cookie

Practice paper

GCSE English Language, practice paper: Component 2 (non-fiction reading and writing) (Eduqas style)

In the style of Eduqas GCSE English Language (C700) Component 2

Practice paper written by cookie in the style of Eduqas GCSE English Language (C700) Component 2. Not an Eduqas paper; not affiliated with or endorsed by Eduqas.

Time allowed: 2 hours

Total marks: 80

Name _____

Instructions

- Answer all questions in Section A and Section B.
- Section A (Reading) is worth 40 marks and Section B (Writing) is worth 40 marks. The marks for each question are shown beside it.
- Both texts for Section A are printed in this paper: Text A with Question 1 and Text B with Question 3.
- You are advised to spend your time as follows. Section A: about 10 minutes reading and about 50 minutes answering the questions. Section B: 30 minutes on each question, with about 5 minutes planning and about 25 minutes writing.
- In Section B, 12 marks for each question are for communication and organisation and 8 marks are for vocabulary, sentence structure, spelling and punctuation.
- Text A was written for this practice paper. Text B is a nineteenth-century essay that is in the public domain.

Information

- The marks for each question are shown in brackets at the end of each part.
- The maximum mark for this paper is 80.

Do it online, timed and marked:
cookie.education/past-papers/gcse/cookie/english-language-eduqas-style

Answer ALL questions. Write your answers in the spaces provided.

1 SECTION A: READING – 40 MARKS
Answer all the questions in this section.

Text A is a twenty-first-century magazine-website article in which a secondary school teacher argues that young people need time to do nothing. The article, its writer and the people in it were invented for this practice paper. Read Text A, then answer Questions 1 and 2.

Text A: In praise of the empty box

Last spring, a Year 11 student I will call Maya proudly showed me her revision timetable. It was a work of art. Every day from 6am until 10pm was divided into ten-minute blocks, each one shaded a different colour: blue for maths, green for biology, orange for ‘walk the dog’. I searched it for a gap. There was one. On Sunday afternoon, squeezed between chemistry and an online French lesson, sat a small grey box labelled ‘relax: 20 mins’.

Twenty minutes. A week.

I have been teaching for nineteen years, and I have never seen young people work as hard as they do now. That ought to be good news. Instead, I find it frightening. Maya is not unusual. Her friends juggle five or six clubs a week, part-time jobs, tutors and group chats that buzz until midnight. When I ask my classes what they do when they have nothing to do, they look at me as if I had asked what they do on the moon.

So, one wet Tuesday, I tried an experiment. I asked a class of thirty fifteen-year-olds to sit for five minutes with nothing at all: no phones, no books, no talking. Just sitting. You would have thought I had asked them to walk over hot coals. Within a minute, hands were creeping towards pockets. One boy sighed so loudly that the class next door must have heard him. When the timer finally went off, he announced that it had been ‘the longest five minutes of my life’.

But here is the interesting part. Afterwards, a quiet girl at the back told me she had worked out the ending of a story she had been stuck on for a fortnight. A boy said he had noticed, for the first time in two years, that the tree outside our window had a nest in it. Five minutes of boredom, and their minds had wandered somewhere useful.

This should not surprise us. Our best ideas rarely arrive while we are staring at a to-do list. They come in the shower, on the bus, halfway through the washing-up: in the empty moments when the brain is allowed to drift. Boredom is not a waste of time. It is the waiting room where imagination gets ready.

The trouble is that we have almost bricked up the waiting room. Last month my train was delayed by forty minutes. I looked along the crowded platform and every single

person, including me, was staring at a small glowing screen. Nobody was watching the pigeons. Nobody was daydreaming. We were not working, exactly, but we were not resting either. We were simply filling the silence before it could fill us.

I am not saying that hard work does not matter. It does. I want my students to pass their exams, and I will cheerfully nag them about quadratic equations until they do. But a life made entirely of productive blocks is not a life; it is a timetable. Young people need time that belongs to nobody: time to wander, to stare, to be gloriously, unapologetically bored.

So here is my modest proposal. Parents: leave one evening a week empty, and resist the urge to fill it. Students: next time you are waiting for a bus, leave your phone in your pocket and look around you. It will feel strange. It might even feel like failing. It isn't.

As for Maya, I asked her to swap one grey box for an empty one with no label at all. She looked horrified. Then, slowly, she smiled.

(a) Read again the first three paragraphs of Text A, from 'Last spring' to 'on the moon'. At what time does each day on Maya's revision timetable begin?

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(1)

(b) How much time does the timetable give Maya to relax each week?

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(1)

(c) How long has the writer been teaching?

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(1)

(Total for Question 1 is 3 marks)

2 In Text A, the teacher sets out to convince readers that young people need time to do nothing. How does the writer try to do this?
You should comment on:
– the ideas, examples and stories the writer uses;
– the writer's choice of language and tone;
– how the article is structured.
You must refer to the text to support your comments, using relevant subject terminology.

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(10)

(Total for Question 2 is 10 marks)

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3 Text B is taken from ‘An Apology for Idlers’, an essay by Robert Louis Stevenson, the Scottish author of Treasure Island, who lived from 1850 to 1894. It was first published in 1877 in a magazine, the Cornhill Magazine, and collected in his book Virginibus Puerisque in 1881. Here an ‘apology’ means a defence: Stevenson argues that being idle is not the waste of time that most people think it is. The essay has been shortened, and […] shows where words have been left out. Words in square brackets explain difficult words and are not part of the essay.

