Neap

Trial Examination 2021

# VCE English as an Additional Language (EAL) Units 3&4

## Aural and Written Examination

## Question and Answer Booklet

Student's Name: _____

Teacher's Name: _____

| *Section* | *Number of questions* | *Number of questions to be answered* | *Percentage of total marks* |
|---|---|---|---|
| A – Listening to texts | 2 | 2 | 20 |
| B – Analytical interpretation of a text | 28 | 1 | 40 |
| C – Argument and persuasive language | 2 | 2 | 40 |
| | | | Total 100 |

Students are permitted to bring into the examination room: pens, pencils, highlighters, erasers, sharpeners, rulers and an English and/or bilingual printed dictionary.

Students are NOT permitted to bring into the examination room: blank sheets of paper and/or correction fluid/tape.

No calculator is allowed in this examination.

**Materials supplied**

Question and answer booklet of 24 pages, including **assessment criteria** on page 24

Task booklet of 10 pages

**Instructions**

Write your name and your teacher's name in the space provided above on this page.

All written responses must be in English.

**At the end of the examination**

You may keep the task booklet.

**Students are NOT permitted to bring mobile phones and/or any other unauthorised electronic devices into the examination room.**

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## SECTION A – LISTENING TO TEXTS

**Instructions for Section A**

You will hear two texts. Each text will be played twice. There will be a short break between the first and second playings of each text. You may make notes at any time.

Listen carefully to each text and then answer the following questions.

Section A is worth 20 per cent of the total marks for the examination.

### TEXT 1

**Background information**

Alex is a Chinese-Australian secondary school student. Alex's school held a summer dessert recipe competition, where students entered videos explaining how to make their favourite sweet treats. Alex shared a recipe for making a Chinese snack.

You may make notes in this space.

**Question 1** (10 marks)

**a.** Does Alex think this dessert is easy to buy in China? Give **one** reason. 1 mark

_____

_____

**b.** Does Alex like the taste of hawthorn fruit? Give **one** quote to support your response. 1 mark

_____

_____

**c.** Alex changes the recipe for two fruits other than hawthorn fruit. In the table below, name the two fruits and the changes to the recipe for each fruit. 2 marks

| Fruit | Change to the recipe |
|---|---|
| | |
| | |

**d.** Which does Alex say takes longer: cooking the sugar or waiting for it to cool? Support your response with evidence. 2 marks

_____

_____

_____

_____



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**e.** Alex wants to avoid the dessert tasting bitter.

In the table below, give one example of language use and one example of delivery showing Alex thinks this is important. 2 marks

| Example of language use | Example of delivery |
|---|---|
| | |

**f.** Tick (✓) the correct box.

What does Alex say is **not** needed for the recipe? 1 mark

- ☐ wooden sticks
- ☐ sugar
- ☐ a thermometer
- ☐ a pan

**g.** What reason does Alex give for wanting to win the competition? 1 mark

_____

_____

_____

_____

You may make notes in this space.

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**TEXT 2**

**Background information**

Sarah is a new manager at the company Southern Trains. A more experienced manager, Don, has offered to support her and give advice when needed. Sarah and Don are having a conversation at work about how Sarah can run more effective meetings.

You may make notes in this space.

**Question 2** (10 marks)

**a.** Tick (✓) the correct box.

Select the best description of Sarah's attitude to meetings at the **start** of the conversation. 1 mark

- ☐ She finds meetings boring.
- ☐ She is grateful for meetings.
- ☐ She is annoyed when meetings interrupt her work.
- ☐ She finds that meetings make her angry.

**b.** Give **two** questions that Don says a person might ask themselves if they are in a bad meeting. 2 marks

1. _____

_____

2. _____

_____

**c.** How and why does Don bring the conversation 'back on track'? 2 marks

_____

_____

_____

_____

**d.** Does Sarah believe it is easy to get people to come to meetings on time? Support your response with an example of her language and delivery. 3 marks

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____





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**e.** How does Don feel about the manager who put up a sign saying 'this ship has sailed'? Give **one** quote to support your response. 2 marks

You may make notes in this space.

## SECTION B – ANALYTICAL INTERPRETATION OF A TEXT

**Instructions for Section B**

Section B requires students to write an analytical interpretation of a selected text in response to **one** topic (either **i.** or **ii.**) on **one** text. The topics can be found on pages 2–6 of the task booklet.

