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Write your **student number** in the boxes above.

**Letter**

# Aboriginal Languages of Victoria

## Question and Answer Book

VCE Examination – Wednesday 12 November 2025

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- Reading time is **15 minutes**: 2.00 pm to 2.15 pm
- Writing time is **2 hours**: 2.15 pm to 4.15 pm

### Materials supplied

- Question and Answer Book of 32 pages

### Instructions

- Write all your responses in the spaces provided in this Question and Answer Book.
- The spaces provided give you an idea of how much you should write.
- Unless otherwise instructed, write your responses in English.

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

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Contents	pages
<b>Section 1</b> (4 questions, 70 marks) _____	2–20
<b>Section 2</b> (1 of 2 questions, 20 marks) _____	22–29
<b>Assessment criteria for Section 2</b> _____	30

## Section 1

### Instructions

- Answer **all** questions in the spaces provided.

#### Question 1 (22 marks)

##### Gathang

Gathang (or Kattang) is the language of the Birrbay, Guringay and Warrimay peoples of the area between the Wilson River, Gloucester and Port Stephens in New South Wales.

The list below presents Gathang sentences, along with their English translations. Some of the words used in these sentences are shown in Table 1 on page 3.

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| 1. <i>Gurruman yalaway.</i>                        | The boy will sit down.                   |
| 2. <i>Yirimala nyuguwang wurrandu.</i>             | The goanna chased him.                   |
| 3. <i>Gigay ngatha bakan djinagu.</i>              | I will kick a stone with my foot.        |
| 4. <i>Gurrumandu bakan gigay djinagu.</i>          | The boy will kick a stone with his foot. |
| 5. <i>Wuunala ngatha nyungung ngurraga.</i>        | I left her at the camp.                  |
| 6. <i>Yalawa gunduga!</i>                          | Sit down on the log!                     |
| 7. <i>Nyaanyiy ngatha nyuguwang guraaga.</i>       | I will see him tonight.                  |
| 8. <i>Bakuwi gimala nyuwa.</i>                     | He roasted meat.                         |
| 9. <i>Gurrumandu galbaanguba buwatja dhanyila.</i> | The boy ate the woman's food.            |
| 10. <i>Gaaku gindaliyn.</i>                        | The kookaburra is laughing.              |
| 11. <i>Nyuwa bakuwi wuunala ngurraga.</i>          | He left meat at the camp.                |
| 12. <i>Gurruman nyaanyiy ngatha.</i>               | I will see the boy.                      |
| 13. <i>Gaakudu bakuwi dhanyila.</i>                | The kookaburra ate the meat.             |
| 14. <i>Gurrumandu nyaanyiy ngurra.</i>             | The boy will see the camp.               |
| 15. <i>Nyaanyila galbaandu barrangang.</i>         | The woman saw me.                        |
| 16. <i>Gindala nyuwa.</i>                          | He laughed.                              |

**Table 1\***

Gathang word	English word
<i>bakan</i>	stone
<i>bakuwi</i>	meat
<i>barrangang</i>	me
<i>buwatja</i>	food
<i>dhanyi</i>	eat
<i>gaaku</i>	kookaburra
<i>giga</i>	kick
<i>gima</i>	roast
<i>guraa</i>	night
<i>nyungung</i>	her
<i>wurran</i>	goanna
<i>wuuna</i>	leave
<i>yalawa</i>	sit down
<i>yirima</i>	chase

\*Note that in Table 1 the Gathang words are listed without suffixes.

- a. List all the Gathang words from sentences 1–16 that correspond to the following English words, paying attention to the spelling shown in the examples.

