

**Paper Reference(s) 4EA1/01R**  
**Pearson Edexcel International GCSE (9–1)**

**English Language A**  
**PAPER 1: Non-fiction Texts and Transactional Writing**

**Monday 5 June 2023 – Morning**

**Time: 2 hours 15 minutes**

**Source Booklet**

**DO NOT RETURN THIS BOOKLET WITH THE  
QUESTION PAPER.**

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## **SECTION A**

### **READING**

**Read the following extracts carefully and then answer Section A in the Question Paper.**

#### **TEXT ONE: Classroom of the damned**

**In this article, the writers describe how, despite having severe dyslexia, Will Carter has achieved academic success.**

**Look at the image on the next page. It shows a young man smiling at the camera above a densely populated city landscape.**

**(continued on the next page)**

**Text one   continued.**



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**Turn over**

**Text one continued.**

**<sup>1</sup> Fulbright scholar:** a student who receives an award of money to study in the USA

**<sup>2</sup> dyspraxia:** a condition affecting physical coordination

**Will Carter could not read until he was 13. Now the boy who burnt with humiliation if confronted with words on a page has a first-class degree.**

**Instead of ‘ending up a criminal’ as some early teachers suggested, the 22-year-old from south London who still struggles to read a menu or fill in a form is settling into campus life at the University of California, Berkeley, where he is studying for a PhD in political geography.**

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**He may be a Fulbright scholar<sup>1</sup> who used to receive free school meals but his story is not one of social mobility. ‘I don’t want to be an exception to the rule,’ he says. ‘I want to be proof that the rule was broken to begin with.’**

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**Carter had been miserable and lonely at primary school.**

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**Text one continued.**

**Years earlier, his mother, Jo, had been miserable and lonely before him at the same school in East Dulwich. She too struggled to read and found it hard to write.**

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**‘She was shut in this room called the Smile Club’ – a classroom for pupils with extra needs which, in reality, offered little extra support – ‘and would walk the corridors on her own without many friends,’ he says.**

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**By the time she was diagnosed with learning difficulties in her final year, Carter says ‘it was too late. She didn’t receive the help she deserved.’**

**School was torment. ‘You look down at your page and think this doesn’t make any sense,’ he says. ‘You see one word and it starts to blur, then you hear the laughter.’ He remembers challenging an English teacher when she called Lennie, the character in the novel **Of Mice and Men**, ‘a retard’.**

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**Text one continued.**

**‘She asked me why I had such a problem with it and whether I related to Lennie. She asked, ‘Are you a retard?’ Then she invited him to read aloud. ‘It was a way of silencing me because she knew I couldn’t. I have a cousin who has Down’s syndrome and is non-verbal. So I was thinking of him, I was thinking of my mum. To me, that word removes the humanity. It’s like using the N-word.’** 40

**He was put in the bottom class for all subjects. 45  
‘There was a sense the race was already over. The rest had won and I had lost. If you were in the lower sets, you got the worst teachers. It felt like the classroom of the damned.’**

**His grandparents fought for further investigation 50  
– ‘they didn’t want the same mistakes to be made [as with his mother]’ – and at the end of primary school he was diagnosed with severe dyslexia and dyspraxia<sup>2</sup>. But the pivotal moment came when, aged 13, he printed off a 55  
copy of the Disability Discrimination Act –  
‘I couldn’t read it but highlighted bits at random to look official’ – and marched into the office of the teacher responsible for special educational needs to demand a teaching assistant and a 60  
laptop. It was granted.**

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**Turn over**

**Text one continued.**

**‘I went from being in the lowest sets to getting A stars. People really look down upon teaching assistants, but without them I wouldn’t have got through secondary school.’**

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**But it was technology that changed everything. At first he copied and pasted text into Google Translate, using the speech function to hear what it said.**

**He started aceing exams using speech recognition software, and won a place to study politics and international relations at the University of Bristol.**

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**While his coursemates were whizzing through reading lists, there were not enough hours in the day to listen to audiobook versions, if they were available. He hunted for shorter journal articles on the same topics and searched YouTube for lectures by the authors.**

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**He found a world of ideas was unlocked by ‘screen reader’ technology, which takes the words on a computer screen and reads them aloud.**

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**Text one continued.**

**He says the education sector has been too slow to embrace the multimedia opportunities that could help excluded students. 85**

**Does he keep up with any of his classmates from the ‘class of the damned’? ‘It’s fairly depressing’, he says, adding that their different directions have made him more determined to challenge ‘the false idea that the few who succeed are examples of a system working rather than a system in disrepair’. 90**

**‘My story is not, ‘I made it, so anyone can’. I ‘made it’, in quotation marks, through luck and the support of others, so I know why so many don’t.’ 95**

## **TEXT TWO: Young and dyslexic? You've got it going on**

**In this article, Benjamin Zephaniah describes his experience of dyslexia.**

**As a child I suffered, but learned to turn dyslexia to my advantage, to see the world more creatively. We are the architects, we are the designers.**

**I'm of the generation where teachers didn't know what dyslexia was. The big problem with the education system then was that there was no compassion, no understanding and no humanity. I don't look back and feel angry with the teachers. The ones who wanted to have an individual approach weren't allowed to. The idea of being kind and thoughtful and listening to problems just wasn't done: the past is a different kind of country.**

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**Text two continued.**

**At school my ideas always contradicted the teachers'. I remember one teacher saying that human beings sleep for one-third of their life and I put my hand up and said, "If there's a God isn't that a design fault? If you've built something, you want efficiency. If I was God I would have designed sleep so we could stay awake. Then good people could do one-third more good in the world."**

