



UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE INTERNATIONAL EXAMINATIONS
General Certificate of Education Ordinary Level

ENGLISH LANGUAGE

1123/22

Paper 2 Reading

May/June 2012

INSERT

1 hour 45 minutes

READ THESE INSTRUCTIONS FIRST

This insert contains the two reading passages.

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



Passage 1 – Shopping

- 1 Markets, bazaars, corner shops, high street stores or out-of-town retail centres – wherever you live, shopping plays some part in your life, and the hours available for this common activity will vary. But do extended shopping hours have a positive or a negative effect on society?
- 2 Extending the opening hours of shops has many advantages. People do not have to rush to the supermarket after a hard day at the office, checking their watches to see how much time they have to buy the evening meal for the family. If a shop is open for a restricted number of hours per week, say forty, then one set of employees is sufficient to run it, but extended opening hours mean that more people are needed to work in the store, thus providing an income for them. This can be particularly beneficial for students, who are able to work for a limited period to earn some money without compromising their studies. Families can also benefit: parents, usually mothers, can work a few hours part-time in the local supermarket when their spouses are not at work. Not only does this provide additional income for the family; it can also avoid the costly and sometimes complicated childcare arrangements which will be necessary if both parents work the same hours. Extended opening hours mean more income for the shop owner, who will not miss out on a potential sale because the shop is shut.
- 3 Keeping shops open longer spreads the load for the shopping centre, as not all the potential shoppers are arriving at the same time, or fighting for a limited number of parking spaces. People have more time to browse when it suits them, and so shopping can become a form of relaxation, giving rise to the term ‘retail therapy’. In modern times there has been a rise in the number of covered shopping malls, which are usually open for longer than the conventional high street stores. These malls offer under one roof a wide range of merchandise – from clothes, to food, to electronic equipment – and so there is increased availability of goods in these virtually round-the-clock outlets. Because these malls are normally modern and bright, they offer an attractive day out for families, and make shopping a valuable family activity.
- 4 But extended shopping hours are sometimes under fire from critics who argue that, far from promoting family life, the ‘shop till you drop’ mentality actually decreases the opportunities for family activities. Indeed, the very expression ‘shop till you drop’ suggests silly, robot-like behaviour. Children miss out on valuable recreational excursions with their parents, who take them on endless shopping trips instead of, for example, to an art gallery. If mum is working in the supermarket in the evening, chances for family bonding, such as simply eating dinner together, or watching television, have been removed. Children are not taken to run around parks and playgrounds because they are shopping instead. There is nothing more depressing than seeing the long faces of parents pushing baby buggies and trailing youngsters round yet another computer shop. The resulting lack of exercise perhaps contributes to increasing childhood obesity in some parts of the world.
- 5 Extending shopping hours also has a detrimental effect on employees, whose own family life is interrupted or compromised because one or other of the family members, possibly including teenage students, is working at any given time. Employers suffer too; they cannot always be in the shop, and will need to appoint an employee as deputy in their absence, which might cause problems. If they decide that this is impossible they may choose to close the shop, but they will lose business to the shops which have stayed open. Moreover, as people have a fixed amount of money to spend shopping, the idea that they spend more because shops are open longer is a myth in any case, and so employers do not ultimately benefit.
- 6 Finally, if people know that the shops are open constantly, they will waste the time that they might have spent doing more useful things.

Passage 2 – The Hospital

- 1 The night before my baby's operation I lay awake anxiously; in the morning I packed her pitifully small requirements and we went to the hospital. She cried when they took her away. The world had contracted to the small size of her face and her clenching, waving hands; the poignancy was intolerable. I went away, and walked around outside the hospital for hours. When I went back at the appointed time, the senior nurse told me that the operation had been successful and that Octavia was well. I could not believe that a mere recital of facts could thus change my fate; I stood there dumbly, wondering whether she had got the wrong name, the wrong data, the wrong message. When I got round to speaking, I asked if I could see her, and they said to come back in the morning, as she was still unconscious. Such was my nervousness that I did not ask again to see her. I went home and wept copiously. 5 10
- 2 It was only then that I began to be preoccupied with certain details about which I had not previously dared to think. Would there be a nurse with Octavia at all times? Would they feed her properly? Earlier these things had seemed trivial, but now their importance swelled in my mind. Because the threat of fatality had been removed, life seemed to have gone back to normal. It was the strangeness more than the pain, I thought, that would afflict her, for she liked nobody but me, and strangers she disliked with noisy vehemence. 15
- 3 When I went round in the morning, the senior nurse told me that Octavia was comfortable. Summoning some courage, I asked to see her, but was told that was impossible. 'She will settle in more happily if she doesn't see you,' she said. I didn't like the sound of that word 'settle'; it suggested complete inactivity. 'I'm afraid that for such small infants we don't allow any visiting at all,' she continued. Octavia had never been settled in her short life, and I pictured her lying there in a state of lethargy. Furthermore, it was now imperative to see her. Already, we had endured the longest separation of our lives, and I began to see it stretching away, indefinitely prolonged. Why would they not let me see the child? Had the operation not been a success? 20 25
- 4 The senior nurse showed me the surgeon's report. Although it was nothing but a mass of technicalities to me, I felt better; for all the senior nurse knew, I might have had enough medical knowledge to understand the report and she would not have taken that silly risk. By this time I could tell that she considered my behaviour to be tedious, and I left.
- 5 But I had been outside the hospital for only a few moments when I thought of my baby's possible distress, and I went back inside. Two junior nurses greeted me nervously, repeating the earlier message, but I told them I had no intention of not seeing my baby. Their voices hardened. They had that whole building behind them and I had nothing behind me except my intention. Just then, the senior nurse returned. 'Well, well, you're back again,' she said. She took my arm and began to push me towards the door. At first I was unable to resist her physical propulsion, but then she took hold of my elbow and started to exert greater pressure, so I started to scream. I screamed very loudly, shutting my eyes to do it, and listened in amazement to the deafening noise. Once I had started, I could not stop. I stood there, motionless, screaming, whilst they shook me and yelled that I was upsetting everyone. 30 35
- 6 Through the noise I could hear things happening and I felt I had to keep doing this until they let me see her. Inside my head it was red and black and very hot. After a while I heard someone shouting above the din: 'For goodness sake, tell her she can see her baby.' I instantly stopped and opened my eyes. I looked at the breathless circle surrounding me: the surgeon himself looking white with anger; the senior nurse crying; the junior nurses looking stunned. It was as though I had opened my eyes on a whole new narrative in which I myself had taken no part. But I had no interest in their story; I wished to know only my own. 'Of course you can see the baby,' said the surgeon, kindly. 'I will take you to see her myself.' 40 45

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