Your response should be supported by close reference to the selected text.

If your selected text is a collection of poetry or short stories, you may write on several poems or stories, or on **at least two** in close detail.

Indicate which text you have chosen to write on and whether you have chosen to answer **i.** or **ii.** by shading the appropriate boxes.

Your response will be assessed according to the assessment criteria set out on page 24 of this booklet.

Section B is worth 40 per cent of the total marks for the examination

Shade the box next to your selected text.

☐ *After Darkness* . . . . . Christine Piper

☐ *All the Light We Cannot See* . . . . . Anthony Doerr

☐ *Behind the Beautiful Forevers: Life, Death, and Hope in a Mumbai Undercity* . . . . . Katherine Boo

☐ *Extinction* . . . . . Hannie Rayson

☐ *I Am Malala: The Girl Who Stood Up for Education and Was Shot by the Taliban* . . . . . Malala Yousafzai with Christina Lamb

☐ *In Cold Blood* . . . . . Truman Capote

☐ *Like a House on Fire* . . . . . Cate Kennedy

☐ *Much Ado About Nothing* . . . . . William Shakespeare

☐ *Nine Days* . . . . . Toni Jordan

☐ *Old/New World: New & Selected Poems* . . . . . Peter Skrzynecki

☐ *Persepolis: The Story of a Childhood* . . . . . Marjane Satrapi

☐ *Photograph 51* . . . . . Anna Ziegler

☐ *Pride and Prejudice* . . . . . Jane Austen

☐ *Rear Window* . . . . . directed by Alfred Hitchcock

☐ *Reckoning* . . . . . Magda Szubanski

☐ *Runaway* . . . . . Alice Munro


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- ☐ *Stasiland* . . . . . Anna Funder
- ☐ *Station Eleven* . . . . . Emily St John Mandel
- ☐ *Stories We Tell* . . . . . directed by Sarah Polley
- ☐ *The 7 Stages of Grieving* . . . . . Wesley Enoch and Deborah Mailman
- ☐ *The Crucible* . . . . . Arthur Miller
- ☐ *The Golden Age* . . . . . Joan London
- ☐ *The Lieutenant* . . . . . Kate Grenville
- ☐ *The Queen* . . . . . directed by Stephen Frears
- ☐ *The Women of Troy* . . . . . Euripides
- ☐ *Things Fall Apart* . . . . . Chinua Achebe
- ☐ *Tracks* . . . . . Robyn Davidson
- ☐ *William Wordsworth: Poems selected by Seamus Heaney* . . . . . William Wordsworth

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Shade the box next to your selected topic.

☐ **i.** or ☐ **ii.**


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## SECTION C – ARGUMENT AND PERSUASIVE LANGUAGE

**Instructions for Section C**

Section C consists of **two** questions.

Read the background information on page 7 and the material on pages 8 and 9 of the task booklet, and then complete **both** Questions 1 and 2.

For the purposes of this task, the term 'language' refers to written, spoken and visual language.

Your response to Question 2 will be assessed according to the assessment criteria set out on page 24 of this booklet.

Section C is worth 40 per cent of the total marks for the examination.

Questions 1 and 2 are equally weighted.

**DO NOT WRITE IN THIS AREA**

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**Question 1** (10 marks)

**a.** What is Mrs Winterson's main problem with Mr Maiocchi's property? In your response, include **one** specific example of this problem. 2 marks

**b.** Give two reasons why Mrs Winterson believes Mr Maiocchi should change his property. 2 marks

1.

2.

**c.** What action does Mrs Winterson ask the DRC to take to resolve this issue? 1 mark

**d.** What does Mr Maiocchi imply when he says, '[…] so I do not attempt to interfere'? 1 mark

**e.** Give two reasons why Mr Maiocchi does not want to change his property. 2 marks

1.

2.


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**f.** Describe Mr Maiocchi's tone. Provide **one** quote that demonstrates this tone. 2 marks

**Question 2** (10 marks)

Analyse the ways in which the writers use argument and written and visual language to try to persuade others to share their point of view. In your response, use the material on pages 8 and 9 of the task booklet.