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**The teacher said, "Shut up, stupid boy. Bad people would do one-third more bad." I thought I'd put in a good idea. I was just being creative. She also had a point, but the thing was, she called me stupid for even thinking about it.**

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**I remember a teacher talking about Africa and the 'local savages' and I would say, 'Who are you to talk about savages?' She would say, "How dare you challenge me?" – and that would get me into trouble.**

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**Text two continued.**

**Once, when I was finding it difficult to engage  
with writing and had asked for some help, 35  
a teacher said, ‘It’s all right. We can’t all be  
intelligent, but you’ll end up being a good  
sportsperson, so why don’t you go outside and  
play some football?’ I thought, “Oh great”, but  
now I realise he was stereotyping me. 40**

**I had poems in my head even then, and when I  
was 10 or 11 my sister wrote some of them down  
for me. When I was 13 I could read very basically  
but it would be such hard work that I would give  
up. I thought that so long as you could read how 45  
much the banknote was worth, you knew enough  
or you could ask a mate.**

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**Text two continued.**

**I got thrown out of a lot of schools, the last one at 13. I was expelled partly because of arguing with teachers on an intellectual level and partly for being a rude boy and fighting.** 50

**I didn't stab anybody, but I did take revenge on a teacher once. I stole his car and drove it into his front garden. I remember him telling us the Nazis weren't that bad. He could say that in the classroom. When I was in borstal I used to do this thing of looking at people I didn't want to be like. I saw a guy who spent all his time sitting stooped over and I thought, 'I don't want to be like that,' so I learned to sit with a straight back. Being observant helped me make the right choices.** 55 60

**A high percentage of the prison population are dyslexic, and a high percentage of the architect population. If you look at the statistics, I should be in prison: a black man brought up on the wrong side of town whose family fell apart, in trouble with the police when I was a kid, unable to read and write, with no qualifications and, on top of that, dyslexic. But I think staying out of prison is about conquering your fears and finding your path in life.** 65 70

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**Text two continued.**

**When I go into prisons to talk to people I see men and women who, in intelligence and other qualities, are the same as me. But opportunities opened for me and they missed theirs, didn't notice them or didn't take them.**

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**I never thought I was stupid. I didn't have that struggle. If I have someone in front of me who doesn't have a problem reading and writing telling me that black people are savages I just think, "I'm not stupid – you're the one who's stupid." I just had self-belief.**

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**For my first book I told my poems to my girlfriend, who wrote them down for me. It really took off, especially within the black community. I wrote 'wid luv' for 'with love'. People didn't think they were dyslexic poems, they just thought I wrote phonetically.**

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**At 21 I went to an adult education class in London to learn to read and write. The teacher told me, "You are dyslexic," and I was like, "Do I need an operation?" She explained to me what it meant and I suddenly thought, "Ah, I get it. I thought I was going crazy."**

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**Turn over**



**Text two continued.**

I wrote more poetry, novels for teenagers, plays, other books and recorded music. I take poetry to people who do not read poetry. Still now, when I'm writing the word 'knot', I have to stop and think, "How do I write that?" I have to draw something to let me know what the word is to come back to it later. If I can't spell 'question' I just put a question mark and come back to it later. 100

When I look at a book, the first thing I see is the size of it, and I know that's what it's like for a lot of young people who find reading tough. When Brunel University offered me the job of professor of poetry and creative writing, I knew my students would be officially more educated than me. I tell them, "You can do this course and get the right grade because you have a good memory – but if you don't have passion, creativity, individuality, there's no point." In my life now, I find that people accommodate my dyslexia. I can perform my poetry because it doesn't have to be word perfect, but I never read one of my novels in public. When I go to literary festivals I always get an actor to read it out for me. Otherwise all my energy goes into reading the book and the mood is lost. 105 110 115 120

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**Turn over**

**Text two continued.**

**If someone can't understand dyslexia it's their problem. In the same way, if someone oppresses me because of my race I don't sit down and think, "How can I become white?" It's not my problem, it's theirs and they are the ones who have to come to terms with it.**

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**If you're dyslexic and you feel there's something holding you back, just remember: it's not you. In many ways being dyslexic is a natural way to be.**

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**What's unnatural is the way we read and write. If you look at a pictorial language like Chinese, you can see the word for a woman because the character looks like a woman. The word for a house looks like a house. It is a strange step to go from that to a squiggle that represents a sound.**

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**Text two continued.**

**So don't be heavy on yourself. And if you are  
a parent of someone with dyslexia don't think 140  
of it as a defect. Dyslexia is not a measure of  
intelligence: you may have a genius on your  
hands. Having dyslexia can make you creative.  
If you want to construct a sentence and can't  
find the word you are searching for, you have 145  
to think of a way to write round it. This requires  
being creative and so your 'creativity muscle'  
gets bigger.**

**Kids come up to me and say, "I'm dyslexic too,"  
and I say to them, "Use it to your advantage, see 150  
the world differently. Us dyslexic people, we've  
got it going on – we are the architects. We are  
the designers." It's like these kids are proud to  
be like me and if that helps them, that is great.  
I didn't have that as a child. I say to them, 155  
"Bloody nondyslexics ... who do they think  
they are?"**

## **Source Information:**

**Text One adapted from Dyslexic student recounts escape from classroom of the damned, Lucy Bannerman and Will Humphries, Times Newspapers Limited 2021. The Sun / News Licensing**

**Image – [http://ga.berkeley.edu/team\\_member/enviro-ga/](http://ga.berkeley.edu/team_member/enviro-ga/)**

**Text Two adapted from ‘Young and Dyslexic? You’ve got it going on’ from a book titled ‘Creative, Successful, Dyslexic’, Benjamin Zephaniah, Jessica Kingsley Publishers 2016**