



UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE INTERNATIONAL EXAMINATIONS  
General Certificate of Education Ordinary Level

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**ENGLISH LANGUAGE**

**1123/21**

Paper 2 Reading

**For Examination from 2011**

SPECIMEN 2 INSERT

**1 hour 45 minutes**

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**READ THESE INSTRUCTIONS FIRST**

This insert contains the two reading passages.

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This document consists of **3** printed pages and **1** blank page.



### Passage 1 – Studying Abroad

- 1 Nowadays it's a small world. A flick of the television switch shows us images of events happening thousands of miles away, some of them happy and, unfortunately, some of them sad. Modern tourists are able to soak up the new experiences offered by foreign travel, sometimes for no other reason than curiosity to explore foreign places. One consequence of this new perception of the planet has been an increase in the number of students travelling abroad to study. 5
- 2 Students who travel to another country to study derive many benefits. Living overseas gives young people the chance to gain information about another culture and way of life; finding out about ordinary things like clothes, food, or even just a different climate can be exhilarating. Then there's the chance not only to learn about but also to participate in another culture, for example, in festivals or celebrations which were before unknown to you – imagine watching the liveliness of, say, Chinese New Year for the first time! Moreover, living abroad teaches young people a healthy tolerance of others, and that we are sisters and brothers, not rivals. Despite the homesickness which might happen when studying abroad, new friends can be made, often with other students who are just as homesick for their own country as you are for yours. Some young people may travel overseas to study in a country where the main language spoken is not their own, giving them the valuable opportunity to learn a new language at first hand, much easier than learning it from a textbook. 10 15
- 3 Overseas students are sometimes able to study subjects which are unavailable in their own country. Indeed, that is often the main motivation for going overseas to study. Thus they are bringing knowledge and a level of expertise home with them which would not otherwise have existed there; the engineers, doctors and teachers, for example, of many countries studied abroad. On their return, they can contribute to the improvement of the living standards in their country and local community. Increased levels of maturity are usually noticed by parents of overseas students when they return – the shy, dependent teenager had been transformed into a confident, self-assured adult, better able to cope with the practicalities of modern living. The caterpillar has become a butterfly! Often those who have studied abroad feel a sense of personal satisfaction that they have responded to a challenge, that they have somehow passed a test they set themselves. 20 25
- 4 But there are disadvantages in studying overseas, many of these concerned with cost. The course studied may be more expensive than a course of study at home, often causing financial hardship to parents. Whereas some students are able to keep down the costs to their parents by staying at home, this is clearly not possible in a foreign setting, and student accommodation can be expensive. In addition, return trips home are often prohibitively expensive. Some overseas students study an accelerated course, by cramming, say, three years of study into two years; such pressure can have an adverse effect on health. Ironically, the intensity of such study deprives the students of the opportunity to experience a new culture, which was one of the advantages they probably anticipated when embarking on the course of study in the first place. Some overseas students become very homesick, missing parents, siblings, friends, the old way of life. Despite their best efforts to fit into a new cultural setting, they often find it impossible to do so. These painful feelings are intensified by the knowledge that return trips home can occur perhaps only annually, if at all. 30 35 40
- 5 Some people argue that overseas study deprives the home country of its best talent – the so-called 'brain-drain'; the truth is that some students will never return to their home country, because they get the irresistible offer of a good job in the country of their studies. Another downside of studying abroad – for the families of the students at least – is that students may settle immediately in the foreign country and not wish to return home. Others may meet a future spouse in their chosen country of study, and marry and settle there. 45
- 6 Whatever way we look at it, it seems that studying overseas will always be an attractive option for some young people. This has indubitably been made easier by increased access to a wide range of travel, particularly by air. There is every reason to think that, given our unprecedented affluence, the attraction of studying overseas is likely to increase. 50

## Passage 2

*(Ms Ramotswe is a detective who has discovered that Mr Moretsi has tried to trick an insurance company into paying him compensation for an accident which never happened.)*

- 1 Ms Ramotswe set off in her van to confront Mr Moretsi. The day had heated up and now, at noon, it was very hot. In a few months' time it would be impossible at midday and she would hate to have to travel any distance. As she drove, all around her was nothing – just empty bush, with nothing but some cattle and the occasional windmill bringing up a trickle of water for them. 5
- 2 She was half an hour away from home when the snake shot across the road. The first she saw of it was when its body was about half way out onto the road - dart of green against the black tar; and then she was upon it, and the snake was beneath the van. She drew in her breath and slowed the car. Where was the snake? Had it succeeded in crossing the road, or had the van hit it? She stopped at the edge of the road, and looked in the mirror. There was no sign of the snake. She drummed her fingers lightly against the steering wheel. Perhaps it had been too quick to be seen; these snakes could move with astonishing speed. But hadn't she looked almost immediately? No, the snake was in the van somewhere, in the works or under a seat perhaps. In any case, it was far too big a snake to disappear just like that. She had heard of people dying at the wheel, bitten by snakes that had been caught up in the pipes and rods that run under a car. 10 15
- 3 She felt a sudden urge to leave the van. She opened the door, hesitantly at first, but then threw it back and leaped out to stand, panting, beside the vehicle. There was a snake inside the van, she was now sure of that. And what sort of snake was it? It had been green, as far as she remembered, which meant at least it wasn't a black mamba. She knew that green mambas existed, but she knew that they were very restricted in their global distribution and they were certainly not to be found in any part of her country. It was more likely to be a cobra, she thought, because it was large and she could think of no other green snake that long. Like cobras, mambas were venomous, but they were tree-dwelling snakes, and they did not like sparse thorn bush. 20 25
- 4 She stood quite still. The snake could strike if she went any closer, or it could by now have insinuated itself into the van and settled under her seat. She bent forward and tried to look under the van, but she could not get low enough without going on her hands and knees. If she did that, and if the snake should move, would she be able to get away quickly enough? 30
- 5 She was aware that a passing car had stopped. She explained to the driver about the snake, and he got out of his car and approached the van gingerly. Then, leaning through the van's open window, he reached for the lever which released the bonnet. Ms Ramotswe peered intently over his shoulder, ready to flee at the first sign of the snake. The man suddenly froze. 'Don't make any sudden movements,' he said very softly. 'There it is. Look.' She peered into the darkness of the engine space. For a few moments she could make out nothing unusual, but then the snake moved slightly and she saw it: a cobra, twined about the engine, its head moving slowly from left to right. 35
- 6 The man told her to get into the cab and start the engine. Moving as slowly as she could, she eased herself into the driving seat and turned the key. The engine came to life immediately. 'Press the accelerator!' yelled the man. 'Race the engine!' She did as she was told and the engine roared throatily. 'You can come out,' he called. 'The cobra had coiled itself through the blades of the fan. Nasty way to go, even for a snake.' Looking into the engine, she saw the cobra in two pieces, quite still. 40 45
- 7 Later that day, in the office of Mr Moretsi's lawyer, she savoured the satisfaction of unveiling a fraud and seeing justice done. 'Some people think,' she said, 'that women are soft and can be twisted this way and that. Well, I can tell you that I'm not soft. In fact, I killed a cobra, a big one, on my way here this afternoon by cutting it in two.'

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