



WESTMINSTER
SCHOOL

The Challenge
Core Paper

GENERAL

Syllabus and Guidance

First Examination 2027

Introduction

The General paper is an innovation in terms of The Challenge, but it recalls something tested centuries ago when the examination began: the application of understanding and rhetoric to the world in which the candidates are growing up. It cannot be revised for in the usual sense: rather, what helps is regular reading of high-quality media, and the ability to take apart difficult or controversial topics in a dispassionate way.

The paper consists of:

Part A, taking around 25 minutes

1. A summary of a challenging text [10 marks]
2. A one-paragraph response based around the given text [15 marks]

Part B, taking around 35 minutes

One essay from a limited choice of open-ended questions. No 'correct' answer is sought, and candidates are encouraged to use whatever knowledge they have in pursuing their analysis. Precise, rigorous writing will be richly rewarded. [25 marks]

Candidates for the King's Scholarship will be questioned on their General paper responses in their interviews with the Master of the King's Scholars. They are not expected to remember what they wrote: rather, their answers will be a springboard for a broader conversation and argumentative development. The Challenge began as an oral examination, and this strand of the process deliberately recalls that.