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**Assessment criteria**

Section B will be assessed against the following criteria:

- knowledge and understanding of the text, and the ideas and issues it explores, demonstrated appropriately in response to the topic
- development of a coherent analysis in response to the topic
- control of expressive and effective language, as appropriate to the task

Question 2 of Section C will be assessed against the following criteria:

- analysis of the use of argument and language to try to persuade
- control of the mechanics of the English language to convey meaning

**END OF QUESTION AND ANSWER BOOKLET**


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Trial Examination 2021

# VCE English as an Additional Language (EAL) Units 3&4

## Aural and Written Examination

## Task Booklet

Reading time: 15 minutes
Writing time: 3 hours

### Instructions

A question and answer book is provided with this task booklet.
Refer to instructions on the front cover of the question and answer booklet.
You may keep this task booklet.

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## SECTION B – ANALYTICAL INTERPRETATION OF A TEXT

***After Darkness* by Christine Piper**

**i.** '*After Darkness* explores the consequences of losing individuality.'

Discuss.

**OR**

**ii.** 'Learning from mistakes means correcting the wrongs of the past.'

To what extent is this shown in *After Darkness*?

***All the Light We Cannot See* by Anthony Doerr**

**i.** '*All the Light We Cannot See* is a celebration of the empowering force of love.'

Discuss.

**OR**

**ii.** How does Doerr show that strength can come in many forms in *All the Light We Cannot See*?

***Behind the Beautiful Forevers: Life, Death, and Hope in a Mumbai Undercity* by Katherine Boo**

**i.** 'In *Behind the Beautiful Forevers: Life, Death, and Hope in a Mumbai Undercity*, no one is truly fortunate.'

To what extent do you agree?

**OR**

**ii.** 'Boo's text reveals how sources of suffering can be both personal and political.'

Discuss.

***Extinction* by Hannie Rayson**

**i.** 'In the character of Piper Ross, Rayson explores the conflict between emotions and moral beliefs.'

Discuss.

**OR**

**ii.** '*Extinction* is about who deserves the power to make important decisions.'

Discuss.

***I Am Malala: The Girl Who Stood Up for Education and Was Shot by the Taliban* by Malala Yousafzai with Christina Lamb**

**i.** 'In *I Am Malala: The Girl Who Stood Up for Education and Was Shot by the Taliban*, beliefs motivate the characters to do extraordinary things.'

Discuss.

**OR**

**ii.** To what extent are the female characters in *I Am Malala: The Girl Who Stood Up for Education and Was Shot by the Taliban* victims of an oppressive society?


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***In Cold Blood* by Truman Capote**

**i.** 'We have no sympathy for Dick or Perry because of their cold-hearted crime.'

Do you agree?

**OR**

**ii.** 'Each of the deaths in *In Cold Blood* is significant.'

Discuss.

***Like a House on Fire* by Cate Kennedy**

**i.** Discuss the different kinds of personal struggles faced by the characters in *Like a House on Fire*.

**OR**

**ii.** 'Kennedy's short stories demonstrate that loneliness stems from not being understood by others.'

Do you agree?

***Much Ado About Nothing* by William Shakespeare**

**i.** 'The characters in *Much Ado About Nothing* do not conform to social expectations.'

Do you agree?

**OR**

**ii.** "Therefore all hearts in love use their own tongues."

How does *Much Ado About Nothing* explore the expression of love?

***Nine Days* by Toni Jordan**

**i.** "He says that without a doubt Francis will be over first thing, to apologise. People fight, Annabel. What matters is how they make up, how they say sorry."

To what extent do the characters in *Nine Days* resolve their conflicts?

**OR**

**ii.** '*Nine Days* is a novel about failing to meet expectations.'

Do you agree?

***Old/New World: New & Selected Poems* by Peter Skrzynecki**

**i.** 'Peter Skrzynecki's poems are about understanding other people.'

Discuss.

**OR**

**ii.** 'Skrzynecki's poetry celebrates the immigrant experience.'

To what extent do you agree?

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***Persepolis: The Story of a Childhood* by Marjane Satrapi**

**i.** '*Persepolis: The Story of a Childhood* is more of a story about adulthood than childhood.'
To what extent do you agree?

**OR**

**ii.** "Once again, I arrived at my usual conclusion: one must educate oneself."
Discuss the importance of education in *Persepolis: The Story of a Childhood*.

