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SOUTH AFRICAN HOME LANGUAGE (HL)
ENGLISH OLYMPIAD:
GRADE 8

DATE: 06 AUGUST 2025

TIME: 75 MINUTES

Instructions:

1. This booklet has 8 questions.
2. Answer on the paper below.
3. Read the questions carefully before answering.
4. Visit the websites: www.saolympiads.co.za.

NAME OF LEARNER:	
SCHOOL:	GRADE:

QUESTION ONE:

FACTS ABOUT HIPPOPOTAMI

Read the following passage and then answer the questions that follow:

The word hippopotamus is derived from the Greek word for 'river horse'. These fascinating creatures are found in sub-Saharan Africa, primarily inhabiting rivers, lakes, and marshlands. They may seem like big, lazy animals, but there's a lot more to them than meets the eye.

They are the third-largest land mammals on Earth, following elephants and rhinos. They are powerful and formidable animals that command respect in their natural environment. Their bulky bodies are barrel shaped, and they have short stumpy legs, an enormous head, huge mouth with distinctive ivory tusks, a short tail, and four toes on each foot. Each toe has a nail-like hoof.

Hippos are well adapted to aquatic life. The ears, eyes, and nostrils are located high on the head so that the rest of the body may remain submerged. The ears and nostrils can be folded shut to keep out water. Although often seen basking in the sun, hippos lose water rapidly through their skin and become dehydrated without periodic dips. They must also retreat to the water to keep cool as they do not sweat. They also secrete a thick, oily substance from their skin, which acts as a sunscreen and moisturiser, protecting their sensitive skin from drying out and getting sunburned.

Hippos come out of the water to graze on grass and eat fruit at night. These creatures can wander for many kilometres each night. Despite their size, they are surprisingly agile in the water. Adults can hold their breath for approximately five minutes before surfacing to breathe. This is a way for them to avoid predators, but they are also surprisingly fast on land and can reach speeds of about 30 kilometres per hour.

Hippos are social animals that live in groups, known as pods, of between 10 and 30 animals. Each pod is led by a dominant male. Females give birth to a single calf. They will often leave the pod to give birth on land or in the water. The mother keeps her calf close for nursing and protection until it is old enough to fend for itself, sometimes for a few years. The infant often stands on the mother's back in the water.

Despite their docile appearance and the fact that hippos are herbivorous, they are considered one of the most dangerous animals in Africa. They are extremely territorial and can become very aggressive if they feel threatened. More people in Africa are killed each year in hippo attacks than by any other animal.

Unfortunately, hippos face numerous threats in the wild, including habitat loss, poaching, and human-wildlife conflict. Their numbers are constantly decreasing but they are not yet on the endangered lists but have reached the 'vulnerable list'. Their tusks are desirable

for carving and since many countries have banned ivory trade from elephants, the hippo is now more vulnerable than ever.

1. **Originally, from what language is the word "hippopotamus" derived?**

   (a) Egyptian (b) Greek
   (c) Latin (d) Old English

   (1)

2. **Why is there "a lot more to them than meets the eye?"**

   (a) They are a lot more energetic and mobile than they look.
   (b) They are quite intelligent animals.
   (c) They are quite highly evolved in terms of adaptation to the water.
   (d) They demand respect in the animal world.

   (1)

3. **They are the third-largest land animals after which animals:**

   (a) Elephants and lions
   (b) Elephants and buffalo
   (c) Rhinos and elephants
   (d) Rhinos and buffalo

   (1)

4. **What is special about the hippo's ears and nostrils?**

   (a) They are higher on the head than some other animals.
   (b) They cover their ears and nostrils with mud to avoid the sun.
   (c) They can stay underwater for a long time with no ill effect.
   (d) Their ears and nostrils can fold to keep out water.

   (1)

5. **Why do hippo become dehydrated so quickly?**

   (a) Their skin loses water quite rapidly in the sun.
   (b) They have to go into the water often to cool down.
   (c) They secrete an oily substance which acts as a moisturizer and sunscreen.
   (d) They are really aquatic animals so are not adapted for the sun.

   (1)

6. **Find synonyms from the passage for these phrases**.

   (a) more or less
   (b) an animal that only eats vegetation
   (c) to look after oneself
   (d) coming up from under the water
   (e) tame

   (5)

7. **What makes hippos well-suited to life in the water? Choose all the correct options.**

(a) The ears and nostrils can be folded to shut out water.
(b) They have short legs so they can wade through the water easily.
(c) They can hold their breath for a long time underwater.
(d) They can move really well in the water. **(3)**

8. **What is the collective noun for a group of hippo from the extract?** **(1)**

9. **Why are hippos vulnerable? Choose all the correct options.**

(a) They are vulnerable because of poaching by humans.
(b) They are vulnerable because of other wildlife prey.
(c) They are vulnerable because of human-wildlife conflict.
(d) They are vulnerable because they are so slow on land.

