SOUTH AFRICAN HIGH SCHOOLS
ENGLISH OLYMPIAD HOME LANGUAGE (HL)
GRADE 8

DATE: 06 AUGUST 2026
TIME: 75 MINUTES

Instructions:

1. This booklet has 8 questions.
2. Answer on the sheets provided.
3. Read the questions carefully before answering.
4. Visit the website: www.saolympiads.co.za.

NAME OF LEARNER:	
SCHOOL:	**GRADE:**

QUESTION ONE:

A DAY IN THE LIFE OF ASTRONAUTS ABOARD THE INTERNATIONAL SPACE STATION

Have you ever wondered what it would be like to live and work in space?

Eating in Space

Imagine going camping for more than a week with several of your close friends. You would make sure you have plenty of food and the gear to cook and eat it with. The food would have to be stored properly and be non-perishable to avoid spoilage. After finishing your meal, or at the end of your camping trip, you would then stow all your gear and dispose of your trash properly just before the ride home.

Astronauts basically do the same thing when they go to space. Preparation varies with the food type. Some foods can be eaten in their natural forms, such as brownies and fruit. Other foods require adding water, such as macaroni and cheese or spaghetti. Of course, an oven is provided in the space station to heat foods to the proper temperature. There are no refrigerators in space, so space food must be stored and prepared properly to avoid spoilage, especially on longer missions.

Condiments, such as ketchup, mustard and mayonnaise are provided. Salt and pepper are available but only in liquid form. This is because astronauts cannot sprinkle salt and pepper on their food in space. The salt and pepper would simply float away! This is dangerous as the spice could clog air vents, contaminate equipment or get stuck in an astronaut's eyes, mouth or nose.

Astronauts eat three meals a day: breakfast, lunch and dinner. Nutritionists ensure the food that astronauts eat provides them with a balanced supply of vitamins and minerals. Calorie requirements differ for astronauts. For instance, a small woman astronaut would require only about 1 900 calories a day, while a large man astronaut would require about 3 200 calories. An astronaut can choose from many types of foods available such as fruits, nuts, peanut butter, chicken, beef, seafood, candy, brownies etc. Available drinks include coffee, tea, orange juice, fruit punches and lemonade.

As on Earth, space food comes in disposable packages. Astronauts must throw their packages away when they have finished eating. Some packaging actually prevents food from flying away. The food packaging is designed to be flexible and easier to use, as well as to maximize space when stowing or disposing of food containers.

Sleeping in Space

After a long day at work, nothing is better than a good night's sleep! Just like on Earth, in space a worker goes to bed at a certain time, then wakes up and prepares for work again. There are a few differences, though. Space has no "up" or "down" but it does have microgravity. As a result, astronauts are weightless and can sleep in any orientation. However, they have to attach themselves so they do not float around and bump into something. Space station crews usually sleep in sleeping bags located in small crew cabins. Each crew cabin is just big enough for one person. Generally, astronauts are scheduled for

eight hours of sleep at the end of each mission day. Like on Earth though, they may wake up in the middle of their sleep period to use the toilet or stay up late to look out the window.

Different things such as excitement or motion sickness can disrupt an astronaut's sleep pattern. During their sleep period, astronauts have reported having dreams and nightmares. Some have even reported snoring in space.

Free Time in Space

Living in space is not just all work and no play. Astronauts like to have fun, too. If you are staying on the International Space Station for a few months, it is certainly okay to look out the window, play with your food, or tease your crewmates once in a while. Fun is an essential ingredient to improving the quality of life.

Astronauts need a break from their busy schedules when they are orbiting Earth. Days or even months of straight work are certain to cause stress among space workers. That is why flight planners on Earth schedule time each day for astronauts to relax, exercise and have some fun. Station crew members even manage to have fun while working. Experiments in space sometimes involve ordinary toys and how microgravity affects them.

A popular pastime while orbiting Earth is simply looking out the window. Inside the International Space Station, crew members have numerous windows they can look out of. Astronauts often comment on their fascination and awe as they look at Earth spin beneath them with its multiple shades and textures. Sunsets and sunrises are also very spectacular, occurring every 45 minutes above the Earth's atmosphere.

