

Part One: Read the following short story carefully. Then do the exercises.
No dictionaries may be used for this part of the exam.

Melvin Whitebooi

Looking for Johnny September

Alice's Pub is a small bar in Uitenhage. When I walked into the place late one night I noticed a distinct pause in the jovial din¹. Even the one-man band stopped playing (I think) and I could feel the suspicious stares turning to me from every side. This sudden lull² must have
5 lasted only a few seconds. But to me it felt like eternity.

The barman was an elderly, stern-faced man. He looked at me with annoyance when I leaned over the counter to order a beer. (The loud noise and the music left me no choice.) Probably not every day that a white man walks into your bar and orders a drink, I thought. And a white man with a Transvaal³ accent to boot.

10 I looked around. The place was full. On a bench in one corner a man lay on his back. Life's burdens had become too heavy to bear and he was sleeping his cares away. The one-man band – a young guy with greasy⁴ hair and an earring – played sentimental songs from the sixties. A small group joined in lustily in the singing.

15 'So what brings you here?' a young man next to me asked out of the blue. He had an open, friendly face and short-clipped hair. He took my beer and a glass from the barman and passed them on to me.

'Just passing through,' I lied, foaming up my glass with beer. He gave me a sidelong glance over the rim of his glass. 'You know something,' he said eventually, making sure that I did not avoid his gaze, 'you're the first whitey ever to walk into this place. Why the Alice? Why not an
20 all-white pub?'

'Apartheid's dead,' I reminded him quietly. 'It's a new South Africa. We've had our elections. And now a man can go and drink where he pleases.'

'True,' he smiled. 'But don't we all prefer to be with our own kind?'

'Not necessarily. Even though I am a Transvaler.'

25 'I realized that,' he said. 'Anyway, let me not disturb you. Enjoy your drink.' As he turned to go, I put my arm on his shoulder. He turned and, for a moment, looked at me scornfully⁵.

¹ noise

² quiet period between times of activity

³ Transvaal: region in the north-east of South Africa, formerly an independent Boer (=white) republic

⁴ covered with a thick, oily substance

⁵ lacking respect

‘Don’t tell me you’re...’ ‘No, no,’ I assured him. ‘I’m a newspaper man.’ He gave me a disbelieving frown⁶. ‘...an investigative reporter for *Beeld*⁷, in Johannesburg.’ He relaxed a little with a smile that seemed to say, I’ll be your pal if you’ll be mine. ‘A reporter.’ From the way he pronounced the word it was clear that newspaper people were held in high esteem in the Eastern Cape.

‘I need some help.’ ‘What about?’ he said, uncertain. ‘Well, you know, we’re living in a new South Africa, the old one is dead and gone, that sort of thing...’

He gazed at me through earnest eyes, but a smile played around the corners of his mouth. ‘We’re planning to do a series, on, er, coloureds, brown people, if you like, who have sacrificed just as much as blacks and whites for the new South Africa. We ... the newspaper ... wondered if we couldn’t talk to the parents, the family and friends of people who fell under the old regime?’

The smile melted from his lips. ‘What’s your name?’ he asked after a long pause. Suddenly my own mouth felt dry. ‘Christiaan Louw.’ ‘And they call you Tiaan?’ he asked and laughed. I didn’t laugh, but I was glad he found it funny. ‘And you?’ ‘Joubert. Frank Joubert.’

I ordered more beer. At first he was hesitant about accepting his but took it in the end. ‘You know,’ he said later, ‘it’s the first time I’ve ever had a drink with a whitey, but ... well, you’re actually not bad for a whitey.’ In between beers we arranged that I would pick him up at his house the next day – after lunch. It seemed that for coloured people too, Sunday lunch was a very special occasion.

I told Frank about Johnny September, a young man from Uitenhage who had been shot and killed in April 1990. I was interested in Johnny September’s story, I told him.

At the mention of September a distant look of sadness filled his brown eyes. He blinked but said nothing. Then he took a long, reflective sip of beer as if to say, Is there no end to the suffering?

He knew Johnny well, he said. In fact, very well. He would take me to meet Johnny’s family. After all, it was time the world was told the story of Johnny September. Then he stood up, left half a glass of beer on the table, and walked out of the bar. I half rose to go after him, but let him go. I sat down again and stared at the foam on my beer.

That entire night I did some more staring at the ceiling. My mind refused to focus on one specific thought and instead scampered⁸ in mindless directions, tiring me out and eventually leaving me to sink into a deep sleep in the early hours of the morning.

