E-mail: English@saolympiads.co.za website: www.saolympiads.co.za

SOUTH AFRICAN HOME LANGUAGE (HL)
ENGLISH OLYMPIAD:
GRADE 9

DATE: 06 AUGUST 2025

TIME: 75 MINUTES

Instructions:

1. This booklet has 7 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:

Read the following text and then answer the questions that follow.

SQUIRRELS

(Compiled by Carla Coetzee Infographic)

You've probably seen squirrels – either in real life or on TV – scurrying about or climbing trees. But did you know that these fluffy rodents are intelligent and dexterous – and some can even glide like birds? Our focus is on the grey squirrel.

There are more than 260 squirrel species and they can be found in areas ranging from tropical rainforests to deserts. Only two continents don't have squirrels: Australia and Antarctica. The Indian giant squirrel is the biggest, measuring almost 1m from nose to tail. The smallest is the African pygmy squirrel. It is only 12cm long.

Apart from ground and tree squirrels, there is also a type called a flying squirrel. They can't really fly but rather glide between trees, thanks to the special membrane connecting their limbs.

Squirrels use their fluffy tails to communicate and for warmth when they sleep, folding it over themselves like a blanket. They can fall as far as 20 m without harm because their tails break their fall.

Grey squirrels' ankles are extremely flexible. That means their paws can face forward or backward – perfect for tree-climbing. They can climb down a tree headfirst by rotating their back ankles 180 degrees and having their hind feet splayed flat against the trunk.

Squirrels have good eyesight. Having their eyes on the sides of their head ensures a broad field of vision. They have strong, long back legs and short front legs. All four legs work together when they jump or climb.

Grey squirrels live in the hollows of trees and make soccer ball sized nests from leaves and twigs high up in the crooks of trees.

This tree squirrel is mostly found in oak or pine plantations and in suburban gardens. The grey squirrels who make their home in oak trees of the Companies gardens in Cape Town are popular with tourists.

Grey squirrels eat nuts, seeds, peanuts, acorns, tree bark, vegetables, fruit and sometimes insects and bird eggs. Apart from 16 molars, they have four sharp incisors to break open nuts and nibble at their food. These incisors never stop growing but their nibbling keeps them short. Their long, strong paws and sharp nails allow them to cling to a tree in any position. Their paws have hairless pads underneath which serve to soften their landing whenever they jump from trees.

During autumn, grey squirrels hoard thousands of nuts in holes to see them through the winter, when food is scarce. They mostly remember where they hide their food,

sometimes going back for it months later. This shows good memory and the ability to plan ahead.

SOURCE: YOU magazine: 16th July 2020

1. **Squirrels are dexterous. Does this mean they are:**

   (a) Neat (b) Agile
   (c) Fast (d) Inventive **(1)**

2. **Which of the following are rodents? Choose all the correct options.**

   (a) Snakes (b) Mice
   (c) Moles (d) Beavers **(2)**

3. **Which are three continents that do have squirrels?**

   (a) South America, Antarctica, Asia
   (b) Europe, Africa, Australia
   (c) South America, Asia, Europe **(1)**

4. **How does the flying squirrel get from branch to branch?**

   (a) It uses very long jumps.
   (b) It uses a special connecting skin between its wrist and ankle to move between branches.
   (c) It climbs very skilfully and dexterously between the branches.
   (d) It hangs on with its tail and then swings itself onto the next branch. **(1)**

5. **Why do you think it is important for grey squirrels' ankles to be so flexible?**

   (a) It is important because they do not risk injury like a broken ankle.
   (b) It is important because it helps them to climb up and down trees very quickly and skilfully.
   (c) It is important because it is perfect for tree climbing as they can look forward while keeping their feet flat against the trunk of the tree.
   (d) It is important as when they glide, they often land awkwardly and having flexible ankles stops them from missing the branch. **(1)**

6. **Choose an antonym for the word "splayed".**

   (a) fanned (b) forked
   (c) Joined (d) radiated **(1)**

7. **Choose 4 facts from those listed below that are an advantage to squirrels and help them in their everyday lives.**

(a) Their colour helps to camouflage them in the trees.
(b) They have eyes on the sides of their heads so have good vision.
(c) They eat absolutely everything so they never go hungry.
(d) They live high up in the crook of trees.
(e) They have sharp nails and strong paws.
(f) They have very strong teeth. **(4)**

8. **In the sentence: They mostly remember where they hide their food, sometimes going back for it months later" – what part of speech is:**

(a) Mostly
(b) They **(2)**

9. **The purpose of the text is to:**

(a) Inform (b) entertain
(c) complain (d) consult **(1)**

10. **Is the following phrase used literally or figuratively?**

"The tail breaks the fall" **(1)**

Total: 15

QUESTION TWO:

Correct the grammar in the following sentences and say what the problem is.

(a) Do you want to come with?

(b) It is necessary to severely deal with those girls who misbehaved at rugby.

(c) Driving through the Kruger National Park, a lion ate a mouse while we watched.

(d) The committee have reached a decision. **(8)**

QUESTION THREE:

Fill in the correct preposition:

(a) Absolve ….. blame

(b) Accessible … . everyone **(2)**

QUESTION FOUR:

Rewrite the following sentence in indirect speech.