1. Choose the correct option from the answers below:

1.1 Which sentence best summarises the section "Eating in Space"?

(a) Discarding all trash is important when leaving a camping area.
(b) Food packaging for use on Earth and in space can be recycled.
(c) Food packaging made for use in space is flexible.
(d) Packing for a trip to space is similar to packing for a camping trip.

(1)

1.2 How does the author organise the section "Free Time in Space" to develop the thesis of the article?

(a) By explaining the ways that astronauts can relax while on board the space station.
(b) By listing activities available to astronauts outside of work hours.
(c) By describing how astronauts can make work entertaining.
(d) By following the activities of an astronaut on an average day.

(1)

1.3 The details in paragraph 7 support the key idea that:

(a) Sleeping in space can be much more dangerous than sleeping at home.
(b) Astronauts must approach sleep the same way as they approach other scheduled activities.
(c) Sleep patterns often change for astronauts spending extended periods in space.
(d) Astronauts feel like they are camping outdoors when they sleep in space.

(1)

1.4 What is the most likely reason the author includes the information about sunsets and sunrises in the text?

(a) To explain why astronauts would choose to live on the space station.
(b) To describe some circumstances that make life on the space station enjoyable.
(c) To show how astronauts keep track of the days and nights.
(d) To indicate how often the astronauts can record their observations about Earth.

(1)

1.5 Based on information in the article, what can the reader conclude about how the conditions of space affect life aboard the space station?

(a) Everything taken into space must be compact in order to keep from interfering with equipment on the space station.
(b) Astronauts must adapt many daily activities because of how weight is experienced in space.
(c) Sleep periods are carefully planned because of the way time is experienced in space.
(d) Astronauts combine work and recreation in order to avoid boredom from being in the space station each day.

(1)

1.6 What is the controlling idea of the article?

(a) Astronauts need time to eat, sleep and relax while living on the space station.
(b) To survive living in space, astronauts eat the same food as they do on Earth and need to store it correctly.
(c) Living and working in space is both similar to and different from living and working on Earth.
(d) Living on the space station is both interesting and difficult because many experiments must be performed.

(1)

1.7 What does the article help the reader understand about the International Space Station?

The International Space Station is used by multiple nations for scientific studies.

(b) The International Space Station is a motionless spacecraft.
(c) The International Space Station is used for short- and long-term living.
(d) The International Space Station is the size of a large city.

(1)

1.8 In the last paragraph of the text, how do the words "fascination", "awe" and "spectacular" contribute to the author's tone in the article?

(a) By revealing the gratitude that astronauts feel about what they can see from space.
(b) By demonstrating the satisfaction that astronauts feel about living on the space station.
(c) By creating a feeling of wonder about the sights that astronauts view from space.
(d) By developing a feeling of mystery about astronauts who live and work on the space station.

(1)

1.9 Provide a synonym from the last paragraph of the text that means the same as "appearance."

(1)

1.10 Give an antonym of your own choosing for the word "clog" as it has been used in the text.

(1)

Total: 10

QUESTION TWO: Parts of speech

Read the following sentence and state what part of speech each underlined word is.

"Imagine going camping for more than a week with several of your close friends."

Total: 6

QUESTION THREE: Figures of speech

Read the following short poem and answer the questions that follow.

The Eagle

He clasps the crag with crooked hands;
Close to the sun in lonely lands,
Ringed with the azure world he stands.
The wrinkled sea beneath him crawls,
He watches from his mountain walls,
And like a thunderbolt he falls.

By: Alfred Tennyson

3.1 Identify the figure of speech used in the first line. (1)

3.2 Line 4 is very effective. Identify the figure of speech used. (1)

3.3 The last line also contains a figure of speech. What is it? (1)

3.4 Why is the eagle close to the "sun in lonely lands"? (1)

3.5 Why does the sea appear "wrinkled"? (1)

Total: 5

QUESTION FOUR:

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

Column A	Column B
1 Beating around the bush	A. To have a dispute with someone
2 Give him the slip	B. Avoiding the main topic
3 Have an axe to grind	C. To escape
	D. Rushed and short on time

Total: 3

QUESTION FIVE:

5.1 Change the following sentences from the active voice to the passive voice.

(a) The thief steals the vegetables. (1)

(b) The boys complete the work on time. (1)

5.2 Underline the adverbs in the following sentences and state what type of adverb they are.

(a) He was just keeping himself alive. (1)

(b) She often went to the same shopping mall. (1)

(c) Mary needed to come home immediately. (1)

Total: 5

QUESTION SIX:

6.1 Indicate where you would put the apostrophes in the following sentences.

(a) Rickett and Johnsons ginger nuts are the worlds best biscuits. (2)

(b) Weve got the largest range of ladies fashions in town. (2)

Total: 4

QUESTION SEVEN: L O G I C

(a) Can you find the common phrase from the word puzzle below?

