



UNIVERSITY OF
CAMBRIDGE

MODERN AND MEDIEVAL LANGUAGES
ADMISSIONS ASSESSMENT

DECEMBER 2016

MML ADMISSIONS ASSESSMENT SPECIMEN PAPER 1

Please read the following passage carefully and then answer the questions following it.

Your response to Section A **MUST** be in ONE of the languages that you are applying to study here. If you are studying both of the languages you wish to study here at A Level (A2) or equivalent, you are free to write in either language. Please write APPROXIMATELY 250 WORDS in your answer.

Your response to Section B **MUST** be in English. Please note that you will not be penalised if you don't know the correct terminology to describe the use of English in the passage.

My body is an electronic virgin. I incorporate no silicon chips, no retinal or cochlear implants, no pacemaker. I don't even wear glasses, but I am slowly becoming more and more a cyborg. So are you. Pretty soon, and still without the need for wires, surgery, or bodily alterations, we shall all be kin to the Terminator, to Eve 8, to Cable... just fill in your favorite fictional cyborg. Perhaps we already are. For we shall be cyborgs not in the merely superficial sense of combining flesh and wires but in the more profound sense of being human-technology symbionts: thinking and reasoning systems whose minds and selves are spread across biological brain and non-biological circuitry.

This tendency toward hybridization is not a modern development. Rather, it is an aspect of our humanity that is as basic and ancient as the use of speech. It was about five years ago that I first realized we were, at least in that specific sense, all cyborgs. At that time I was busy directing a new interdisciplinary program in philosophy, neuroscience, and psychology at Washington University in St. Louis. The realization wasn't painful; it was, oddly, reassuring. A lot of things now seemed to fall into place: why we humans are so deeply different from the other animals, while being, quite demonstrably, not so very different in our neural and bodily resources; why the recent loss of my laptop had hit me like a sudden and somewhat vicious type of (hopefully transient) brain damage. The cyborg is a potent cultural icon of the late twentieth century. It conjures images of human-machine hybrids and the physical merging of flesh and electronic circuitry. My goal is to hijack that image and to reshape it, revealing it as a disguised vision of our own biological nature. For what is special about human brains, and what best explains the distinctive features of human intelligence, is precisely their ability to enter into deep and complex relationships with non-biological constructs, props, and aids. Such mergers may be consummated without the intrusion of silicon and wire into flesh and blood, as anyone who has felt himself thinking via the act of writing already knows.

SECTION A

What are the main points of the author's argument? Do you agree or disagree?
Explain your answer.

Remember to answer this section in APPROXIMATELY 250 WORDS in a foreign language you intend to study at Cambridge.

You should spend approximately 40 minutes on this exercise.

[32 marks]

SECTION B

How does the writer persuade us of his point of view? Please give examples from the text to support your answer.

Remember to answer this section in English.

You should spend approximately 20 minutes on this exercise.

[16 marks]

MML ADMISSIONS ASSESSMENT

SPECIMEN PAPER 2

Please read the following passage carefully and then answer the questions following it.

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Your response to Section B **MUST** be in English. Please note that you will not be penalised if you don't know the correct terminology to describe the use of English in the passage.

The territory of the earth is a mosaic of nations: or is it simply a mosaic of states? What makes a state a nation? The problem for the state, unless it possesses a monarch endowed with divine authority, is the question of what legitimates its authority. As the French discovered in 1789, the idea of the nation fulfils this function in an ideal way. As a larger corporation, to which its citizens necessarily belong without choice, the nation becomes an empty space in which all forms of potential identification can be filled: race, religion, language, culture, history, the land: what makes you a part of your nation?

It always used to be assumed that in order to become a nation, the people of a nation should resemble each other as closely as possible. If they looked different, spoke a different language, followed a different religion, then this was considered a threat to what the political theorist Benedict Anderson has characterized as the 'imagined community' of the nation. Many people, languages, cultures, have been repressed for this reason. The United States, a nation of immigrants, makes an interesting test case in its attempt to make the many one. First of all, everyone in the US has something in common, that they or their ancestors came as immigrants – though awkwardly this does not apply to the first nations of native Americans who were displaced or exterminated in order to make room for the new arrivals. Secondly, unlike most countries, even the landmass of the US is not attached, but dispersed with other countries and oceans in between. The absence of traditional links to land, history, and culture explains why the US has to make an identity for itself out of its liberal state ideology (democracy, liberty, free enterprise capitalism), and why it has to create demonic enemies which are alleged to threaten its very existence (successively: witchcraft, Chinese immigrants, communism, Hispanics who won't speak the state's official language, Islam...). These enemies serve to make all its different people feel collectively threatened, and therefore to bond with each other.

All these common values are symbolized by the American flag, which flies everywhere across the country, planted in every conceivable place: front lawns, car windows, the sides of buildings, corporate websites. Its ideology is materialized through the common lifestyle that keeps the US coherent as a nation, the proliferation of monopoly capitalism.