(3)

10. **Find antonyms from the passage for:**

(a) friendly (b) adult

(c) advance (d) confront

(4)

Total: 21

QUESTION TWO:

Rewrite the following sentence with the required punctuation.

(a) on wednesdays we have two periods of english one period for history and then three periods of maths before break **(3)**

QUESTION THREE:

Change these sentences to active voice.

(a) The exam was being written by the learners.

(b) The date should be written at the top of each page.

(c) Coffee was being made by me.

(3)

QUESTION FOUR:

What figure of speech are each of these statements?
(The words in the box may help.)

hyperbole	onomatopoeia	personification	irony
wit	sarcasm	metaphor	oxymoron

(a) The wind whispered through the trees.
(b) The maths professor calculated incorrectly. **(2)**

QUESTION FIVE:

(a) Identify the subject, object and predicate in the following sentence:

"Tomorrow we are buying the new decoder for the television." **(3)**

(b) What part of speech is each of the underlined words in the sentence below?

"Read the questions carefully before you answer." **(2)**

QUESTION SIX: LOGIC

(a) You live in a one-storey house made of redwood. What colour are the stairs? **(1)**

(b) Johnny's father has FIVE sons
1. Zaze 2. Zeze 3. Zize 4. Zoze.

What is the name of the FIFTH son? **(1)**

QUESTION SEVEN:

Match the following idioms in Column A with their meanings in Column B.

Column A	Column B
a) Haste makes waste	a) Very expensive, a large amount of money.
b) Dead ringer	b) A task that can be done very easily.
c) A piece of cake	c) Doing things quickly can result in a poor ending.
	d) duplicate or identical. **(3)**

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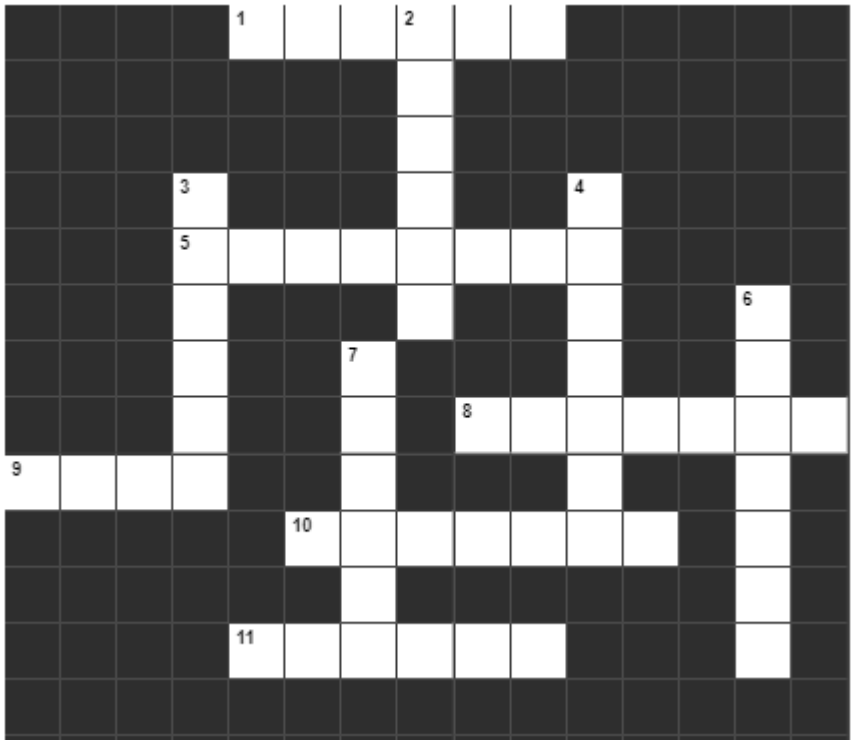
QUESTION EIGHT: CROSSWORD: SYNONYMS AND ANTONYMS

Read the clues below and fill in the crossword puzzle.



CLUES:

Across:		**Down:**	
1	Abundant resources are the opposite of being …….	2	Fragile and delicate are synonyms, opposite of sturdy and …….
5	Small and insignificant are synonyms While enormous is the ……..	3	Frigid weather is the opposite of ……
8	Cowardice is the opposite of ……	4	Fickle and indecisive are similar, opposite of resolute and ……
9	Timid and shy are similar, like brave and ……. are.	6	Conflict is the opposite of …….. (another word for peace.)
10	Fake is the opposite of …….	7	You might hide a gift, but …… a secret (tell it to someone.)
11	Vacant and empty are similar, like occupied and …… are.		

(11)

Total for paper: 50