



L-Università
ta' Malta

MATRICULATION AND SECONDARY EDUCATION CERTIFICATE
EXAMINATIONS BOARD

**SECONDARY EDUCATION CERTIFICATE LEVEL
2025 MAIN SESSION**

SUBJECT: **English Language**
PAPER NUMBER: II – Level 1-2 (Speaking)
DURATION: 10 minutes

SESSION 1

EXAMINER'S PAPER

Speaking

(Total: 100 marks)

Brief

The Speaking Task involves two parts: (i) an ice-breaker which aims to allow candidates time to feel at ease, and (ii) a long turn that includes two minutes for candidates to think and reflect on the topic that they choose from a list of three titles. Following this time period, candidates are expected to speak about the topic for up to two minutes. The task should last approximately **10 minutes**.

Below are the instructions for both examiners and candidates to follow during the speaking task.

PART 1 – Guided Examiner-to-Candidate Conversation (about 1 minute)

The examiner tells the candidate:

Good morning/afternoon. Please have a seat.

In this part of the task, I am going to ask you some questions about yourself. May I remind you to please speak up so that I may hear you, and remember to answer questions as fully as possible.

Let's talk about you.

1. How do you spend the weekend in summer?
2. How do you spend your Saturdays in winter?

[If the candidate answers a question too briefly or is unable to move beyond one- or two-word responses, the examiner should move on to the next question or to the second task.]

After the candidate has answered all the questions, the examiner says:

Thank you. Now we shall proceed to the second part of the task.

PART 2 – Guided Examiner-to-Candidate Long Turn (about 2 minutes)

The examiner tells the candidate:

*In this part of the task, you are to speak for about **two minutes** on the topic you've chosen. Before you start speaking, you have two minutes to recollect your thoughts on the topic. Here's a pencil and paper to write some notes. You may refer to these notes during the speaking task.*

The examiner hands a pencil and a sheet of paper to the candidate and waits for two minutes. At the end of the two minutes, the examiner tells the candidate:

All right? Which title have you chosen?

The examiner waits for the candidate to pronounce the title. The examiner then says:

You may begin.

Titles:

1. School uniforms are important and should be kept. Discuss.
2. Playing a team sport has benefits and drawbacks. Discuss.
3. A bicycle is the best means of transport in today's busy world. Discuss.

[If the examiner notes that the candidate is unable to maintain discourse for one or two minutes, the examiner should pose just ONE prompt to assist the candidate. If the candidate is still unable to proceed, then the examiner should bring the task to an end.]

After the candidate has concluded the presentation, the examiner says:

Thank you. May I have the paper back, please? This is the end of the speaking task.



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2025 MAIN SESSION**

SUBJECT:	English Language
PAPER NUMBER:	II – Level 1-2 (Speaking)
DURATION:	10 minutes

SESSION 1

CANDIDATE'S PAPER

Speaking

(Total: 100 marks)

PART 2 – Guided Examiner-to-Candidate Long Turn (about 2 minutes)

Choose ONE of the titles given below and prepare a TWO-minute presentation on the topic. Before you start speaking, the examiner will give you two minutes to recollect your thoughts on the topic. The examiner will give you pencil and paper to make notes. You will be allowed to refer to these notes during your presentation.

Choose ONE of the following:

1. School uniforms are important and should be kept. Discuss.
2. Playing a team sport has benefits and drawbacks. Discuss.
3. A bicycle is the best means of transport in today's busy world. Discuss.

At the end of the exam, please give the paper back to the examiner, together with the pencil and paper.



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**SECONDARY EDUCATION CERTIFICATE LEVEL
2025 MAIN SESSION**

SUBJECT: **English Language**
PAPER NUMBER: II – Level 2-3 (Speaking)
DURATION: 10 minutes

SESSION 1

EXAMINER'S PAPER

Speaking

(Total: 100 marks)

Brief

The Speaking Task involves two parts: (i) an ice-breaker which aims to allow candidates time to feel at ease, and (ii) a long turn that includes two minutes for candidates to think and reflect on the topic that they choose from a list of three titles. Following this time period, candidates are expected to speak about the topic for about three minutes. The task should last approximately **10 minutes**.

Here are the instructions for both examiners and candidates to follow during the speaking task.

PART 1 – Guided Examiner-to-Candidate Conversation (about 2 minutes)

The examiner tells the candidate:

Good morning/afternoon. Please have a seat.

In this part of the task, I am going to ask you some questions about yourself. May I remind you to please speak up so that I may hear you, and remember to answer questions as fully as possible.

Let's talk about you.

1. How did you spend last weekend?
2. How do you intend to spend your evenings this summer?
3. What type of food do you prefer?

[If the candidate answers a question too briefly or is unable to move beyond one- or two-word responses, the examiner should move on to the next question or to the second task.]

After the candidate has answered all the questions in the set, the examiner says:

Thank you. Now we shall proceed to the second part of the task.

PART 2 – Guided Examiner-to-Candidate Long Turn (about 3 minutes)

The examiner tells the candidate:

*In this part of the task, you are to speak for about **three minutes** on the topic you've chosen. Before you start speaking, you have two minutes to recollect your thoughts on the topic. Here's a pencil and paper to write some notes. You may refer to these notes during your discussion.*

The examiner hands a pencil and a sheet of paper to the candidate and waits for two minutes. At the end of the two minutes, the examiner tells the candidate:

All right? Which title have you chosen?

The examiner waits for the candidate to pronounce the title. The examiner then says:

You may begin.

Titles:

1. We are doing our best to reduce pollution in our towns and villages. Discuss.
2. Nowadays, we no longer need libraries. Discuss.
3. Meeting friends online is always better than in person. Discuss.

[If the examiner notes that the candidate is unable to maintain discourse for the required three minutes, the examiner should pose just ONE prompt to assist the candidate. If the candidate is still unable to proceed, then the examiner should bring the task to an end.]

After the candidate has concluded the presentation, the examiner says:

Thank you. May I have the paper back, please? This is the end of the speaking task.



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2025 MAIN SESSION**

SUBJECT:	English Language
PAPER NUMBER:	II – Level 2-3 (Speaking)
DURATION:	10 minutes

SESSION 1

CANDIDATE'S PAPER

Speaking

(Total: 100 marks)

PART 2 – Guided Examiner-to-Candidate Long Turn (about 3 minutes)

Choose ONE of the titles given below and prepare a THREE-minute presentation on the topic. Before you start speaking, the examiner will give you two minutes to recollect your thoughts on the topic. The examiner will give you pencil and paper to make notes. You will be allowed to refer to these notes during your presentation.