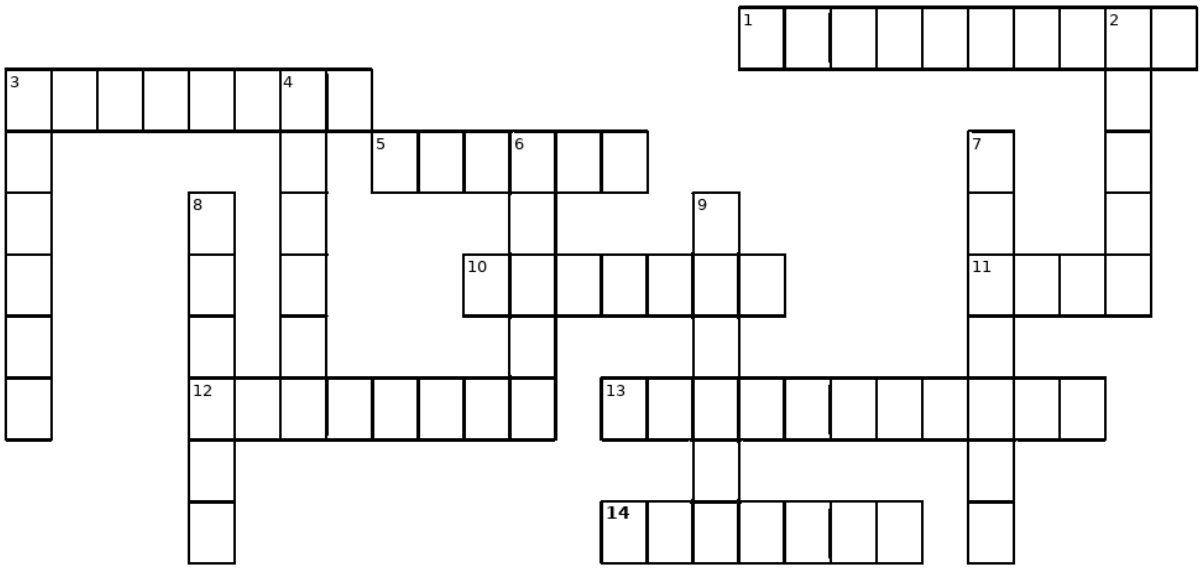
/R/E/A/D/ **(1)**

(b) What is it where the more you take away, the larger it becomes? **(1)**

Total: 2

QUESTION EIGHT: CROSSWORD: LITERARY TERMS

Read the clues below and fill in the crossword puzzle. There is a Word Bank to assist you.



CLUES:

Across:	**Down:**
1 A fictional prose narrative that is usually ten to twenty pages long.	2 The repetition of accented vowel sounds and all sounds following them in words close together in a poem.
3 The uncertainty or anxiety you feel about what will happen next in a story.	3 A group of consecutive lines that form a single unit in a poem.
5 A kind of rhythmic compressed language that uses figures of speech and imagery to appeal to emotion and imagination.	4 A person, a place, a thing, or an event that has its own meaning and stands for something beyond itself.
10 A group of words repeated at intervals in a poem, song or speech.	6 The truth about life or main message revealed in a work of literature.
11 The attitude that a writer takes towards the audience, a subject, or a character.	7 The time and place in which the events of a work of literature take place.
12 An exaggerated fanciful story that gets more far-fetched as it is told and retold.	8 A musical quality produced by the repetition of stressed and unstressed syllables or by the repetition of certain other sound patterns.
13 The vantage point from which a story is told.	9 A comparison between two unlike things using the words “like” or “as”.
14 The voice talking in a poem.	

WORD BANK

theme	simile	rhyme	suspense	tone
talltale	poetry	stanza	pointofview	rhythm
refrain	speaker	symbol	shortstory	setting

Total: 15

Total for paper: 50