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Western Cape Government
Education

Grade 12 Literature Setwork

NSC and SC Examination Question Papers and Memoranda
(Marking Guidelines)

English Home Language: Novels

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The Picture of Dorian Gray	Oscar Wilde	2
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***LIFE OF PI* – Yann Martel**

Answer EITHER QUESTION 8 (essay question) OR QUESTION 9 (contextual question).

QUESTION 8: *LIFE OF PI* – ESSAY QUESTION

It is true that the characters we encounter can change us, sometimes so profoundly that we are not the same afterwards.

Critically discuss the validity of this statement in relation to Pi.

Your response should take the form of a well-constructed essay of 400–450 words (2–2½ pages). **[25]**

QUESTION 9: *LIFE OF PI* – CONTEXTUAL QUESTION

Read the extracts below and then answer the questions that follow.

EXTRACT C

Then the elderly man said, 'I have a story that will make you believe in God.'

…

'It starts right here in Pondicherry just a few years back, and it ends, I am delighted to tell you, in the very country you come from.'

'And it will make me believe in God?'

'Yes.'

'That's a tall order.'

'Not so tall that you can't reach.'

My waiter appeared. I hesitated for a moment. I ordered two coffees. We introduced ourselves. His name was Francis Adirubasamy.

'Please tell me your story,' I said.

'You must pay proper attention,' he replied.

'I will.' I brought out pen and notepad.

…

Later, in Toronto, among nine columns of Patels in the phone book, I found him, the main character. My heart pounded as I dialled his phone number. The voice that answered had an Indian lilt to its Canadian accent, light but unmistakable, like a trace of incense in the air. 'That was a very long time ago,' he said. Yet he agreed to meet.

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We met many times. He showed me the diary he kept during the events. He showed me the yellowed newspaper clippings that made him briefly, obscurely famous. He told me his story. All the while I took notes. Nearly a year later, after considerable difficulties, I received a tape and a report from the Japanese Ministry of Transport. It was as I listened to that tape that I agreed with Mr Adirubasamy that this was, indeed, a story to make you believe in God. 20

[Author's note]

9.1 Place the extract in context. (2)

9.2 Describe the relationship between Mr Adirubasamy and Pi. (2)

9.3 Refer to line 4: *'And it will make me believe in God?'*

Account for the narrator's tone in this line. (2)

9.4 Refer to line 2: *'It starts right here in Pondicherry just a few years back'.*

Explain how the lessons Pi learnt in Pondicherry manifest in his later life in Canada. (3)

9.5 Refer to lines 21–22: *'It was as …'/'believe in God.'*

Drawing on your knowledge of the novel as a whole, discuss how Pi's story might make the author 'believe in God'. (3)

AND

EXTRACT D

I wished for her anger. I wished for her to punish me. Only not this silence. I made to arrange some life jackets for the sailor's comfort so that I could be next to her. I whispered, 'I'm sorry, Mother, I'm sorry.' My eyes were brimming with tears. When I brought them up, I saw that hers were too. But she didn't look at me. Her eyes were gazing upon some memory in mid-air. 5

'We're all alone, Piscine, all alone,' she said, in a tone that broke every hope in my body.

…

He cut up everything, including the sailor's skin and every inch of his intestines. He even prepared his genitals. When he had finished with his torso, he moved on to his arms and shoulders and to his legs. Mother and I rocked with pain and horror. Mother shrieked at the cook, 'How can you do this, you monster? Where is your humanity? Have you no decency?' 10

…

We each had our end of the lifeboat. It's amazing how willpower can build walls. Whole days went by as if he weren't there.

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But we couldn't ignore him entirely. He was a brute, but a practical brute. He was good with his hands and he knew the sea. He was full of good ideas. He was the one who thought of building a raft to help with the fishing. If we survived any time at all, it was thanks to him. I helped him as best I could. [Chapter 99]	15

9.6 Refer to line 3: 'I'm sorry, Mother, I'm sorry.'

Account for Pi's feelings at this stage of the novel. (3)

9.7 Discuss how the French cook influences Pi's responses to his circumstances. (3)

9.8 Refer to line 13: 'We each had our end of the lifeboat.'

Discuss the significance of maintaining boundaries in the context of the novel. (3)

9.9 Using this extract as a starting point and your knowledge of the novel as a whole, critically discuss how the novel demonstrates that Pi's survival relies on his dependence on others. (4)
[25]

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***LIFE OF PI* - Yann Martel**

QUESTION 8: *LIFE OF PI* – ESSAY QUESTION

- Here is the basis for answering this essay. Use the following as a guideline only. However, also allow for answers that are different, original and show evidence of critical thought and interpretation.
- A range of examples may be used by the candidates to support their arguments.
- Refer to page 24 for the rubric to assess this question.

Candidates might refer to characters in either or both versions of the story.

Candidates might argue that those whom Pi encounters change him and he will never be the innocent/naive young boy he was. Without these encounters, Pi might not have had the strength of character or survival skills to endure the suffering that he faced and to emerge with his humanity intact.

