

Paper Reference(s) 4EB1/01
Pearson Edexcel International GCSE

English Language B
PAPER 1

Time: 3 hours plus your additional time allowance

Extracts Booklet

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

TEXT ONE

HOTEL DU LAC

**adapted from the novel Hotel du Lac by
Anita Brookner**

**In this passage, the writer describes a hotel
in Switzerland.**

**A pale light filtered through a large window over the
landing. There was nobody about, although through
a door further along the corridor she could hear the
faint sound of a radio.**

The Hotel du Lac (owned by the Huber family) was	5
a dignified building, a house of good reputation, a	
traditional establishment, used to welcoming the	
well-to-do, the retired, the modest, the respected	
patrons of an earlier era of tourism. It had made little	
effort to smarten itself up for the passing trade which	10
it had always despised. Its furnishings, although plain,	
were of excellent quality, its linen spotless, its service	
impeccable. Its reputation among knowledgeable	
professionals attracted employees of good character	
who had a serious interest in the hotel trade.	15

**As far as guests were concerned, it took a peculiar
pride in its very absence of attractions. Any visitor**

(continued on the next page)

Turn over

mildly looking for a room would be puzzled by the
 simplicity of the terrace, the muted hush of the lobby,
 the absence of piped music, public telephones, 20
 advertisements for scenic guided tours, or notice
 boards directing one to the amenities of the town.
 There was no sauna, no hairdresser, and certainly
 no glass cases displaying items of jewellery; the bar
 was small and dark which did not encourage people 25
 to linger. Chambermaids were rarely encountered
 after ten o'clock in the morning, by which time all
 household noises had to be silenced; no vacuuming
 was heard, no carts of dirty linen were glimpsed,
 after that time. A discreet rustle announced the 30
 reappearance of the maids to turn down the beds and
 tidy the rooms once the guests had finished changing
 to go down to dinner. The only publicity from which
 the hotel could not distance itself was the word of
 mouth recommendations of guests of long standing. 35

What it had to offer was a safe haven, an assurance
 of privacy, and discretion. These qualities being less
 than attractive to a surprising number of people, the
 Hotel du Lac was usually half empty, and at this time
 of the year, at the end of the season, was resigned to 40
 catering for a mere handful of guests before closing
 its doors for the winter. The few visitors who were left
 from the small number who had taken their holiday in
 the high summer months were, however, treated with
 the same courtesy and respect as if they were 45

(continued on the next page)

Turn over

treasured patrons of long standing, which, in some cases, they were. Naturally, no attempt was made to entertain them. It was assumed that they would live up to the hotel's standards, just as the hotel would live up to theirs. And if any problems were encountered, those problems would be dealt with discreetly. In this way the hotel was known as a place which was unlikely to attract unfavourable attention, a place guaranteed to provide a restorative vacation for those whom life had mistreated or merely fatigued. Its name and situation appeared in the card indexes of those whose business it is to know such things. Certain doctors knew it, many solicitors knew it and accountants knew it. Travel agents did not know it, or had forgotten it. Those families who benefit from the periodic absence of one of their more troublesome members treasured it. And the word got round.

And of course it was an excellent hotel. And its situation on the lake was agreeable. The climate was not brilliant, but in comparison with other, similar, resorts, it was pleasant. The resources of the little town were not extensive, but cars could be hired, excursions could be taken, and the walking was pleasant if unexciting. The scenery, the view, the mountain, were curiously indistinct, as if painted in the watercolours of an earlier period.

(continued on the next page)

While the young of all nations hurtled off to the sun and the beaches, jamming the roads and the airports, the Hotel du Lac took a quiet pride, and sometimes it was very quiet indeed, in its isolation from the herd. It was as if it knew that it had a place in the memory of its old friends, knowing too that it would never refuse a reasonable request from a new client. That is, always providing that the new client had the sort of unwritten references required from an hotel of this distinction, and that the request had come from someone whose name was already on the Huber family's files, most of which went back to the beginning of the century. 75 80

The salon was more agreeable than her room would have led her to expect, furnished with a deep blue carpet, many round glass tables, comfortably traditional armchairs, and a small upright piano at which an elderly man with a made-up bow tie was playing mild selections from post-war musicals. 85

TEXT TWO

Hans Brinker Hotel: the worst hotel in the world?

adapted from a review by Shaney Hudson

In this passage, the writer visits a hotel that claims to be the worst hotel in the world.