⁶ serious, angry or worried expression on a person’s face that causes lines on their forehead

⁷ Afrikaans-language newspaper

⁸ to move quickly with short light steps

Sunday afternoon was bleak⁹ and grey with an incessant drizzle enveloping the town. I found Frank's place easily. He lived in Blikkiesdorp, so named for the number of corrugated¹⁰ tin structures that dominated what was virtually a squatter camp¹¹. His house was covered in a coating of lime¹² that had started flaking off in places. The Joubert family's tiny yard boasted the only tap for several families, and a crowd of people, all clutching buckets, clustered around it. I got out of my car and immediately felt several pairs of eyes on my back, all asking
65 the question: White man, what do you want here?

Frank opened the door before I could knock. 'Shew! I feel like yesterday's leftovers,' he groaned in greeting, looking at me through bloodshot eyes. I waited for him to invite me in but instead he took my arm and led me back to the car. We made our way to a house that was even more run-down than the Joubert home. A piece of cardboard was stuck in one of
70 the windows in the place of a pane¹³. A little girl, playing with her dolls in the shade of a tree, looked up at us as we passed her. Frank and I walked to the door, both silent.

The entire family sat waiting for us in the living room. They were all neatly dressed. It made me feel uneasy. Frank had obviously told them that I was coming and I suspected that they had dressed up especially for me.

75 Johnny's pa: You want to know about Johnny, meneer¹⁴? He was a good boy, meneer. A good boy. It's not true what the policeman said about him. He was no terroris'. Not our Johnny.

Johnny's ma: He was our only son, meneer.

80 Johnny's grandma: And a difficult birth it was. We thought ... we thought it was goodbye to both of them. But they pulled through.

Johnny's pa: I worked hard to give him a decent education. You see, we just did the lower standards, me and my wife. Then he went to Jo'burg.

Johnny's ma: To Sasol, that's where he went.

Johnny's pa: I know, dear. But that's also up there somewhere.

85 Johnny's ma: That policeman, he jus' told lies, meneer. He was no terroris', not Johnny. His friens came an' tol' us... All he did was go an' drink a few beers at a shebeen¹⁵ with his friens. He didn' even know they were ANC¹⁶. An' then that policeman went an' got himself a medal on top of it for murdering my child. Shooting him dead. Two shots in the back. He was a good child, my Johnny. Always sent us money, never skipped a month.

⁹ cold and unpleasant

¹⁰ shaped into a series of regular folds that look like waves

¹¹ place where poor people live without permission or paying rent

¹² white substance obtained by heating limestone, used in building materials

¹³ single sheet of glass in a window

¹⁴ sir, mister (*Afrikaans*)

¹⁵ (*formerly*) bar in a township where alcohol is served illegally

¹⁶ =African National Congress: political party founded in 1912 with the aim of ending racial discrimination in South Africa

90 Johnny's grandma: Also wanted to build a house for us. He use to say this one won't last long.

Johnny's ma: But we have forgiven an' forgotten, meneer. That is what the Good Book says we must do.

Johnny's pa: I went to vote, meneer. First time in my life. An' there was such peace ... that's
95 how Johnny would've wanted it to be ... to forgive ... not to bear grudges against anyone...
Later, Frank and I drove over to Johnny's girlfriend's place. We found her sitting on the stoep¹⁷, knitting. Frank had been reluctant at first to introduce me to her. He refused to give any reasons. But in the end he agreed to take me. When we arrived, Frank and this woman stared silently at each other for a few seconds. There was something in their eyes which I
100 could not explain, something private.

Johnny's girlfriend: What can I say? There will never be another Johnny. Nor do I want one again. I'm raising our child, alone. If you had known him, meneer, you would also have understood the kind of person he was. Big-hearted, a good man. Loving. (She began to sob.) Oh Lord, meneer, I miss him so! (She wiped away her tears.) But it's all over now. We look
105 ahead of us. Me and our little girl. I have forgiven.

Me: Can ... *can* one forgive?

Johnny's girlfriend: Yes. Some people forgive because they believe in the Good Book. And some of us ... some of us forgive because we can't bear the hatred any longer, because we're tired, tired to death of it. (She pressed her fists to her forehead.) But then again, take
110 our President, Mister Mandela. He has been through so much more than any of us, and yet *he* could forgive. Completely.

It was late afternoon when I stopped the car in front of Frank's door. We had driven back in silence. Yes, he had taken me to others who also knew Johnny, but everywhere the story was the same.

115 He turned now to look at me, his eyes very dark. 'She left me for Johnny,' he said. 'And then he actually had the decency to ask me to forgive him. He disarmed me totally with this. That was Johnny for you. You couldn't help but like the man.'

He opened the door. I took his arm.

120 'Let it be,' he said, 'Mandela has forgiven. Johnny's parents have forgiven. It's a new country, a new beginning.'

Then he looked straight at me. 'How old were you in April 1990? Nineteen? Twenty?' My head reeled.

'Did you ... did you know all along?' I asked, my hand already extended to say goodbye.

125 He didn't answer, and only hesitated for a moment before he took my hand. He got out, closed the door and walked towards the house without looking back.