6 marks

boy \_\_\_\_\_

camp \_\_\_\_\_

he \_\_\_\_\_

him \_\_\_\_\_

saw \_\_\_\_\_

will see \_\_\_\_\_

**Question 1** continues on the next page.

b. Identify **one** intransitive sentence from the Gathang sentences on page 2. 1 mark

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c. Explain why **two** different forms of the Gathang word for 'boy' are used. Use examples from sentences 1–16 on page 2 to justify your response. 3 marks

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d. Consider the Gathang pronouns meaning 'he' and 'him' as well as your response to **part c**.  
Explain how the use of the Gathang pronouns meaning 'he' and 'him' shows a different pattern compared to Gathang nouns, such as the word for 'boy'. Use examples from sentences 1–16 on page 2 to justify your response. 4 marks

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**e.** Identify **two** Gathang suffixes that mark a verb tense and name which tense is marked by each suffix. 2 marks

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**f.** Identify the function of the Gathang suffix *-guba* in sentence 9 on page 2. 1 mark

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**g.** Explain one difference between English and Gathang in how they express location. Provide **one** example from sentences 1–16 on page 2 to justify your response. 2 marks

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**h.** Consider only the sentences that are transitive on page 2.  
Does Gathang have a fixed word order for transitive sentences?  
Describe the word order(s) of **two** transitive sentences from page 2 to support your response. 3 marks

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**Question 2** (12 marks)

**Gathang adjectives and sentence translations**

Consider the following additional Gathang sentences and their English translations.

- 17. *Gurruman githal nyaanyila ngatha.* I saw the hungry boy.
- 18. *Wurrandu djukaldu buwatja dhanyila.* The big goanna ate the food.
- 19. *Nyuwa nyaanyila gaaku djukal.* He saw the big kookaburra.

a. What is the Gathang word for 'hungry'? 1 mark

\_\_\_\_\_

b. Explain how English and Gathang differ in how they place an adjective in relation to a noun. Provide **two** examples from sentences 17–19 to justify your response. 2 marks

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

c. Explain why the suffix *-du* is used in the word *djukaldu* in sentence 18. 1 mark

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

d. Translate the following Gathang sentences into English. 4 marks

*Gurruman gindaliyn ngurraga.*

\_\_\_\_\_

*Bakan djukal galbaandu gigala.*

\_\_\_\_\_

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e. Translate the following English sentences into Gathang.

4 marks

The hungry goanna saw the kookaburra's food.

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The woman sat down on the log.

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**References for Questions 1 and 2**

A Lissarrague, *A Grammar and Dictionary of Gathang: The Language of the Birrbay, Guringay and Warri May*, Australia: Muurrbay Aboriginal Language & Culture Co-operative, 2010, pp. 30–34, 67, 76–77, 215

**Question 3** (19 marks)**Wadawurrung**

The Victorian language known today as Wadawurrung or Wathaurong was documented in John Cary's 1898 article 'Woddowro personal pronouns: their derivation'. The article was based on diaries and notes written by Francis Tuckfield, who was a missionary in the Barwon River region in 1838, at a time when the language was spoken by everybody at the mission.

Tuckfield's list of 'personal pronouns' in the nominative case is partly reproduced in Table 2.

**Table 2**

Nominative case	
Singular	
<i>bangik</i>	I
<i>bangen</i>	thou
<i>bang-nuk</i>	he
Dual	
<i>bangul</i>	we
<i>bangbullok</i>	you
<i>bang-a-bul-ong</i>	they
Plural	
<i>bang-wod-juk</i>	we
<i>bang-ud</i>	you
<i>bang-tan-ong</i>	they

- a. Write a detailed definition of the **two** 'Woddowro' words translated by Tuckfield as 'you', explaining when they would be used and in what way they are different.

2 marks

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**b.** What other word in Table 2 would today be translated as 'you' in English? Explain when this word would be used.

2 marks

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**Use the following information to answer parts c and d.**

A few years later, in 1904, Robert Hamilton Mathews published an article called 'Language of the Wuddyawurru Tribe, Victoria', using an alternative spelling for the name of the language. His list of pronouns in the nominative case is presented in Table 3. Note that the abbreviation 'incl.' is for 'inclusive' and 'excl.' is for 'exclusive'.