Choose ONE of the following:

1. We are doing our best to reduce pollution in our towns and villages. Discuss.
2. Nowadays, we no longer need libraries. Discuss.
3. Meeting friends online is always better than in person. Discuss.

At the end of the exam, please give the paper back to the examiner, together with the pencil and paper.



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**SECONDARY EDUCATION CERTIFICATE LEVEL
2025 MAIN SESSION**

SUBJECT:	English Language
PAPER NUMBER:	I – Level 1-2-3 (Listening)
DATE:	26 th April 2025
DURATION:	40 minutes

EXAMINER'S PAPER

Procedure Comprehension Private Candidate's Paper for Listening

Listening Level 1-2-3

Procedure for the Listening Comprehension:

- Candidates are given three minutes to read all the questions.
- Candidates listen to Part 1 and can start answering the questions.
- Candidates are given two minutes to answer the questions about Part 1.
- Candidates listen to Part 2 and can start answering the questions.
- Candidates are given two minutes to answer the questions about Part 2.
- Candidates listen to Part 1 and Part 2 for the last time.
- Candidates are given three minutes to answer all the questions.
- Candidates are allowed to write during all the parts of the Listening Comprehension.

Transcript:

Part 1

Jamie, who was a musician, kept irregular hours, and frequently had days when not only did he not have any rehearsals or performances, but he had no teaching either. He taught violin at the Edinburgh Academy and at Portobello Conservatory. He managed to cram all his teaching into two mornings and one afternoon a week, which left three weekdays for other things. Those days might easily have been filled up with session work or preparation for concerts, but times were hard and there seemed to be less and less of that work around.

Jamie's conversation with Isabel took place on one of her working days. 'Perhaps the music's stopped,' he had remarked to Isabel. She had assured him that music seemed to continue in the face of every difficulty, just as philosophy did.

'We imagine our crises are unlike all other crises,' she had said. 'But they aren't. There's always uncertainty. There's always been uncertainty. There's always been danger. It's the human condition – the normal one, perhaps.'

On Jamie's free days, he took over responsibility for Charlie, allowing Isabel to attend to her job as editor, and owner too, of the *Review of Applied Ethics*. Charlie now went to a small nursery school round the corner, and Jamie would drop him off there at eight-thirty in the morning, take him to the classroom with his neatly packed lunch box, and then return for him five hours later. After lunch, while Isabel worked in her study on the latest issue of the *Review*, Jamie would often supervise Charlie's afternoon rest, read to him, play the piano with him, or take him for a walk

Part 1 continues on the next page.

by the canal or, as a special treat, to Blackford Pond. That pond, inhabited by a tribe of over-fed and demanding ducks, could keep Charlie amused for hours, and Jamie knew every inch of its muddy shore quite as well as an experienced mariner knows the bays and inlets of his native waters. He had also come to know the personality of the various ducks and had realised where each stood around the pond. Size, it seemed, was the sole determinant of that.

Part 2

Even though she had made an early start while it was still comparatively cool, already the weather was making it difficult for Isabel to work. She had opened her study windows but there was only an intermittent breeze, and the air inside was heavy. Her study had a particular smell to it – the smell of paper, she had decided – and for some reason this oppressed her. Perhaps it was not a day on which to hide oneself inside; perhaps it was simply not a day to do philosophy. Her friend, Julian, who, like her, edited a philosophical paper, seemed to be able to do his thinking in all sorts of circumstances – in the car, in a train, in a coffee shop – but it was not the same for Isabel. It was true that thoughts came to her at the oddest of moments, but what she called *organised thinking* needed the time and place to be right; and the thinking she was trying to do that day – assessing submissions for a future issue of the *Review* – was definitely organised thinking.

She got up from her desk, putting aside the paper she had been trying to read. She looked at her watch. She was due to relieve Jamie of Charlie duties in two hours' time but if she stopped work now, she would have time to go to her niece Kate's bakery and buy some lunch. Kate had a supplier who delivered freshly made meat pies in the morning, which people picked up during their lunchbreak or on their way home from work. If she left now, she would be able to have her choice of the pies and still have time to finish reading the paper and make a decision too. It would be yes, of course; she already felt that.

She closed her study windows, collected her shopping bag from the kitchen cupboard and let herself out of the house. It was even warmer outdoors than indoors. However, tucked inside the shopping bag was her light jacket because the weather in Edinburgh was notoriously fickle, and even a day like this could suddenly turn hostile. There would also be room for the meat pie too, and for some salad as the bag was big enough.

(Adapted from The Uncommon Appeal of Clouds by Alexander McCall Smith)



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**SECONDARY EDUCATION CERTIFICATE LEVEL
2025 MAIN SESSION**

SUBJECT: **English Language**
PAPER NUMBER: I – Level 1-2-3
DATE: 26th April 2025
DURATION: 2 hours 5 minutes

Section A: Listening

(Total: ☐ | 25 marks)

Listen to an extract from the book 'The Uncommon Appeal of Clouds' by Alexander McCall. Answer the questions that follow.

Part 1

1. Tick (✓) the **FIVE** correct sentences. (5)

a. Jamie was a teacher at the Edinburgh Academy and Portobello Conservatory.	
b. Isabel compared music to philosophy.	
c. It was quite easy to find work connected with music.	
d. Jamie looked after Charlie every day.	
e. Isabel was in charge of the 'Review of Applied Ethics'.	
f. Several ducks lived in Blackford Pond.	
g. Jamie knew his way around Blackford Pond.	

2. Fill in the grid below with the name of the character: Isabel, Jamie, Charlie. (6)

a. was a musician	
b. had teaching commitments	
c. attended nursery school	
d. expressed certainty about the popularity of music	
e. worked from home	
f. had an afternoon nap	

Please turn the page.

3. Underline the correct answer. (6)
- Jamie (often, rarely, never) had days off from work.
 - Jamie packed all his teaching into (two, three, four) mornings and one afternoon a week.
 - At that time, life was (easy, normal, difficult).
 - The ducks were (hungry, well-nourished, thirsty).
 - The place where the ducks stood (was random, depended on their personality, depended on their size).
 - Blackford Pond (bored, displeased, entertained) Charlie.

