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ENGLISH LANGUAGE

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Paper 2 Reading

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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 – The Internet

- 1 One of the most exciting innovations of recent times has been, without doubt, the internet. It has brought about change on a grand scale.
- 2 The internet has revolutionised the speed with which information can be accessed: students, for example, can use computers instead of books to research a topic in school, with almost instantaneous results. The internet is also beneficial because it gives a wide variety of information; people who surf the net never cease to be amazed at the apparently limitless range of facts available. Moreover, in contrast to expensive reference books, the internet provides most of its information at no cost to the recipient. The information is easily stored, as computers take up much less space in a house or a library than rows and rows of bookcases. No-one wants their house cluttered with books. 5
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- 3 It is not just school and college students who reap the benefits of the internet. Online courses can be completed at home, which removes the expense and time it would take to travel to an educational establishment. In addition, location is not a factor when embarking on an online course; it is feasible to have a 'class' of students from all over the world participating in the same course. 15
- 4 Messages, called emails, sent via the internet, can be sent without interrupting the recipient in the way that a ringing telephone does: one would be reluctant to phone a family member late at night, but there is no problem in sending an email at that time, knowing that one's relative will not necessarily open the email until the next morning. Friends and family members who are parted by long distances can keep in touch via Skype, an internet service which allows people to see each other on the computer screen so that contact is visible as well as audible. The internet helps to create new friendships as well as support existing ones, as people, often young people, can make new friends on social networking sites such as Facebook. 20
- 5 The internet also frees up time for busy families who are now able to do their weekly shopping online. Among the other things they might now do in their new-found leisure time is read books online; novels and other texts can be downloaded as e-books, as they are called, which are much cheaper than conventional books. 25
- 6 However, online shopping has a detrimental effect on conventional shops by taking away customers, often leaving unsightly gaps and boarded-up stores in the main streets of towns. The internet removes the social dimension of shopping; people who shop online no longer congregate in shopping centres or meet friends for coffee there. Browsing for books on the internet rather than in a bookstore denies the pleasure of handling books, and reduces the opportunity of discovering a wonderful book by sheer accident. 30
- 7 It is possible to become a slave to email, both at home and at work, where there is a nagging pressure to check that one has not been contacted for a decision. Furthermore, teachers complain that the art of letter writing has been lost because of emails. People can become addicted to the internet, spending lots of time surfing the net when they could be engaged in more fulfilling pursuits, like playing sport or studying. The internet has been criticised because sometimes the material available is inappropriate, particularly for children, although parents should monitor their children's access to the internet in any case. Not all websites are reliable: some sites have been shown to contain information which is misleading, or even inaccurate. However, perhaps this criticism could be levelled at some books too; caution may be the key. 35
40
- 8 Living in the age of the computer has the drawback that sometimes what would have been simple transactions in the past are now disproportionately complicated. Take, for example, queuing to pay for purchases with the exact payment in your hands, and then being greeted with the depressing news that the computer at the checkout has 'crashed'. 45
- 9 The internet is a marvellous and fascinating phenomenon. Whether we allow it to work against us rather than in our favour is very much in our own hands. At the end of the day, human beings are more intelligent and resourceful than machines.

Passage 2

A teenage boy called Miles tells the story of a night when he found something extraordinary.

- 1 My family lived in a tiny, metal-roofed house facing the Pacific Ocean. Behind the house was a detached garage, over which I had my bedroom. One of the good things about this was its low, slanted ceilings, which kept the adults away. That night I stepped unnoticed down the dark outside stairway from my room. It was 2.15am, an hour before low tide, with a full moon. I could hear the sea hissing faintly, and was aware of the fishy reek of living, dead and dying seaweed, clams and crabs. 5
- 2 It was my first summer collecting marine specimens for money. I sold starfish, crabs, and other tidal creatures to public aquariums. Almost everything had a market, I was discovering – I offloaded at a local restaurant the clams I had collected, and for more unusual types of sealife, I dealt with a private aquarium dealer. Full moon was when I often had my best haul, which complicated things because I wasn't allowed on the mudflats after dusk. 10
- 3 I walked along the edge of the water, the light of my flashlight bouncing ahead of me, picking my way to avoid crushing clam shells. I saw a massive moon snail, its undersized shell riding high on its body like the cab of a bulldozer, below which its mound of oozing flesh hunted for any clam unlucky enough to be in its path. I thought about grabbing it, but it was too big. So I went out toward the oyster farm belonging to Judge Stegner. That was my rather weak alibi if I was caught out there, that I was tending the judge's oysters. He paid me twenty dollars a month to help maintain them, though not at night, of course. Still, it could be useful if someone asked what I was doing there at that hour. I knew how everyone felt about Judge Stegner. My father tucked his shirt in whenever he came around. And when the judge spoke in his deep, easy rumble, nobody interrupted. 15
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- 4 There were dozens of shore crabs near the low mesh fence around the judge's oyster beds. Crabs amused me in small numbers, but when they crowded together like this they unhinged me, especially when they were in water where they moved twice as fast as on land. I heard their pincers clasp the fence, pushing their bodies higher. The oysters were under siege, but I couldn't bring myself to interfere. I rounded the oyster beds to the far side, relieved to find them relatively crab free. 25
- 5 And that's where it happened. I heard it long before I saw it. It was the sound of something exhaling. Was a whale stranded again, I wondered. We had a young minke whale stuck out there once, and it made similar noises until the tide rose high enough for rescuers to help free it. I waited, but there were no more sounds. Still, I went toward what I thought I'd heard, avoiding stepping into the mud unless I had to. I knew the flats well enough to know the danger. The general rule was you didn't venture out onto the mud with an incoming tide, or you were in mortal danger. I sank up to my knees twice, but I kept stepping toward the one sound I'd heard, a growing part of me hoping I'd find nothing at all. 30
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- 6 Then my flashlight crossed it. My first thought? A massive octopus. But when I saw the long tubular shape of its upper body, I knew it was something else. I came closer, within twenty metres, close enough to see its body quiver. I couldn't tell if it was making any sounds at that point because it was impossible to hear anything over the roaring of the blood in my ears. It was hard to be sure exactly where it all began or ended. The creature's body was triangular, with narrow fins that lay flat on the mud like wings. I was afraid to prise my eyes off its jumble of tentacles for more than half a second. I didn't know whether I was within its reach, and its tentacles were as thick as my ankles and lined with suckers. If they had even twitched, I would have run. Then I gradually realised the dark shiny disc in the rubbery mass was an eye, thirty centimetres across. I knew that this creature could only be one thing. It was a giant squid, one of the largest and rarest of all sea creatures. And it was still alive. 40
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