**Table 3**

<b>Nominative case</b>	
<b>Singular</b>	
<i>bangek</i>	I
<i>bangin</i>	thou
<i>banguk</i>	he
<b>Dual</b>	
<i>bangal</i>	we incl.
<i>bangalluk</i>	we excl.
<i>bangbula</i>	you
<i>bangbullang</i>	they
<b>Plural</b>	
<i>bangaduk</i>	we incl.
<i>bangwŭdjak</i>	we excl.
<i>bangŭt</i>	you
<i>anganak</i>	they

- c. Explain the difference in meaning between 'we incl.' and 'we excl.' in the dual pronouns. 1 mark

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- d. In Table 2 on page 8, Tuckfield records *bangul* as 'we' (dual) and *bang-wod-juk* as 'we' (plural).

Compare these forms to those recorded by Mathews in Table 3. What information is missing from Tuckfield's translations?

2 marks

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**Question 3** continues on the next page.

**Use the following information to answer parts e–g.**

Both Mathews and Tuckfield also give 'possessive case' forms for each of these pronouns. Table 4 shows some 'Wuddyawurru' possessive case forms provided by Mathews alongside the nominative case forms.

**Table 4**

Nominative case		Possessive case	
Singular		Singular	
<i>bangek</i>	I	<i>bangordigek</i>	my, mine
<i>bangin</i>	thou	<i>bangordigin</i>	thy, thine
<i>banguk</i>	he	<i>bangordiguk</i>	his

- e. What part of the words is common to all of the 'Wuddyawurru' pronouns in Table 4? 1 mark

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- f. Consider the data in Table 4 from Mathews.

Explain how the possessive forms are derived from the nominative forms.

2 marks

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- g. Using the data from Table 4, identify the suffixes that indicate the following.

3 marks

1st person singular \_\_\_\_\_

2nd person singular \_\_\_\_\_

3rd person singular \_\_\_\_\_



- i. Suggest **two** possible explanations for **one** of the differences between the historical sources in **part h**.

2 marks

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**References**

JJ Cary, 'Woddowro personal pronouns: their derivation', originally presented in January 1898 and later published as part of 'Vocabularies of the Geelong and Colac tribes, collected in 1840', in *Australian Association for the Advancement of Science*, (1899) 7: 840-872, <nla.gov.au:443/tarkine/nla.obj-387442382>

RH Mathews, 'Language of the Wuddyawurru tribe, Victoria', *Zeitschrift für Ethnologie* XXXVI, 1904, pp. 729–734

**Question 4** (17 marks)**Yugambeh-Bandjalang**

As new concepts and objects emerge, people find ways to use language to talk about them. The Yugambeh and Bandjalang language communities are based in the north-east of New South Wales, towards southern Queensland. They have worked with linguist Margaret Sharpe to adapt the language to create words for things, ideas and actions that were not part of traditional society.

Table 6 shows a partial list of sounds in Yugambeh-Bandjalang, adapted from the community orthography. The vowels have a length distinction – long vowels are marked with an ‘h’ to distinguish them from the short vowels. For example, ‘a’ represents a short vowel and ‘ah’ represents the corresponding long vowel. In the Yugambeh-Bandjalang language, the letter ‘r’ represents a trill or rolled sound, whereas ‘r’ represents a sound similar to the English ‘r’.

**Table 6**

<b>Vowels</b>												
a	ah	i	ih	u	uh	e	eh					
<b>Consonants</b>												
b	d	j	g	m	n	ny	ng	l	<u>r</u>	r	w	y

**Loan word adaptation**

One way of creating new words is by adapting English words into the sound patterns of a language. This is a common process known as loan word adaptation.

Some of these new words in Yugambeh-Bandjalang are shown with their English origins in Table 7.

**Table 7**

<i>behng</i>	bag
<i>milang</i>	(cow's) milk
<i>bing-bing</i>	pig
<i>jimbang</i>	sheep (from 'jumbuck')

- a. Based on Table 7, how does Yugambeh-Bandjalang express the ‘g’ and ‘k’ sounds present at the end of English words?

1 mark

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**Question 4** continues on the next page.

