



# Cambridge International AS Level

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ENGLISH GENERAL PAPER

8021/23

Paper 2 Comprehension

October/November 2020

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

19-year-old Amelia has just successfully completed her final year in school and is looking to become an au pair\* for a year before going to university, where she will be studying medicine. She has been offered a place at a university near her hometown.

Amelia is fluent in French and English, and speaks a little Spanish. She was captain of her school swimming team and plays tennis regularly; she is a talented musician, playing flute and piano, and enjoys reading historical novels. She is close to her family and has twin sisters and a brother. She is the second oldest child in her family: her brother is two years older than her, and her sisters are two years younger. She has experience of working with children in a summer holiday camp and of babysitting her cousins and neighbours' children; she has a first-aid certificate.

She is considering three au pair positions.

### (i) The Holden Family

This family consists of John and Monica Holden and their three children: two boys, James (four years old) and Joshua (six years old) and a girl, Sarah (nine years old). The family live a four-hour flight away in a large city renowned for cultural and historic attractions. Their native language is English.

They have a large house in the suburbs with a garden and a range of family pets: two dogs, a cat and two rabbits. The oldest boy attends the local school and James will start school in a year's time. They are keen for their children to be exposed to new languages and cultures.

Amelia's accommodation would be in an annexe next to the main house with bedroom, bathroom, living room and kitchen. She would usually be expected to help the family for 30 hours a week dependent on the parents' working schedules. Jobs would include taking Joshua to and from school, looking after James when he is not at pre-school, making meals for the children, doing laundry, babysitting and general housework. Holidays would have to be taken when the family were away on their holiday. The Holdens would like their au pair to start in October.

### (ii) The Podolski Family

Dennis and Dorota Podolski have four children: two boys and two girls aged between 7 and 11 years old. Their eldest child, Leo, has dyslexia and receives extra support at school; his sisters, Alessandra and Hannah, are able musicians, playing violin and cello in a local orchestra; the youngest child, Nico, has diabetes. Their native language is French.

The Podolskis live in a medium-sized house with a garden in a small town two hours' car journey from a large capital city. Amelia's journey to this location would be two hours by plane. With this family, Amelia would have her own room in the family home; she would share a bathroom with the two girls. She would be expected to help the family for 35 hours a week. The Podolskis would like their au pair to start in September. Holidays would be arranged by negotiation.

Amelia's jobs would include taking the children to and from school, supervising music practice, looking after Nico when his siblings were at school, walking the dog, housework, babysitting, doing the children's laundry and preparing their evening meal.

### (iii) The Maccarone Family

This family consists of single mum Georgina, who is a widow, and her three children, all boys: Max, Leo and Tobin aged 6, 9 and 14 years old. The family lives in a large apartment in a small town close to a capital city. It would take five hours to fly there. The family are bilingual, speaking Spanish and English interchangeably. Georgina Maccarone is originally from Spain. All the children play soccer at the weekends, tennis in the week and swim each Monday and Wednesday.

Amelia's accommodation would be a separate bedroom with its own bathroom. Georgina would expect Amelia to work flexibly each week for up to 30 hours doing a range of things, such as preparing meals for the boys, taking the younger two to school and back, helping with homework and sporting activities, doing some housework, and babysitting when necessary; every two weeks Amelia would need to work a Saturday when Georgina goes horse-riding.

The Maccarones would like Amelia to start in September, but this is negotiable. Amelia would be expected to take at least one of her holidays with the family.

\*An au pair is an unmarried young adult typically aged 18 to 30 years old, who has no children and travels to a foreign country for a defined period of time to live with a host family. The au pair is considered to be a full member of the family during the entire stay and helps with housework and looking after the children in return for board, lodging and an agreed amount of pocket money each week.

#### Additional information

1. Georgina Maccarone is chief executive of a large financial company, who works long hours in a nearby city.
2. Amelia's mother was ill recently and is still recovering from treatment; Amelia hopes to be able to return home to visit at least twice during the year.
3. Amelia's university medical course requires a period of work experience in September during her year out before attending university.
4. Amelia has an allergy to dairy products.
5. Amelia's mother is a native French speaker, and her father is English.
6. John Holden works away from home in the oil industry for long periods of time, and Monica Holden works part-time as a nurse in a children's hospital.
7. Amelia is occasionally nervous around animals.
8. Coming from a loving family herself, Amelia is keen to find a family with whom she can interact fully and build a positive relationship.
9. Dennis Podolski is a musician working in a well-known orchestra and is often away touring for several weeks at a time. His wife teaches part-time in a local school.
10. Nico Podolski's diabetes is managed with regular insulin injections, which he administers himself, and an au pair will need to supervise him.
11. Amelia has not travelled much by air and is anxious about this.
12. Amelia has played in a soccer team for five years and is captain of her local tennis team.

