Cambridge Assessment International Education

Cambridge O Level

ENGLISH LANGUAGE **1123/11**

Paper 1 Reading **October/November 2025**

INSERT **2 hours**

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INFORMATION

- This insert contains the reading passages.
- You may annotate this insert and use the blank spaces for planning. **Do not write your answers** on the insert.

This document has **8** pages. Any blank pages are indicated.

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Read **Text A** and answer **Question 1** and **Question 2** on the question paper.

Text A: ***The circus train***

This story is set over 90 years ago. Jacob Jankowski has left his previous life behind and set off in search of a new beginning.

1 I stop because I'm tired, hungry and have no idea where I am.

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‘I’m staying.’

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Read **Text B** and answer **Question 3** on the question paper.

Text B: ***Climbing Mount Everest***

This text discusses the popular challenge of climbing the world's tallest mountain above sea level.

1 Ever since Sherpa mountaineer Tenzing Norgay and New Zealand climber Edmund Hillary became the first recorded individuals to reach the top of Sagarmatha, the Nepali name for Mount Everest, in 1953, the numbers attempting to emulate their greatness have skyrocketed. By 1980, 112 people had reached the summit. By 2018, it was over 9000 people. With the increase in visitors in recent years, many locals now run tourism businesses, ranging from eateries to guesthouses, to cater for the sheer numbers descending on them.

2 Lists are published online of people who climbed Everest in the 20th century. The list for the 21st century doesn't exist, nor is it likely to. Something that over 800 people now do in any given year just isn't that notable. Today's smug social media photos of the path to the summit of Everest show climbers literally queueing on the mountain.

3 The Sherpa indigenous community in Nepal has lived in the harsh conditions among the world's tallest mountains for centuries. Every year, Sherpas guide foreign adventurers on excursions to Earth's highest peaks. That wasn't the case when Norgay and Hillary first summited Everest in 1953. Doing it first, figuring out how to do it, was part of what made them the best.

4 When did this monumental achievement in human history become something anyone reasonably fit can just pay people to help them do? Nowadays, teams of elite Sherpas, known as 'icefall doctors', trek up Everest to fix the hi-tech ropes and ladders that make it easier for their clients to climb. Other Sherpas carry heavy loads on their backs so that clients can travel light. When reading old accounts of mountaineering expeditions, we see that Sherpas achieved amazing feats, but their achievements were never highlighted. Foreign adventurers would say something like, 'I climbed the mountain and around seven Sherpas helped' – they didn't even know their names!

5 Since then a whole service industry has developed around mountaineering. Facilitated by hired Sherpas and ultra-modern equipment, today's summiteers justify their indulgence with claims of raising awareness of climate change or contributing to the local economy. Tourism is a large part of the Nepali economy, and Nepal is definitely worth visiting. The majority of activities travellers can enjoy (trekking, rafting, kayaking) are much more affordable, equally beneficial for your mental health and pose a significantly lower risk to life. If mountain climbing really is your thing, there are numerous other peaks in Nepal that can be climbed for much less money.

6 What sets Everest apart is that many of the people who now attempt to climb it aren't necessarily professional or seasoned mountain climbers. But climbing Everest is not the only way to see the mountain. Trekking routes in the area provide glorious views. And when travelling through Nepal, by booking activities and accommodation with local providers, you're directly contributing to the livelihoods of ordinary Nepali people.

7 Anyone still tempted to climb what technically isn't even the tallest mountain in the world (if you consider other mountains that begin below sea level) needs to hurry up. The glaciers of Everest are melting at an exponential rate, making the ice that's left much less stable and more dangerous.

8 The impact of humans on even the highest reaches of our planet hasn't gone unnoticed. Samples of microplastic were recently found on Everest – the highest point above sea level where microplastic had ever been recorded. Some climbers apparently don't care about their

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belongings, abandoning them on their way back down. In recent years, both the government and the Sherpas have been proactively trying to clean the mountain, bringing in new rules to help with waste management.

45

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