



# Cambridge International AS Level

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ENGLISH GENERAL PAPER

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Paper 2 Comprehension

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INSERT

1 hour 45 minutes

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## INFORMATION

- This insert contains all the resources referred to in the questions.
- You may annotate this insert and use the blank spaces for planning. **Do not write your answers** on the insert.



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This document has 8 pages. Blank pages are indicated.

## Material for Section A

### Background

The Billi family recently purchased a large piece of land on the outskirts of the town of Xanoo, with the intention of having a house built on the site to their own specifications. They researched which architectural firm to employ by finding out which ones had designed and constructed recent award-winning houses. They now have a shortlist of three award winners:

#### (i) **Exlund Architects** designed No 27 North Shore

Building contractor: Smithson Incorporated, town of Xanoo

Structural engineers: Granio Engineering

This design was a response to the problems posed by the site: bounded by a main road on the west and the sea to the east. The main body of the house faces the sea to maximise the potential of the site, with a roof line and sea defences carved in such a way as to reflect the contours of the nearby cliff face and so integrate seamlessly into their surroundings. No 27 has a futuristic industrial look, with clean lines and bold forms. Externally, the pipes are hidden, and the walls, a mixture of rugged concrete and steel sheets, are weathering beautifully. Inside, the rooms are drenched in light thanks to the use of tinted glass (to ensure privacy for the owners because of the proximity of the main road) and reflective metal surfaces. Clever usage of wood balances the hard industrial look. The latest technology, such as heating and lighting controls, has been incorporated as well.

#### (ii) **Baum and Trulli** designed Bellevue

Building contractor: Hillis Limited, Yita (the capital city)

Planning consultant: Stacey Antonio

This design sought to link the new build clearly to its rural surroundings and local building traditions. The design made use of building materials saved from the original house on the site: wood panels, stone, handmade tiles and bricks – all local and creating a warm palette of colours, typical of the area's historic houses. Internally, the quality of the build is just as impressive, with much attention to detail. Tradition is upheld (for example, the beautiful old window frames, doors and fireplaces), but there are also features that bring the design right up to date and make it a comfortable family home. The double-height kitchen is light and airy, with doors leading to the vegetable and herb patch one way and, the other way, into the sofa-filled conservatory.

#### (iii) **Esposita Associates** designed Villa Nova

Building contractor: Beautiful Buildings, county of Xanoo

Sustainability consultant: Nico Brown

This design highlighted how a contemporary house could have excellent 'green' credentials and also offer flexible living arrangements for a family by the addition of a tree house hidden in the garden. The house is environmentally friendly as it is carbon neutral. The house is built around a central courtyard with ventilation towers providing summer cooling. Internally, everything is designed to use the minimum of energy and take advantage of clean green technologies. The first sight of the tree house is so exciting – you cross a suspension bridge, open a wooden door and then enter into another world! The tree house, 5m up in the air, is built around an oak tree. There are three

rooms, plus a kitchen and tiny toilet – all lined with timber and with narrow windows framing woodland views.

### **Additional information**

- 1 The land bought by the Billi family includes some mature trees in the southern section and a river running through the northern section.
- 2 The Billis need to apply for planning permission in order to build a new house on this land.
- 3 The family consists of five members: Mr and Mrs Billi and their children Eva (17), Fabio (13) and Geraldo (9).
- 4 The eastern section is overlooked by several blocks of flats.
- 5 In the central section are situated the ruins of the original manor house.
- 6 Mrs Billi always seeks to create a warm and welcoming environment in her home.
- 7 The family would prefer to be in their new house within 12 months.
- 8 The family are all keen tennis players.
- 9 The Xanoo town council planning department is known to look favourably upon new house designs that use local materials and local professionals.
- 10 Flooding is a regular problem in the town of Xanoo.
- 11 Eva would like to be able to entertain her friends somewhere on the property without disturbing her parents who both work from home.
- 12 Mrs Billi used to be a professional chef.
- 13 Fabio thinks that the new house should be environmentally friendly.
- 14 Geraldo is a very imaginative child.
- 15 Stacey Antonio has never had one of her designs turned down by the Xanoo town council planning department.
- 16 Mrs Billi prefers a more conservative approach to design compared to her husband, appreciating Xanoo's traditional style of buildings.
- 17 Granio Engineering has moved away from the region.
- 18 Mr Billi loves cutting-edge technology and design.
- 19 Baum and Trulli's designs are proving to be so popular that there is currently a waiting time of six months for an initial consultation with them.

