

The 2027 ENGLISH OLYMPIAD

Enrichment through English



CALL FOR ENTRIES

The South African National English Olympiad
is a joint venture of
the Grahamstown Foundation and
the South African Council for English Education.



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Entries are invited for the 52nd South African National English Olympiad, to be examined on Tuesday, 2 March 2027.

THE SYLLABUS FOR THE 2027 OLYMPIAD

The theme for 2027 will be ***“Stepping Through - Future Uncertain; Possibilities Abound”***.

The syllabus will be related to the journey from adolescence to adulthood.

The English Olympiad is moving with the times, so printed anthologies will no longer be provided. Instead, the core prescribed texts will be presented in an on-line Study Guide with notes, questions and stimulating discussion points, in an A4 printable format and an A5 large-print version for use with mobile devices. Additional reference material with links to supplementary study resources (including video clips) and periodic further support will be provided from time to time using social media, channelled through participating schools.

THE DATE & TIME OF THE EXAMINATIONS

There will be two examinations – one for English Home Language (HL) candidates, and another for English First Additional Language (FAL) candidates.

Both examinations will be written simultaneously at participating schools on **2 March 2027**.

On 2 March the examinations may commence **at any time between 11:00 and 14:00**, at the discretion of each school, provided candidates are allowed three hours to write.

To avoid clashes with other events, schools are asked to ensure that the date of the Olympiad examinations is included in their annual school calendars.

THE FORMAT OF THE EXAMINATION

Candidates are required to prepare for a **three-hour, open-book examination**. Question papers will be accompanied by an addendum containing the core texts to which candidates will be expected to refer in their responses to the questions. Answer books will be provided.

NB - Candidates should be advised that, although the Olympiad involves an open-book examination, they should prepare thoroughly in advance, making sure that they are well acquainted with the prescribed texts.

The examination will require responses to the following:

- one topic from Section A – a discursive essay (60 marks)
- one challenge in Section B – a creative response related to particular texts (40 marks)

HOW TO ENTER

To enter candidates for the 2027 English Olympiad, please complete the **on-line Entry Form** that is available [here](#). Schools experiencing difficulty should contact the Olympiad Officer, who will guide them through the process.

Proof of payment of the entry fees should be submitted together with the Entry Form.

Note: Entries are accepted only via schools. No individual or private entries are accepted.

The CLOSING DATE for entries will be 16 October 2026.

This date has been chosen to allow schools to complete the entry process before the start of their end-of-year examinations. Individual schools may contact the Olympiad Officer to request an extension of the deadline.

ENTRY FEE: R120 (incl VAT) per candidate

The entry fee covers on-line study material, examination documents, assessments and certificates.

Please note that the 2027 Study Guide (including prescribed texts) will be published on line, in A4 printable format, with an A5 large-print version for use with mobile devices.

To reduce printing and courier expenses, printed study material will no longer be provided, but schools will be permitted to print A4 copies for candidates who may have difficulty in accessing or using on-line resources.

COURIER FEE: R120 per school

This fee covers the delivery of examination materials and certificates to South African schools.

Note: Schools located outside South Africa will be required to pay full courier costs.

Please include the courier fee in your total when submitting proof of payment for your entries.

ENTERING CANDIDATES FOR THE OLYMPIAD

1. The 2027 Olympiad is open to all learners (English HL and FAL) who will be in **Grades 9 to 12** in 2027 – i.e. learners who are in Grades 8 to 11 in 2026.
2. Candidates may register for the **Home Language (HL)** or the **First Additional Language (FAL)** examination. To be eligible to register for the FAL examination, however, candidates must be studying English FAL at their schools. (NB - When submitting entries, teachers must clearly indicate whether each candidate intends to write the HL paper or the FAL paper.)
3. Please use the **on-line entry form** that is available [here](#).
4. Please complete **all** sections of the entry form, to ensure that your entries are processed correctly. Please pay special attention to the spelling of candidates' names.
5. A school may save its on-line entry form and return to it later before submitting their final version. If assistance is required, please contact the Olympiad Officer.
6. To avoid duplication, each school may submit the entry form only once. A school wishing to add entries after submitting its entry form should contact the Olympiad Officer.
7. In your entry form, please indicate **the name of the PostNet branch to be used for counter-to-counter delivery** of your school's examination question papers and answer books that will be delivered in February 2027. (Certificates will be sent via the same branch in July 2027).

Please note that the organisers of the English Olympiad cannot accept responsibility for packages that are mislaid or delayed in transit.

DETAILED ASSESSMENTS

A maximum of two candidates per school may apply for detailed written comments on their individual scripts. Applications for detailed assessments must be made on the Entry Form.

The fee for each detailed assessment is R190, in addition to the candidate's R120 entry fee.

Detailed assessments will be sent to candidates via their schools after the Olympiad results have been released after the June 2027 prize giving. (Please note that late applications for detailed assessments are not accepted, and answer scripts are never returned to schools or to candidates.)

ENGLISH OLYMPIAD ENTRY FEE BURSARIES

The Eastern Cape Branch of SACEE offers partial bursaries to learners who cannot afford the full entry fee. To apply, a candidate should write and sign a short letter of application explaining why they wish to write the English Olympiad, and how they plan to prepare for the examination. Candidates must also confirm that they are fully committed to writing the examination on 2 March 2027.

Successful applicants will pay a **reduced entry fee of only R50**.

A letter from the School Principal, supporting the application and verifying that the applicant is normally not required to pay school fees, must be included with each bursary application.

Schools must ensure that their candidates' bursary applications reach the Olympiad Officer no later than **30 September 2026**, so that the school may be notified of the outcome of its applications before the deadline for entries.

NB - Schools that submit applications for bursaries should not send any payment until the outcomes of their bursary applications have been confirmed.

RESULTS

After the midyear prize giving, the names of the Top 100 HL and Top 20 FAL candidates will be published on the Olympiad website. Schools may then access all their candidates' results via the Olympiad website. (Please note that there is no mechanism for appeals against results.)

PRIZES AND AWARDS

ALL CANDIDATES

All candidates who attempt and adequately complete their Olympiad examinations will receive **certificates** indicating the classification of their examination assessments.

Top 20 Home Language (HL) Candidates

The winner of the English Home Language Olympiad will receive

The Len and Betty Welland Memorial Prize

valued at R25 000, donated by Dr Maxine Ward-Cox.

The remaining HL candidates in the Top 20 will receive prizes ranging from R20 000 to R1 000, sponsored by the Grahamstown Foundation and the South African Council for English Education.

Top 10 First Additional Language (FAL) Candidates

The winner of the First Additional Language Olympiad will receive a prize of R7 500.

The other FAL candidates in the Top 10 will receive prizes ranging from R5 000 to R1 000, sponsored by the Grahamstown Foundation and the South African Council for English Education.

National Schools' Festival Tour Prizes

The top ten HL and top three FAL candidates will be offered free admission to the annual National Schools' Festival in Grahamstown/Makhanda, with free accommodation and meals.

These prize winners will receive their certificates and prizes on stage during the annual English Olympiad Prize Giving that forms part of the Schools' Festival.

Rhodes University English Olympiad Scholarships

The **Top 40 Home Language** candidates and the **Top 10 First Additional Language** candidates will be offered **free tuition scholarships for their first-year of any undergraduate programme of study** at Rhodes University after the successful completion of their matriculation examinations, subject to their meeting the University's normal entry requirements.

CONTACT DETAILS

The Olympiad Officer

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