***Photograph 51* by Anna Ziegler**

**i.** 'Rosalind fails because she cannot trust other people.'
Do you agree?

**OR**

**ii.** 'In *Photograph 51*, free will is more important than fate.'
To what extent do you agree?

***Pride and Prejudice* by Jane Austen**

**i.** 'In *Pride and Prejudice*, love conquers all.'
To what extent do you agree?

**OR**

**ii.** Discuss the significance of relationships within families in *Pride and Prejudice*.

***Rear Window* directed by Alfred Hitchcock**

**i.** 'The characters in *Rear Window* are all unhappy with their lives.'
To what extent do you agree?

**OR**

**ii.** 'Jeff and Lisa are a good influence on one another in *Rear Window*.'
Do you agree?

***Reckoning* by Magda Szubanski**

**i.** '*Reckoning* reveals the importance of discovering the truth.'
Discuss.

**OR**

**ii.** 'Magda's parents affect her life in unexpected ways.'
Discuss.

***Runaway* by Alice Munro**

**i.** "I have gone away. I will be all write."
'In *Runaway*, the characters all struggle to express themselves.'
To what extent do you agree?

**OR**

**ii.** 'In Munro's short stories, loss can be a source of grief and opportunity.'
Discuss.

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***Stasiland* by Anna Funder**

**i.** 'No one in *Stasiland* can escape the past.'

To what extent do you agree?

**OR**

**ii.** How important is Anna Funder's perspective in *Stasiland*?

***Station Eleven* by Emily St John Mandel**

**i.** 'It is only when the characters in *Station Eleven* experience loss that they are able to realise what truly matters to them.'

Discuss.

**OR**

**ii.** '*Station Eleven* shows us that being selfish can be dangerous.'

Discuss.

***Stories We Tell* directed by Sarah Polley**

**i.** 'Sarah Polley's film explores the significance of multiple perspectives in storytelling.'

Discuss.

**OR**

**ii.** 'In *Stories We Tell*, the truth is unknowable.'

To what extent do you agree?

***The 7 Stages of Grieving* by Wesley Enoch and Deborah Mailman**

**i.** '*The 7 Stages of Grieving* reveals the importance of hope.'

Discuss.

**OR**

**ii.** 'None of the characters in *The 7 Stages of Grieving* can let go of the past.'

Do you agree?

***The Crucible* by Arthur Miller**

**i.** 'In Arthur Miller's *The Crucible*, the truth does not matter.'

To what extent do you agree?

**OR**

**ii.** 'Abigail is able to cause conflict because she knows what people want to believe.'

Discuss.

***The Golden Age* by Joan London**

**i.** '*The Golden Age* examines the consequences of war and suffering.'

Discuss.

**OR**

**ii.** Discuss the significance of new relationships in Joan London's *The Golden Age*.

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***The Lieutenant* by Kate Grenville**

**i.** 'The conflicts in *The Lieutenant* happen because of divided loyalties.'

To what extent do you agree?

**OR**

**ii.** How does *The Lieutenant* reveal the importance of communication?

***The Queen* directed by Stephen Frears**

**i.** '*The Queen* is a film about making commitments to others.'

Discuss.

**OR**

**ii.** Discuss how Stephen Frears depicts change in *The Queen*.

***The Women of Troy* by Euripides**

**i.** 'We cannot condemn any of the women in the play because they acted out of self-preservation.'

Do you agree?

**OR**

**ii.** 'Hecuba's hate is more powerful than her love.'

To what extent do you agree?

***Things Fall Apart* by Chinua Achebe**

**i.** 'Okonkwo's obsession with masculinity makes him a tragic hero doomed to repeat the mistakes of the past.'

Do you agree?

**OR**

**ii.** 'In *Things Fall Apart*, Achebe presents the dualities of colonialism.'

Discuss.

***Tracks* by Robyn Davidson**

**i.** 'Davidson's *Tracks* celebrates the importance of meaningful connections to other people.'

Discuss.

**OR**

**ii.** 'During her journey, Robyn realises how powerful women can be.'

Discuss.

***William Wordsworth: Poems selected by Seamus Heaney* by William Wordsworth**

**i.** 'Wordsworth's poems reflect a sense of awe for the natural world.'

Discuss.

**OR**

**ii.** How does Wordsworth comment on society through his poetry?

**END OF SECTION B**


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## SECTION C – ARGUMENT AND PERSUASIVE LANGUAGE

**Background information**

The Archerwood Council has recently established a Dispute Resolution Centre (DRC). The DRC aims to settle disputes between neighbours amicably and without the need for any form of legal action. The free service is available to all residents of Archerwood. When the DRC receives letters, they send a copy to everyone involved.