- Mr Adirubasamy's teaching Pi to swim saves his life when the Tsimtsum sinks. Pi also learns the skill of storytelling from him, which enables him to keep his mind occupied on the lifeboat and prevents him from descending into depression and madness.
- Pi refers to both Mr Kumars as 'the prophets' of his 'Indian youth'. They represent two apparently opposing views of religion and science. However, Pi comes to the realisation that their views are complementary. This encourages him to study both zoology and theology.
- Mr Kumar, the Biology teacher, teaches Pi to pay close attention to detail and it is this acute sense of observation that enables Pi to survive at sea.
- All three of Pi's religious mentors instil in him a strong sense of faith which sustains him on the lifeboat. His exposure to different religions encourages him to be tolerant and open-minded. All of their teachings define the way he lives his life.
- When Pi is on the lifeboat with the French cook, he encounters the brutality and savagery that humans are capable of. It is only through the French cook's lessons on survival that Pi is able to endure his ordeal.
- The adult Pi still bears the scars of the bestial acts of murder he engages in on the lifeboat. He has to live with the guilt of having taken a life to save his own.
- Pi's relationship with Richard Parker sustains him and gives him hope throughout his ordeal. Taming him keeps Pi occupied and prevents him from sinking into depression.
- Pi's assuming of Richard Parker's persona enables him to distance himself from the horrific things he has to do. However, the adult Pi still suffers from the guilt and trauma of his actions.
- The disbelief of the Japanese officials to Pi's story forces him to revise the story thus compelling him to acknowledge the inherent evil of which he is capable.
- Candidates might refer to the influence Pi's parents have on the person he becomes.

[Consider mixed/valid alternative responses.] **[25]**

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QUESTION 9: *LIFE OF PI* – CONTEXTUAL QUESTION

9.1 The narrator, who is travelling through India searching for inspiration for a novel, encounters an elderly man in a coffee shop in Pondicherry. He is intrigued when he is told that the narrator is a writer. The elderly man proceeds to tell the narrator the story that follows.

[Award 2 marks for two ideas.] (2)

9.2 Mr Adirubasamy and Pi share a close bond. Pi affectionately refers to him as Mamaji. He takes Pi under his wing and teaches him to swim. Pi sees Mamaji as his mentor and he looks forward to his praise. Even though he lives on a different continent, the adult Pi maintains contact with Mamaji.

[Award 2 marks for two distinct ideas.] (2)

9.3 The narrator's tone is disbelieving/cynical/suspicious. He is sceptical about Mr Adirubasamy's assertion. Initially, he is suspicious as he believes that Mr Adirubasamy is an evangelist seeking to convert him to a particular faith.

[Award 2 marks only if tone is discussed.] (2)

9.4 As a child Pi learnt about the value of love and family. This is later manifested in the close bonds he shares with his own family. He developed a passion for God and a belief in the universality of all religions. His choice of theology as a field of study and his home in Canada reflect the continuation of these beliefs. The love and respect for animals that he developed as a child later influences his choice of career.

[Award 3 marks for two ideas well discussed OR three distinct ideas.] (3)

9.5 It is a miracle that Pi survives at sea for the length of time that he does without being attacked by Richard Parker or falling foul to the other dangers that surround him. Pi's faith sustains him and enables him to transcend the impossible odds he faces.

OR

The version of the story Pi narrates to the Japanese officials is indicative of his will to survive at any cost and his belief that God will sustain him. It is this belief that enables him to engage in the barbaric acts he commits in order to survive.

[Candidates may refer to either one or both versions of the story for 3 marks.]

[Consider valid alternative responses on their merit.] (3)

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9.6 Pi and the cook have eaten all the biscuits. He is now feeling ashamed and guilty because he has shown a lack of concern for the others who are also hungry. Pi's mother's silence hurts him and he apologises for upsetting her.

[Award 3 marks for two ideas well discussed OR three distinct ideas.] (3)

9.7 The French cook's behaviour sets an example for Pi to follow. He becomes increasingly capable of savagery in order to survive. Pi learns to be brutal and unfeeling after witnessing how the cook kills the sailor and, later, Pi's mother. He commits homicide and engages in cannibalism, which are actions he would never have contemplated prior to his encounter with the cook.

[Award 3 marks for two ideas well discussed OR three distinct ideas.] (3)

9.8 Pi and his mother separate themselves from the cook for their safety and as a way of rejecting his immoral behaviour. The issue of establishing boundaries is also evident in the first story when Pi physically distances himself from Richard Parker for the purposes of survival. In the second version, when Pi assumes the alter ego of Richard Parker, he does so to separate the violent side of his nature from that of the innocent boy he was.

[Award 3 marks for two ideas well discussed OR three distinct ideas.] (3)

9.9 In this extract, Pi realises that, despite his hatred of the French cook, he and his mother are reliant on him for their survival. In the first version of Pi's story, Richard Parker is dependent on Pi as the provider of food, while Pi relies on Richard Parker as a source of companionship. Pi's focus on training Richard Parker gives Pi a sense of purpose and helps him maintain his sanity. When a ship passes without noticing the lifeboat, Pi is devastated and appreciative of the tiger's presence, seeing him as motivation to persevere.

[Credit valid alternative responses.]

[Award 4 marks only if reference is made to this extract and the novel as a whole.] (4)
[25]

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***LIFE OF PI* – Yann Martel**

Answer EITHER QUESTION 18 (essay question) OR QUESTION 19 (contextual question).

QUESTION 18: *LIFE OF PI* – ESSAY QUESTION

In *The Life of Pi*, the establishment of boundaries is essential for survival.

Critically discuss the extent to which you agree with the above statement.

