



UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE INTERNATIONAL EXAMINATIONS
General Certificate of Education Ordinary Level



ENGLISH LANGUAGE

**1115/02, 1120/02
1123/02**

Paper 2 Comprehension

May/June 2007

INSERT

1 hour 30 minutes

READ THESE INSTRUCTIONS FIRST

This insert contains the passage for comprehension.

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



(When he was a young man, the writer travelled across Spain. The passage describes made from the port of Vigo to the town of Zamora during his first few days in that country.)

- 1 It was early and still dark when we reached the harbour and the soothingly rhythmic rocking of the ship stopped. I was awakened by the noise of the rattling anchor going over the side. I didn't want to move at first, because I had enjoyed the voyage, my very first experience of the sea. So I lay for a while in the silence of Vigo harbour and listened to the first faint sounds of Spain – a howling dog and the sharp cry of a cockerel. I had at last reached my destination, and so I went up onto the deck and for the first time in my life I saw, looped round the bay like a sparkling necklace, the shape of a foreign city. There was no movement among the houses, but lights were coming on and twinkling as people got up for the new day. 5
- 2 I was in Spain and a new life was beginning. I had a few coins in my pocket and no return ticket; I had a rucksack, a tent, some spare clothes, a blanket, a violin and only enough words to ask for a glass of water. The sun rose, and people started appearing on the street. I cut my last connection with home by changing my coins into local currency, bought some bread and fruit and headed straight for the open country. 10
- 3 I spent the rest of the day on the long, arduous climb up from the coast, and then decided to put up my tent for the night on a craggy hilltop. A primitive instinct had forced me to leave the road and climb to this rocky tower, which gave me an eagle's view of the distant harbour I had recently left. I could see where I'd been that day and much of the country still to come, which rolled desolately away, wild and silent. Faced with its alien magnificence, I felt a pang of homesickness, but nevertheless a twinge of excitement. 15
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- 4 Night fell quickly and the valleys filled with heavy shadows which took on strange and eerie shapes. The jagged coastline looked menacing, like fragments of broken glass. As the sun went down, Vigo became cold and dim, smothered in the blue dusk. I couldn't help but feel abandoned, even though it was foolish of me, when I saw the small white ship on which I had arrived sail off in the gloom. I sat on the hilltop, my teeth chattering as the night wind rose. I found a little hollow out of the wind, ate some bread and fruit and put up my small tent. Because I had only a bed of stones to lie on, sleep eluded me. Moreover, I was troubled by wild dogs which howled in the distance. Not until dawn did their yelping and snarling stop, and I fell asleep at last. 25
- 5 When I woke next morning it was already light; I looked at my watch and saw that it was six o'clock. Realising that I was uncomfortably drenched in dew, I wriggled out of my blanket and lay in the rising sun, inhaling the pleasant smell of drying bushes and wild herbs. I felt the warm earth beneath my stiff limbs and forgot the dew and the wild dogs of the night. I felt it was for this that I had come: to wake at dawn on a hillside and look out on a new world, alone and without a plan, in a place that was totally unfamiliar to me. 30
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- 6 The next day I followed the track through the hills, giving in to a feeling of loneliness when I saw occasional signs of life – sometimes a shepherd's hut, or a boy with a flock of goats. The track climbed higher into the clear, cold air, and I followed it, frequently convinced that I had lost my way. That night I took shelter in a ruined castle. The remains of fires and the skeleton of a sheep, propped in one corner, sent shivers of apprehension down my spine. This place was, I thought, an obvious refuge for bandits. But I slept well enough, in spite of the rustlings in the walls and the sighing of the mountain wind. On the following day, I finished my bread and fruit, and was glad to find some wild grapes to eat. After that, all I remember about those days is a steadily sharpening hunger, which made me lose all track of time. I was aware of nothing but a shifting pattern of sun and shadow, hunger and sleep. 40
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- 7 I came down at last to the rich plain around the town of Zamora, where crops grew in abundance in the Spanish summer. My head thumped in the blindingly bright light and I screwed up my eyes, which in itself was painful because my face had been burned by the sun. I stood there, covered in road dust, and looked at Zamora – somewhat decrepit now, but still retaining something of its splendid past. The nearby river was like a leathery arm of wrinkled mud, with a vein down the middle of green, stagnant water. I padded into the town square and sat down under a tree. After the long day's walk my back was soaked with sweat. I slipped my bag to the ground; it had felt like a load of stones and I was glad to be free of it.
- 8 As I sat wondering where I would spend the night, I heard music coming from a nearby street. Two young men with violins like mine who, judging by their speech, were foreigners too, were giving a concert in the midst of a crowd of wide-eyed children. These musicians were doing well – people threw coins from windows or tossed them over the children's heads – and I shouted my congratulations to one of the violin players, a tall young man with feverish blue eyes, as he caught the coins in his hat. I was cheered up by the sight, as this was how I, too, hoped to earn my living in Spain. After the concert we all sat on the pavement chattering. Artur, the tall young man, talked with vitality, but his speech was often broken by jagged rasps of coughing. 55
- 9 'Now for more music!' he cried, and we made our way to the crumbling warehouse where they were to hold their next concert. When we stepped on the floorboards, little clouds of peppery dust rose into the air. Soon an audience of young men and women had gathered there; they stood, enthralled, as the music from Artur's violin soared above them. After the concert, Artur leant exhausted against the wall, bathed in sweat, before we went out into the starlit street. As soon as the cool air met us, Artur's coughing began, and we went up through the silent town to the restaurant where supper was waiting. After supper we carried Artur like a corpse to the dark room upstairs. We lit a candle and laid him down, took off his boots and wiped his forehead. Nobody spoke or even whispered, although probably we shared the same thought. I lay sleepless for a while in the darkness, my first and last night in Zamora, listening to the choking rattle of Artur's breath, and the sound of his friend's weeping. 60
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Adapted from 'As I Walked Out One Midsummer Morning' by Laurie Lee

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