



UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE INTERNATIONAL EXAMINATIONS
General Certificate of Education Ordinary Level

ENGLISH LANGUAGE

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Paper 2 Reading

October/November 2013

INSERT

1 hour 45 minutes

READ THESE INSTRUCTIONS FIRST

This insert contains the two reading passages.

This document consists of **3** printed pages and **1** blank page.



Passage 1

Electronic Book Readers

- 1 A new phenomenon is springing up nowadays in railway stations, in airport queues and on buses. It is the sight of people engrossed, not in a newspaper or paperback novel, but rather an electronic book reader (e-reader). Are downloaded e-books a passing fad or are they here to stay?
- 2 One attraction of e-books is that some of them are free. Others can be downloaded at a much cheaper price than the bookshop price, and for avid readers this is an obvious advantage because the money saved can be spent on other things, perhaps new clothes or days out. There is no need to make time-consuming trips to bookshops, which is a real hassle, especially for parents with children to bundle into the car or bus. Instead, books can be paid for and downloaded from the comfort of your own living room. E-readers don't take up much space, which makes a huge difference to people whose living space might be limited, for example, families with several young children vying for space for toys, games and all the paraphernalia of family life. Moreover, e-readers are extremely portable; instead of having to choose which book to take with you to read on the train, or having to narrow your choice to three or four books to fit into your holiday suitcase, you can have the delightful experience of carrying hundreds on your e-reader. 5
10
- 3 E-readers are a blessing to short-sighted or visually-impaired readers because, as with all computer screens, the size of the print can be increased; no more squinting at the pages of a book or, worse, having the frustrating experience of not being able to read the book at all. Lights can also be attached to e-readers, and this is generally conducive to keeping eyes healthy. Users of e-readers can personalise their reading in the same way that people often personalise their mobile phones, as e-readers can be purchased with covers in a variety of materials and colours. While those who are generally wary of technology complain that e-readers are mere gimmicks, teachers and parents, who often regret that children don't read enough, hope that the novelty value of e-readers will lead to increased reading and improved examination results. Gone is the need for bookmarks and the frustration of losing the place in your book, as e-readers remember where you stopped reading and take you automatically to that point when you open up to start reading again. 20
25
- 4 However, e-readers have their critics too. There are those who say that e-readers will bring about the closure of libraries, which will be a great loss to society as a whole. Although downloaded books are cheap or even free, the initial cost of e-readers is high, as they are essentially computer-based, and computers are expensive. This is all very well for those who can afford it, but it is socially divisive because not everyone can. If e-readers do bring about the closure of libraries, some people – those who can afford neither books nor the technology to read e-books – will have little opportunity to read at all. 30
35
- 5 And what about the sheer, aesthetic pleasure of owning books? Many people delight in holding, and just possessing, their favourite books. Snuggling up on the sofa with an e-reader pales into insignificance when compared with doing so with a 'real' book. When people are moved to tears or to fury by characters or plots in a book, they instinctively tell their friends about it, and often books change hands and are temporarily swapped. This delight is denied to readers of e-books. Furthermore, students are not able to annotate e-books and use them for cross-reference in their studies in ways which are possible with books. 40
- 6 When buying e-books from home, readers have to know what they are looking for, whereas browsing in a bookshop allows readers to stumble on books they might otherwise never have come across. It would be a great pity if bookshops had to close because they were unable to compete with e-readers, either because the customers didn't come any more, or because they were reluctant to pay the higher prices inevitably charged for books as opposed to e-books. Moreover, jobs would be axed if bookshops closed. Will society have to pay too high a price for this latest technology? Perhaps it is too early to tell. 45

Passage 2

Miss Garnet has just arrived in Venice, a city of canals where transport is provided by boats and water-taxis.

- 1 Miss Garnet thought it was surprisingly cold when she landed at Venice airport.

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Despite her thirty-five years of school teaching, Miss Garnet was unused to receiving attention from young people.

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