LE GOUVERNEMENT DU GRAND-DUCHÉ DE LUXEMBOURG Ministère de l'Éducation nationale, de l'Enfance et de la Jeunesse	EXAMEN DE FIN D'ÉTUDES SECONDAIRES **2017**		
BRANCHE	**SECTIONS**	**ÉPREUVE ÉCRITE**	
Anglais	**B, C, D, E, F, G**	*Durée de l'épreuve* *2 heures*	
		Date de l'épreuve *02 juin 2017*	
		Numéro du candidat	

In an age of robots, schools are teaching our children to be redundant

In the future, if you want a job, you must be as unlike a machine as possible: creative, critical and socially skilled. So why are children being taught to behave like machines? Children learn best when teaching aligns with their natural energy and curiosity. So why are they forced into rows and made to sit still while they are stuffed with facts? We succeed in adulthood through collaboration. So why is collaboration in tests and exams called cheating? Governments claim to want to reduce the number of children being excluded from school. So why are their curriculums and tests so narrow that they alienate any child whose mind does not work in a particular way?

There is a common reason for these perversities. Our schools were designed to produce the workforce required by 19th-century factories. The desired product was workers who would sit silently at their benches all day, behaving identically, to produce identical products, submitting to punishment if they failed to achieve the required standards. Collaboration and critical thinking were just what the factory owners wished to discourage.

When children are allowed to apply their natural creativity and curiosity, they love learning. They learn to walk, to talk, to eat and to play spontaneously by watching and experimenting. Then they get to school, and we suppress this instinct by sitting them down, force-feeding them with facts and testing the life out of them.

There is no single system for teaching children well, but the best ones have this in common: they open up rich worlds that children can explore in their own ways, developing their interests with help rather than indoctrination. For example, one school in Bolton gives every pupil an iPad, on which they create projects, share material with their teachers and each other, and can contact their teachers with questions about their homework. By reducing their routine tasks, this system enables teachers to give the children individual help.

Other schools have gone in the opposite direction, taking children outdoors and using the natural world to engage their interests and develop their mental and physical capacities. But it's not a matter of high-tech or low-tech; the point is that the world a child enters is rich and diverse enough to ignite their curiosity, and allow them to discover a way of learning that best reflects their character and skills.

There are plenty of teaching programmes designed to work with children, not against them. One project encourages them to form teams of inquiry, solving an imaginary task – such as running a container port, excavating a tomb or rescuing people from a disaster – that cuts across traditional subject boundaries.

An Italian school allows children to develop their own curriculum, based on what interests them most, opening up the subjects they encounter along the way with the help of their teachers. Other schools treat empathy as a fundamental skill, as important as reading and maths, and use it to develop the kind of open, fluid collaboration that will be the 21st century's key skill.

In countries such as Britain and the United States, such programmes succeed despite the system, not because of it. Had these governments set out to ensure that children find learning difficult and painful, they could not have done a better job. Yes, let's have some social engineering. Let's engineer our children out of the factory and into the real world.   (564 words)

adapted version of an article by George Monbiot published in The Guardian on 15th February 2017

I)   Working with the text   30 marks

A) Comprehension (20 marks)

Use your own words as far as possible to answer the comprehension questions.

1. What negative aspects does the author detect in the existing mainstream school system? (8 marks)
2. How does the author explain the origin of the school system he attacks? (4 marks)
3. How can schools best prepare students for the real world according to the author? (8 marks)

B) Personal Opinion (10 marks)

Word limit: 100 – 150 words.

Haim Harari, a renowned theoretical physicist, claims that technology is changing education. Do you agree?

II)   Essay   30 marks

Write an essay (between 300 and 400 words) on ONE of the following topics. Indicate your choice CLEARLY and include the word count.

1. Recent studies show that a person's life expectancy will soon exceed 90 years in developed countries. How will such an increase in lifespan affect society?

2. Facebook and Twitter helped revolutionaries drive dictators from power in countries like Tunisia, Egypt or Libya. Can social media also represent a danger for democracy?

3. According to a UN report, mankind's future ability to feed itself is in jeopardy due to intensifying pressures on the environment and a growing world population. Where will our food come from in the future?