



General Certificate of Secondary Education  
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## **English (Specification B)**

**3701/PM**

### **Pre-release booklet: Section A Insert**

For use with Section A of the question paper

The booklet that follows is:

- Section A of the pre-release booklet: Media texts.

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## SECTION A: MEDIA TEXTS

*The Times*, 9<sup>th</sup> August 2008

Beijing 08 Sport

# Something in the air tonight – as usual

**Simon Barnes**

If you peer hard enough through the pall of smog that squats over this city, you can sight glory and smell triumph. Not just the wonder of Olympic athletes in victory, but also a wild celebration of the human spirit. The smog itself tells us about all the astonishing things that humanity is capable of achieving. It is utterly appropriate that the day before the opening ceremony of the Beijing Olympic Games of 2008 should pass, as all other days this week have passed, in a great and glorious cloud of murk.

We had a blue-sky day on Sunday, then the sun went missing. I had a three-second sighting of it a couple of days back, but you had to be quick. If you hadn't seen it for a while, you wouldn't have recognised it. But most of my time here has been spent in a strange silver-grey dome about half a mile across. It's as if the world beyond doesn't exist.

The Chinese say it's just a foggy day in Beijing town. Foreign sensation-seekers say it is lethal smog. And they are both right, very high humidity and a cloud ceiling of about zero feet do not do much to make the city look good, but the unshifting cloud, filled with the perpetual paranoid buzz of helicopters, is not made of water vapour alone.

The BBC has been taking informal readings and the other day came up with a figure of 191 micrograms of particulate matter per cubic metre of air. We are all experts now, so I can tell you that the particulate matter in question mostly comes from the emission of fossil fuels. The World Health Organisation recommends a target of 50, and 150 as an interim target for developing nations. London is about 21. Chinese readings of the Beijing air are significantly lower and anyway, these measurements can vary wildly.

But clearly we are in sub-optimal conditions for the start of the greatest



sporting event on earth. All those famous and draconian measures that the Chinese Government has taken have failed to give us a single blue-sky day in the week leading up to the Games. Traffic has been halved – odd and even number plates on alternating days – and factories, construction sites, mines and chemical plants have been given an enforced holiday. And still I can't see from one end of the Olympic Park to the other.

Now, we all know that pollution is a bad thing, but it doesn't happen through malice. And here, it has come about because of a wild uplifting surge of the human spirit. Modern China is a phenomenon. It is the result of individual initiative. The freeing of the native entrepreneurial spirit has resulted in an explosion of creativity.

The people have sought to do in a

decade what other nations have done over the course of centuries. It has been a wild and reckless charge head-long into the modern world. It has been glorious, it has been spectacular. Now it is time to count the cost, and the world looks at the great things China has done and sucks its teeth.

Restoration ecology, replanting, re-greening: the developed world is spending a fortune putting the toothpaste back into the tube, while China has the tube on the floor and is stamping with all its might.

Perhaps these Games will stand as a lesson to us all, that economic development is not the only thing in life that matters. But for China, as for the developed world, such a realisation is a little on the late side.



## China thrills the watching world

By Jim White

WHEN Yao Ming, all seven feet and a bit of him, marched into the Beijing National Stadium, already some 287 firework positions had been blasting pyrotechnics into the night sky. Already 14,000 performers had been pounding out their choreographed rhythms. But it was when the giant basketball player was first spotted that we knew that this was a stadium that could hold a noise. It went on and on and on, the yelp of excitement – “China, China, China”. But it wasn’t until you saw Yao, towering above everyone else, the most astonishing physical specimen at these Games, huge and graceful and utterly terrifying, that you realised this: oh boy, these guys mean business. The Chinese are not just intent on hosting the finest Games in history. They intend to win them as well.

Mind you, as visual statements go, Yao was but the final crescendo to a night of sensory overload. This was raising the bar so high not even Yao Ming could reach it.

As every dance troupe from Beijing to the Afghan border smoothly, expertly, beautifully strutted their stuff; as the Olympic cauldron was lit, blasting out a flame so huge you could probably see it from Streatham, you began to pity the poor representatives from London 2012 watching high in the packed stands. How are they going to follow this? How are they for one second going to come up with something a tenth, a hundredth, a thousandth as grand as this?

One thing is for sure, they had better start rounding up every Morris dancer in the country right now. Somehow, after this, a duet between Cliff Richard and Vera Lynn might not cut the mustard.

The most anticipated moment in Chinese history began with several hundred men rolling what appeared to be laundry baskets into the arena. Silently squatting behind their baskets for 15 minutes, they looked impressive, if a little ominous. These were not laundry baskets at all but ancient Chinese

percussion pieces that barked like thunder, each individually lit up in time to the beat. Within 30 seconds, every spectator’s breath was taken away. Within a minute they bashed into a cocked hat anything that Athens produced four years ago.