SECTION A

What are the main points of the author's argument? Do you agree or disagree?
Explain your answer.

Remember to answer this section in APPROXIMATELY 250 WORDS in a foreign language you intend to study at Cambridge.

You should spend approximately 40 minutes on this exercise.

[32 marks]

SECTION B

How does the writer persuade us of his point of view? Please give examples from the text to support your answer.

Remember to answer this section in English.

You should spend approximately 20 minutes on this exercise.

[16 marks]

MML ADMISSIONS ASSESSMENT

SPECIMEN PAPER 3

Please read the following passage carefully and then answer the questions following it.

Your response to Section A **MUST** be in ONE of the languages that you are applying to study here. If you are studying both of the languages you wish to study here at A Level (A2) or equivalent, you are free to write in either language. Please write APPROXIMATELY 250 WORDS in your answer.

Your response to Section B **MUST** be in English. Please note that you will not be penalised if you don't know the correct terminology to describe the use of English in the passage.

The interest in invented languages, like Klingon and Elvish, appears a fanciful, if fruitless, pursuit to most. But to those who spend their time engineering aesthetic languages, recent interest has been nothing short of a coming-out party, as more and more people are willing to publicly talk about this hobby.

Even the grandfather of constructed languages, or 'conlangs', guarded his activities. JRR Tolkien, author of the *Lord of the Rings* trilogy and creator of Middle-Earth languages such as Entish and Goldogrin, kept secret his penchant for language creation until a 1931 speech he called *A Secret Vice*.

Language creators and linguists say that film and TV viewers' increasingly discerning taste in authentic-sounding conlangs allowed creators of such languages to find each other and flourish. For the first time, a conlang inventor has a full-time job. *Game of Thrones* producers hired the creator of Dothraki, David J Peterson, to write dialogue for its fictional characters after a contest on their website. Peterson believes he is the only person in the world to invent languages full-time. Mainstream linguists are beginning to take an interest in the activities of the still somewhat marginalized community.

'These fictional languages are having a moment,' said Arika Okrent, author of *In the Land of Invented Languages*. 'A lot of it has to do with the care that's gone into the world creation. You can't just have a show without some historical land or plant some group of people without fully imagining how they live, what their metaphors are, who they are.'

Whether we should view these inventions as art or as a tool, like most do for everyday language, remains debatable. Some linguists find the creation of new languages frustrating in light of the accelerating extinction of endangered languages.

More than 80 per cent of the world's (at least) 5,000 languages could disappear over the next century, some linguists estimate.

SECTION A

What are the main points of the author's argument? Do you agree or disagree?
Explain your answer.

Remember to answer this section in APPROXIMATELY 250 WORDS in a foreign language you intend to study at Cambridge.

You should spend approximately 40 minutes on this exercise.

[32 marks]

SECTION B

How does the writer persuade us of his point of view? Please give examples from the text to support your answer.

Remember to answer this section in English.

You should spend approximately 20 minutes on this exercise.

[16 marks]

MML ADMISSIONS ASSESSMENT

SPECIMEN PAPER 4

Please read the following passage carefully and then answer the questions following it.

Your response to Section A **MUST** be in ONE of the languages that you are applying to study here. If you are studying both of the languages you wish to study here at A Level (A2) or equivalent, you are free to write in either language. Please write APPROXIMATELY 250 WORDS in your answer.

Your response to Section B **MUST** be in English. Please note that you will not be penalised if you don't know the correct terminology to describe the use of English in the passage.

Our attitudes to accidental phone rings are stuck in the 80s. Even though the mobile has long since ceased to be a cutting-edge gadget possessed only by the high-earning early-adopting few, when one goes off inappropriately, we still visualise a shameless yuppie in red braces, Aston Martin double-parked outside, closing deals – an offensive symbol of profligate and faddish modernity.

This is hopelessly out of step with what these machines now mean to us. Research just published by a team at the University of Missouri shows that, when a sample of 40 people were temporarily deprived of their iPhones, their heart rate and blood pressure rose, and their ability to perform tasks suffered. Our mobiles, the paper suggests, are now 'an extension of our physical selves, an umbilical cord, anchoring the information society's digital infrastructure to our very bodies'. We hate to be parted from them and we don't much like turning them off.

Many will lament this, but it's not altogether bad. Our phones reassure us because they make us feel connected – because if your mobile is turned on, in range and not ringing, it probably means that no work crisis has developed and no disaster has befallen a close friend or loved one. It's a constant everyone-in-your-life-is-more-or-less-OK monitor. Maybe we should learn to live without such reassurance, but it doesn't reflect entirely badly on us that we're comforted by it.

People often criticise one another for talking or texting on their phones in preference to live interaction. Such critics forget that, in the heyday of the landline, a ringing telephone – the phone in the hall – was always answered. The notion of call screening is entirely modern. It never used to be rude to answer – it was rude not to.