Your response should take the form of a well-constructed essay of 400–450 words (2–2½ pages). **[25]**

QUESTION 19: *LIFE OF PI* – CONTEXTUAL QUESTION

Read the extracts below and then answer the questions that follow.

EXTRACT I

[Mother] looked beautiful. And sad. For she was leaving India, India of the heat and monsoons, of rice fields and the Cauvery River, of coastlines and stone temples, of bullock carts and colourful trucks, of friends and known shopkeepers, of Nehru Street and Goubert Salai, of this and that, India so familiar to her and loved by her. While her men – I fancied myself one already, though I was only sixteen – were in a hurry to get going, were Winnipeggers at heart already, she lingered. 5

The day before our departure she pointed at a cigarette wallah and earnestly asked, 'Should we get a pack or two?'

Father replied, 'They have tobacco in Canada. And why do you want to buy cigarettes? We don't smoke.' 10

Yes, they have tobacco in Canada – but do they have Gold Flake cigarettes? Do they have Arun ice cream? Are the bicycles Heroes? Are the televisions Onidas? Are the cars Ambassadors? Are the bookshops Higginbothams'? Such, I suspect, were the questions that swirled in Mother's mind as she contemplated buying cigarettes.

…

As the ship was worked out of the dock and piloted out to sea, I wildly waved goodbye to India. The sun was shining, the breeze was steady, and seagulls shrieked in the air above us. I was terribly excited. 15

[Chapter 35]

19.1 Account for Pi's father's decision to emigrate to Canada. (3)

19.2 Refer to lines 4–6: 'While her men … at heart already'.

Explain how Pi and Ravi's attitudes, in these lines, contrast with their initial reaction to leaving India. (3)

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19.3 Refer to lines 13–14: 'Such, I suspect, … contemplated buying cigarettes.'

Discuss what this sentence suggests about Pi's understanding of his mother, at this point in the novel. (3)

19.4 Refer to lines 16–17: 'The sun was shining, … I was terribly excited.'

In the light of later events, discuss how these lines are ironic. (3)

AND

EXTRACT J

I wept like a child. It was not because I was overcome at having survived my ordeal, though I was. Nor was it the presence of my brothers and sisters, though that too was very moving. I was weeping because Richard Parker had left me so unceremoniously. What a terrible thing it is to botch a farewell. I am a person who believes in form, in the harmony of order. Where we can, we must give things a meaningful shape. 5

…

It's important in life to conclude things properly. Only then can you let go. Otherwise you are left with words you should have said but never did, and your heart is heavy with remorse. That bungled goodbye hurts me to this day. I wish so much that I'd had one last look at him in the lifeboat, that I'd provoked him a little, so that I was on his mind. I wish I had said to him then – yes, I know, to a tiger, but still – I wish I had said, 10 'Richard Parker, it's over. We have survived. Can you believe it? I owe you more gratitude than I can express. I couldn't have done it without you. I would like to say it formally: Richard Parker, thank you. Thank you for saving my life. And now go where you must. You have known the confined freedom of a zoo most of your life; now you will know the free confinement of a jungle. I wish you all the best with it. Watch out for 15 Man. He is not your friend. But I hope you will remember me as a friend.'

[Chapter 94]

19.5 Place the extract in context. (3)

19.6 Refer to line 6: 'It's important in life … you let go.'

Explain why Pi reaches this conclusion. (3)

19.7 Refer to lines 15–16: 'Watch out for … not your friend.'

Critically discuss the validity of Pi's warning to Richard Parker, in light of the novel as a whole. (3)

19.8 Refer to lines 13–14: 'And now go where you must.'

By referring to your knowledge of the novel as a whole, comment on whether Richard Parker's leaving at this point in the story is essential for Pi's well-being. (4)

[25]

TOTAL SECTION B: 25

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***LIFE OF PI* – Yann Martel**

QUESTION 18: *LIFE OF PI* – ESSAY QUESTION

- Below is the basis for answering this essay. Use the following as a guideline only. However, also allow for answers that are different, original and show evidence of critical thought and interpretation.
- A range of examples may be used by the candidates to support their arguments.
- Refer to page 37 for the rubric to assess this question.

Candidates might argue that the establishment of boundaries in the animal kingdom, as well as in the human world, is essential for survival.
AGREE

- Animals will never intentionally wander outside their boundaries because they have an innate awareness of their territory. Pi cites numerous examples to illustrate the territorial nature of animals.
- The boundaries of the zoo offer Richard Parker protection from the anxieties of guarding territory, worrying about predators or starving to death.
- Mr Patel teaches his sons about boundaries they may not traverse when he demonstrates the danger of forgetting the violent nature of animals.
- Pi grows up in the confined and protected environment of his loving family and the sense of security this gives him allows him the freedom to explore new ideas such as religious freedom, etc.
- When Pi is stranded on the lifeboat, that security is taken away. He has to defend his territory and fend off predators. Pi creates a mental barrier between the savagery of the cook on the one hand and his and his mother's violent acts on the other hand in order to maintain his sanity.
- Pi uses the knowledge he has of animals' marking their territory to demarcate his living space from Richard Parker's. He does this to protect himself and ensure his survival.
- He uses storytelling and practical activities to establish mental boundaries so that he is not overwhelmed by the grief of losing his family or to allow himself to become despondent.
- It might be argued that his withdrawal into a hallucinatory world using the rag soaked with seawater is his attempt to create a boundary to keep out the reality of his dire situation. This keeps him sane.
- In the second story, Pi projects his brutal actions onto Richard Parker as a way of dealing with the darkness and savagery within himself. By establishing this boundary, Pi protects himself from the inhumanity of which he is capable.
- In order to resume a normal life, Pi has to compartmentalise his experience at sea. He does this by separating the brutal, murderous side of himself from his gentler vegetarian side.
- In order to move on with his life, Pi acquires an education, a career and a family – an accomplishment made possible because of the boundary that he creates between himself and Richard Parker.
- Candidates might argue that sometimes boundaries can be destructive as illustrated by the separation of religions. Pi's ignoring of these confines to embrace three different religions shows that it is possible to transcend boundaries.