From then on, there was an hour of incredible sights, of bangs and wallops, of flashes and hundreds of sensational photographs. At times it was visual overload. At one point Lang Lang, the brilliant concert pianist, was spotted out in the middle, tinkling the ivories on a white grand piano, accompanied by a five-year-old helper and surrounded by about 2,000 dancers in lime green pyjamas. You thought, as you watched the pyjamas turn all spangly and the dancers form themselves into a human pyramid depiction of the bird’s nest national stadium even as Lang Lang played on, that you don’t see that on *Strictly Come Dancing*. Each moment was as jaw-dropping as the previous one, brilliantly produced and realised, the product of by far the deepest pockets made available for such an occasion.

It culminated with Li Ning, a veteran Chinese gymnast, completing the torch relay that began what seems a lifetime ago. He was winched to the top of the stadium and round the roof, carrying the flame, his ageing frame looking so tiny, so vulnerable until he finally arrived at the giant cauldron. His circular perambulation was an incredible moment, and you feared that at any moment he might tumble in some ghastly technical fault. But every second had been rehearsed, every possibility of disaster erased from the system.

Of course, there are those who believe the night should be about the several thousand folk at the heart of the Olympic movement. No, not the IOC delegates, but the athletes. Folk such as Mark Foster, the swimmer who marked his fifth Games by carrying the British flag in front of a team including Tom Daley, the young diver who wasn’t even born when Foster swam in his first Games. Or Lopez Lomong, the Darfur activist and Sudan refugee who carried the Stars and Stripes at the front of the US team. Or the hundreds proudly walking in their fancy national costumes, which, in the case of the virulent orange skirts of the Uzbekistan female competitors, appeared to have been borrowed from the cabin crew of Easyjet. Or the team from Mali who appeared to be decked out in Graham Norton’s curtains.

But really, let’s not kid ourselves here. This was all about China. And for the next two weeks of sport, you had better brace yourself: it will be China, China and China again.



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*The Telegraph*, 9<sup>th</sup> August 2008

# The world was watching and China didn't disappoint

By Richard Spencer in Beijing and Gordon Raynor

IN a riot of colour, pageantry and invention, Beijing fired the starting gun for the 2008 Olympic Games with the most breathtaking opening ceremony ever seen. For the past year, 14,000 performers have relentlessly chased perfection in their rehearsals, and last night they achieved it, from the first beat of the 2008 perfectly synchronised drummers to the moment the Olympic flame exploded into life four hours later. It was an emphatic display of China's long traditions of showmanship, and a worldwide audience of up to four billion surely looked on in awed admiration.

## The Footprints of Fire

A countdown was beaten out on thousands of bronze drums lit from within to form the number of seconds remaining. Then a battery of fireworks exploded from the stadium, in the shape of a red flower. A second volley burst into the sky from Tiananmen Square, forming the shape of a giant footprint. Rockets formed a footprint every second, marching to the Bird's Nest stadium, with 29 footprints in all, one for each modern Olympiad. As the fireworks died down, acrobats dressed as sylphs flew above the arena, and thousands of tiny lights came together to form



the Olympic rings which lifted into the air to gasps from the crowd.

## The giant scroll

After 56 children, one from each of China's ethnic groups, brought the Chinese flag into the stadium, a scroll unfurled to form a giant screen on to which images of China's 5,000-year history were projected. Thousands of years of art, including cave paintings and the 12th-century Song dynasty masterpiece *A Thousand Li of River and Mountains* were projected on to the scroll.

## The Terracotta Army

Peace was followed by war in the shape of a triumphal

army dressed as the Terracotta Warriors. As the scroll showed a map of the ancient Silk Road, hundreds of women dressed in blue silk to represent the sea held up giant oars showing the seven voyages of Zheng He, who sailed the world 87 years before Columbus.

## The songs

As the performance moved into the modern age, dancers arranged themselves in the form of a dove and then of the Bird's Nest itself. After a mass display of kung fu and tai-qi - Chinese shadowboxing - an enormous globe rose out of the ground, with performers on wires running around it, and above


them astronauts representing China's space programme to bring the show up to the present day.

## The athletes enter

The Chinese flag was carried by the 7ft 6in basketball star Yao Ming, accompanied by Lin Hao, a nine-year old survivor of the earthquake in Sichuan province. As the athletes paraded around the arena, they walked over a canvas infused with ink, so that their footprints made a landscape picture which was then raised to form the podium on which the official speeches were made.

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## New Olympic training centre opens

**A new athletics facility for the country's budding Olympic medallists has been officially opened.**



Olympic Minister Tessa Jowell unveiled the new Lee Valley Athletics Centre in north London on Tuesday.

The site will improve training opportunities in the run-up to the 2012 Games and provide a new home for Enfield and Haringey Athletics Club.