It's a fairly bold move to call yourself the worst hotel in the world. After all, there's no shortage of dodgy places out there vying for the title. Hotels with bedbugs and blocked plumbing, dirty linen and broken furniture. Hotels where there is mould in the bathroom and cigarette burns on the sheets, bad electrical wiring and broken locks on the doors. Hotels where the surly, sleazy staff believe the customer is always wrong. And yet along comes Amsterdam's Hans Brinker Hotel, proudly proclaiming to be the worst hotel in the world.

Featuring marketing gems such as 'Hans Brinker Budget Hotel: it can't get any worse... but we'll do our best' and 'Now a door with every room!' the decades-long campaign has been a huge viral success. Most importantly it has ensured a consistently high occupancy rate: after all, which 20-something doesn't want to brag on social media about surviving the world's worst hotel?

(continued on the next page)

Turn over

But amongst all the well-crafted hype, one question remained: is the Hans Brinker Hotel really all that bad? One Friday night I booked a twin room for 79 euros and decided to find out. On paper, I'll admit the hotel had the potential to be horrid: with 550 beds, it was bound to pack people in like sardines. With such an obnoxious marketing campaign, it had to have indifferent staff. And with its basement nightclub open until 4 am, it promised little sleep. 20 25

Curiously though, Hans Brinker Hotel is located in a more renovated part of Amsterdam known for its fine art and antique stores. The hotel is on a mainly residential street with an Italian deli, a few galleries, tattoo parlours and bike shops. 30

Entering the hotel, I discover first impressions last at Hans Brinker, mainly because the lobby's special stench of stale beer and old cigarette smoke will seep into your clothes and hair, lingering for days. The lobby is cluttered with peeling posters, beer vending machines and people: one group with luggage waiting to be checked in by the sole receptionist, another made up of guests waiting to be buzzed out of the secure building. Eventually, I'm checked in en masse with five others. The receptionist tells us to all pay attention at once so she doesn't have to repeat herself (not exactly customer-focused, but time-efficient). 35 40 45

(continued on the next page)

After paying 10 euros for a key deposit, I head to my room on the 4th floor. Inside, there are two single beds, two lockers, a chair, and a rubbish bin in the room. Surprisingly, there's a small hand towel on the end of the bed and a full roll of toilet paper in the toilet. There's even some very bad, framed art on the walls and the walls look freshly painted. There are working lights, smoke detectors and the window even opens to allow fresh air in. There's even a view of a church and a courtyard filled with blooming tulips. When I see the tulips, I start to get suspicious. Last time I checked, the world's worst hotel didn't offer a garden view. Could this hotel really be that bad?

I decide the answer to this lies in the bar. Over a hundred hotel guests sit in groups around picnic tables eating from a menu featuring a selection of backpacker fare: burgers and spaghetti bolognese. I feel like I'm in a school cafeteria, mainly because everyone is very young. People file in and out, quite a few of them carrying, predictably, souvenir bags from tourist attractions. A few take selfies with the hotel's worst hotel posters, giving the thumbs-up sign. For a Friday night, it's fairly tame stuff, even if it is early. But I have to admit it's the sort of environment I would have relished if I were backpacking for the first time.

(continued on the next page)

When we check out the next morning, there's a free breakfast happening downstairs and the room is packed with hungry, hung-over but mostly happy guests. Collecting our key deposit back with a minimum of fuss, we leave the hotel disappointed and underwhelmed. We really had expected a lot worse from the worst hotel in the world. 75

As suspected, Hans Brinker is just your stock-standard low budget, run-down hostel catering to young people. The only difference is the owners have wisely spent some money on a decent PR campaign that aroused the curiosity of their target market. But don't worry. Should you feel the need to tweet, Facebook or Instagram a picture of yourself at the world's worst hotel, I won't tell a soul you're just in another average backpacker hostel. 80 85

Sources taken/adapted from:

Text One: Source from: Hotel du Lac, Anita Brookner, Penguin 2016

Text Two: Hans Brinker hotel, Amsterdam review: the worst hotel in the world? By Shaney Hudson © Traveller.com.au