¹⁷ veranda (SA English)

I didn't turn the engine back on, just sat there. Is this what I came for, I wondered. Forgiveness? To be assured that Johnny's people had forgiven us for everything that we had done to them?

130 There were people who had been brainwashed into believing that someone like Johnny September was a terrorist, a murderer, a dangerous man.

I know that, because I was the policeman who shot dead Johnny September.

Note: All the following exercises are contextual. The meaning of the given words and expressions in the exercises is the same as in the story.



Reading Comprehension and Text Interpretation

Answer the questions in your own words. Make complete sentences (28 points).

1. "Life's burdens had become too heavy to bear and he was sleeping his cares away." (l. 10-11) Explain.

2. What made Johnny September special to his parents/grandparents? What account do they give of his life and character?

3. Why was Johnny September shot? Consider the different pieces of information/the two sides in the story.

4. What reasons does Johnny's girlfriend give why she and the people in South Africa in general somehow manage to leave the past behind?

5. How does it become obvious from the very beginning on that the I-narrator must be personally involved in the whole story, despite his introduction as a 'newspaper man'?

6. What other hints throughout the story foreshadow the ending? Name three examples.

7. Where can we see that Frank is a prime example of forgiveness in the new South Africa?

Synonyms

Give one-word synonyms for the following words that fit the gaps in the text. Phrasal verbs and compound nouns count as one word (10 points).

distinct (l. 3)		entire (l. 56)	
eventually (l. 18)		virtually (l. 61)	
earnest (l. 34)		neatly (l. 72)	
melted (l. 39)		skipped (l. 89)	
rose (l. 54)		sob (l. 103)	

Dictionary Definitions

What words out of the text do the following dictionary definitions describe? Watch the word class given (7 points)!

1. happening or done quickly and unexpectedly (adj., l. 1-31)

→ _____

2. to produce a mass of small bubbles (v., l. 1-31)

→ _____

3. slow to speak or act because you feel uncertain, embarrassed or unwilling (adj., l. 32-65)

→ _____

4. constant, never stopping (adj., l. 32-65)

→ _____

5. feelings of anger or dislike towards somebody because of something bad they have done to you in the past (n., l. 66-95)

→ _____

6. honest, polite behaviour that follows accepted moral standards and shows respect for others (n., l. 96-131)

→ _____

7. to seem to be spinning around and around (v., l. 96-131)

→ _____

Pronunciation

What sounds are there in the underlined parts of the following words from the text?

1. Circle the correct sound from the list and

2. write another word you can think of with the same sound in it (12 points).

Example: night (l. 1) : / i: / / eɪ / / ɔɪ / (/ aɪ /) buy

1. sudden (l. 4) : / aɪ / / æ / / ʌ / / ɒ / _____

2. eternity (l. 5) : / ɒ / / ə / / ɜ: / / eə / _____

3. bench (l. 10) : / ʃ / / ʒ / / tʃ / / dʒ / _____

4. bear (l. 11) : / eə / / ɪə / / æ / / əʊ / _____

5. shoulder (l. 26) : / aʊ / / əʊ / / ʊə / / ɔ: / _____

6. stood (l. 53) : / ʊ / / u: / / ə / / ʌ / _____

Word Formation

Write the part of speech indicated. *-ing/-ed* endings are not accepted (7 points)!

- | | | | | |
|-------------------------|---|------|---|-------|
| 1. suspicious (l. 4) | → | v. | : | _____ |
| 2. pleases (l. 22) | → | adj. | : | _____ |
| 3. prefer (l. 23) | → | n. | : | _____ |
| 4. necessarily (l. 24) | → | n. | : | _____ |
| 5. investigative (l.28) | → | v. | : | _____ |
| 6. refused (l. 97) | → | n. | : | _____ |
| 7. decency (l. 116) | → | adj. | : | _____ |

Mixed Grammar

Complete the second sentence so that it has a similar meaning to the first one. Use the word given in **bold**, without changing it. Do not write more than six words – and watch your punctuation (14 points).

1. In between beers we arranged that I would pick him up the next day. (l. 44-45)

you

While we were having some beers, I told him: _____
_____.

2. A piece of cardboard was stuck in one of the windows in the place of a pane. (l. 69-70)

of

They _____ in one of the windows in the pane.

3. Oh Lord, meneer, I miss him so! But it's all over now. (l. 104)

wish

Oh Lord, meneer, _____. But it's all over now.

4. Johnny's girlfriend: 'What can I say? There will never be another Johnny.' (l. 101)

asked; added

Johnny's girlfriend _____ and
_____ another Johnny.

5. What's your name? (l. 39)

wonder

I _____.

6. 'True,' he smiled. 'But don't we all prefer to be with our own kind?' (l. 23)

rather

'True', he smiles. 'But _____ with our own kind?'