"I had a headache yesterday". **(3)**

QUESTION FIVE:

Join a sentence in column A below to the correct figure of speech in column B

COLUMN A	COLUMN B
She is an angel.	ONOMATOPOEIA
I could eat a horse!	METAPHOR
The water sparkled like tiny diamonds.	ASSONANCE
The water gushed from the tap.	SIMILE
The shadows broke rolling over the river.	ALLITERATION
	HYPERBOLE

(5)

QUESTION SIX:

LOGIC:

(a) A red house is made from red bricks, a blue house is made from blue bricks, a yellow house is made from yellow bricks. What is a greenhouse made from? **(1)**

(b) If an electric train is travelling south, which way is the smoke going? **(1)**

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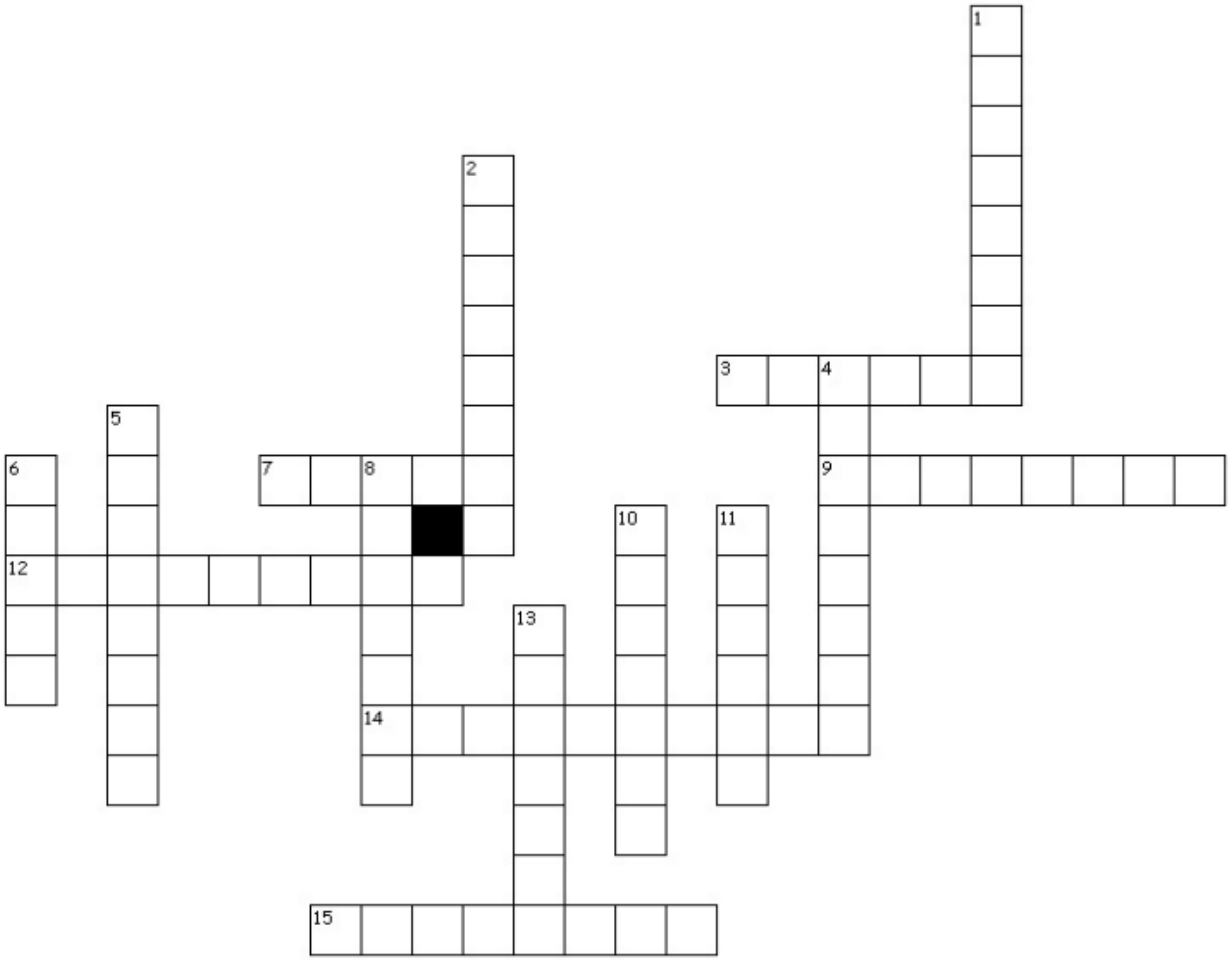
QUESTION SEVEN: CROSSWORD PUZZLE : VOCABULARY

Fill in the Crossword puzzle below using the clues given. There is a Word Bank to assist you.



CLUES:

Across:	Down:
3 To confuse	1 To excite ill temper in
7 Whole range	2 To free
9 Another word for isolate	4 A break in your bones
12 Insolence	5 To put out of its proper place
14 To pay for	6 Sorrow
15 Hole	8 Ridicule
	10 Self-flattery
	11 To cause to be loved
	13 Wealthy

WORD BANK:

liberate	endear	grief	aperture	opulent
irritate	gamut	fracture	impudence	displace
alienate	conceit	mockery	baffle	remunerate

(15)

Total for paper 50