[A cogent 'Disagree' response is unlikely. However, treat all responses on their merits.]

[Credit valid alternative/mixed responses.] **[25]**

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QUESTION 19: *LIFE OF PI* – CONTEXTUAL QUESTION

19.1 India is going through political uncertainty at the time and Pi's father is concerned about the effect this might have on their future. He is afraid that, despite all the effort he has put into making the zoo successful, budgetary cuts by the government will force him to close it down. Canada, on the other hand, offers the family better prospects.

[Award 3 marks for any two ideas well discussed OR any three distinct ideas.] (3)

19.2 The expression, 'Winnipeggers at heart' shows Pi and Ravi's eagerness to embrace their new lives in Canada. They are initially reluctant to emigrate. Their opinion of Canada is that it is a country with extremely harsh weather conditions and Ravi, who is a talented cricketer, is concerned that cricket is not a Canadian sport.

[Award 3 marks only if the candidate discusses the contrast.] (3)

19.3 Pi realises that his mother is anxious about emigrating and what the future might hold. He understands her need to cling to what is familiar; her desire to purchase cigarettes despite not smoking reflects her need to surround herself with familiar objects in the unfamiliar country of Canada. She wants to retain her attachment to India, even in the form of insignificant items. Although she does not voice her thoughts, Pi intuitively knows what she is thinking because he shares similar sentiments and a close bond with his mother.

[Award 3 marks for any two ideas well discussed OR any three distinct ideas.] (3)

19.4 Pi's description of the scene emphasises his anticipation of a happy life in a new land. The reference to the favourable weather evokes feelings of happiness in him. However, his expectations of a happy future do not materialise as the *Tsimtsum* sinks, his family drowns, he is stranded on a lifeboat and undergoes many ordeals before he reaches civilization.

Candidates might suggest that Pi's appreciation of nature here is ironic because of the suffering he endures at the hands of nature while on the lifeboat.

[Award 3 marks only if the irony is well discussed.] (3)

19.5 Pi finally reaches the shores of Mexico after leaving the algae island. He can hardly believe that his ordeal is now over. Richard Parker immediately disappears into the jungle. Pi is found by a group of villagers.

[Award 3 marks for any two ideas well discussed OR any three distinct ideas.] (3)

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19.6 Pi regrets not having had the opportunity to say goodbye to his family who drown in the shipwreck. He has not been able to express his gratitude to his family. He is also devastated that Richard Parker leaves him without hesitation or without acknowledging the hardships they have suffered. This lack of closure still has the ability to affect him emotionally.

AND/OR

With reference to the second story, Pi has to forgive himself for his brutal actions on the lifeboat. He has to reconcile the two sides of himself and forgive himself in order to lead a normal life.

[Award 3 marks for any two ideas well discussed OR any three distinct ideas.] (3)

19.7 VALID
Pi's warning is valid because, as a child, he witnesses many instances of man's cruelty to animals at his father's zoo. He realises the danger that humans pose to animals. These observations are reinforced by the sign near the entrance pointing out that 'Man' is the most dangerous animal in the zoo. The inhumane actions of some of his fellow castaways validate this view.

[A cogent 'Invalid' response is unlikely. However, treat all responses on their merits.]

[Award 3 marks for any two ideas well discussed OR any three distinct ideas.] (3)

19.8 YES
Now that Pi has reached civilization, he no longer needs Richard Parker's companionship or the sense of purpose that taming the tiger gave him. He feels Parker's freedom is well-deserved.

If Richard Parker represents Pi's survival instinct, then his disappearance reflects Pi's realisation that he no longer needs to behave in the same savage way as he did on the lifeboat. By releasing Richard Parker, he allows himself to become fully human again and achieve the 'happy ending' that the narrator observes when he interviews the adult Pi.

[A cogent 'No' response is unlikely. However, treat all responses on their merits.]

[Award 4 marks for any three ideas well discussed OR any four distinct ideas.] (4)
[25]

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***LIFE OF PI* – Yann Martel**

Answer EITHER QUESTION 8 (essay question) OR QUESTION 9 (contextual question).

QUESTION 8: *LIFE OF PI* – ESSAY QUESTION

The novel, *Life of Pi*, suggests that, despite offering contradictory approaches to life, reason and faith can co-exist.

Critically discuss the extent to which you agree with the above statement.

Your response should take the form of a well-constructed essay of 400–450 words (2–2½ pages). **[25]**

QUESTION 9: *LIFE OF PI* – CONTEXTUAL QUESTION

Read the extracts below and then answer the questions that follow.

EXTRACT C

The elements allowed me to go on living. The lifeboat did not sink. Richard Parker kept out of sight. The sharks prowled but did not lunge. The waves splashed me but did not pull me off.

