and I’ll pull ya right out.” They fumbled for each other’s hands in the dark. Lida lay down on the rails and hooked her feet under the track to give herself more leverage. She had Hattie in her fingertips. Then she lost her. Then she had her again. Lida pulled and she could feel the joints in Hattie’s hands popping. In this instant, Hattie found better purchase—on what, no one could be sure—and her hands came into view. Wearing a mask of anguish, her teeth clenched and reflecting the pale moonlight, Lida pulled and pulled. Hattie’s amorphous form appeared from below the surface like some stygian phantom. Mary and Florence’s screams could be heard intermittently in the night, watching helplessly as the train lights grew brighter. Hattie’s torso finally eclipsed the edge of the pit and there she lay, catching her breath. The girls hoisted her to her feet and hobbled away from the tracks like a collection of frenzied grave robbers, their treasure in tow. It was there that

they stood, caked in ash, watching as the train screeched to a stop and dropped its load of glowing cinders.

1. What type of characters are Mary and Florence?
  2. What insight do you get about Lida and her living background?
  3. How do Hattie and Lida differ in the story?
  4. Comment on the use of irony in the poem.
  5. What is the central idea depicted through the story?
4. Read the following poem and answer the questions given below it, using your **own words** as far as possible. (20 marks)

### **The Victims**

When Mother divorced you, we were glad. She took it and  
took it in silence, all those years and then  
kicked you out, suddenly, and her  
kids loved it. Then you were fired, and we  
grinned inside, the way people grinned when  
Nixon's helicopter lifted off the South  
Lawn for the last time. We were tickled  
to think of your office taken away,  
your secretaries taken away,  
your lunches with three double bourbons,  
your pencils, your reams of paper. Would they take your  
suits back, too, those dark  
carcasses hung in your closet, and the black  
noses of your shoes with their large pores?  
She had taught us to take it, to hate you and take it  
until we pricked with her for your  
annihilation, Father. Now I  
pass the bums in doorways, the white  
slugs of their bodies gleaming through slits in their  
suits of compressed silt, the stained  
flippers of their hands, the underwater

fire of their eyes, ships gone down with the  
lanterns lit, and I wonder who took it and  
took it from them in silence until they had  
given it all away and had nothing  
left but this.

1. Explain the attitude of the children regarding their father.
2. Do you think the title "The Victims" is suitable for the poem? Why do you say so?
3. What led to the downfall of the father?
4. Do you think the speaker is hurt? Justify your views.
5. Is the father to be sympathized with? Why?