Part 2

4. Are the following sentences True or False? Circle the correct answer and give a reason. (5)
- The weather allowed Isabel to work comfortably.
True/False because _____
 - The smell in the study bothered Isabel.
True/False because _____
 - Kate made the meat pies at the bakery.
True/False because _____
 - Julian was flexible in the way he did his thinking.
True/False because _____
 - The weather in Edinburgh was very stable.
True/False because _____

5. Put the following in order according to what you have listened to. Number them from 2 to 4.
The first one (1) has been done for you. (3)

Isabel opened her study windows.	1
She checked the time.	
She thought about the meat pies at Kate's bakery.	
She put away the paper she was reading.	

Section B: Reading(Total: | 25 marks)**Read the following extract and answer the questions about each section.****Part 1**

And after all the weather was ideal. The family could not have had a more perfect day for a garden-party if they had ordered it. Windless, warm, the sky without a cloud. Only the blue was veiled with a haze of gold, as it is sometimes in early summer. The gardeners had been up since dawn, mowing the lawns and sweeping them, until the grass and the dark flat rosettes where the daisy plants had been, seemed to shine. As for the roses, you could not help feeling they understood that roses are the only flowers that impress people at garden-parties; the only flowers that everybody is certain of knowing. Hundreds, yes, literally hundreds, had bloomed in a single night; the green bushes bowed down as though they had been visited by royalty. Breakfast was not yet over before the men came to put up the marquee*.

"Where do you want the marquee put, mother?"

"My dear child, it's no use asking me. I'm determined to leave everything to you children this year. Forget I am your mother. Treat me as an honoured guest."

But Meg could not possibly go and supervise the men. She had washed her hair before breakfast, and she sat drinking her coffee in a green turban, with a dark wet curl stamped on each cheek.

Jane, the sociable one, always came down in a silk petticoat and a kimono jacket.

"You'll have to go, Laura; you're the artistic one."

Away Laura flew, still holding her piece of bread-and-butter. It's so delicious to have an excuse for eating out of doors, and besides, she loved having to arrange things; she always felt she could do it so much better than anybody else.

Four men in their shirt-sleeves stood grouped together on the garden path. They carried planks of wood, and they had tool-bags slung on their backs. They looked impressive. Laura wished now that she had not got the bread-and-butter, but there was nowhere to put it, and she couldn't possibly throw it away. She blushed and tried to look severe and even a little bit short-sighted as she came up to them.

"Good morning," she said, copying her mother's voice. But that sounded so fearfully affected that she was ashamed, and stammered, "Oh, is it about the marquee?"

"That's right, miss," said the tallest of the men, a lanky fellow, and he shifted his tool-bag, knocked back his straw hat and smiled down at her. "That's about it."

His smile was so easy, so friendly that Laura recovered. What nice eyes he had, small, but such a dark blue! And now she looked at the others. They were smiling too. "Cheer up, we won't bite," their smile seemed to say. How very nice workmen were! And what a beautiful morning! She mustn't mention the morning; she must be business-like.

"Well, what about the lily-lawn? Would that do?"

And she pointed to the lily-lawn with the hand that didn't hold the bread-and-butter. They turned, they stared in the direction.

"I don't fancy it," said he. "Not conspicuous enough. You see, with a thing like a marquee," and he turned to Laura in his easy way, "you want to put it somewhere where it'll catch your eye, if you follow me. Take it from me. I'm an expert."

Laura's upbringing made her wonder for a moment whether it was quite respectful of a workman to be so forward. But she did quite follow him.

*marquee – a large tent used for social occasions

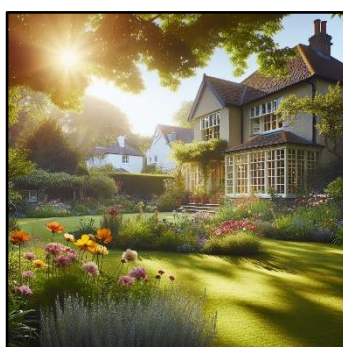
Please turn the page.

Answer the following questions:

1. Underline the correct answer. (½)

The family (had been, had not been, were still) worried about the weather.

2. Which picture best fits the description of the weather on the day of the party? Tick (✓) the correct box below. (½)



(Generated by AI Copilot)

a.

b.

c.

3. Are the following True or False? Circle the correct answer and give a reason. (3)

a. The gardeners had been working in the garden since the night before.

True/False because _____

b. A large number of roses came out overnight.

True/False because _____

c. Mother had a clear idea of where the marquee should be placed.

True/False because _____

4. Underline the correct answer. (1 ½)

a. 'But Meg could not possibly go and supervise ...' (line 13) In this phrase, **possibly** shows that it was (impossible, forbidden, inappropriate) for Meg to go out into the garden.

b. The writer makes use of the word **impressive** (line 21) because the workmen seemed (strong, friendly, threatening) in Laura's eyes.

c. Laura (was forced, wanted, couldn't decide whether) to go out into the garden.

5. According to the text, write the correct name under each picture: Laura, Meg, Jane. (1 ½)



(Generated by AI Copilot)

a. _____

b. _____

c. _____

6. Explain how the writer's use of the phrase 'blushed and tried to look severe' (line 23), helps the reader understand how Laura was feeling.

(2)

7. Why did Laura think it was not a good idea to mention the morning (line 32)?

(1)

8. How did Laura feel about the workman's comment 'you want to put it somewhere where it'll catch your eye ...' (line 37)?

(1)

Please turn the page.

Part 2

"A corner of the tennis-court," she suggested. "But the band's going to be in one corner."

"Hmm, going to have a band, are you?" said another of the workmen. He was pale. He had a haggard look as his dark eyes scanned the tennis-court. What was **he** thinking?

45 "Only a very small band," said Laura gently. Perhaps he wouldn't mind so much if the band was quite small. But the tall fellow interrupted.

"Look here, miss, that's the place. Against those trees. Over there. That'll do fine."

50 Against the karakas. Then the karaka-trees would be hidden. And **they** were so lovely with their gleaming leaves, and their clusters of yellow fruit. They were like trees you imagined growing on a desert island, proud, solitary, lifting their leaves and fruits to the sun in a kind of silent splendour. Must they be hidden by a marquee?