The centre is said to be the largest indoor and outdoor athletics facility serving London and the South East.

It houses the only indoor 200m six lane track in the South of England and also comprises permanent seating for 500 spectators and cutting edge sports science and physiotherapy suites.

**“ There has never been a better time for people of all abilities to give athletics a try ”**

Seb Coe, Chairman of London 2012

The 2012 Olympic Games will be centred in the Lee Valley area.

Ms Jowell said: “The Lee Valley Athletics Centre is a fantastic new facility.

“This will be a hub of training and support for those talented athletes aspiring for the podiums of 2008 and 2012. And it will also inspire people of all ages, recreational and community users too to get out and take part in sport.”

The Centre has been funded by £4m from the Department for Culture, Media and Sport's Capital Modernisation Fund, £7m from Sport England (via the National Lottery), and £5m from Lee Valley Regional Park Authority.

### Cutting edge facilities

Seb Coe, Chairman of London 2012, who ran for Haringey Athletics Club in the 1980s, said: “The Lee Valley Athletics Centre brings cutting edge facilities within reach of millions of Londoners and people in the South East.

There has never been a better time for people of all abilities to give athletics a try.”



**BBC London**  
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# Olympic Stadium

*www.london2012.com, October 2008*

**Sport:**

Athletics, Paralympics Athletics

**New or existing venue?**

New

**How many seats in 2012?**

80,000

**Temporary or permanent?**

Permanent - converts to 25,000 seat stadium after 2012.

The innovative Olympic Stadium design allows for an 80,000 seat Athletics stadium to be converted into a more easily maintained 25,000 seat venue after the Games.

## Getting ready

Construction officially started on the Stadium on 22 May 2008. Over the next few years over a thousand workers will help build the venue.

The Stadium is beginning to take shape. More than 100 columns, each 5m tall, have already been constructed to support the podium of the Stadium's west and south stands. This also forms the lower ground floor of the West Stand, which houses athletes' changing rooms and other back of house facilities.

The foundations for the Stadium are also nearing completion with more than 3,500 of the 4,000 permanent piles installed in the ground.

## The Stadium timeline

- July 2006: search starts for build and design team
- Oct 2006: negotiations begin with Team Stadium
- Feb 2007: Olympic Board gives statement on legacy
- July 2007: demolition starts on Olympic Stadium site
- July 2007: Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) signed with Team Stadium
- Nov 2007: concept designs launched
- Dec 2007: Stadium site clearance completes
- April 2008: contract signed and Team Stadium take over site
- May 2008: construction started
- 2011: construction finishes in time for test events to take place before the Games

## After the Games

After the Games, the Stadium will be transformed into a 25,000 capacity venue that will host a variety of sporting, educational, cultural and community events. It will be a venue for memorable sporting moments during 2012, but it will continue to add value to the local community for years to come.



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# Olympics: The lesson for London: bring an umbrella and a sense of humour

Richard Williams *The Guardian*,

Tuesday 26 August 2008

The mist, haze, smog or whatever it is crept back in to Beijing yesterday, shrouding the Bird's Nest and the Water Cube. So last Thursday's heavy rain, which cleared the skies in time for the weekend and the closing ceremony, must have been the work of that department of the Chinese government which, with an annual budget of several million pounds, has the task of controlling the weather by firing missiles and shells containing silver iodide pellets into the clouds.

This is just one way in which London 2012 will fall short of the organisational standards of Beijing 2008. We accept our weather. We live with it. Rain may interrupt our Test matches and create a species of Friday night hell on the M60 or London's North Circular but it makes our fields and hedgerows and window boxes green. Putting a roof on Centre Court is about as far as we go in trying to fight nature.

I have a slogan for London, three simple words that use a sense of humour to restore a sense of proportion. Here it is, copyright-free and with no royalty required for its use on flags, banners, commemorative mugs and tea towels: "Only a Games".

No, it'll never catch on. To the ancient Greek motto of the Olympics - Faster, Higher, Stronger - has been added a fourth imperative: Bigger. And whatever we may say about recognising that London's resources can never match those available to the People's Republic of China, the pressure to exceed will be there.

Beijing built an Olympic Park of extravagant proportions, but it never felt as though it had been designed for humans. It was vast and it was breathtaking, but there was almost nowhere to sit down, buy a drink and a sandwich, and take it all in in a relaxed kind of way. All people could do was wander around taking pictures of each other in front of the landmark stadiums. At the very least London's Olympic Park should concentrate on creating a greater intimacy, reflecting the capital's recently acquired taste for alfresco café society.

And, given reports of the weather in England over the past couple of weeks, those responsible for planning the facilities for August 2012 should ensure the provision of plenty of cover. Those grey umbrellas featured in the eight-minute London pageant? They weren't a joke.

