IGCSE Cambridge Topical Past Papers

# ENGLISH
# FIRST LANGUAGE

**0500  P2**
**2017 - 2023**

# ENGLISH 1ST LANGUAGE 0500

**TOPICAL PAST PAPER WORKSHEETS**

2017 - 2023 | Questions + Mark scheme

**AVAILABLE PAPERS**

**P2**
198 Questions

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| TOPICS | P2 |
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| Directed Writing - Letter | 20 |
| Composition - Argumentative/Discursive Writing | 0 |
| Composition - Descriptive Writing | 78 |
| Composition - Narrative Writing | 78 |

**1** - (0500/32_Summer_2017_Q1) - *Directed Writing - Magazine Article - P3*

*On behalf of your school, you attend a lecture in which a medical researcher considers the effects of noise on young people's lives.*

## Noise: a Modern Menace

Everybody knows that children from poor families struggle more at school than their wealthier counterparts. Other factors such as illness or a lack of parental support also seriously affect students' prospects of success. But now, as well as these well-known factors, there is increasing evidence that constant exposure to noise damages children's health and prevents them from learning at school. An Austrian study, for example, concluded that children who lived on busy main roads had shorter concentration spans than others and research in the UK found that exposure to aircraft noise is linked with reading impairment in children.

Constant noise contributes to high blood pressure, strokes and heart attacks in adults. It disturbs sleep which in turn affects the immune system, and raises levels of aggression and anxiety. Anti-noise organisations have sprung up in many countries in recent years to draw attention to the need to mitigate the effects of noise in people's homes and workplaces. Half a million people in Britain in one year cited noisy roads, aircraft noise, loud neighbours or barking dogs as reasons why they moved house. Workers in open-plan offices, exposed to constant noise from machinery, telephones and office chatter, had higher levels of adrenaline in their bodies than those who worked in quiet, self-contained work stations. Those in quiet offices were also more productive at work, slept better at night, had better digestion and were less irritable.

Children and young people, however, don't make the big decisions in their own lives. They are exposed to higher levels of noise in the modern world than their parents' or grandparents' generations. Teenagers can't just 'up sticks' and move to a quieter area, they can't force their school authorities to provide expensive protection against traffic noise for pupils or insist on silence in the classroom when work needs to be done. They are also often unaware of how their own behaviour can make matters worse. For example, many young people use loud music to drown out unwanted noise from other sources, risking a range of different hearing problems. Homework, for many students, is completed to an accompaniment of music, radio or TV. For young people who have grown up in modern, noisy environments and live constantly with intrusive noise, silence is actually disturbing. Their waking hours are filled with loud music, TV shows in which excitable presenters shout at their audience and conversations with friends which seem unnecessarily loud to their teachers and the older people around them. The shopping malls and fast food restaurants favoured by young people aren't just noisy, busy places; they often have background music pumped into them as well. Young people seem to crave the noise which, if all the research is to be believed, harms their health and their chances of success in later life.

There is computer software which can neutralise office chatter and ear plugs which muffle unwanted noise so that music can be listened to at lower volumes. It is also probably possible to protect young people from the worst effects of their noisy lives, at least at school. Measures to reduce external noise from air and road traffic are expensive but necessary and overcrowded dining halls and classrooms can be fitted with noise-reducing insulation. Some improvements need a change of heart, however, rather than physical barriers to noise. Some schools need to discourage students from simply adding to the noise by shouting over the din around them! Students who are used to countering one racket with another will resist the benefits of peace and quiet. Only the most old-fashioned of us adults will want to see a return to deathly silent classrooms where only the teacher's voice can be heard, but the evidence is stacking up that noisy schools are stressful and ineffective learning environments. Some schools are beginning to educate students about the dangers of noise for their academic attainment as well as their health and well-being. Young people who have grown up with the increasing levels of noise associated with modern life may have to be persuaded that silence is, indeed, golden.

**Write an article** for young people to be published in your school/college magazine with the title, 'Is your life too noisy?'.

In your article you should:

·     evaluate what the researcher said about young people and noise
·     give your own views about young people and noise, based on the lecture you attended.

Base your article on what you have read in the passage, but be careful to use your own words. Address each of the two bullet points.

Write about 250 to 350 words.

**2** - (0500/33_Summer_2017_Q1) - *Directed Writing - Magazine Article - P3*

*This magazine article is about the issues involved in keeping up with technological changes in the modern world.*

## The Cost of Keeping Up

One of the most obvious features of modern life is the hectic pace of change in technology. Young people seem to relish this heady race towards ever better/faster/sleeker gadgets, machines and household appliances. Some older people, however, look back nostalgically to days gone by when a TV would last decades, a washing machine would service a whole family until the children had children of their own, and even phones would last a lot longer than a year or two. These older people are, after all, the ones who pay the bills.

It's true that ingenious designers and manufacturers give us plenty of incentives to upgrade. We can purchase TVs that have internet connectivity, high definition, 3-D functions, applications and all manner of improvements which are made to sound essential for modern living. New models of last year's cars appear with fancier dashboard electronics and a slightly more refined, 'cooler' look. The other day I heard an eleven-year-old lamenting how 'old' and 'slow' his phone was compared to those of his friends, as if his parents were guilty of the most grotesque neglect of their offspring by not updating such a vital piece of equipment.