I watched the ship as it disappeared with much burbling and belching. Lights flickered and went out. I looked about for my family, for survivors, for another lifeboat, for anything that might bring me hope. There was nothing. Only rain, marauding waves of black ocean and the flotsam of tragedy.

…

I inched my way along the oar till my feet were against the bow of the boat. I had to proceed with extreme caution. My guess was that Richard Parker was on the floor of the lifeboat beneath the tarpaulin, his back to me, facing the zebra, which he had no doubt killed by now.

…

Of greater significance to me was the strange fact that Richard Parker had not killed it. In the normal course of things he should have killed the zebra. That's what predators do: they kill prey. In the present circumstances, where Richard Parker would be under tremendous mental strain, fear should have brought out an exceptional level of aggression. The zebra should have been properly butchered.

The reason behind its spared life was revealed shortly. It froze my blood – and then brought a slight measure of relief. A head appeared beyond the end of the tarpaulin. It looked at me in a direct, frightened way, ducked under, appeared again, ducked under again, appeared once more, disappeared a last time. It was the bear-like, balding-looking head of a spotted hyena.

[Chapter 41]

9.1 Refer to lines 1–2: 'Richard Parker kept out of sight.'

Explain Richard Parker's presence on the lifeboat. (3)

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9.2 Refer to lines 4–7: 'I watched the ship … flotsam of tragedy.'

What do these lines suggest about Pi's state of mind as the ship sinks? (3)

9.3 Refer to lines 20–21: 'It was the … a spotted hyena.'

Comment on the significance of the hyena in the context of the novel as a whole. (3)

9.4 In the light of the novel as a whole, critically discuss how Pi's knowledge of animals ensures his survival on the lifeboat. (3)

AND

EXTRACT D

The smell of vegetation was extraordinarily strong. As for the greenness, it was so fresh and soothing that strength and comfort seemed to be physically pouring into my system through my eyes.

…

I heard a growl. I turned. Richard Parker was observing me from the lifeboat. He was looking at the island, too. He seemed to want to come ashore but was afraid. Finally, after much snarling and pacing, he leapt from the boat. I brought the orange whistle to my mouth. But he didn't have aggression on his mind. Simple balance was enough of a challenge; he was as wobbly on his feet as I was. When he advanced, he crawled close to the ground and with trembling limbs, like a newborn cub. Giving me a wide berth, he made for the ridge and disappeared into the interior of the island.

I passed the day eating, resting, attempting to stand and, in a general way, bathing in bliss. I felt nauseous when I exerted myself too much. And I kept feeling that the ground was shifting beneath me and that I was going to fall over, even when I was sitting still.

…

[Richard Parker] killed beyond his need. He killed meerkats that he did not eat. In animals, the urge to kill is separate from the urge to eat. To go for so long without prey and suddenly to have so many – his pent-up hunting instinct was lashing out with a vengeance.

[Chapter 92]

9.5 Place the extract in context. (3)

9.6 Refer to lines 9–10: 'Giving me a … of the island.'

Based on your knowledge of the novel as a whole, discuss the implication of Richard Parker's behaviour in these lines. (3)

9.7 Refer to lines 16–17: 'To go for … have so many'.

Comment on the extent to which these lines foreshadow the effect that Pi's ordeal will have on his life. (3)

9.8 Refer to lines 11–12: 'I passed the … bathing in bliss.'

Do you agree that the island represents the contrast between reality and illusion? Justify your response, using this extract as a starting point. (4)

[25]

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***LIFE OF PI* – Yann Martel**

QUESTION 8: *LIFE OF PI* – ESSAY QUESTION

- Below is the basis for answering this essay. Use the following as a guideline only. However, also allow for answers that are different, original and show evidence of critical thought and interpretation.
- A range of examples should be used by the candidates to support their arguments.
- Refer to page 25 for the rubric to assess this question.

Candidates might agree to a greater or lesser degree with the statement but are unlikely to disagree wholeheartedly.

- Reason is the power to think about, understand, and form judgements logically. It helps one to consider the effects before taking any action. Faith, on the other hand, is a belief in a higher power. Although these might appear to be contradictory concepts, the novel suggests that reason and faith can co-exist.
- In the *Author's Note*, the element of faith is introduced when the narrator is told that Pi's story 'will make you believe in God'.
- Pi's love for the logic of science is nurtured by his Biology teacher, Mr Kumar, as well as through his observation of animal behaviour at his father's zoo.
- Pi embraces all three religions to which he is exposed because he recognises that they all reflect the common element of love for God.
- His passion for science and religion is encouraged by his role models, the two Mr Kumars. Despite their different perspectives, one scientific and the other religious, they are able to reach consensus on their appreciation of the zebra. This suggests that these two ideas, reason and religion, can co-exist.
- Atheists are also capable of having faith although their faith lies in science rather than in a belief in God.
- Some agnostics believe that reason and faith cannot co-exist and that everything should have a logical explanation.
- On the lifeboat, both reason and faith help Pi to survive. His faith allows him to maintain focus and hope while his scientific knowledge and his ability to think logically sustain him physically.
- Pi's reason makes him realise that he has to abandon his vegetarianism and resort to killing in order to survive. He is able to reconcile himself to his savagery by showing reverence for and praying over his kill. He also rationalises the need to distance himself from the savagery to which he descends. The creation of Richard Parker, his alter ego, enables him to cope with the horror of his actions.
- Later, at university in Canada, Pi's choice of subjects reflects his ability to find commonality in seemingly disparate world views.
- His choice of science as a career and his religious nature reflect his ability to reconcile reason and faith.
- Furthermore, the Japanese officials do not believe Pi's version of the story with the animals and the algae island because it defies logic. Nevertheless, Pi uses the example of the floating bananas in an attempt to prove the truth of his experiences. He maintains that, at times, one has to have faith and belief, such as the belief in the existence of God, without any empirical evidence.