The onus of politeness, in those days, was on the caller. Except in an emergency, you didn't telephone someone at a mealtime, during their favourite television programme or after 10 o'clock. When you thought someone might not want to be disturbed, you didn't disturb them unless you had to. It's the passing of that etiquette, rather than the prevalence of mobile phones, that I think is a shame.

SECTION A

What are the main points of the author's argument? Do you agree or disagree?
Explain your answer.

Remember to answer this section in APPROXIMATELY 250 WORDS in a foreign language you intend to study at Cambridge.

You should spend approximately 40 minutes on this exercise.

[32 marks]

SECTION B

How does the writer persuade us of his point of view? Please give examples from the text to support your answer.

Remember to answer this section in English.

You should spend approximately 20 minutes on this exercise.

[16 marks]

Modern and Medieval Languages Admissions Assessment Marking Criteria

CANDIDATE.....TOTAL SCORE (___/48)

Question 1. What are the main points of the author’s argument? Do you agree or disagree? Explain your answer. (Total of 32 marks available)

Comprehension, summary and response (16 marks)

Subtotal out of 16: ____

	Comprehension	Summary	Organisation of ideas	Response to passage
4	<input type="checkbox"/> Clear comprehension of all aspects of the passage	<input type="checkbox"/> Very effective summary of main points	<input type="checkbox"/> Well structured answer	<input type="checkbox"/> Intelligent and cogent response to passage
3	<input type="checkbox"/> Good comprehension of the passage	<input type="checkbox"/> Competent summary of main points	<input type="checkbox"/> Generally clear organisation of ideas	<input type="checkbox"/> Convincing response to passage
2	<input type="checkbox"/> Gaps in comprehension of passage with some irrelevant material	<input type="checkbox"/> Summary misses some key ideas	<input type="checkbox"/> Some attempt to organise ideas	<input type="checkbox"/> Fair but unambitious response to passage
1	<input type="checkbox"/> Significant misunderstandings in comprehension of passage	<input type="checkbox"/> Limited summary showing a number of deficiencies	<input type="checkbox"/> Disorganised	<input type="checkbox"/> Limited response to passage

Use of foreign language (16 marks)

Subtotal out of 16: ____

	Communication of ideas	Range of vocabulary	Complexity of language use	Accuracy
4	<input type="checkbox"/> Effective communication of complex ideas	<input type="checkbox"/> Ambitious range of vocabulary used	<input type="checkbox"/> Wide range of structures, including complex constructions	<input type="checkbox"/> Highly accurate with only occasional errors
3	<input type="checkbox"/> Good communication of complex ideas	<input type="checkbox"/> Appropriate range of vocabulary used	<input type="checkbox"/> Good variety of structures with some attempt at complex constructions	<input type="checkbox"/> Good level of accuracy with some errors
2	<input type="checkbox"/> Some attempt to communicate complex ideas	<input type="checkbox"/> Limited range of vocabulary hampers communication at points	<input type="checkbox"/> Structures mainly simple, with little variety	<input type="checkbox"/> A number of errors but these generally do not impede communication
1	<input type="checkbox"/> Little attempt to communicate complex ideas	<input type="checkbox"/> Simple and very limited vocabulary	<input type="checkbox"/> Structures very simple and limited in scope	<input type="checkbox"/> Many basic errors and/or errors which significantly impede communication

Question 2. How does the writer persuade us of his point of view? Please give examples from the text to support your answer.

(Total of 16 marks available)

Subtotal out of 16: _____

	Analysis	Evidence	Expression	Organisation
4	<input type="checkbox"/> Perceptive analysis of a range of techniques (even if specialised terms are not used)	<input type="checkbox"/> Highly effective and detailed examples indicated	<input type="checkbox"/> Expression is precise, fluent and very persuasive	<input type="checkbox"/> Answer is complete, with ideas organised very effectively
3	<input type="checkbox"/> Competent analysis of a range of techniques (even if specialised terms are not used)	<input type="checkbox"/> A number of effective examples indicated	<input type="checkbox"/> Expression is fairly precise and fluent	<input type="checkbox"/> Answer is reasonably full, with ideas structured coherently
2	<input type="checkbox"/> Some techniques identified	<input type="checkbox"/> Some relevant examples indicated	<input type="checkbox"/> Expression is reasonably clear but little or no evidence of more complex vocabulary or syntax	<input type="checkbox"/> Answer is a little sketchy; some evidence of an attempt to organise ideas
1	<input type="checkbox"/> Very basic response, demonstrating limited or no awareness of relevant techniques	<input type="checkbox"/> Few or no relevant examples indicated	<input type="checkbox"/> Very basic expression which sometimes hampers the communication of ideas	<input type="checkbox"/> Answer is overly brief and/or poorly organised