



Cambridge International AS Level

ENGLISH GENERAL PAPER

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Paper 2 Comprehension

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INSERT

1 hour 45 minutes

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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Material for Section A

A national television chat show is famous for hosting debates about issues close to its viewers' hearts. A recent debate centred on whether secondary school students should be required to wear school uniform. This stemmed from a recent controversial story in a national newspaper about a school principal who had sent home 100 students for failing to arrive at school dressed in appropriate uniform. His decision had both supporters and critics. Members of the audience were asked to comment on the issue.

The following are extracts of opinions raised by four audience members:

(i) A senior year student

I think school uniform is very important – in my opinion, it did aid my concentration in my early years at school because it reminds you that you're at school to learn. For some reason I didn't feel as though I could concentrate as well if I didn't have school uniform on – but I'm not sure if that's because I am so used to wearing uniform and I associated my own clothes with free time and not being at school. It's quite useful on trips to identify members of the school and stop them getting lost, too.

I also think it's a great tool to prevent bullying. If everyone is wearing the same clothes, it's impossible to make fun of each other's clothing, as is the case sometimes on days where you're allowed to wear your own clothes. I don't think this should prevent a child's need to express themselves, however. Uniform rules can be taken too far though: I was once told I would get a detention for every day I turned up to school with my grey bag instead of a black one.

(ii) A parent

In my perfect world, school uniforms wouldn't exist. Children would project their personalities through their clothes at school, just as they do at home. Schools wouldn't impress on pupils the need to wear skirts to a certain length, or to do a minimum number of buttons up on shirts – and if the rules weren't there, kids wouldn't try to break them.

But we don't live in a perfect world, and learning to fit in is one of the things being at school teaches our children. One of my daughters wore only trousers for five years, but her school uniform was a skirt, so she had to fit in and wear one. It seemed unfair and tough at the time; in the end, it didn't do her any harm at all – in fact, it taught her an important lesson.

From my point of view, with times when I've had four daughters in as many as three different schools, uniforms spell simplicity, and help put order into the school day. ('Have you got your uniform all sorted out?' I shout up the stairs on a Sunday night to my secondary-school-age girls.) And, overall, I think it's cheaper: uniforms are hard-wearing clothes, and they're put through the mill.

I know some people have this idea that they're democratic, but from what I see that's not really true. My house is often crammed with uniform-wearing girls, and no two of them ever look the same. Kids customise whatever they wear. If uniform rules are strictly enforced, it all becomes about the bag or the coat or the shoes. But the best thing about uniforms, for me as a parent, is the simplicity.

(iii) An educational psychologist

Uniform has to be seen as something that is earned. I think pupils should start school with no uniform, and as they progress through the school they should start wearing it. I always think children need to be proud of their school, and uniform is important for that. So, make them earn it! If they

let the school down, they shouldn't be allowed to wear it. Look at the marines and paratroopers – they can't wait to get that beret.

How a child wears the uniform shows their feelings towards the school. To an extent, school uniform definitely levels things between pupils compared to wearing no uniform at all, but this argument is overrated. Children can still single out other children from the make of their shoes or how well-fitting their clothes are. If you wanted to do it properly, it would be like the police: the children would come in and change into uniform provided by the school. Still, in a way I agree with strict uniform rules. In my experience, they help schools maintain authority.

(iv) A teacher

I have had 10 years' teaching experience in inner-city secondary schools, and my last position was second-in-charge of the English faculty. I have had experience teaching in both uniform and non-uniform schools and I can definitely see the benefits of pupils wearing uniform. A uniform can be vital in creating a sense of school identity and community, and I feel it is often a source of collective pride for students. However, if a school relies heavily on uniform regulation to improve behaviour and raise aspirations, then it can push out other more positive forms of behaviour management and become counterproductive.

I've seen many students both in uniform and not, and I think that what actually distinguishes students is not what they're wearing, but how they interact and engage with each other. I believe teaching students how to express themselves with confidence should be the priority, rather than the length of their tie or skirt.

Material for Section B

A smartphone manufacturer with a social conscience

The Dutch company Fairphone launched its first Android smart phone manufactured from ethically sourced materials in 2013. It aims to be a sustainable organisation with a social conscience. From the smart phone it manufactures to the warehouse offices out of which it operates, Fairphone has made conscious decisions to consider the environment and the social ethics behind manufacturing its phone and, in doing so, minimise any negative impacts the company or its product may have. 5

One amongst several 'low key' alternatives to the mainstream smart phone market, devices like those produced by Fairphone have been described as 'liberating' their owners. Fairphone's ethical smart phone has attracted many customers because, although not as high-functioning as the more favoured market leaders, many people are keen to use a device that makes them feel they are choosing a more socially and environmentally friendly option whilst still having the connectivity of a smart phone. Many people are concerned about the ethics and sustainability behind the smart phone industry; questions are raised over the use of child labour and poor working conditions in the production process. As smart phones have rechargeable batteries containing cobalt, worries are raised about this so-called 'conflict mineral' which is mined in certain parts of Africa with a dubious supply chain. The Fairphone aims to use conflict-free minerals; so far it has managed to do this with tin and tantalum (a metal that is highly resistant to corrosion). 10 15

Underpinned by a social and ethical conscience, the company has a transparent supply chain and production process. A full breakdown of the costs of production of its phone are publicly available and each stage of the production process can be viewed on the company website. Its factory in China pays workers a decent wage and has working conditions which meet health and safety standards; a welfare fund has been set up for these workers and a percentage of the money from each phone sale goes into this fund. 20 25

On the environmental side, Fairphone executives intend to do their bit to reduce the increasing amount of electronic waste that is being created by our throw-away society. Made from aluminium and recycled plastic, each one of their phones is meant to last as long as possible: this is achieved through a modular design which can be repaired and upgraded by the owner using the iFixit app on the phone; thus, lengthening a phone's life. Another environmentally friendly feature is that it comes without a charger because the owner can use any existing micro USB charger that he or she already possesses. 30

The phone comes with virtually no apps, except a radio, ready installed. This may attract those who like to stay out of the mainstream as it avoids the presumption that everyone wants as many apps as possible on their phone. It can be easily linked to apps through search engines to allow users to satisfy their needs. Reviews of the Fairphone are generally favourable, especially with the ethical argument behind it. However, there is still a mountain to climb to get anywhere near as many customers as the market leaders. 35 40

The same sustainable design principles have been used in creating Fairphone's headquarters in Amsterdam. An old industrial building was chosen and in two and a half months the design team in charge carried out their brief to create 'an open-plan, transparent office emphasizing reused and environmentally friendly materials'. The chief designer describes it as a challenging task as she had a limited time, a limited 45

budget and a limited field of materials to use. 'Most of the original structural features of the warehouse were left untouched, which created a logical placement of the workspaces by the window for great daylight and views of the city.'

The rectangular floor is covered at regular intervals with large wooden boxes, built big enough to house meeting rooms and also to break up the open-plan space. These stand-alone rooms have glass walls, made using reclaimed window frames from the building's previous tenants, which let in natural light. Other walls are clad with old floorboards made from rubberwood – a light-coloured, tropical hardwood that is harvested as a waste product of the latex industry, once the rubber trees have been stripped of their natural polymers. This wood was also used to form a set of stairs that employees can sit on creating an area for larger meetings and talks. Other seating areas are created in unused areas between the desks and the cube shaped rooms, using non-matching second-hand furniture arranged like small living rooms. Vintage lamp shades and hanging plants are suspended from the roof beams to give an informal, homely feel, ensuring this company's environmental conscience remains close to its heart.

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