



ST. MARGARET'S SCHOOL (SECONDARY)

Preliminary Examinations 2026

CANDIDATE NAME

CLASS

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REGISTER NUMBER

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ENGLISH LANGUAGE

1184/02

Paper 2 Comprehension

17 August 2026

INSERT

1 hour 50 minutes

Secondary 4 Express and 5 Normal Academic

Additional Materials: Question Paper

READ THESE INSTRUCTIONS FIRST

This Insert contains Text 1, Text 2, Text 3 and Text 4.

Section A

Study the online advertisement (**Text 1**) and the news report (**Text 2**) and answer Questions 1–4 in the Question Paper.

Text 1 is an online advertisement taken from a school's website.

NFEC National Fire And Civil Emergency Preparedness Council

Joint Community Project by Town Councils, Singapore Civil Defence Force & National Fire and Civil Emergency Preparedness Council

Guidelines On The Use Of Common Areas In HDB Estates

Ambulance crew and a wheelchair-bound person require at least 1.2m clear width for access	Clear width of 1.2m with placement of small shoe rack	Obstruction to emergency crew access due to constricted corridor
Clear staircase and landing at all times	Obstruction to means of escape (staircase)	Excessive storage of combustibles
No storage of items within wet/dry riser compartment		Storage of items within hosereel compartment

Text 2 is taken from a news report about an accident along a cluttered HDB corridor.

In January this year, Chen's family was also affected by her neighbour's alleged hoarding — as two of her children were leaving home in a stroller, a slipper got caught in the wheels, purportedly causing both her daughter and son to fall out.

While her son was unharmed, her 18-month-old daughter cut her upper inner lip on her teeth.

"My daughter's lip got cut just because of my neighbours' behaviour, hoarding things like that and blocking the corridor," Chen recalled in frustration.

She added: "We are suffering whenever we walk in and out, and I also worry how I can escape with my four young children if a fire happens."

Adapted from
<https://www.asiaone.com/singapore/serangoon-resident-police-report-children-fall-neighbour-corridor-clutter>

Section B

Text 3

In the text below, the writer describes a journey to a friend's house.

Read the text carefully and answer Questions 5–15 in the Question Paper.

- 1 The cold has come, causing the country to lie down and curl up around itself. A couple of weeks ago, the trees and bushes were still lounging around, frothing with fevered leaves and seed, stretching, the grasses dizzy over my head. Now the exuberance is gone, leaving jaundiced pine trees, berries shrivelled up, grasses pale and brittle as though the frost has sucked the green resilience out of them. Yesterday's wind has turned the remaining leaves to bare their undersides like submissive bellies; it has flattened the grasses so they all lie in one direction. I bully my way through, kicking loose the snarls that catch my feet. The morning's frost flakes off and sprinkles down. 5
- 2 It is only when I reach the highway that the sun clears the trees. It is warmer, instantly. It is early and a Saturday; there's no traffic this far out the road. Most people are still waking up, drinking coffee beside stoked stoves and staring out windows at reminders of chores to be done before freeze-up: gardens to be turned, skirting to be nailed, wood to be split and stacked. The first hard frost, no matter how late, always comes before any of us is ready. 10 15
- 3 When I turn off to your place, I study the ruts¹, wondering if you are really here. You said you would be when we talked. 'This weekend for sure,' you said, sounding guilty, regretful. The ruts in the driveway don't tell me much. The mud's frozen hard, tyre tracks printed in it. Where it was wettest, it's crystallised like quartz, pointed spears of brown ice radiating from each pit. They crunch under my feet, shattering. It's clear that no one has driven in or out this morning. 20
- 4 When I reach the top of the rise, I can see the roof of your house. The shakes² catch the sunlight the same as the grass, the cedar burnished like gold. But it is the chimney I watch. Straining my sight, I look for the wavy distortion the heat from a dampered, smokeless fire causes. The trees stand still as a painted backdrop. I keep walking toward your house. As it materialises, top to bottom, I think of the summer you built it. Seven years later, there it is—still standing, still surprising me. 25
- 5 As I get closer, the look of desertion looms larger. The yard grows wild: nettles collapsed and wild weeds sprawled. I climb the many steps, the sound of my boots a thudding of arrival. The door is padlocked. I tug on the lock, testing. When it holds, I move down the porch, nudging with my foot at a coffee can along the way. It's empty except for a stiff paintbrush. 30