Read Text B, then answer Questions 3 and 4.

Text B: An Apology for Idlers

It is surely beyond a doubt that people should be a good deal idle in youth. For though here and there a Lord Macaulay [a famous historian who had won many prizes as a student] may escape from school honours with all his wits about him, most boys pay so dear for their medals that they never afterwards have a shot in their locker [have anything left to give], and begin the world bankrupt. […] Books are good enough in their own way, but they are a mighty bloodless substitute for life. […] And if a man reads very hard, as the old anecdote reminds us, he will have little time for thought.

If you look back on your own education, I am sure it will not be the full, vivid, instructive hours of truantry [missing school without permission] that you regret; you would rather cancel some lack-lustre periods between sleep and waking in the class. For my own part, I have attended a good many lectures in my time. I still remember that the spinning of a top is a case of Kinetic Stability. I still remember that Emphyteusis is not a disease, nor Stillicide a crime. [Kinetic Stability is a term from physics; Emphyteusis and Stillicide are terms from law, which Stevenson studied at university] But though I would not willingly part with such scraps of science, I do not set the same store by them as by certain other odds and ends that I came by in the open street while I was playing truant. […] Suffice it to say this: if a lad does not learn in the streets, it is because he has no faculty of learning. Nor is the truant always in the streets, for if he prefers, he may go out by the gardened suburbs into the country. He may pitch on some tuft of lilacs over a burn [a stream], and smoke innumerable pipes to the tune of the water on the stones. A bird will sing in the thicket. And there he may fall into a vein of kindly thought, and see things in a new perspective. Why, if this be not education, what is?

[…] Extreme busyness, whether at school or college, kirk [church] or market, is a

symptom of deficient vitality [a lack of life and energy]; and a faculty for idleness implies a catholic [wide-ranging] appetite and a strong sense of personal identity. There is a sort of dead-alive, hackneyed people about, who are scarcely conscious of living except in the exercise of some conventional occupation. Bring these fellows into the country, or set them aboard ship, and you will see how they pine for their desk or their study. They have no curiosity; they cannot give themselves over to random provocations; they do not take pleasure in the exercise of their faculties for its own sake; and unless Necessity lays about them with a stick, they will even stand still. […] If they have to wait an hour or so for a train, they fall into a stupid trance with their eyes open. […] They have been to school and college, but all the time they had their eye on the medal; they have gone about in the world and mixed with clever people, but all the time they were thinking of their own affairs. As if a man's soul were not too small to begin with, they have dwarfed and narrowed theirs by a life of all work and no play; until here they are at forty, with a listless attention, a mind vacant of all material of amusement, and not one thought to rub against another, while they wait for the train. […] This does not appeal to me as being Success in Life.

[…] There is no duty we so much underrate as the duty of being happy. […] A happy man or woman is a better thing to find than a five-pound note. He or she is a radiating focus of goodwill; and their entrance into a room is as though another candle had been lighted. […] Look at one of your industrious fellows for a moment, I beseech you. He sows hurry and reaps indigestion; he puts a vast deal of activity out to interest, and receives a large measure of nervous derangement in return.

(a) Look again at the first paragraph of Text B. What does Stevenson mean when he says that books are ‘a mighty bloodless substitute for life’?

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(1)

(b) Look again at the second paragraph of Text B, from ‘If you look back’ to ‘what is?’. According to Stevenson, what can a truant do if he goes into the country? Give two things.

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(2)

(Total for Question 3 is 3 marks)

4 What do you think and feel about Stevenson's views on being idle and being busy?
You should comment on:
– what is said;
– how it is said.
You must refer to the text to support your comments.

(10)

(Total for Question 4 is 10 marks)

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5 To answer Questions 5 and 6 you will need to use both texts.

According to these two writers, what are the effects of being too busy?
Use details from both texts and make it clear which text you are referring to.

(4)

(Total for Question 5 is 4 marks)

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6 Both texts argue for the value of idle time. Compare:
– what each writer thinks about being busy and being idle;
– the methods each writer uses to put across their views.
Support your comments with references to both texts, making it clear which text you mean each time.

(10)

(Total for Question 6 is 10 marks)

7 SECTION B: WRITING – 40 MARKS
Answer Question 7 and Question 8.

This section tests your writing. Each answer is marked out of 20: 12 marks for communication and organisation, and 8 marks for vocabulary, sentence structure, spelling and punctuation. Keep your purpose and your reader in mind as you write. Aim for roughly 300 to 400 words for each task.

Your school or college is planning to make every student take part in at least one after-school club or activity each week.
Write a letter to your headteacher or principal giving your views on this plan. You could write in favour of the plan or against it.

(20)

(Total for Question 7 is 20 marks)

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8 A local news website is running a series called ‘Switch Off’, in which readers review a place where they go to slow down and relax, such as a park, a beach, a café, a library or a swimming pool.
Write a lively review of a place of your choice for the series.

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(20)

(Total for Question 8 is 20 marks)

END OF QUESTIONS