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English B – Higher level – Paper 2 – Reading comprehension
Anglais B – Niveau supérieur – Épreuve 2 – Compréhension écrite
Inglés B – Nivel Superior – Prueba 2 – Comprensión de lectura

7 May 2026 / 7 mai 2026 / 7 de mayo de 2026

Zone A afternoon	Zone B afternoon	Zone C afternoon
Zone A après-midi	Zone B après-midi	Zone C après-midi
Zona A tarde	Zona B tarde	Zona C tarde

1 h

Text booklet – Instructions to students

- Do not open this booklet until instructed to do so.
- This booklet accompanies paper 2 reading comprehension.

Livret de textes – Instructions destinées aux élèves

- N'ouvrez pas ce livret avant d'avoir reçu l'autorisation de le faire.
- Ce livret accompagne la partie de l'épreuve 2 portant sur la compréhension écrite.

Cuadernillo de textos – Instrucciones para el alumnado

- No abra este cuadernillo hasta que se lo autoricen.
- Este cuadernillo acompaña a la parte de comprensión de lectura de la prueba 2.

Text A

The dos and don'ts of your first semester at university

- 1** Starting university is an exciting time. But, we know it can also be slightly daunting, so read our crucial top tips below.

- 2** **Do get involved**

There's more to university life than just studying, and there's no better way to make friends than taking part in all the extras. Of course, in your first semester you've got freshers* week to enjoy, a week of great nights out and freshers fairs to learn about everything you need to know and meet fellow students. Also, get involved with some societies; if you're a fanatic sports player, find your sport and sign up to the team, or look for alternatives such as music groups, debating societies, country-inspired ones, eco groups, course-specific groups and so much more.



- 3** **[– 7 –]**

We've heard it all: "it's only first year", "first year doesn't count". But that's not strictly true. For many courses, the first year does count towards the final grade and what you're learning in this first year will help you down the line. So go out and enjoy yourself, but set the alarm for those 9.00am lectures also.

- 4** **[– 8 –]**

Maybe it's somewhere you've never been or somewhere you're sure is full of brain boxes and mean librarians, but you couldn't be more wrong. At times the library will become a second home to you throughout your university life. Get to know it early, find the books you need, which areas you like, where the computers are and, of course, the quiet zones for when you really need to get your head down.

- 5** **[– 9 –]**

If you have a question, ask it! Everyone's in the same shoes as you being completely new to university life so the chances are somebody else is thinking it too. Whether it's about the lecture, your student accommodation or the university in general, don't hesitate to ask. Your lecturers, university staff and those working at your accommodation will all be super friendly and helpful and are there to help you adjust to university life.

- 6** **[– 10 –]**

If this is the first time you've lived away from home, the idea of managing your money can be somewhat overwhelming. We recommend sitting down with a parent before you start planning your finances. This way you know how much you have to spend on bills, how much to budget on the food shop and what's left to go out and enjoy yourself with.

* freshers: students who have just started at a university

Text B

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Text C

Who speaks Australian English? Ethnolects and language(s) in the lucky country

2024 marked 60 years since the publication of Donald Horne’s influential book *The Lucky Country*. Most people read the title as a compliment, but he originally intended the book as a wake-up call to Australians about our complacency and our embrace of a provincial reliance, first on Britain and later, on America.

- 5 When the book was written, Australians were overwhelmingly white and English-speaking. In 1964, 95 % of the country claimed British ancestry. Fast forward 60 years, and the
- 10 composition of Australia’s population has changed considerably, especially in its largest cities. Thanks to changing waves of migration, first from southern Europe and more recently from Asia and Africa, Australians look and sound very different from their peers in the
- 15 year Horne’s book was published.



- Horne explored many facets of Australian culture in *The Lucky Country*, but he didn’t delve into the impact of the language diversity resulting from this migration—no doubt because
- 20 assimilation was in vogue and English was (and is) the dominant language.

Nowadays, alongside Australia’s many Indigenous languages, English co-exists with an increasingly diverse range of home and community languages—Arabic, Chinese, Greek, Punjabi, Vietnamese, just to name a few.

More than words—language is identity

- 25 For many Australians, speaking more than one language is part of who they are, and maintaining a community language builds their sense of belonging in Australia while simultaneously connecting them with their heritage.

- When Australian English started being studied systematically in the middle of the last century, researchers noted that, while it lacks the regional differences (“dialects”) heard in the UK,
- 30 languages other than English changed the form and sound of Australia’s distinctive English. For example, there are differences in the English spoken by second-generation Australians from different backgrounds (German, Greek, Italian). Where “dialect” describes regional differences in ways of speaking, we call these differences according to background “ethnolects”.

Ethnolects and what it means to “sound” Australian

- 35 Because of their association with migrants and their descendants, our first reaction might be to look on ethnolects as a “broken” form of English, remnants of the imperfect language learning efforts of the first generation. But current research indicates a more positive role for ethnolects. Any child who grows up in Australia will learn Australian English, but a child who also learns an ethnolect can shift between ways of speaking English, just as any Aussie* can switch between

- 40 more cultivated or more broad speech. For those children and grandchildren of migrants who haven't maintained their community language, the ethnolect is especially important for providing connection to community and heritage. So, instead of looking on ethnolects as a deficiency, we should think of them as a bonus—like being able to speak another language—something to be celebrated as part of the expanding definition of what it means to be Australian.

* Aussie: an informal word for a person from Australia

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