[Credit valid alternative/mixed responses.] **[25]**

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QUESTION 9: *LIFE OF PI* – CONTEXTUAL QUESTION

9.1 After finding himself on the lifeboat, Pi spots Richard Parker in the water. Being pleased to see a familiar figure and out of concern for the tiger's safety, Pi helps the tiger onto the boat. Richard Parker prefers to hide himself away because he finds himself in unfamiliar territory and is feeling sea-sick.

Candidates might focus on the second story and suggest that Richard Parker is present as Pi's alter ego, which enables him to cope with his ordeal. Richard Parker's being out of sight is because, at this point, Pi is still able to control his savagery.

[Award 3 marks for any two ideas well discussed OR three ideas.] (3)

9.2 Pi feels despair and hopelessness as the ship sinks. A sense of Pi's distress and vulnerability is reinforced by the description of the waves as 'marauding'. The phrase, 'flotsam of tragedy' suggests that Pi feels broken, desolate/alone and at the mercy of the elements. The finality of the lights being extinguished emphasises Pi's feelings of despondency. The bleakness of the description is a reflection of Pi's state of mind.

[Award 3 marks for any two ideas well discussed OR three ideas.] (3)

9.3 In both stories, the hyena/French cook is portrayed as unpredictable, greedy, cunning and vicious. As scavengers, hyenas prey on those who are perceived as weaker, but are cowardly and afraid of confronting a more powerful adversary. In the same way, the French cook is cowardly and viciously attacks the injured sailor. The hyena is a reminder of the savagery of which humans are capable when survival is at stake.

[Award 3 marks for any two ideas well discussed OR three ideas.] (3)

9.4 Pi's early years are spent at his father's zoo where he is able to observe animals at close quarters. His interests in science and zoomorphism give him detailed knowledge of animal behaviour. Without this knowledge, Pi would not have known how to tame the tiger and predict how the animals would respond on the lifeboat. His father's lesson in the danger of anthropomorphising animals is also instrumental in his survival. In addition, the knowledge gained from the survival manual about which sea creatures are edible also ensures his survival.

[Award 3 marks for any two ideas well discussed OR three ideas.] (3)

9.5 Soon after Pi's encounter with the blind Frenchman, Pi and Richard Parker come across an island of trees. At first Pi thinks that it is an illusion, especially when he notices that the island has no soil. His scepticism is overcome when he falls overboard and encounters solid land.

[Award 3 marks for any two ideas well discussed OR three ideas.] (3)

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9.6 Richard Parker follows his predatory instinct by rushing off to hunt. However, through his training of Richard Parker, Pi has established himself as the dominant force in order to survive. Richard Parker's giving Pi 'a wide berth' indicates that he accepts Pi as the alpha male and respectfully avoids intruding on Pi's territory. Richard Parker's disappearance on the island foreshadows his leaving Pi when they reach Mexico.

Candidates might focus on how, in the safe confines of the island, Pi is able to keep the tiger's savagery at bay and thus Richard Parker is allowed to disappear. Richard Parker's behaviour foreshadows Pi's separation from his alter ego when it is no longer required to ensure his survival.

[Award 3 marks for any two ideas well discussed OR three ideas.] (3)

9.7 On the island, Richard Parker (Pi's alter ego) kills more meerkats than he can eat. Pi greedily eats and hoards any food he is given in hospital, and as an adult, Pi stockpiles food in his home. Pi needs the security of knowing that he has enough food and that he will never again have to resort to savagery. This is an indication that Pi is still psychologically scarred by his ordeal. The memory of the deprivation he has suffered remains with him throughout his life.

[Award 3 marks for any two ideas well discussed OR three ideas.] (3)

9.8 AGREE
At first the island is a sanctuary to Pi and Richard Parker as it provides for all their essential needs. However, Pi realises that, rather than being a paradise which offers salvation, the island is carnivorous and deadly. The island seems to be like the Garden of Eden/Paradise, but Pi discovers the human teeth, suggesting beastly characteristics. This leads to the realisation that the island is evil; this symbolises a shallow faith. It is not the safe haven that Pi has assumed it to be. It is this knowledge that finally spurs him to leave the island.

Candidates might refer to Pi's being in a hallucinatory state and being unable to distinguish between what is real and what is imaginary.

[A cogent 'Disagree' response is unlikely. However, treat all such responses on their merits.]

(4)

[Award 4 marks for any three ideas well discussed OR four ideas.] **[25]**

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***LIFE OF PI* – Yann Martel**

Answer EITHER QUESTION 8 (essay question) OR QUESTION 9 (contextual question).

QUESTION 8: *LIFE OF PI* – ESSAY QUESTION

The manner in which Pi fights to survive diminishes his humanity.

Critically discuss the extent to which you agree with the above statement.