One Beijing blemish that London can easily avoid is the appalling music. Not all songs emphasising the virtues of peace and friendship have to be quite as numbingly saccharine as those piped into virtually every venue and public space during the Games. Which doesn't mean that We Will Rock You and We Are The Champions must automatically become the soundtrack to 2012.



*The Daily Mail*, May 29<sup>th</sup> 2005

## John Carter visits the village with its own eccentric games

As they wait for the Olympic Committee's decision on July 6, the high-profilers backing London's bid must be on tenterhooks. For some light relief, Lord Coe and co could do worse than take time out this week in a corner of England that added 'tenterhooks' to our vocabulary - and much more. Specifically, they should make for a natural amphitheatre in the Cotswolds - and an Olympic tradition far older than the Games we owe to Baron de Coubertin. The Cotswold 'Olimpicks' could exist nowhere but England - a unique blend of history, eccentricity, amateurism and enthusiasm bordering on the obsessive.

They date from the early 17th Century when retired lawyer Robert Dover decided to put some fun back into celebrating Whitsun.

His proposal to revive the Olympic Games near the village of Chipping Campden was bucking the Puritan trend of the times, but he had a friend at Court who lobbied King James I for support. Dover declared the Games open on the Thursday of Whit Week in 1612 - beating Baron de Coubertin's revival by 284 years. Over two days there were horse and foot races, coursing, cockfighting, wrestling, hammer-throwing, fencing, bowls, dancing and chess as well as the manly Cotswold sport of shin-kicking, a main feature of the Games for nearly 250 years.

The Games ended in 1852 ('owing to the disorderly mobs which used to attend') but were revived, shin-kicking included, for the 1951 Festival of Britain.

They continue to this day in that natural amphitheatre, now known as Dover's Hill, in the parish of Weston Sub Edge, hard by Chipping Campden.

On the first Friday after Whitsun, hobnailed boots still strike straw-padded trouser legs, though shin-kicking has become more of a demonstration sport.

Both sexes participate in the general athletic events. But hammer-throwing, shot-putting, 'spurning the bar' - the Cotswold equivalent of tossing the caber - sword fighting and wheelbarrow races are a mostly male preserve.

But if there is a hint of sexism, unlike the modern international Games the Cotswold Olimpicks have always been free of charges of bribery and corruption although on one occasion a local farmer had to be given a bottle of whisky before he would move his sheep from the arena.





The *Observer*, 24 August 2008

# Olympic dream: now it's our turn

Seb Coe Chairman, London 2012

ONE OF the moments of the Beijing Games for me was Rohullah Nikpai winning bronze in the men's taekwondo. Nikpai's medal, earned after defeating the world champion, Juan Antonio Ramos of Spain, was Afghanistan's first ever Olympic medal.

In a country torn apart by war, Nikpai had fought, and won, a different battle and shown his country that, despite events at home, they have athletes to be proud of and can still achieve sporting success at the highest level. Later, it was reported, he received a congratulatory call from Afghanistan's President. 'I hope this will send a message of peace to my country after 30 years of war,' Nikpai said afterwards.

Nikpai's performance will make him a role model for other Afghans back home. But that's the remarkable truth about sport. It has the ability to unify, the power to inspire change and the momentum to cut across barriers and prejudices. It can ignite our own passions and ambitions as we cheer and shout at events unfolding before us.

Consider the example set by South Africa's Natalie du Toit, the swimmer who lost a leg, below the knee, in a motorcycle accident in 2001, aged 17. Already established as a multi-gold-medal winner at the Paralympics in Athens in 2004, du Toit wanted to compete against able-bodied athletes at the Olympics. In May, she qualified for the gruelling 10km open-water swimming event in Beijing.

Earlier this week, she joined 24 other Olympians on the pontoon at Shunyi and finished 16th. After two hours in the water and more than six miles of swimming, she was just one minute and 22 seconds behind the Russian who won gold.

But that's Olympic sport, and at London 2012 it will be no different.

I've long been of the belief that sport is the hidden social worker in society. One of my aims for 2012 is to ensure that hosting the Olympic and Paralympic Games inspires young people, in this country and around the world, to take up sport. Sport is also a good educator, good health carer and good foreign policy. And, of course, it is inclusive and open to *all*.

Sport also provides a catalyst for change, which is another of London 2012's main goals. Hosting the Olympic and Paralympic Games gives us a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to regenerate a hard-pressed part of east London, providing much-needed jobs and homes, outdoor spaces and sports facilities. Once the Games are over, world-class facilities will be left behind for use by elite athletes and the local community.

I know an opportunity like this will not come along again in my lifetime, which is why the next four years, and beyond, will be all about change for the better, not only for our sportsmen and women, but for the country as a whole. There is no time to waste.



London calling: How the 2012 stadium will look when the Games are on

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