Table 8 shows four more words adapted from English.

**Table 8**

<i>dindihj</i>	dish (from 'tin dish')
<i>bujigan</i>	cat (from 'pussycat')
<i>jugi-jugi</i>	chicken (from 'chook')
<i>bihbar</i>	book, newspaper (from 'paper')

- b. Based on Table 8, identify **two** sounds in English that correspond to the 'j' sound in Yugambeh-Bandjalang. 2 marks

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- c. Based on Table 8, identify all the ways in which the English sounds 'p' and 't' are expressed in Yugambeh-Bandjalang. 3 marks

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**Word creation**

The Yugambeh-Bandjalang words in Table 9 have been created by using the purpose suffix *-gu*, which means 'for/to'.

**Table 9**

<b>Yugambeh-Bandjalang word</b>	<b>Literal translation</b>
<i>ganngah-gu-gawal</i>	for hearing at a distance
<i>nyahbi-gu-gawal-jahng</i>	for seeing a very long distance
<i>wayalih-gu</i>	for flying
<i>mih-nyahbi-gu</i>	for eyes seeing
<i>burehn-gu</i>	for bread

- d. Match the new meanings provided in the following list to the Yugambeh-Bandjalang words and their original meanings.

3 marks

spectacles/eyeglasses

butter

telescope

aeroplane

telephone

<b>Yugambeh-Bandjalang word</b>	<b>Literal translation</b>	<b>New meaning</b>
<i>ganngah-gu-gawal</i>	for hearing at a distance	
<i>nyahbi-gu-gawal-jahng</i>	for seeing a very long distance	
<i>wayalih-gu</i>	for flying	
<i>mih-nyahbi-gu</i>	for eyes seeing	
<i>burehn-gu</i>	for bread	

- e. What is the Yugambeh-Bandjalang word for 'far, at a distance'?

1 mark

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**Question 4** continues on the next page.

- f. What is the Yugambeh-Bandjalang word for 'to see'? 1 mark

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- g. Suggest **two** new Yugambeh-Bandjalang words, using the same word formation process from Table 9 on the previous page, and give an English translation for each. In combination with *-gu*, use the following verbs adapted from Yugambeh-Bandjalang. You may also use *-gawal*. 2 marks

*yanbigi-*        to go  
*gawarilih-*    to run  
*jurigalih-*     to count  
*duwalih-*      to dig

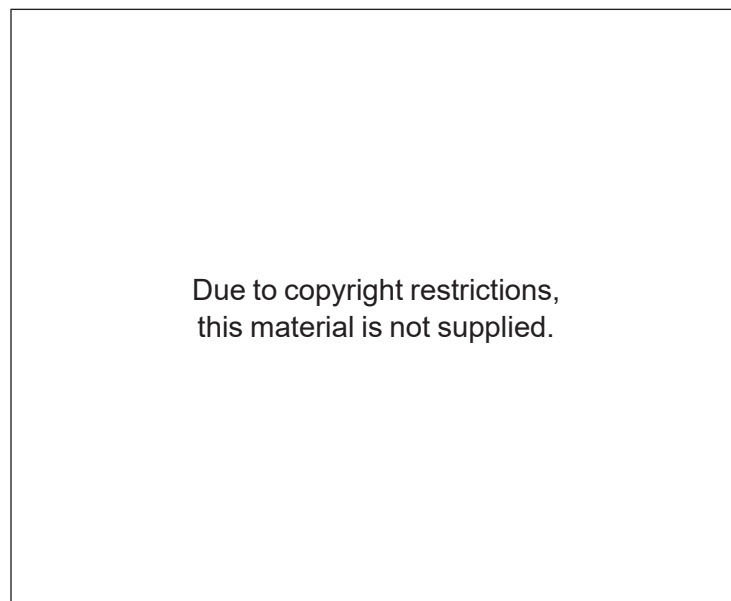
New Yugambeh-Bandjalang word	English translation

**Use the following information to answer parts h–j.**

Table 10 shows more new words in Yugambeh-Bandjalang. These are words that existed in the traditional Yugambeh-Bandjalang language and to which a new meaning has been added since the arrival of the English language.

