

## Grade 9 English Home Language

### Comprehension, language and writing tasks

Based on *Idea War: Volume 1* by Abi Godsell

### Comprehension and language questions

#### Comprehension Question 1

Read the extract below and answer the questions that follow.

- 1 “Christopher Belle, pay attention!” The teacher’s voice cut through the classroom noise like a laser. Heads turned, a girl with blue-ribboned pigtails sniggered. There was a moment of silence. It stretched.
- Twenty-four desks played holos of silently rotating gold atoms. Only one didn’t.
- 5 Above its shiny plastic top whirled the model of Entropy that the class had been studying ten minutes ago.
- The blonde boy sitting behind it was still staring out of the window. The Educator gave a heartfelt sigh. Teaching the ‘development’ stream on Mondays always gave her a headache.
- 10 “Christopher Belle.”
- The boy continued to stare.
- Christopher Belle remained oblivious.
- “Mr Belle. I am waiting.”
- “Do you want to pull this class into the bottom quintile?”
- 15 Christopher Belle looked up. He hadn’t heard the question, but when Educator Cripps used that tone she could only be talking about one thing. Adopting a shy look of slightly gormless apprehension he shook his head, “N-no Ma’am.”
- “Good. Even if you are not riveted by this thermodynamics lesson, at least pretend to keep up with the class.”
- 20 There was some nervous laughter.
- “Right you horrible lot! Now that we’re all awake, would someone be nice enough to tell Christopher our current projection code?”
- A pudgy girl with tinted prescription glasses looked up from the aquarium she was

coding into the corner of her holo-screen. Tonelessly she rattled off a string of digits.  
25 Giving the teacher a winning and apologetic smile, Chris voiced them in. Then he sat,  
motionless and attentive as the swirling entropic forces pixelated out to be replaced with  
the spinning gold atom. Educator Cripps eyed him for a moment longer, then strode  
back to the central screen and continued the science class with an air of resignation.  
Belle would probably need yelling at again before the class was over. She made a  
30 mental note to send a comment to his Life Orientation Bot. Then she transferred her  
attention back to the rest of the learners, flagged as slow by the school optimisation  
algorithm, who formed her current development stream.

At his desk by the window, Chris pretended to stare avidly at the rotating info-  
graphic, watching as the tiny South Africans joined hands with the tiny cartoon Chinese  
35 military and held the atom together despite the onslaught of entropic forces. He pressed  
the ‘More info!’ button and twiddled the opacity gauge. Immediately his screen  
widened and whitened, hiding him from the class behind a white page. Learners didn’t  
often press the ‘More info!’ button, but he’d been working on his ADHD act for a while  
now so hopefully the Educator would think it was normal.

40 Chris risked a look outside.

She was still there, crouched against the fence and holding her side with a hand that  
was covered in blood.

Modified from *Idea War: Volume 1*, Chapter 2: Chain Link Fence

### Questions:

1. How is Christopher’s behaviour different to that of the other children in the class?  
(2)
2. What does the author mean with the word ‘holos’? Why do you think she used this  
word?  
(2)
3. How did Christopher hide himself from Educator Cripps’ view?  
(1)
4. This piece imagines a future Johannesburg schoolroom. Name two examples of words  
used to help the reader realise that this is in the future.  
(2)

5. Quote two examples to show that Educator Cripps doesn't like teaching the development stream. (2)
- 6.1 Write down a different word for *pixelated* so that it still makes sense in the text. (1)
- 6.2 What do the following words mean? (4)
- a) gormless (line 17)
  - b) riveted (line 18)
  - c) apprehension (line 17)
  - d) opacity (line 36)
6. What does the abbreviation ADHD stand for? (1)
8. Name the parts of speech of the following words: (5)
- a) sniggered (line 2)
  - b) heartfelt (line 8)
  - c) slightly (line 16)
  - d) apologetic (line 25)
  - e) someone (line 21)

### Comprehension Question 2

Read the extract below and answer the questions that follow.

1	Chris remembered then that time last year that the Government had taken his class to the Rainbow-National Wildlife Preserve out north. They'd been watching a lion pride eating their weekly impala. His cousin had told him once that the game rangers shot the impala in the leg first so that visitors were guaranteed to see a kill. The Government
5	communicator had been lecturing about teamwork and unity and sacrifice or something. He hadn't been listening. He'd been looking for bullet holes in the impala. When he couldn't find any, he'd looked up, bored, and seen the jackal. No one else had. You had to look through the other window of the game viewing bus.  It had been a pretty ragged jackal, scrawny and young with dust tipping its thin fur.

10	<p>For a while it had just looked at him with its cool, golden eyes. It hadn't been the eyes that fascinated him, or the fact that it was a jackal. He'd seen lots of those scavenging in city bins before the Pest Control Programme. It hadn't been any physical characteristic of the small canine, unless you counted placement. The jackal had been on the wrong side of the fence.</p>
15	<p>The girl was still leaning against the fence, her hand clasped at her side, her beads glinting in the sun.</p> <p>Suddenly he remembered where he'd seen those colours before, the blue, green, black and white of the girl's beads.</p> <p>They were Rebel colours.</p>
20	<p>The pit of Chris's stomach went cold. She was a rebel. He turned slowly to stare at her. The girl on the other side of the fence was a rebel. A wanted criminal. His cousin would have said freedom fighter. Dad would've said terrorist.</p> <p>The rebel on the fence wasn't looking at him anymore. She turned her face, lightning quick to the top of the road and froze. Chris looked too, trying to see what she saw.</p>
25	<p>It was a tank. One of the Urban models, grey and silenced.</p> <p>Chris stood up, open-mouthed. The tank glided to a halt behind her. Its gun turret began swinging round and stopped as its computer guidance registered the school.</p> <p>Educator Whatever was yelling at him, but he didn't care. She barked out an order and every child was out of their chair, and curling into the memory-foam Bomb Pods</p>
30	<p>below their desks. The jackal-girl was climbing desperately now, already almost at the top. The soldiers took aim behind her.</p> <p>The girl pulled herself to the top and balanced for a moment gasping.</p> <p>“—on't be scared! It's okay! They're not gonna shoot you. They don't—”</p> <p>Not even the classroom's bulletproof windows muffled the guns' report.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Modified from <i>Idea War: Volume 1</i>, Chapter 2: Chain Link Fence</p>	