¹ deep, narrow marks made in the ground by the wheels of a vehicle

² part of the roof of a house

- 6 Sitting on the edge of your porch, I let my legs dangle. Snowfields divide the
pale sky from the water below as though bleeding off the colour, draining it 35
down the cracked and broken glaciers to the concentrated, undiluted blue of
the bay. I see the fencepost of your garden. There it is, the old plot, looking
small and indistinguishable from the rest of the field. It's all weeds, as far as I
can tell, strung high and some climbing vines. All laced together. I stand up,
wondering where I can find something to write a note with—charcoal, wax, 40
anything—but there's nothing here, in this place, grayed out and gone to
seed, just like the garden that is before me.

Adapted from *Small Potatoes* by Nancy Lord

Section C

Text 4

In the text below, the writer discusses the impact of the Battle of the Oranges, one of the most unique festivals in Italy.

Read the text carefully and answer Questions 16–21 in the Question Paper.

- 1 Ivrea, at the foot of the Alps, is one of the most beautiful villages in Piedmont. It is famous for its characteristic Carnival of Ivrea, the oldest historical carnival in Italy, dating back to the Middle Ages. It is not just a folkloristic event, but a re-enactment of a popular rebellion in 1200. The rebellion is commemorated every year through a beautiful ceremony composed of ritual and historical characters, and by the Battle of the Oranges. 5
- 2 The Battle of the Oranges, Italy's largest and most violent food fight, can be traced back to the twelfth century. It has its roots in the medieval legend of the revolt against a tyrant. Today, for three days in February, Ivrea turns into a raucous battleground. It is played between nine teams of walking orange trees on foot, who represent the people who revolted, and the orange-throwers known as 'Aranceri' on horsedrawn carriages, who play the role of the feudal armies. They engage in battle at fighting arenas across the city with oranges as the sole ammunition. 10
- 3 The story behind this spectacular event is about freedom and identity, celebrated with enthusiasm and dedication. The city proudly defends its tradition and regards this as an example of civic education and collective participation. However, it is also often criticised, and rightly so for its violence. For novice and seasoned participants alike, the weight of the oranges and the sting of juice combine to create a painful weapon, especially since most fight without protection. Participants come away with bloody noses, eye damage, facial trauma and bruises. In 2026, it was reported that 138 people were injured, with seventeen requiring hospitalisation. 15 20
- 4 Despite being a re-enactment, the intensity of the battle is high with oranges hurled at high speeds. It can be overwhelming for spectators, as it is a literal fight against the people on the carts. Unprepared spectators can get severely bruised accidentally by flying oranges and debris, especially if they are not wearing the protective red hat that signals non-participation. Many of the Italians are disturbed by the brutality of the battle which they regard as uncivilised. 25 30
- 5 Approximately 500,000 kilogrammes of oranges are thrown annually, creating a massive, slippery and sticky mess of pulp throughout the city's streets. Critics argue that destroying such massive amounts of produce is unethical and wasteful, especially given the global food security, prompting ongoing

debate regarding its sustainability. Nevertheless, the organisers are always quick to defend themselves stating that the oranges are usually of lower-quality, non-commercial grade sourced from certified companies. Many of these oranges would have otherwise been thrown out or composted. 35

6 Some residents question the high expense of organising the three-day event, arguing it is a costly spectacle that causes extensive chaos and inconvenience for the residents. The areas get extremely congested and noisy. The festival's aftermath means days of cleaning to clear up the pulp that has clogged the streets. Even so, cobblestones are left with invisible residue that tyres and shoes will skid on dangerously for weeks to come. 40

7 While the Battle of the Oranges is a spectacle, at its heart, it remains a solemn nod to a town's resilient spirit. The re-enactment serves as a yearly reminder of the lengths to which the oppressed will go to claim their freedom. Admittedly messy, it is a jubilant celebration which embodies a sense of belonging through a shared history. Economically, the festival is considered a major tourist attraction, driving significant revenue for local restaurants, hotels and souvenir vendors of the small city. 45 50

Adapted from <https://www.visititaly.eu/places-and-tours/historic-ivrea-carnival-battle-of-oranges>
and <https://italysegreta.com/ivreas-battle-of-the-oranges/>