## Material for Section B

### Two Tales from the new Silk Road

China calls it the project of the century – a massive roll-out of Chinese-built infrastructure to remake the map of the global economy with China at its heart. Some see this new Silk Road as an opportunity, others as a power grab.

#### The Trader's Tale

It's hard to keep up with Nigel Cropp as he races past suitcases, pet supplies and money boxes. He found a wife in Yiwu market and now he's looking for something else. Fidget spinner toys. 'I buy them for 60 or 70 cents and sell them for \$7. At one point I heard that they were retailing at \$15. The customers are really fighting for them. I can sell 100 000 a day, maybe 10 million by the end of the year.' The fidget spinner is this year's must-have item for schoolchildren in Europe and North America. And is Nigel's current obsession. 5  
10

Nigel doesn't usually like shopping but he loves it here. The biggest small goods market in the world is an assault on the senses with the clattering of trolleys, the chattering of traders from every continent and the sweet smell of pineapple from the seller's cart.

The wave was once slower. For hundreds of years, tea, silk and ceramics were the staples on the old Silk Road – an ancient network of trade routes from China to the Middle East and Europe. But, in 2017, there's not much China doesn't sell to the world and this market is on fast-forward. 15

Nigel is speed-walking and talking but his eyes are feverishly scanning side to side ... catapults, sewing machines, bicycle pumps and paint rollers. He can't afford to miss the next new trend or latest colour. It's a binary world: grab or ignore. 20

An entire section of the market is filled with toy shops. Nigel says no to the remote-controlled plastic bear careering between our legs on a skateboard. 'Avoid electrical. They won't pass European Union regulations.' And it's another no to a soft bear with button eyes. 'Small parts ... might choke small children.' From toys to gift bags, Nigel is now haggling over fractions of a cent on 7000 matching sets of gift bags in different sizes. 25

Nigel says the roads and rail lines planned for the new Silk Road will mean even more Yiwu goods heading west. But despite China's promise that it will be a win-win scenario for China and its trading partners, he's less optimistic about goods travelling back into China. Customs red tape still makes importing a nightmare, he says. 'The government can change the law any time, so there's no real concrete law,' he adds. 30

But Nigel is pragmatic. He's a trader after all, and it's not his problem whether all win equally on China's new Silk Road. Soon he's back to hunting for the best fidget spinner.

#### The Cargo Man's Tale 35

Wu Xiaodong remembers the day in 1983 when he joined the railway. China had a mere 1 per cent of world trade and, aged 17, his own ambitions went no further than a free uniform and a free train ride. 'Our trains were like tractors. We were running a steam railway.'

Now China is the world's number one trading nation. He paces the Yiwu cargo yard in blue uniform and hard hat, barking orders at men with grappling hooks as they ease 12m shipping containers on to freight carriages. The frenzied din of cranes, sirens, trucks and screeching metal can't alter the fact that this train for Europe is late. 40

When Wu joined the railway, Yiwu was a shabby backwater. No-one dreamed of foreign trade back then, he says. Even sending freight across China took two months of planning. Now he's in charge of sending trains off on a journey that crosses nine countries and more than 11 000 km. But he's constantly being pushed to make further improvements. 'I've done almost every job on the railway – there's not enough sleep in any of them. Security, logistics, co-ordination, repairs ... we're under a lot of pressure. We need the train to develop faster and better.' 45 50

The pressure is coming from the top. With the United States retreating from global leadership on free trade, President Xi has seized his chance. His plan is so big that it may be decades before we can say whether it's a worthy successor of the ancient Silk Road. But with no other country offering a big idea right now, this is the most ambitious bid to shape our century. 55

Critics say dragging 50 containers from Yiwu to Europe by train is a poor way to start, observing that rail makes little economic sense when you can easily shift 10 000 containers in a single ship. Even with government subsidies the train costs more than twice as much as sea freight, and is slowed by changes of railway gauge and engine. But Wu points out that rail takes only 18 days, compared to 35 by sea. 'The train can't take the place of sea freight, but there's lots of room for expansion, especially to landlocked countries.' 60

Beijing's vision is about much more than a railway. It's about roads, pipelines, ports, industrial zones and shipping routes. China is promising to spend almost \$1 trillion on infrastructure to boost trade. But as it crosses two continents laden with Chinese goods, the freight train has become an important symbol of success. 65

Wu glances out along the tracks. 'Some day I'm going to make this journey to see it all for myself ...'

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