7. There were people who had been brainwashed into believing that someone like Johnny September was a terrorist. (l. 129-130)

not

If people had not been brainwashed _____
_____ that someone like Johnny September was a terrorist.

8. Mandela has forgiven, Johnny's parents have forgiven. It's a new country, a new beginning. (l. 119-120)

forgive

If people _____ new beginning.

9. What can I say? (l. 101)

happen

Do you _____ say?

10. You couldn't help but like the man. (l. 117)

didn't

Everybody _____?

11. I told Frank about Johnny September, a young man from Uitenhage, who had been shot and killed in April 1990. (l. 47-48)

somebody

I said to Frank: 'Johnny September was a young man from Uitenhage. _____
_____ in April 1990.'

12. 'So what brings you here?' a young man asked me out of the blue. (l. 14)

unexpectedly

A young man asked me _____.

13. 'Let it be,' he said. (l. 119)

advised

He _____.

Language

Study the section where the narrator and Frank go to meet Johnny's family carefully (l. 75-95). Johnny's family speak Coloured South African English (CSAE). Choose three examples and thus name some of the distinctive features (=characteristics) of CSAE (6 points).

Example: a Sentence: *He was no terroris'.*

b Distinctive feature: *omission of last letter/ last consonant in a word*

1. Sentence: _____

 Distinctive feature: _____

2. Sentence: _____

 Distinctive feature: _____

3. Sentence: _____

 Distinctive feature: _____

Verb Forms

Fill in the gaps in the newspaper commentary below with a correct tense form/pattern of the verb(s) in brackets (16 points).

I see clouds gathering over the rainbow nation – Graham Boynton on South Africa 20 years after Nelson Mandela’s release

It _____ (be) a day I thought I _____ (never/see). _____ (spend) my youth as a sporadically active anti-apartheidist, not in my wildest dreams did I think I would witness Mandela¹⁸ walking free. I _____ (do), and thus proved that predicting the ebb and flow of African politics was a mug’s game.



In the four years between that famous day and Mandela’s swearing in as South Africa’s first democratically elected president, I was equally certain a peaceful outcome was impossible. But despite Zulus _____ (threaten/engage) in civil war with Xhosas, and white Afrikaner hardliners trying to blow the constitutional talks, out of this combustible landscape came Mandela’s Rainbow Nation.

Now, 20 years on, I cannot but feel that dark clouds _____ (gather). Mandela’s success at instilling patriotism and of transforming the ruling African National Congress from a liberation movement to a democratic political party

¹⁸ Nelson Mandela, anti-apartheid activist, leader of the armed wing of the ANC, imprisoned for 27 years, released in 1990, first South African President elected in democratic elections; in power from 1994 to 1999.

_____ (be) all but undone during the rule of Thabo Mbeki¹⁹, his strange, remote successor.

Mbeki's refusal to deal appropriately with the country's AIDS epidemic, his support for Zimbabwe's despotic president Mugabe and his inability to address the growth of institutional corruption _____ (leave) the country in a precarious state. To expect a moral turnaround from his successor Jacob Zuma²⁰, a wild populist with a history of dubious fiscal and sexual encounters, is probably asking too much.

Meanwhile the gap between poor and rich _____ (continue/widen), the country's crime rate _____ (keep) soaring and there are signs that democratic institutions _____ (challenge). Many of the socio-economic problems were deferred by the construction boom tied to the Football World Cup of 2010. That South Africa was the only African nation capable _____ (hold) such a major international sporting event was an achievement in itself, but if it is to avoid becoming as dysfunctional as the rest of the continent in the years following, it _____ (have) to return to the values that Mandela so brilliantly _____ (articulate) 20 years ago. I _____ (not be) too optimistic, but then I _____ (be) consistently wrong up to now.

(Adapted from *The Daily Telegraph*)

¹⁹ Thabo Mbeki, South African President from 1999 to 2008.

²⁰ Jacob Zuma, President since 2009.

Part Two: Choose one of the following topics and write a composition of about 250 words. You may use your English-English dictionary for this part of the exam.

1. "The weak can never forgive. Forgiveness is the attribute of the strong."

Your thoughts on a quotation by Mahatma Ghandi (1869-1948, Indian philosopher).

2. "To forgive is to set a prisoner free and discover that the prisoner was you." (Lewis B. Smedes, 1922-2002, American professor of theology and ethicist)

Discuss.

3. "If you are neutral in situations of injustice, you have chosen the side of the oppressor. If an elephant has its foot on the tail of a mouse and you say that you are neutral, the mouse will not appreciate your neutrality." (Desmond Tutu, *1931, South African archbishop emeritus)

Your reflections upon neutrality.

4. "Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world."

How far do you agree with Nelson Mandela's statement? What are the chances, where are the limitations? Discuss.