Already the men had shouldered their planks and were making for the place. Only the tall fellow was left. He bent down, pinched a sprig of lavender, put his thumb and forefinger to his nose and snuffed up the smell. When Laura saw that gesture, she forgot all about the karakas in **her** wonder at him caring for things like that – caring for the smell of lavender. How many men that she knew would have done such a thing? Oh, how extraordinarily nice workmen were, she thought. Why couldn't she have workmen for her friends rather than the silly boys she danced with and who came to Sunday night supper? She would get on much better with men like **these**.

55 It's all the fault of these absurd class distinctions, she decided, as the tall fellow drew something on the back of an envelope. Well, she didn't feel them. Not a bit ... And now there came the chock-chock of wooden hammers. Someone whistled, someone sang out, "Are you right there, matey?"
60 "Matey!" The friendliness of **it**. Just to prove how happy she was, just to show the tall fellow how at home he felt, and how she despised stupid conventions, Laura took a big bite of her bread-and-butter as she stared at the drawing. She felt just like them.

"Laura, where are you?" a voice cried from the house.

65 "Coming!" Away she skimmed, over the lawn, up the path, up the steps, across the verandah, and into the porch. In the hall, her father and John were brushing **their** hats ready to go to the office.

(Adapted from 'The Garden Party' by Katherine Mansfield)

Answer the following questions:

9. Tick (✓) the correct answer.

(½)

'a haggard look' (lines 42-43)

The word 'haggard' is

Neutral	
Positive	
Negative	

10. a. How did Laura feel about having the marquee by the trees?

(1)

b. Why did she **not** voice her opinion about this?

(1)

11. What do the following refer to in the text?

(3)

a. he (line 43)		d. these (line 57)	
b. they (line 47)		e. it (line 61)	
c. her (line 53)		f. their (line 66)	

12. Between lines 41 and 58, find a word which means:

a. surveyed _____

b. lone _____

c. magnificence _____

d. exceptionally _____

(2)

13. In your own words, explain how the tall fellow's gesture with the lavender makes Laura feel about:

a. the workmen _____

b. her friends _____ (2)

14. Between lines 60 and 64, pick out **ONE** phrase of **FOUR** words which shows how Laura felt about social class. In your own words, explain how this phrase brings out this idea for the reader.

phrase _____

explanation _____

(1 ½)

Refer to **both Part 1 and Part 2**, and answer the following questions:

15. Number the sentences 2-5 below in the order in which you read about them in the text. The first one (1) has been done for you. (2)

a.	Laura approached the house.	
b.	One of the men wrote on a piece of paper.	
c.	Laura pointed to the lily lawn.	1
d.	Laura heard the sound of a hammer.	
e.	Laura heard someone whistle.	

16. After reading the extract, a book club member posted the following hashtags on a social media platform. **TWO** of the hashtags below are the odd ones out. Mark them with an **X**. (1)

#gardeninginstructions	
#readingcommunity	
#mybookclub	
#characterstudy	
#marqueesetupmanual	
#deepreading	

Section C: Writing

(Total: | 50 marks)

You are advised to spend an average of 40 minutes on this section.

Write in full sentences.

Use the space provided.

You are reminded of the need to plan your writing.

You should leave enough time to check your work at the end.

Part 1 Short Writing Task

(10 marks)

You have two tickets to a concert taking place next week. In between 60 to 80 words, write a text message to your friend Katie, inviting her to join you and giving her details of the day, place and time of the concert.

Part 2 Long Writing Task

(40 marks)

You have decided to take part in a writing competition. Choose **ONE** of the following titles and write a short story entitled:

1. 'An Unexpected Act of Kindness'

OR

2. 'My Secret Mission'

Make use of this space to plan your writing.

[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]



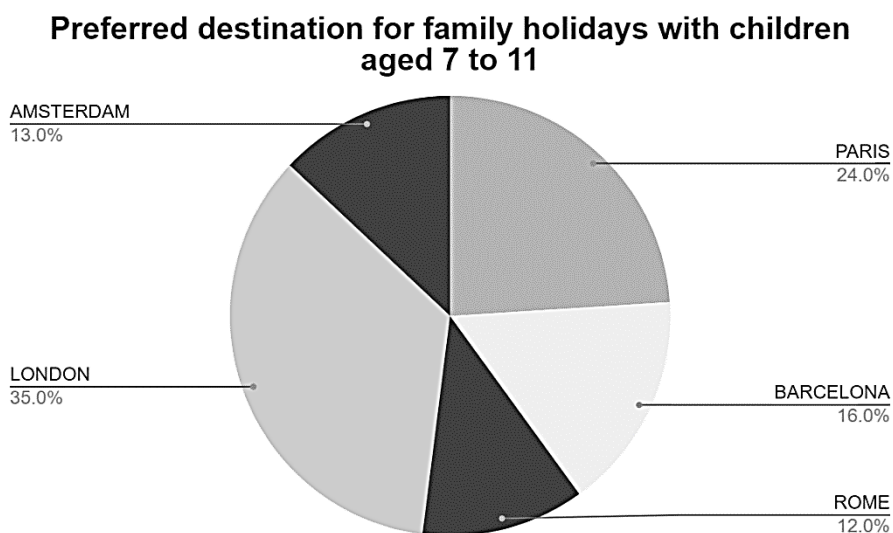
SUBJECT: **English Language**
PAPER NUMBER: II – Level 1-2 (Extracts Booklet)
DATE: 26th April 2025
DURATION: 2 hours 5 minutes

Section A: Reading – Source A

(Total: 30 marks)

Paragraph 1

The following diagram I came across in a travel magazine made me reflect on the fact that discovering a new city with your children is a wonderful experience, but it doesn't always make for the most relaxing of family holidays.



Paragraph 2

- 5 Before deciding on a city break, you need to consider your children's age. For those of you with young children, such as babies and toddlers, compact, walkable cities that don't get too hot, such as Copenhagen and Amsterdam, are great options. Teenagers might prefer somewhere like New York to hit the stores, while Barcelona is great for the beach and Rome for its history.

Paragraph 3

- 10 Whatever their age, get children excited about the trip by involving them in the planning. If you're taking young children, talk about what they might like to see and show them photos of the sights. Plan a loose itinerary of what you definitely want to do and look online for reviews of child-friendly attractions.

Paragraph 4

- 15 When travelling with teenagers, chances are that you don't want to be walking any more than you need to, so either stay near the sights you plan to visit or near a good transport link. Make sure your accommodation is family friendly. Avoid a self-catering apartment with cream sofas and expensive ornaments or a hotel that doesn't offer adjoining or family rooms.