**Questions:**

1. Why did Chris think of the jackal incident at this time? (1)
  
2. What clues does the author give the reader to make it clear that the story takes place

- in South Africa? (2)
3. Are the words 'terrorist' and 'freedom fighter' synonyms? Why does the author use these words to describe the same thing? (2)
4. Why do you think the rebel hid at a school? (1)
5. Why do you think the girl was attacked? (1)
6. Rewrite this sentence to make it sound like Chris was listening and interested in what the Government Communicator was saying:  
'The Government communicator had been lecturing about teamwork and unity and sacrifice or something.'  
(2)
7. In line 25 the author uses the word *urban*. What does this imply about the tanks? Use this word in a sentence of your own. (2)
8. Is the use of the apostrophe in *He'd been looking* in line 6 correct? Explain your answer. (2)
9. Name the parts of speech of the following words:  
a) pride (line 2)  
b) bored (line 7)  
c) swinging (line 27)  
d) barked (line 28)  
e) top (line 32) (5)
10. If you had to design a cover for this book, explain which imagery you would use. (2)

## Summary

Read the text below, then summarise it in no more than 80 words. You must use your own words. Include an accurate word count, in brackets, beneath the final draft of your summary.

Chris's desk vibrated suddenly. He had a message. Waving it open he scanned the contents warily.

“change holos you moron.”

The username was Th4nd3ka. He turned to glance suspiciously over at the girl a couple of desks behind him. She sat motionless, her eyes obscured by the sim-fish she was coding, swimming orange and blue across her screen and reflecting in her glasses. Narrowing his eyes Chris looked around the class. He was a couple of projections behind. Hastily he craned his neck to try and spot the correct code. His desk purred again.

“1645. chop.”

He frowned, wary again, but the Educator could be on him any moment. Taking a deep breath he muttered the numbers in. The correct screen came up and Chris blinked. He'd expected some kind of trick to get him in trouble. Irregular stream-ins like him were notoriously picked on by stable classes. Even stable 'development' classes.

Already Ribbons and Alice Band had made it clear he wasn't welcome here. This Th4nd3ka chick was interesting though. She might just be on the level. Of course, she could just be pretending to be nice to get him into more trouble later, like that guy in his last stream.

Cautiously he messaged back, “thanks”.

The reply was instantaneous, “chop”.

Chris shrugged. Maybe she was just a girl. Nelson had already warned him that girls were crazy.

Modified from *Idea War: Volume 1*, Chapter 2: Chain Link Fence

## Writing tasks

1. Write a paragraph. If you had to attend a school in the future, what do you imagine would change?  
(5)
2. Imagine you are Chris. Write his diary entry of what happened in school today given the pieces above.  
(10)



3. Using the map of the Idea War area below, explain to someone who has never read futuristic writing how Johannesburg has changed in two paragraphs.

(10)



## Memorandum

### Answers for Comprehension Question 1

1. He is staring at something else and is behind with the classwork. He doesn't hear the Educator speaking to him.
2. It is a shortened or colloquial word for hologram. The author uses this word to make it sound like an everyday technology, making it clear that this is a futuristic world in which the story takes place.
3. He pressed the More info! button which made his screen whiten, so he could hide behind it. Usually the screens are see-through.
4. Any two: holos, Life Orientation Bot, the teacher is instead called an Educator, Chris's infographic revolves, he needs a projection code to carry on with his classwork.
5. Teaching them 'always gives her a headache'. She calls them a 'horrible lot'.

6.1 Zoomed

6.2 What do the following words mean?

- a) unintelligent/dull/dense
  - b) engrossed/fascinated
  - c) anxiety/uneasiness/nervousness
  - d) see through/cloudiness
7. Attention deficit hyperactivity disorder
8. a) verb  
b) adjective  
c) adverb  
d) adjective  
e) pronoun

### Answers for Comprehension Question 2

1. The girl was also on the wrong side of the fence, looking at him.
2. There are lions and impalas, he talks about a jackal. He uses the term 'freedom fighter'.
3. No. To explain that his family has different opinions about the rebels.
4. Learners' own opinion, for example: Because the tanks would hesitate to shoot at a school.



5. Learners' own opinion, for example: Because she was a rebel and had been breaking the law.
6. The Government communicator was telling us about teamwork, unity and sacrifice.
7. That they are meant to do battle in cities. I live in the urban part of South Africa.
8. Yes, the apostrophe replaces the word had.
9. Name the parts of speech of the following words:
  - a) collective noun
  - b) adjective
  - c) verb
  - d) verb
  - e) preposition
10. Learners own answers relevant to the text. They could use the following: the rebel colors, the jackal, a class, a fence.