Your response should take the form of a well-constructed essay of 400–450 words (2–2½ pages). **[25]**

QUESTION 9: *LIFE OF PI* – CONTEXTUAL QUESTION

Read the extracts below and then answer the questions that follow.

EXTRACT C

It was with pride that I waved the ticket collector's hand away and showed Mr Kumar into the zoo.

He marvelled at everything, at how to tall trees came tall giraffes, how carnivores were supplied with herbivores and herbivores with grass, how some creatures crowded the day and others the night, how some that needed sharp beaks had sharp beaks and others that needed limber limbs had limber limbs. It made me happy that he was so impressed.

He quoted from the Holy Qur'an: 'In all this there are messages indeed for a people who use their reason.'

We came to the zebras. Mr Kumar had never heard of such creatures, let alone seen one. He was dumbfounded.

'They're called zebras,' I said.

'Have they been painted with a brush?'

'No, no. They look like that naturally.'

'What happens when it rains?'

'Nothing.'

'The stripes don't melt?'

'No.'

I had brought some carrots. There was one left, a large and sturdy specimen. I took it out of the bag. At that moment I heard a slight scraping of gravel to my right. It was Mr Kumar, coming up to the railing in his usual limping and rolling gait.

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…

Mr and Mr Kumar looked delighted.

'A *zebra*, you say?' said Mr Kumar.

'That's right,' I replied. 'It belongs to the same family as the ass and the horse.'

'The Rolls-Royce of equids,' said Mr Kumar. 25

'What a wondrous creature,' said Mr Kumar.

'This one's a Grant's zebra,' I said.

Mr Kumar said, '*Equus burchelli boehmi*.'

Mr Kumar said, '*Allahu akbar*.'

I said, 'It's very pretty.' 30

We looked on.

[Chapter 31]

9.1 Refer to lines 1–2: 'It was with … into the zoo.'

Account for Pi's feeling of pride. (3)

9.2 Refer to line 27: ' "This one's a Grant's zebra," I said.'

Explain the significance of the zebra in the context of the novel as a whole. (3)

9.3 Earlier in the novel, Pi says, 'Mr and Mr Kumar were the prophets of my Indian youth.'

Refer to the novel as a whole and comment on the impact of both men on Pi's life. (3)

9.4 Refer to line 25: 'The Rolls-Royce of equids' and line 26: 'What a wondrous creature'.

Despite their widely differing perspectives on life, both Mr Kumars display a similar reaction to the zebra.

Discuss the accuracy of this observation. (3)

AND

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EXTRACT D

'What exactly do you intend to feed that tiger of yours? How much longer do you think he'll last on three dead animals? Do I need to remind you that tigers are not carrion eaters? Granted, when he's on his last legs he probably won't lift his nose at much. But don't you think that before he submits to eating puffy, putrefied zebra he'll try the fresh, juicy Indian boy just a short dip away?' 5

…

You may be astonished that in such a short period of time I could go from weeping over the muffled killing of a flying fish to gleefully bludgeoning to death a dorado. I could explain it by arguing that profiting from a pitiful flying fish's navigational mistake made me shy and sorrowful, while the excitement of actively capturing a great dorado made me sanguinary and self-assured. But in point of fact the explanation lies 10 elsewhere. It is simple and brutal: a person can get used to anything, even to killing.

It was with a hunter's pride that I pulled the raft up to the lifeboat. I brought it along the side, keeping very low. I swung my arm and dropped the dorado into the boat. It landed with a heavy thud and provoked a gruff expression of surprise from Richard Parker. After a sniff or two, I heard the wet mashing sound of a mouth at work. 15 I pushed myself off, not forgetting to blow the whistle hard several times, to remind Richard Parker of who had so graciously provided him with fresh food.

[Chapter 61]

9.5 Explain how Pi's upbringing has equipped him with the necessary skills for his survival. (3)

9.6 Refer to lines 1–3: 'What exactly do … not carrion eaters?'

In your view, is Pi's survival linked to that of the tiger? Justify your response. (3)

9.7 Refer to lines 16–17: 'I pushed myself … with fresh food.'

Critically discuss the contrast between Pi's current mood and his mood when he is first stranded on the lifeboat. (3)

9.8 Refer to line 11: 'It is simple … even to killing.'

Critically discuss how Pi's comment at this point in the novel is crucial to your understanding of his plight on the lifeboat. (4)
[25]

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***LIFE OF PI* - Yann Martel**

QUESTION 8: *LIFE OF PI* – ESSAY QUESTION

- Below is the basis for answering this essay. Use the following as a guideline only. However, also allow for answers that are different, original and show evidence of critical thought and interpretation.
- A range of examples may be used by the candidates to support their arguments.
- Refer to page 25 for the rubric to assess this question.

Candidates might agree or disagree with this statement or they may offer a mixed response.
Agree:

- Initially Pi displays a deep sense of humanity. He has been taught to love, value and respect all living things. This is as a result of his solid family-orientated upbringing as well as his deeply-held religious faith.
- When he is shipwrecked, Pi's survival instincts emerge. However, the manner in which Pi fights to survive diminishes his humanity.
- His moral beliefs are discarded. He transforms from being a staunch vegetarian and having a deep reverence for life to killing and resorting to cannibalism. He learns to fish and to catch turtles, often violently butchering his catch. He not only consumes the flesh but drinks the blood of the turtles too. Pi is shocked at how savage and brutal he has become.
- His hunger drives him to behave in an animalistic manner, wolfing down his food before Richard Parker is even aware of the catch.
- After Richard Parker kills the blind Frenchman, Pi uses some of his flesh as bait and he even eats a piece of it.
- In the story that Pi narrates to the Japanese officials, he describes how he overcame his scruples about stealing food on the boat. The killing of the French cook out of revenge and to survive is indicative of his diminishing humanity. The adult Pi still struggles to come to terms with the killing of the French cook as he recognises how he had lost an essential part of himself in the process.
- His creation of Richard Parker as his alter ego is a result of his desire to separate himself from his brutal survival instinct.