On 7 February 2021, Mrs Patricia Winterson, spokesperson for Archerwood Residents for Enterprise and Action (AREA), sent a letter to the DRC about a dispute she wanted resolved. Her dispute involved another Archerwood resident, Mr Frank Maiocchi. Maiocchi received a copy of Winterson's letter on 8 February 2021.

Maiocchi wrote a letter to the DRC in reply on 15 February 2021. The DRC sent a copy of his letter to Winterson as part of the resolution process.

The DRC scheduled a meeting for March 2021 to make a decision about the dispute.

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**To: Archerwood Dispute Resolution Centre**

**From: Mrs Patricia Winterson**

Dear Sir/Madam,

As the spokesperson of Archerwood Residents for Enterprise and Action (AREA), I am writing to alert you to a matter of the gravest concern. I wish to seek your assistance in achieving a satisfactory resolution to what has become an increasingly frustrating and, quite frankly, exhausting issue for all concerned.

In March of last year, Mr Frank Maiocchi purchased a house at 17 Viewcrest Road, Archerwood. The area, as I need hardly tell you, is well-known for its natural and historical attractions. Those of us who warmly welcomed Mr Maiocchi to the neighbourhood assumed that he would wish to enjoy these advantages and had chosen his residence intending to integrate himself into the community. It soon became apparent, however, that Mr Maiocchi had very different ideas.

Instead of assimilating himself into the life and ways of Archerwood, Mr Maiocchi has chosen to make an eyesore of what was a very desirable residence. Mr Maiocchi's property is opposite my own and I have, regrettably, observed the changes he has made. Far from adapting himself to fit our suburb, Mr Maiocchi – who calls himself a 'junk artist' – has set about converting 17 Viewcrest Road into an 'innovative sculpture garden'. I could not imagine anything fitting in less with the existing streetscape. Indeed, any reasonable person would see the so-called 'innovative sculptures' for the monstrosities that they are. One such 'sculpture', a pile of derelict cars, is fully visible from the street (please see the photograph I have included).

Ours is a heritage area. Mr Maiocchi is bringing down property values and doing harm to what makes Archerwood unique and desirable. His unsightly property is impossible to ignore and significantly interferes with the enjoyment that other residents expect to have in their local surroundings.

AREA is of the view that Mr Maiocchi should dismantle his 'sculpture garden', which constitutes nothing more than a public nuisance. We have approached him on this point, but he remains uncooperative. For this reason, AREA is now turning to the Dispute Resolution Centre in the hope that your intervention may prove effective where we have not. Otherwise, we see no alternative but to begin what may be a long and potentially costly legal process. If we have not heard from Mr Maiocchi before 1 March 2021, we will be obliged to proceed with legal action.

Yours most sincerely,

Mrs Patricia Winterson


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**To: Archerwood Dispute Resolution Centre**

**From: Mr Frank Maiocchi**

Dear DRC members,

I am writing in response to the complaint from Mrs Patricia Winterson, spokesperson of AREA, which you forwarded to me on 8 February. I would like to thank the Archerwood Dispute Resolution Centre for agreeing to help resolve this matter.

I dispute Mrs Winterson's representation of my property. For one thing, I do not feel that I received any notably warm welcome to the neighbourhood. But, as I have listened patiently to Mrs Winterson's views, I think it is most unfair that I should be described as 'uncooperative'. In adapting my property to fit my needs, I am simply using my rights as a citizen, just as Mrs Winterson uses hers.

Whatever Mrs Winterson may prefer to think, I am a junk artist, a member of a growing movement that is finding wide acceptance in the arts community. The work of junk artists features in galleries around the world, which is how I sell my art to make money. My sculpture garden, which is an ever-evolving project that I hope to expand over time, is how I express my creativity. Perhaps Mrs Winterson cannot see it, but junk can be a beautiful thing. I celebrate what she condemns, and I think that, of the two of us, I am more in tune with the state of a modern society that values recycling and is critical of waste. I have worked hard to acquire the skills to use my imagination and make beauty out of what others throw away. Where is your imagination, Mrs Winterson?

I have received legal advice and now understand that I have not broken any local laws. It seems to me that what we have here is a purely aesthetic dispute: AREA does not like the way my sculpture garden looks. Very well. Perhaps I do not like their boringly predictable lawns and flowers. It's not for me, but they seem to like it, so I do not attempt to interfere. I am happy to engage in discussions about art with Mrs Winterson and AREA whenever they choose, but, until it can be shown that I have broken any local laws, I think we should resolve to let everyone make their own home decoration choices.

