



Cambridge International AS Level

ENGLISH GENERAL PAPER

8021/23

Paper 2 Comprehension

October/November 2022

INSERT

1 hour 45 minutes

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 4 pages.

Material for Section A

Janita and Fred are managers at Finex, a financial company located in a large office in a major European city. Finex has experienced financial difficulties recently and is looking to become more efficient. Its employees work mainly in the office; many live a long distance away due to expensive property in the city and commute to work in a variety of ways: by bus, train and car.

Fred and Janita are talking over coffee with two other employees, Thomas and Louisa, about the different ways the company can organise its workforce in the future, particularly with reference to working from home or at the office. Janita has been reading recently published reports about the positive impact homeworking can have on a company, including cost savings on office rents. In addition, Fred has brought along a new government report encouraging companies to contribute to the national policy of improving air quality in major cities. Thomas has been working from home for the last five months following a leg operation which made it difficult for him to travel into work. Louisa works in the legal department at the company's office.

All four have also seen recent media reports discussing the different impact of homeworking on men and women.

The conversation between the employees

Janita: OK, everyone. So, we have to put together a report for the board about the future of work practices at the company. It needs to include a review of current ways of working and what the future might look like. As we know, we were forced to work from home for ages last year; we didn't lose any business then and it's really made us think whether we could look at this as a way of working for the long term.

Fred: Yes, we got by OK. We didn't lose any important customers. We know the technology's there. I can see both sides of the argument here, but let's hear what Thomas and Louisa have got to say.

Thomas: I've been linked up to the office remotely for five months now. It's working quite well – not commuting every day is a bonus. Definitely don't miss the train journey and I'm also better off each month. Those train season tickets are so expensive and the trains are often unreliable.

Louisa: Well, those are definite benefits of being at home. But I love working in the office. I like the feeling of everyone in one place, pulling together.

Thomas: Yes ... I do miss a good catch-up, but I've been able to keep in touch via video conferencing. I did have to do some upgrades though, to make sure I was able to do that.

Louisa: Do you get a buzz out of that, though? There are so many interesting people to talk to at our company – you can really network and share ideas.

Thomas: I do miss the office banter and I know there have been a few opportunities for promotion recently that I've missed out on despite working hard to get them. I felt that my work wasn't appreciated.

Louisa: Being in the office means we can occasionally socialise after work. I really enjoy these get-togethers, but then I have to travel in by bus.

Janita: So, do you normally drive to work?

Louisa: Yes – it's more convenient even though it takes some time. Usually, I have to leave my house by 07:15 to get into the office by 09:00 and in the evening I don't get home before 19:00, at the earliest.

Thomas: Wow! That's a long commute – mine takes less than a minute, along with grabbing a coffee. I start at my desk at 08:00 when I would normally be on the train. I go for a walk locally most lunchtimes for about an hour. I am usually done by 15:30, but I'm available till 17:30. Then I 'commute' to my kitchen and start cooking dinner!

Louisa: Don't you get bored though? I would. And I love getting dressed up for the office. It gives me a sense of purpose and helps me put my 'work head' on. I would definitely miss that. How do you switch on to and off from work?

Thomas: It did take some getting used to. I was definitely getting more stressed. I spoke to my manager about it and I've learned to make sure I have a break. It can get a bit monotonous though. I also worry that I am not being seen enough. I spend a lot of time making sure my boss knows what I am doing, usually by copying him into my emails. We have a video conference catch-up every Friday morning now.

Louisa: A friend of my husband works from home but she finds it very difficult to juggle everything and do a good job for the company. At least when I leave the office, work is done for the day.

Additional Information

1. Where Thomas lives, the trains are often unreliable.
2. Louisa has an expensive wardrobe of office clothes. She believes in dressing to impress.
3. Homeworkers can apply for tax benefits under new government ruling.
4. Thomas already had a well-equipped office at home.
5. Louisa's bus journey to and from work takes three hours.

Material for Section B

Rock climbing, skateboarding, surfing and karate are now Olympic sports. How will that affect them?

On a warm September evening in London, The Arch climbing wall, just south of the River Thames, is packed.

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