Disagree:

- Despite Pi's acts of brutality, he still maintains his humanity and faith, showing his reverence for life by praying before each act of killing.
- The adult Pi is still haunted by his actions aboard the lifeboat. He displays deep love for his family and has a strong religious faith. These attributes suggest that he has recovered his humanity and is not defined by his earlier experiences.

[Credit mixed/valid alternative responses.] **[25]**

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QUESTION 9: *LIFE OF PI* – CONTEXTUAL QUESTION

9.1 Pi is proud of his father's achievements as zookeeper. He also takes pride in showing off the animals in the zoo and becoming Mr Kumar's teacher in this instance. He regards it as a great honour to show Mr Kumar around the zoo because he holds him in high esteem, as he is one of Pi's religious mentors.

[Award 3 marks for three ideas.] (3)

9.2 In Pi's first story with the animals, a beautiful male Grant's zebra breaks its leg as it jumps into the lifeboat. The zebra is killed by the hyena./In Pi's second story, the zebra has a human counterpart, the Taiwanese sailor, who breaks his leg while jumping off the sinking ship. He is killed and cannibalised by the French cook after he had cut off his leg.

In both stories, the zebra/sailor is portrayed as helpless/vulnerable and beautiful to look at but unable to survive in the harsh environment aboard the lifeboat.

Candidates might refer to the zebra's having been sacrificed for the survival of others.

[Award 3 marks only if the significance of the zebra is discussed.] (3)

9.3 One of the Mr Kumars is Pi's Biology teacher and teaches him to appreciate scientific inquiry and logic. It is from him that Pi gains the scientific knowledge that will enable him to survive at sea. Later, Pi chooses to study Zoology as a consequence of Mr Kumar's influence.

The other Mr Kumar introduces Pi to Islam and helps to develop his religious faith. When Pi is overwhelmed by the hopelessness of his situation at sea, it is his faith that gives him the fortitude to persevere. Perhaps his influence contributes to Pi's choice of Religious Studies as a second major.

[Award 3 marks only if both characters are discussed.] (3)

9.4 Both men admire the zebra and recognise its beauty, one from a scientific point of view and the other from a religious viewpoint. Mr Kumar, the Biology teacher, compares the zebra to a Rolls-Royce, focusing on its being a fine specimen, while Mr Kumar, the pious baker, praises the wonder of God's creation. Although their perspectives on life may appear to be so widely different, one an atheist and the other a devout Muslim, they are able to reach consensus in their appreciation of the zebra.

[Award 3 marks only if both characters are discussed.] (3)

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9.5 Pi's upbringing in a zoo and his father's lessons have taught him much about the habits of animals. He has developed a healthy respect for the nature of animals. This knowledge enables him to survive on the lifeboat with Richard Parker.

Pi's being taught to swim/his religious beliefs contribute to his ability to survive. His love of story-telling and his keeping of a diary keeps his mind occupied and alert.

[Credit valid alternative responses.]

[Award 3 marks for two ideas well discussed OR three distinct ideas.] (3)

9.6 YES.
Richard Parker's presence distracts Pi from dwelling on the loss of his family and the hopelessness of his situation. His preoccupation with taming the tiger keeps him busy. Without Richard Parker, he would have no sense of purpose and he would fall into a state of despair. The companionship that the tiger provides helps him stave off loneliness. By emulating the predatory nature of the tiger, Pi is able to survive his ordeal. Richard Parker also saves Pi from the Frenchman.

In the second story, Pi's creation of Richard Parker as an alter ego allows him to survive his ordeal.

OR

NO.
Candidates might argue that Pi's survival can be attributed to his strong will to survive and his belief in God.

[Accept mixed/valid alternative responses.] (3)

9.7 Pi's current mood is of exhilaration/pride/elation. He is now the alpha male who has successfully tamed Richard Parker and he is the provider of food. Previously, Pi was terrified, desperate and anxious about surviving the ordeal. He felt hopeless, despondent and doomed.

This shift in mood is indicative of Pi's growing belief in his own ability to survive despite the overwhelming odds against him.

[Award 3 marks only if the contrasting moods are discussed critically.] (3)

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9.8 This statement focuses on Pi's loss of innocence. He changes from being a strict vegetarian and an essentially non-violent person to someone who finds killing the dorado thrilling. The will to survive becomes a driving force which leads him to become more violent and animalistic. Each time he kills, the boundaries beyond which he will not go become weaker.

AND/OR

In the second version of Pi's story, he witnesses the cook's cannibalism and his murdering of Pi's mother. This prepares Pi psychologically for the killing of the cook and the eating of parts of his body. His need to survive begins to overpower his conscience.

[Accept mixed/valid alternative responses.]

[Award 4 marks for three ideas well discussed OR four distinct ideas.] (4)
[25]

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