It is true that young people are always attracted to ever-changing fashions in clothes, music and technology. It's part of being young. Even their parents often want what their neighbours have in their homes and spend their hard-earned cash on new appliances when the old ones are still reasonably serviceable. But it's not just that. Those same ingenious manufacturers who create the wondrously designed 'must have' products of today, already have their eye on your next purchase. They can, and often do, design or program products with a limited life span to make sure they'll need replacing sooner rather than later. A printer, for example, can be designed to send an error message once it's copied a certain number of papers, even if it's still working perfectly, and the battery life of a phone can be deliberately made short. Expensive software is often programmed to disable its online connectivity after a while, and then its users are directed to the latest version. They have to pay for it, and relearn how to use it, whether they want to or not. Many laptop users have experienced a sudden deterioration in the speed and reliability of their machines – just as the new model appears on the market.

The practice isn't new. It's even got a name – planned obsolescence – and has been used by manufacturers for decades to create a steady stream of demand for all kinds of everyday things from the light bulb to the latest smart phone or sports car. Technology industries make us buy things more often than we need to, both by making them stop working sooner than they would anyway, and by enticing us with ever more glitzy and fashionable updates so that we can gloat over our friends. That's why there's such a thriving recycling industry for these goods in some communities.

It might seem a cynical and manipulative practice, but the economies of some very big countries depend on it. Hundreds of thousands of jobs world-wide rely on people throwing away and replacing computers, TVs, phones, cars, satnavs and all the rest on a very regular basis. It is, however, an expensive practice in other ways. Environmentalists are quick to point out that it takes a thousand times more energy to make a thousand more gadgets than are really necessary – multiplied many more times globally – and in a world where resources are running out fast this level of waste is immoral. These unwanted products are also dumped in poorer countries where desperate people risk their health by burning plastics in order to retrieve the working parts or the rare minerals used in the manufacture of things the richer world has discarded after a year or so.

Many older people in the world know, or at least remember, how to 'make do and mend' – to live with things which aren't the latest and best and to repair them rather than replace them. The poor of the world have never had a choice, of course. But isn't it about time that young people realised how much their wasteful pursuit of all things new is really costing them, their families and the planet?

**Write an article** intended for young people entitled 'Keeping up: what's it worth?'.

In your article you should:
· select the relevant arguments in the article to support your views
· develop and evaluate those arguments to make a convincing case, based on what you have read.

Base your article on what you have read in the passage, but be careful to use your own words. Address each of the bullet points.

Write about 250 to 350 words.

**3** - (0500/32_Summer_2018_Q1) - *Directed Writing - Magazine Article - P3*

## Boredom is not a problem to be solved: it's the privilege of a free mind

*The following passage is an article from a daily newspaper and explores the issue of boredom.*

'Embrace boredom, not your smartphone screen: you'll learn more about yourself and the world around you than you think.'

Confessing to boredom is like confessing to a character flaw. Popular culture is littered with advice on how to shake it off: find like-minded people, take up a new hobby, find a cause and work for it, take up a musical instrument, read a book, or clean your house. Certainly, you must not let your children be bored: keep them active, inspire them, sign them up for swimming, football, dance, church groups – anything to keep them from relieving their boredom by gravitating towards much worse activities. To do otherwise is to admit that you're not engaging with the world around you, or that your children are deprived, or that your mobile phone has died.

But boredom is not tragic. Properly understood, boredom helps us understand time, and ourselves. Unlike fun or work, boredom is not about anything; it is our encounter with pure time. With screens and hand-held devices all around us, we don't get to have that experience very often any more for all this, that and the other that bombard our senses wherever we go. We should teach young people to feel comfortable with time on their hands and nothing to see or do.

I live and teach at a university in a small town, and some of my students from bigger cities tell me that they always go home on a Friday because they are bored here. 'You know the best antidote to boredom?' I ask them. They look at me expectantly, smartphones dangling from their hands. 'Thinking,' I tell them. 'Thinking is the best antidote to boredom. I am not kidding, kids. Thinking is the best antidote to boredom. Tell yourself, I am bored. Think about that. Isn't that interesting?' They look at me incredulously. Thinking is not how they have been brought up to handle boredom.

When you're bored, time moves slowly. The German word for 'boredom' is 'Langweile': a compound made of 'lange', which means 'long', and 'weile', meaning 'a while'. Slow-moving time can feel like torture for people who can't feel peaceful alone with their minds. Learning to do so is why learning to be bored is so crucial. It is a great privilege if you can do this without having to visit a psychiatrist.

So embrace boredom, that intense experience of time untouched by beauty, pleasure, comfort and all other temporarily attractive sensations. Observe it, see how your mind responds to boredom, see what you feel and think when you get bored. This form of meta-thinking, or 'thinking about thinking', can help you overcome your boredom, and learn about yourself and the world in the process. If meditating on nothing is too hard at the outset, you can try reflection. It can fill empty hours while teaching you, slowly, how to sit and just be in the present.