## Material for Section B

### Singapore's great durian divide by Emma Hogan

#### The fruit divides opinion and now generations.

The durian, if you are not acquainted with it, is a pungent fruit which on the outside looks like a cross between a giant kiwi fruit and a hedgehog. Inside, the yellow flesh resembles a decayed kidney and smells like rotting rubbish. Its stink has got it banned from hotels, carry-on luggage and subway systems in Singapore; the sign proscribing it looks as if the city-state has outlawed spiky hand-grenades.

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I moved to South-East Asia three months ago. In my second week, I went with two new Singaporean friends to the district of Geylang where we sat on rickety plastic chairs at a roadside stall, scooping out creamy durian flesh (which tastes like a combination of almonds, brandy and sour buttermilk) while wearing plastic gloves to stop ourselves smelling of the fruit. A few weeks later we ditched dinner and went straight to another stall instead. An oncologist friend of mine, knowing how much I like the stuff, now invites me over to eat the durians given to him by grateful patients.

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I'm not the only Westerner to have loved the 'king of fruits', as South-East Asians refer to it. Alfred Russel Wallace, a British explorer, uttered that 'to eat durians is a new sensation, worth a voyage to the East to experience'. But it is still rare enough for my Singaporean friends to find my obsession hilarious. Most of them are used to foreigners telling them they can't stand the smell of blue cheese meets mouldy old socks, let alone eat the bittersweet insides. 'An *ang mo* (white person) who likes durian? You must have a bit of Asian blood in you', laughed one. Strangers are no less amused: on one of my durian forays a man laughed as he gave me the thumbs up as I happily sucked the yellow flesh off the pips. Another took my picture.

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But what is rarer is that I am a twenty-something who enjoys durian. With a few exceptions, everyone with whom I have eaten durian has been older than me – and no one younger than me has enjoyed it as much. My two original durian friends are in their thirties and forties. The oncologist is in his fifties and his teenage sons dislike the fruit so much that at a recent dinner we had to eat it in a separate room. Nearly all the young Singaporeans I've met are puzzled by my love of the fruit, with many expressing disgust or indifference.

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Most durian sellers insist that Singaporeans of all ages enjoy eating durian, and emphasise that it is just a divisive kind of fruit ('you either love it or you hate it'). But when pressed, several admit that their most ardent customers are middle-aged and above. Few teenagers can be seen at durian stalls on a weekend. Even at extremely popular venues such as Ah Seng Durian stall in Holland Village, where all durians have to be pre-ordered, most of those under twenty-five are with their parents. The younger generation are 'less exposed to it', says Audrey, who was queuing up to collect her reserved durians on a recent Saturday with her two daughters. They liked the fruit because she and her husband gave them 'no choice'. But her nephew and nieces are less keen.

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Elsewhere in the city another mother talks about how her children, born after 1980, are less likely to enjoy the fruit; they have become westernised, she explains, plumping for fast-food chains and imported fruits like strawberries rather than durians. Other millennials are put off by the increasingly high prices (the most popular kind of durian, Mao Shan Wang, can cost up to S\$50 apiece), or by the high levels of sugar in the fruit.

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Celine, a 20-year-old arts management graduate, describes how her friends prefer to go to bars or 'supper places' which are cheap. 'No one goes out to eat fruit,' she says. Although there's a kind of charm to sitting in a plastic seat next to a huge bin of durian husks, most of the durian stalls are less snazzy than other eateries. 45

Many durian sellers are trying to change this. Established stalls, such as Ah Seng or Combat Durian – which, like New York diners, are plastered with photos of celebrity customers – rely heavily on social media, posting pictures of glistening yellow fruit in order to create a buzz. The Durian Story, a sleek modern shop, opened last year in north-east Singapore. It has a jolly website and offers delivery across the city. Others are going even further: in October the Mao Shan Wang Café opened in Chinatown, serving durian-flavoured pizza, strudel and ice cream. 50

Perhaps these novelties will turn young people on to this controversial fruit, although the idea of durian pizza churns my stomach. Or perhaps, as I turn thirty this year, I should take my weird passion as a sign that I'm not as trendy as I used to be. 55

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