Paragraph 5

One of the most exciting things about a city for children is making use of a different mode of transport. Whether it's a train, tram, underground, bus, bike or monorail, it becomes adventure in itself. Many cities also offer bus or boat tourist tours and while they can be pricey, they're an easy way to explore a city without worrying about weary little legs.

Paragraph 6

- 20 Many of the most popular tourist attractions in cities such as Paris, Venice and Florence provide the option of buying tickets online beforehand to avoid queues. This is always a good idea, as young children aren't known for their patience. What they are known for, though, is waking up early, and you should take advantage of this by getting to attractions before they get too busy or too hot.

Paragraph 7

- 25 Make sure the day's schedule includes water and snack breaks and that you have plenty of both with you. With so much to take in, it's likely that young children will need more breathers than usual, so don't restrict these.

Paragraph 8

- 30 A city break is a terrific opportunity to give teenagers some responsibility. Perhaps they could research where to have lunch, be in charge of taking photos or be responsible for the budget that day.

Paragraph 9

City breaks can be gruelling for little ones, so don't try and squeeze too much in. Doing a few, select attractions properly is better than trying to do everything with an overtired young child who's moaning.

(Adapted from High Life Magazine)

Section B: Reading - Source B**(Total: 30 marks)**

Journalist: Thank you both for joining **me** to talk about your extraordinary adventure. Let's start with you, Alexander. Can you describe the first day of **your** trek in the Finse wilds?

Alexander: Certainly. It felt like stepping into another world. We travelled to Finse from Oslo and checked into our hotel. The next morning, after breakfast, we set off across Finsevatnet lake. The landscape was pure white. After a full afternoon of skiing, we camped in a valley overnight, **which** was an experience in itself.

Journalist: How did you feel, waking up in that landscape the next morning?

Alexander: I woke up cold and barely aware I'd even slept. I lay still, mummified in a sleeping bag. The tent shook uncontrollably around me. I had to mentally brace myself before stepping out. But once I did, I was met by **this** surreal landscape—everything around me had disappeared under a layer of blinding, toothpaste-white snow. I moved slowly, like an astronaut, trying to keep my balance in the blizzard.

Journalist: That sounds remarkable. Ian, as the founder of the expedition company, what led you to start bringing people into these wild environments?

Ian: **My** background in endurance sports, for example, ultramarathons, and rowing across the Atlantic in 2020, taught me a lot about myself and about resilience. I realised that each experience was a chance to push my boundaries and discover something new about myself. And I wanted to help others experience that same magic of self-discovery. There's something transformative about emerging from those challenges as a stronger version of yourself.

Journalist: Did this theme of self-discovery come up on this particular trip?

Alexander: Definitely. Ian shared his perspective with me on why so many people join these treks. I had my own reasons, and we talked about how personal motivations shape these experiences. It was interesting. **He** mentioned that on these treks, unlike women, a lot of men, not necessarily fit, come looking for some kind of clarity or grounding, as well as to improve their mental health.

Journalist: Ian, could you tell us more about that difference in experience you've observed between men and women on these expeditions?

Ian: Sure. I've noticed that women tend to start at a low point: **they** underrate themselves but then are gradually strengthened by the experience. But most men start at the opposite point, full of strength and confidence, and that tends to break down very quickly. This process really exposes their vulnerabilities, which can be a powerful, if challenging, experience. Both men and women come out the other side feeling transformed, usually more confident and ready to take on whatever comes next in **their** lives.

Journalist: It seems like self-analysis sets these expeditions apart from more typical travel.

Alexander: It does. There's something about facing such conditions that pulls you into the moment. I remember when we made the decision to ski back through the blizzard. I had a mix of disappointment and excitement—the weather wasn't ideal, but the challenge kept me present. I remember reaching the top of a steep incline, and the sheer whiteness all around. It was humbling, but I felt incredibly alive.

Journalist: This has been thought-provoking. Thank you both for sharing this experience.

(Adapted from CNN traveller)



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MATRICULATION AND SECONDARY EDUCATION CERTIFICATE
EXAMINATIONS BOARD

**SECONDARY EDUCATION CERTIFICATE LEVEL
2025 MAIN SESSION**

SUBJECT: **English Language**
PAPER NUMBER: II – Level 1-2 (Questions Booklet)
DATE: 26th April 2025
DURATION: 2 hours 5 minutes

Answer BOTH sections.

Section A: Reading

(Total: | 30 marks)

You are advised to spend an average of 40 minutes on this section.

Read Source A in the Extracts Booklet.

1. Underline the correct answer.

The main purpose of the passage is to

- a. encourage parents to take their children on holiday with them.
- b. promote city breaks for families with children.
- c. advise parents on how to plan holidays with children.
- d. advertise tourist destinations for families.

(1)

2. a. Underline the correct answer in brackets.

The writer is (in favour of, against) visiting new cities with children.

(1)

- b. Write down **TWO** consecutive words found between lines 1 and 7 which show this.

(1)

3. Underline the correct answer.

The diagram shows that

- a. Amsterdam is the second most preferred destination.
- b. Paris has a lower preference than Barcelona.
- c. London tops the list of destinations.
- d. Rome is more attractive than Amsterdam as a destination.

(1)

4. Fill in the table below with information from the passage.

(2)

GOOD DESTINATION FOR:	NAME OF CITY
shopping	
enjoying the sea	
exploring on foot	
visiting historical sites	

5. Give **TWO** reasons why the writer states 'Avoid a self-catering apartment with cream sofas and expensive ornaments' (lines 14-15).

a. _____

b. _____ (2)

6. Between lines 4 and 19, find **single** words that match the following meanings. (5)

a. take into account	
b. choices	
c. travel plan	
d. connection	
e. expensive	

7. In which paragraphs do we find the information listed in column A? Fill the boxes below in column B with the correct paragraph number (1-9). (5)

COLUMN A	COLUMN B
researching accommodation carefully	Paragraph Number
carrying refreshments	Paragraph Number
giving older children a task	Paragraph Number
skipping queues by buying online	Paragraph Number
ways of getting around in a city	Paragraph Number

8. In your own words, list **FIVE** suggestions made by the writer to parents who are travelling with young children. (5)

a. _____

b. _____

c. _____

d. _____

e. _____

9. Explain what the writer means by 'weary little legs' (line 19).

 _____ (1)

10. According to what you have read, underline the correct answer in brackets. (3)

- a. Teenagers (don't like walking much, wake up early, are impatient).
b. Ideally, hotel rooms should be (on different floors, linked to each other, big).
c. When out with children, it is important to have (hardly any, occasional, frequent) breaks.