Don't replace boredom with work or fun or habits. Don't pull out a screen at every idle moment. Boredom is a privilege of the free mind. Don't believe people who try to persuade you that you must fill every waking moment with purposeful activity. Boredom is your opportunity to develop judgement, discernment and taste. In other words, always trust when boredom speaks to you. Instead of avoiding it, listen to its messages, because they will keep you true to yourself.

It might be beneficial to think through why something bores you. You will get a whole new angle on things. Hold on to your boredom; you won't notice how quickly time goes by once you start thinking about the things that bore you.

**Write an article** with the title, 'Thinking about Nothing' for a teenage magazine.

In your article, you should:
- explain the writer's ideas about boredom and its potential benefits
- evaluate how far these ideas are helpful in your life and the lives of your readers.

Base your article on what you have read in the passage, but be careful to use your own words.
Address each of the bullet points.

Write about 250 to 350 words.

**Up to 10 marks are available for the content of your answer, and up to 15 marks for the quality of your writing.**

# ANSWERS

**1** ▪ (0500/32_Summer_2017_Q1) ▪ *Directed Writing - Magazine Article - P3*

There is no answer in the mark scheme for this question

**2** ▪ (0500/33_Summer_2017_Q1) ▪ *Directed Writing - Magazine Article - P3*

There is no answer in the mark scheme for this question

**3** ▪ (0500/32_Summer_2018_Q1) ▪ *Directed Writing - Magazine Article - P3*

There is no answer in the mark scheme for this question

**4** ▪ (0500/31_Winter_2019_Q1) ▪ *Directed Writing - Magazine Article - P3*

There is no answer in the mark scheme for this question

**5** ▪ (0500/33_Winter_2019_Q1) ▪ *Directed Writing - Magazine Article - P3*

There is no answer in the mark scheme for this question

**6** ▪ (0500/22_Summer_2020_Q1) ▪ *Directed Writing - Magazine Article - P3*

**7** ▪ (0500/23_Summer_2020_Q1) ▪ *Directed Writing - Magazine Article - P3*

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**8** - (0500/21_Winter_2020_Q1) - *Directed Writing - Magazine Article - P3*

| | |
|---|---|
| Imagine you are a student at a school which is considering introducing eSports as part of the sports curriculum.<br><br>Write the speech you give to your school community, giving your views.<br><br>In your speech you should:<br>• evaluate the views and attitudes about eSports given in both texts<br>• give your own views, based on what you have read, about whether eSports should be offered in schools.<br><br>Base your speech on what you have read in <u>both</u> texts, but be careful to use your own words. Address both of the bullet points.<br><br>Write about 250 to 350 words.<br><br><u>Up to 15 marks are available for the content of your answer, and up to 25 marks for the quality of your writing.</u> | 40 |

Notes on task:

## Responses *might* use the following ideas:

### Text A

- level of interest / increasing audience
- global /cultural influence
- broad demographic though predominantly young
- skill / talent of competitors
- (suggested) inclusion in Olympics / has similar attributes to 'real' sports
- eSports as a career / financial gain
- lifespan of games / ever-changing nature
- dismissive attitude of 'traditionalists'

### Text B

- passion of audience
- powerful force: on a level with traditional sporting events / nations
- live and interactive: access to stars / can post own streams
- finance: attractive to advertisers / global brands
- diversity of audience
- aspirational

## Possible evaluation of ideas:

### Text A

- whether it is appropriate for schools to reflect / encourage / offer alternatives to participation of a trend / fashion
- sedentary / digital nature of 'sports' – not in line with schools' responsibility to students' health
- should be aware of and preparing for career opportunities it presents / responsibility to prepare for real life skills in a modern world: there are real and often lucrative careers in this field - schools should be fostering this opportunity
- how schools would meet cost of equipment / staying up to date with changing games: students could become expert in one type only to find it obsolete – how could parity be established?
- skills and expertise of teachers – relatively few likely to be equipped to train students for eSports
- the global reach of eSports promotes multi-cultural communication and cooperation – important values for schools to inculcate.
- a very popular sport not dependent on the weather – useful for schools
- chess is recognized by the IOC why not eSports.
- generational prejudice against eSports is unfounded / ill-informed
- school-based qualifications in eSports could be dismissed by traditionalist employers / college admission staff

**Text B**

- responsibility to educate to question influence of media / global brands, not facilitate it; the sponsors for eSports are often manufacturers of unhealthy products such as energy drinks and fact food
- safer / more civilised combat sport than e.g. boxing
- might engage disaffected students / quality of opportunity – more relevant, modern, interactive, open to all
- non-sporty students will be given chance to excel: this is sport for the mind - their passions are legitimate
- the eSports industry can provide opportunities including employment for people with disabilities
- missed opportunities to broaden awareness of those not involved if we ignore it in school – career, social, global
- opportunity for promotion of schools on the world stage / healthy competition between establishments - eSports skills prepare students for a remote-working world
- the huge popularity of eSports drives technological innovation and contributes large amounts to the economy – surely beneficial to young people
- inclusion in the curriculum would increase already disproportionate dependence on technology