Yours truly,

Mr Frank Maiocchi, junk artist and home-owner

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**END OF TASK BOOKLET**


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Trial Examination 2021

# VCE English as an Additional Language (EAL) Units 3&4

Aural and Written Examination

## Section A Transcript

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*For your reference, this document contains the transcript of the audio file for Section A. The transcript should **not** be provided to students before or during the examination.*

## TEXT 1

**ALEX:** Hi everyone! Today I'm making tanghulu, which is a delicious treat you can buy everywhere in China. My friend taught me to make it last summer when I visited her in Beijing and I have made it many, many times since I came home.

This is my entry for the Summer Sweets recipe challenge. I'm entering this recipe because it is traditional, simple and tasty. If you like it, please vote for me!

Essentially, tanghulu is fresh fruit covered in a delicious, crunchy toffee. It is the combination of the juicy, slightly sour fruit with the sweet sugar shell that makes these so incredible.

I'm using strawberries today because they are my favourite fruit and they are easily available where I live. You can use other fruits as well, such as grapes, pineapple or orange pieces. The most traditional fruit used is hawthorn fruit, which are like little apples and they taste pleasantly sour. Sadly, I can't buy those here, but other fruits work really well.

To make this treat we are essentially melting sugar, so please be careful. If you are a kid, get an adult to help you out. Kids: Do not make this alone!

Firstly, add the sugar and water to your pan. Your pan should be over low heat. I also like to add some honey for flavour if I'm using strawberries, but you don't have to. If using oranges, I include more water to make the sugar thinner.

No matter what fruit you're using, do not stir this mixture or the sugar may crystallise and become rough like sand. You can, however, swirl the pan gently to move the mixture around. As soon as the majority of the sugar has dissolved in the water, you can turn the heat up to medium and let it boil. No higher, though. You don't want to taste burned sugar!

I use a thermometer to check the temperature. You want the sugar to reach 150 degrees Celsius, also known as the 'hard crack' stage for making candy. This is going to take 8 to 10 minutes, depending on your stove.

If you don't have a thermometer, you can still make tanghulu. Just cook the mixture slightly longer – and I mean slightly – until it has turned a very pale brown colour. Take the pan off the heat as soon as it changes colour. Immediately when you see that change! Otherwise, the sugar will burn and your mixture will taste bitter.

You should thread your fruit onto wooden sticks. You can put more than one piece of fruit on each stick, but I just use one strawberry on each to keep things tidy at home. You can dip the fruit in the pan, or you can use a spoon to pour the hot sugar mix over the fruit. If you use the spoon, keep the fruit over the pan so the extra sugar can go back in and doesn't make a mess. Also be very careful not to get any on your skin.

Place the sticks gently down on a sheet of baking paper to cool completely. That will take at least 10 minutes.

Not only are these delicious, but they are also fun to eat. The hot syrup softens the fruit a little, so you can get great contrast between the juicy texture of the fruit and the hard, crunchy shell. It explodes in your mouth.

Oh, and please vote for this recipe. I would really appreciate your support. The prize for winning this competition is a new digital camera – I'm a young filmmaker and I want to make videos as my career. Winning the digital camera might be my chance! I would also love to see pictures of your tanghulu, so don't forget to tag me when you post on social media. Have a great day and thanks for watching.

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## TEXT 2

**SARAH:** Hi, Don. It's great to see you again. I appreciate you taking the time to give me a hand with my meetings.

**DON:** Happy to help, Sarah. When I was just starting out as a manager, I had trouble running meetings, so I'm glad you reached out. I've got a few minutes before I have another meeting, but let's maybe cover one thing worrying you and we can book a time to chat again.

**SARAH:** Sounds good. Shame about the meeting. I guess meetings can be just the worst, right? I mean, sometimes I'm working away on something and then I get a notification on my computer – time for a meeting! It seems they always come at the most inconvenient times. I think this is my important first question – is it possible to enjoy a meeting?

**DON:** Yes! It is totally possible but you've got to work at it, a bit. Unfortunately, meetings are just one of those things we have to do. Part of life for anyone with a job. I guess the first thing is to get rid of those meetings that are pointless and just a waste of our time. If you find yourself sitting there thinking, 'Who is that?' or 'Why am I here?' or even 'What is this meeting about?' – you're probably in a bad meeting.