11. Explain what the writer means by 'be responsible for the budget that day' (lines 29-30).

(1)

12. Tick (✓) the correct box: (2)

- a. 'A city break is a terrific opportunity' (line 28)

The word 'terrific' is:

Positive	
Neutral	
Negative	

- b. City breaks can be 'gruelling for little ones' (line 31).

The word 'gruelling' is:

Positive	
Neutral	
Negative	

Please turn the page.

Section B: Reading**(Total: | 30 marks)**

You are advised to spend an average of 35 minutes on this section.

Read Source B in the Extracts Booklet.

1. Underline the most appropriate title:

- a. A Guide to Winter Sports in Finse
- b. Exploring the Wild: Adventures in Self-Discovery
- c. Overcoming Fears in Urban Landscapes
- d. The Science of Surviving Harsh Environments (1)

2. Underline the correct answer.

In lines 8-9, 'mummified in a sleeping bag' means that Alexander

- a. could not move at all.
- b. was tossing and turning in his sleep.
- c. dreamed about his mother as he slept.
- d. felt very warm in his sleeping bag. (1)

3. Why did the tent shake uncontrollably (line 9)?

_____. (1)

4. Give **ONE** reason why Alex moved slowly (lines 11-12).

_____. (1)

5. In your own words, explain why Ian founded the expedition company.

_____. (2)

6. In a paragraph of between 45 and 55 words, summarise Ian's observations about the differences in how men and women experience the challenges of the treks.

Use your own words.

[illegible]

7. Are the following statements True or False? Circle the correct answer and give a reason.

(5)

- a. Alexander's first day involved hiking across a mountain range.

True/False because

- b. Alexander spent the night at the hotel on the second day in Finse.

True/False because

- c. Alexander and Ian discussed personal motivations for joining the trek.

True/False because

- d. Ian's expeditions are primarily designed for professional athletes.

True/False because _____

- e. The decision to ski back through the blizzard left Alexander with contrasting feelings.

True/False because

Please turn the page.

8. What do the following words refer to? (4)

a. me (line 1)	
b. your (line 2)	
c. which (line 5)	
d. this (line 10)	
e. My (line 15)	
f. He (line 23)	
g. they (line 28)	
h. their (line 33)	

9. Are the following Fact or Opinion? Circle the correct answer. (4)

- | | |
|---|----------------|
| a. It felt like stepping into another world (line 3) | (Fact/Opinion) |
| b. The landscape was pure white (lines 4-5) | (Fact/Opinion) |
| c. I woke up cold (line 8) | (Fact/Opinion) |
| d. That sounds remarkable (line 13) | (Fact/Opinion) |
| e. It seems like self-analysis sets these expeditions apart (line 34) | (Fact/Opinion) |
| f. I remember reaching (line 38) | (Fact/Opinion) |
| g. It was humbling (lines 38-39) | (Fact/Opinion) |
| h. This has been really thought-provoking (line 40) | (Fact/Opinion) |

10. Read both Source A and Source B and tick (✓) the correct box below. (3)

Which text	Source A	Source B
is an interview?		
is an article?		
includes the narration of a personal experience?		

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**SECONDARY EDUCATION CERTIFICATE LEVEL
2025 MAIN SESSION**

SUBJECT: **English Language**
PAPER NUMBER: II – Level 1-2 (Writing)
DATE: 26th April 2025
DURATION: 2 hours 5 minutes

Section C: Writing

(Total: ☐ | **40 marks**)

1. Short Writing Task

(10 marks)

**You are advised to spend an average of 15 minutes on this section.
Write in full sentences.
Use the space provided.
You are reminded of the need to plan your answer.
You should leave enough time to check your work at the end.**

You took the photo below while on holiday. Write a short post on your social media page in which you give information about

- how you arrived there
- how long you stayed
- the service at the café
- how you felt when you were there.



(Generated by AI Copilot)

2. Long Writing Task

(30 marks)

You are advised to spend an average of 30 minutes on this section.
Write in full sentences.
Use the space provided.
You are reminded of the need to plan your answer.
You should leave enough time to check your work at the end.

Choose **ONE** of the following:

- a. You are Max Smith. By mistake, you damaged your elderly neighbour's car. When your neighbour, Ms Alderson, approached you about this, you reacted angrily. Write an email in which you apologise to your neighbour (jalderson@zmail.com) for the whole incident and explain how you intend to make up for it.

OR

- b. You are Andy Green. By mistake, you lost a book which you borrowed from your teacher, Ms Sanders, to complete a school project. Write an email in which you apologise to your teacher (psanders@zmail.com) and explain how you intend to make up for it.

Write your email here.

To:

Subject: Apology

DO NOT WRITE ABOVE THIS LINE

[illegible]

DO NOT WRITE ABOVE THIS LINE

[illegible]



SUBJECT:	English Language
PAPER NUMBER:	II – Level 2-3 (Extracts Booklet)
DATE:	26 th April 2025
DURATION:	2 hours 5 minutes

Section A: Reading – Source A

(A) Many regard The Shawshank Redemption which came out 30 years ago as a cinematic masterpiece. Surprisingly, when released in 1994 it was a box-office flop but over the years it has seen a remarkable reversal of fortune.

(B) The Shawshank Redemption seemed to have all the ingredients of a box-office smash. After all, it was based on a short story by one of the world's best-selling authors, Stephen King, so it looked as if a ready-made fanbase would be interested in seeing it. Indeed, another story, The Body, taken from the same 1982 collection, Different Seasons, had been turned into a hugely successful movie, Stand by Me, in 1986.

(C) Director and screenwriter Frank Darabont believed that the story was so filmic that in 1987 he bought the rights to adapt it himself. The short story was about Andy Dufresne, a man who was serving a life sentence, and how, through his friendship with fellow inmate Ellis "Red" Redding, **he** survives, and ultimately triumphs over the brutally harsh conditions of Shawshank Penitentiary.