**Table 10**

<b>Yugambeh-Bandjalang word</b>	<b>Original meaning</b>	<b>Additional modern-day meaning</b>
<i>nyugam</i>	bailer shell (a large type of seashell, pictured in Figure 1)	basin, pot, billy can, water container
<i>mulu</i>	stone	money
<i>guygam</i>	sand	salt
<i>gibam</i>	moon	time period of about one month

**Figure 1: Bailer shell**

Photograph: Bo Wong

Source: Wanderland <[www.visitwanderland.com.au](http://www.visitwanderland.com.au)>

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**Question 4** continues on the next page.

**h.** What is the name of the word formation process shown in Table 10? 1 mark

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**i.** Choose **two** of the Yugambeh-Bandjalang words in Table 10 and explain why these words may have been chosen to represent the modern meaning. 2 marks

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**j.** The word *jalngay* can mean any of ‘light’ (of fire), ‘shine’, ‘shiny’, ‘bright’. Suggest a potential new meaning for this word and explain your reasoning. 1 mark

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**Reference**

MC Sharpe (ed.), *Gurgun Mibiŋyah: Yugumbir, Yugambeh, Nganduwal, Ngarahngwal, Wangerriburra, Manandjali*, Keeaira Press, Southport, 2023, pp. 11–15, 259–262

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Examination continues on the next page.

## Section 2

### Instructions

- Answer **one** question, **either** Question 5 **or** Question 6 in the spaces provided.
- Your responses will be assessed according to the assessment criteria set out on page 30.

### EITHER

#### Question 5 (20 marks)



Source: Parks Victoria <[www.parks.vic.gov.au](http://www.parks.vic.gov.au)> © Parks Victoria 2019

You have been involved with a language reclamation project as part of your study of the target language. Imagine the same language group has been approached by a parks authority to collaborate on a new project, and the parks authority would like you to provide linguistic support as part of the team.

The parks authority is planning to update the signage in a national park in the language group's area. One of the signage projects is a short walk that will have signs with information about native plants and animals. The parks authority would like to add the names of the native plants and animals in the target language and include any relevant information about their traditional uses and importance to the local Aboriginal people.







**Question 6** (20 marks)

Read the following excerpt from a speech by Gunditjmara person Rueben Berg at the Victorian Statewide Treaty Gathering, held on 5 April 2024. Rueben is the reserved seat holder representing the Eastern Maar Aboriginal Corporation and Co-Chair of the First Peoples' Assembly of Victoria.

The First Peoples' Assembly of Victoria is the independent and democratically elected body representing Traditional Owners of Country and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in Victoria.

We want our kids to grow up proud of who they are and strong in culture.

We also want to share our cultures and languages with everyone who lives or visits Victoria.

Something as simple as the language we use to name a place, can offer a way to connect with each other and help newer Australians better understand the oldest living culture in the world.

Embracing our languages and having our cultural practices respected and celebrated is something we'd love to see more of.

So, you can expect there'll be some talk in the (treaty) negotiations about things like strengthening dual naming policies, but we'll also be looking at ways to rejuvenate our beautiful languages by having them taught.

Imagine if all primary school kids could learn about the language of the Traditional Owners of Country in their area. It would of course need to be subject to the wishes of Traditional Owners in each area, but it's certainly something I'd love to see.

Source: First Peoples' Assembly of Victoria, <[www.firstpeoplesvic.org/news/the-journey-ahead/](http://www.firstpeoplesvic.org/news/the-journey-ahead/)>  
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## Assessment criteria for Section 2

### Content

The extent to which the student demonstrates an understanding of

- the broad issues related to language reclamation
- how and why languages differ and how they change over time
- the relationship between language and culture

### Presentation

The quality of responses, demonstrated by:

- the comprehensiveness of the response(s)
  - the coherence and relevance of the response(s)
  - the effectiveness of the use of language examples
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