**SARAH:** Why do you think people hate meetings so much?

**DON:** I think there are several reasons. The first, and the most annoying for me, is when people are late. It shows a lack of respect. Another is not knowing the point of the meeting. That just makes it feel like you aren't going to gain anything from the meeting. The next reason, I think, is sometimes meetings get taken over by other people. They change the topic or speak for a long time about something not super important. Before we know it, the meeting's over and we haven't talked about the thing we needed to talk about! It also frustrates me when people are there, but their mind is somewhere else. You can see this when people are on their phones or computers. It's rude to the person speaking and it's like that person isn't even in the room. You don't want technology to be a distraction.

**SARAH:** Yeah, that's really [*phone noise*] – oh, excuse me. That's my husband. We're organising dinner for some friends this weekend. He's checking out the prices at a bakery near our house. So sorry – my phone is meant to be on silent … but I'm just going to … just a sec … um … Okay, so, so where were we?

**DON:** We were talking about the potential for technology like phones to get in the way of meetings.

**SARAH:** Oh… Uh… Sorry. You're right. You brought that back on track nicely.

**DON:** Thank you.

**SARAH:** So, I guess we can turn around all those things you said make a meeting a bad meeting and do the opposite. Does that make for a good meeting?

**DON:** Well, I guess so. I think it's most important to have a clear purpose. I actually think purpose is the most important thing. Ask yourself, by the end of this meeting, what do you want to have happened? A lot of neuroscience research shows people like certainty – they like knowing what is going to happen rather than having a surprise meeting. So, what we want to do is let people know what we are going to talk about and what we want to happen. This will make it more likely they will be prepared and relaxed, so then we have a better chance of getting a result. Let people know what key questions you are going to discuss. Or, what information they need to bring. That helps us all come prepared. You can really give some thought to what you might need to say in a meeting if you know what is coming.

**SARAH:** And, then, what about that other big one? Punctuality!

**DON:** (*DON sighs*)

**SARAH:** I know! But how do you MAKE people turn up on time? I find it INCREDIBLY difficult to just get people in the room by the start time. If a few people drift in 10 minutes late with a coffee in their hand, it wastes so much time, you know?

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**DON:** Mmm. (*in agreement*)

**SARAH:** I mean, if there are 10 people in the meeting and we all start 10 minutes late, that's 100 minutes of the company's time wasted. Or, if I do start, then people come in late, I feel I have to go back over and summarise what they missed, which is also a waste of time or can cause the conversation to go backwards to something we had already finished talking about. I just want to MAKE them be there on time.

**DON:** Well, you can't make anyone do these things, unless you get a reputation for being serious about it. That's hard to do when you're new to the role. At one of the places I used to work, punctuality was a nightmare. People were late for absolutely everything. Then, we got a new manager, Mike, who joined the company. He was a senior leader. We learned that when you had a meeting with him you just had to be there on time. He would get there on time. Ultimately, he would also leave the meeting on time. He was really strict. Everyone knew that about him, so they were on time! As a manager or leader, you have to make it clear that punctuality is important. It isn't something you are going to let slide.

**SARAH:** Right, so, set an example.

**DON:** Exactly. Another manager I worked with, Jackie, used to lock the door when the meeting started and put a sign up saying 'this ship has sailed'.

**SARAH:** Oh! That's amazing! I guess passengers wouldn't be late for a ship, so she treated meetings that way.

**DON:** Uh huh. There would be people knocking on the door, but she would just shake her head. Too late!

**SARAH:** That is delightful for the people who are inside the room, isn't it?

**DON:** It is. Even if it's just one person.

**SARAH:** Just her, you mean?

**DON:** Right. But, the staff learned she was taking it seriously.

**SARAH:** Is that something you would recommend?

**DON:** It, uh, wouldn't suit my management style, shall we say? I wouldn't be that extreme. But, I do think it is worth setting rules for meetings.

**SARAH:** Got it. I think setting expectations for punctuality will be high on my list. Is it time for your meeting yet?

**DON:** Oh, yes, I think I better get going; I have to find the room. Why don't you give punctuality some attention and then we can chat about how you went in a few weeks. Do you have any time early next month?

**SARAH:** Actually, yes. My projects will be wrapping up then, so it would work well. I'll send you an email this afternoon.

**DON:** Works for me. I'll get going now, I don't want to be the one who's late for a meeting!

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