(D) Darabont also found what seemed to be the perfect location to stand in for the merciless, gothic prison. Ohio State Reformatory had opened in 1896 and been active up until 1990 when it closed due to allegations of inhumane treatment of its prisoners. Filming there would add an authentically grim atmosphere to The Shawshank Redemption. The production even managed to pull in two acclaimed actors for its starring roles. Tim Robbins, who was playing Dufresne, had received two Golden Globe nominations for different performances the year before, winning best actor for The Player. Morgan Freeman, cast as Red, had at the time already been Oscar-nominated twice. He was also hot off the back of appearing in Clint Eastwood's 1993 western, Unforgiven, a film which had, along with achieving box-office success, won four Oscars.

(E) When the prison-set drama was finished, the early buzz was extremely promising. Hopes were understandably high when The Shawshank Redemption was released in September 1994. Yet it had trouble finding an audience and getting people to show up. Ticket sales of **its** initial theatrical run in the United States of America were distinctly underwhelming, only managing to recoup 16 million dollars of its 25-million-dollar budget.

(F) The timing of the film's release meant that it faced some stiff competition for viewers' attention. The Shawshank Redemption came out in the middle of the wildly successful cinema run of the Tom Hanks hit Forrest Gump. Quentin Tarantino's Pulp Fiction, which had won the Palme d'Or award at the Cannes Film Festival, came out just a couple of weeks later. These films were not just critical and commercial successes but their quotable dialogue, striking cinematography and jukebox soundtracks generated reams of media coverage. They each offered talking points about the state of America at the time, overshadowing The Shawshank Redemption's more introspective storyline. While the Academy did recognise The Shawshank Redemption, nominating it for seven awards including best actor for Freeman and best picture, ultimately it came away with nothing. Forrest Gump proved to be the big winner on the night, picking up six Oscars, with Pulp Fiction winning **one** for best screenplay.

- 40 **(G)** Of course, the bleak premise and lack of female characters may have also made it a less obviously appealing choice to cinemagoers. The movie's initial box office failure was partially put down to its name. "The only real marketing that movies get is word-of-mouth," Freeman told The Graham Norton Show in 2017. "People went to see The Shawshank Redemption and came back and said, "Oh man, I saw this really terrific movie, it's called the ... er ... Shanksham? Shimshawnk? So, if you can't get word across, then it just doesn't do well."
- 45 **(H)** But The Shawshank Redemption was to have its own redemption arc, as it found a new life in the home-video market. With its release on Video Home System, the film's story of human resilience, friendship and the power of hope resonated with an audience that had missed it at the movie theatre. "We became the most rented video of 1995. And then that word-of-mouth from that audience began to grow and grow," Darabont told the BBC in 2004.
- 50 **(I)** From 1997, its frequent broadcasts on cable television helped it to reach an even broader audience. By the time Darabont appeared on the BBC in 2004, The Shawshank Redemption was repeatedly appearing on lists of the "greatest" movies, including being voted the best film "never to have won an Oscar" in a poll by the BBC's Radio Times. On the Internet Movie Database's (IMDb) list of top 250 films, voted by regular users, it currently sits at the
- 55 top. "And what's really bizarre is that momentum never really seems to have died out. **It** has just kind of continued. It's a fantastic vindication," said Darabont.
- (J)** Perhaps the biggest endorsement of The Shawshank Redemption's enduring appeal, and the fans who championed it, came in 2015 when the Library of Congress added it to the National Film Registry which represents "important cultural, artistic and historic achievements in
- 60 filmmaking".

(Adapted from: <https://www.bbc.com>)

Section B: Reading – Source B**Starting an Into Film Club****Is an Into Film Club for me?**

Into Film Clubs are a fun and valuable way to engage young people with and through film. They are easy to set up, and you'll also gain access to our new Into Film+ streaming platform, our ongoing Film Review competition, a range of resources and exclusive invitations to screenings and events. Let us take you through some of the key questions to answer to work out if Into Film Clubs is for you.

Am I eligible for an Into Film Club?

If you're thinking of starting an Into Film Club but are concerned that you may not be eligible due to your location or the young people you work with, then don't worry. Clubs are free for all UK state-funded schools and not-for-profit youth organisations.

Can I run an Into Film Club in my area?

Yes, as long as you're based in the United Kingdom, you can run an Into Film Club and access the Into Film streaming platform. We have Into Film Clubs situated all around the United Kingdom, from capital cities to rural areas. Into Film Clubs have the incredible power to bring young people together and provide opportunities for learning in a fun and accessible way, ensuring that even the most secluded areas of the nation still have access to our offer.

Where will I run my Into Film Club?

Into Film Clubs are flexible and can be run in varied settings. Many take place in schools, and also at local youth clubs, churches, community centres or other appropriate public spaces. We even have Into Film Clubs in far more unconventional settings, including in rural locations where they can take place in cattle sheds and barns! So, rest completely assured that wherever you are, an Into Film Club can still be for you. To see an example of the vast diversity of our programme across the United Kingdom check out our video [here](#) about a farming community on an island off the coast of Scotland.

Will an Into Film Club help with academic learning?

Academic level is also no barrier, as it has been found that Into Film Clubs have a significant and positive impact on all young people's learning, in particular with regard to literacy, communication and social skills, as well as being fun for all!

See what film club leaders say about their young club members in the Table featured on this webpage. Evidence suggests Into Film Clubs hugely benefit young people with special educational needs. The inclusive nature of Into Film Clubs can lead to greater social cohesion and attainment for club members, whilst partaking in filmmaking activities can be a great way to bring everyone into the fold.

TABLE

What are the varied ways an Into Film Club can benefit young people?		
<p>78%</p> <p>of club leaders say it has improved discussion and social skills amongst young people</p>	<p>86%</p> <p>of film club members say that it helps them enjoy school more.</p>	<p>88%</p> <p>of club leaders say that Into Film Clubs help young people's critical thinking.</p>
764,201 - Total number of club member reviews submitted - and counting!		

(Adapted from <https://www.intofilm.org>)



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EXAMINATIONS BOARD

**SECONDARY EDUCATION CERTIFICATE LEVEL
2025 MAIN SESSION**

SUBJECT: **English Language**
PAPER NUMBER: II – Level 2-3 (Questions Booklet)
DATE: 26th April 2025
DURATION: 2 hours 5 minutes

Answer BOTH sections.

Section A: Reading

(Total: | 30 marks)

You are advised to spend an average of 40 minutes on this section.

Read Source A in the Extracts Booklet.

- Underline the title that best fits the text.
 - A Masterpiece of Cinema
 - A Box-Office Hit
 - An Undeserved Success Story
 - From Failure to Success
 - A Film Which Never Lost Its Appeal

(1)
- Each sentence included in the table below summarises the main idea of a single paragraph. Complete the table with the letters C, E, F, G, and H. An example (A) is given to you. (5)

How the title of the film proved to be a hinderance.	
An important purchase was concluded.	
The Shawshank Redemption started to find an audience.	
The Shawshank Redemption was outshone by other releases.	
The Shawshank Redemption did not live up to early expectations.	
A film with an interesting history.	A

- Identify single words that match the following meanings as found in the text. The paragraph is given to help you. (3)
 - encouraging (Paragraph E) _____
 - worth being repeated (Paragraph F) _____
 - in the end (Paragraph F) _____
 - unattractive (Paragraph G) _____
 - toughness (Paragraph H) _____
 - strange (Paragraph I) _____

4. In a paragraph of **not** less than 60 and not more than 70 of your own words, summarise the reasons why The Shawshank Redemption had all the ingredients of a box-office hit. (10)

This image shows a blank sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

5. In the last three paragraphs (Paragraphs H, I and J lines 45-60) the writer describes how opinion about The Shawshank Redemption changed over the years. Read the following statements based on Paragraphs H, I and J. Are they True or False? Underline the correct answer and give a reason. (5)

a. The home video market failed to lift the fortunes of *The Shawshank Redemption*.

True/False because

b. What people told each other about The Shawshank Redemption played a part in its success.

True/False because _____

c. By 2004, *The Shawshank Redemption* was still largely ignored.

True/False because _____

d. The popularity of The Shawshank Redemption is now on the decline.

True/False because _____

e. In 2015, fans of The Shawshank Redemption felt that their support for the film was finally recognised.

True/False because _____

6. What do the words listed below refer to in the text? (2)

a. he (line 12) _____

b. its (line 25) _____

c. one (line 38) _____

d. It (line 55) _____

7. In your own words, explain what the writer means by the phrase 'overshadowing The Shawshank Redemption's more introspective storyline' (lines 34-35).

_____ (2)

8. Underline the correct answer.

The phrase 'resonated with an audience that had missed it at the movie theatre' (lines 47-48), seems to suggest that

The Shawshank Redemption

a. eventually proved to be a resounding success.

b. had a special meaning for the people who had not previously watched it.

c. was popular with people who watched it for the first time.

d. received a lukewarm reaction by the people who had not watched it before. (1)

9. Find a phrasal verb (e.g. look forward to:) from the text which means: (1)

a. take the place of (Paragraph D) _____

b. believed that the reason was (Paragraph G) _____

Please turn the page.

Section B: Reading**(Total: | 30 marks)**

You are advised to spend an average of 35 minutes on this section.

Read Source B in the Extracts Booklet.

1. The phrase 'the most secluded areas of the nation' (line 16) refers to
 - a. the populous areas of the country.
 - b. the remotest areas in the United Kingdom.
 - c. the least populated areas in Great Britain.
 - d. the most deprived areas in the country. (1)
2. From lines 18-33, find a phrase of 3 to 4 words in the text which means (6)
 - a. are possible to organise _____
 - b. much stranger places _____
 - c. have no doubt _____
 - d. the wide range _____
 - e. superior unity between people _____
 - f. together _____
3. Underline the correct answer.

The Table shows that

 - a. the number of reviews has exceeded one million.
 - b. members and leaders disagree about the impact of Into Film Clubs.
 - c. Into Film Clubs have left their members with a positive impression.
 - d. Into Film Clubs have improved their members' listening skills. (1)
4. Based on what you have read about Into Film Clubs in Source B, underline the correct answer in the brackets below. (6)
 - a. Into Film Clubs are a fun and valuable way to engage young people. This is (a fact, an opinion) because the terms 'fun' and 'valuable' are (objective, subjective).
 - b. It is a service that is free for all state-funded schools. This is (a fact, an opinion) because it is based on information that (can, cannot) be verified.
 - c. We have Into Film Clubs situated all around the UK. This is (a fact, an opinion) because it (can, cannot) be checked.
 - d. Into Film Clubs have the incredible power to bring young people together. This is (a fact, an opinion) because it (reflects, does not reflect) a belief about the impact of films.

-
- e. Many take place in schools, but they can also be held in local youth clubs. This is (a fact, an opinion) because it (relies, does not rely) on feelings.
- f. An Into Film Club can still be for you. This is (a fact, an opinion) because it (is, is not) based on encouragement.
5. An Into Film Club is free and easy to set up. List **SIX** other benefits of having an Into Film Club. (6)
- a. _____
- b. _____
- c. _____
- d. _____
- e. _____
- f. _____

Read both Source A and B for question 6

6. Source A and Source B focus on films. On the lines below, write about the similarities and differences between the two texts. In your answer, refer to the points listed below:
- what each text is about
 - the purpose of each text
 - the possible target audience for each text
 - the organisation and structure of the texts
 - the ideas or messages you think the writers convey
- Do **not** quote directly from the text when supporting your view. (10)

DO NOT WRITE ABOVE THIS LINE

This image shows a full page of white paper with horizontal blue or grey ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page, typical of notebook paper. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the page.

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DO NOT WRITE ABOVE THIS LINE

[illegible]



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**SECONDARY EDUCATION CERTIFICATE LEVEL
2025 MAIN SESSION**

SUBJECT:	English Language
PAPER NUMBER:	II – Level 2-3 (Writing)
DATE:	26 th April 2025
DURATION:	2 hours 5 minutes

Section C: Writing

(Total: | 40 marks)

Long Writing Task

You are advised to spend an average of 45 minutes on this section.
Write in full sentences.
Use the space provided.
You are reminded of the need to plan your answer.
You should leave enough time to check your work at the end.

You have been asked to write an article for the school website. Choose **ONE** of the titles given below.

1. Having a lot of free time has its benefits and its drawbacks. Write an article in which you discuss this.

OR

2. Write an article about the advantages and disadvantages of being honest.

[illegible]

DO NOT WRITE ABOVE THIS LINE

[illegible]

DO NOT WRITE ABOVE THIS LINE

[illegible]

DO NOT WRITE ABOVE THIS LINE

[illegible]