

# Pearson Edexcel International GCSE

**Time** 3 hours

**Paper  
reference**

**4EB1/01**

## **English Language B**

### **PAPER 1**

#### **Extracts Booklet**

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## Text One

### Into The Heart of Darkness

adapted from a piece of travel writing by Ben Mallalieu

*In this passage, the writer recounts a journey he made to the Bolivian rainforest in South America.*



It wasn't a good journey; it was never going to be a good journey, but it must have seemed like a good idea at the time – as most bad ideas do, particularly when stuck in an unpleasant office and wanting to be somewhere else, anywhere else. I had put forward an idea for a travel article for a magazine about seeing how far I could get into the wilds and be back at my desk seven days later, all bright and eager, refreshed by the excitement of travel. I should have known better.

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As my final jumping-off place into the heart of darkness, I had chosen Rurrenabaque in the Bolivian rainforest for no better reason than it is one of those wonderfully romantic place names like Zanzibar or Timbuktu. It was also the starting point for some of the better journeys of the early 20<sup>th</sup> century explorer, Colonel Percy Fawcett. He memorably described it as 'a dismal heap on the way into the jungle, and a city on the way out'. From there, I could take a dug-out canoe upriver.

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But Fawcett is not a good role model, not someone in whose footsteps it is wise to tread if you intend to get back in one piece (he 'disappeared' in Brazil in 1925). Furthermore, I had left planning my journey much too late and even getting to the Bolivian capital of La Paz required zigzagging between a disturbingly large number of South American airports, all identical except for being in a different time zone.

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Eventually I arrived in La Paz at 4,000 metres above sea level in the middle of a hot, humid and very black night. Fawcett was an intrepid traveller, never happier than when reduced to eating his own boots or when one false step would spell certain ruin, and he hardly had a day's illness in his life, but he did warn about altitude sickness in La Paz. As well as

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causing almost total weakness and incapacity, altitude sickness has all the disadvantages of being drunk with none of the benefits – headache, nausea, disorientation...

In the morning, I got up too early.

I had booked a taxi for 6 am. My hotel was impenetrably dark, I couldn't find any light switches and in my hurry to pack before leaving England I had forgotten to include a torch. Outside there was no sign of my taxi and it was getting dangerously late, so I waved down the first taxi that came. Unfortunately the driver had no English but when I showed him my airline ticket (probably the wrong one) he seemed to understand.

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The airport he took me to was not the one I had arrived at the day before – it was much smaller and practically deserted. None of the officials spoke any English but my taxi driver explained the situation (I think); there was sudden panic and two of the officials rushed out to flag down an ancient turbo-prop military plane taxiing on the runway ready to depart, and I was bundled on board without having my ticket checked. An ageing air force officer offered me some cotton wool to put in my ears, and a mug of industrial-strength coffee. We dipped and swerved between the mountains over cold, beautiful valleys where planes like ours have a history of finding their final resting place.

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An hour later, we landed on a bumpy grass airstrip surrounded by jungle, a very long way from Heathrow but only a brief truck ride into town. Rurrenabaque had hardly changed from the photograph in Fawcett's book, only one paved road and just a few brick buildings among the old shacks. A dump yes, but dismal no – I felt very relieved to be there. I also enjoyed the trip upriver but I did not like the rainforest, too 'in your face', in your hair, in your clothes and under your skin. And I didn't have a torch. It was a relief three days later to get back to Rurrenabaque where the bright lights dazzled, just like a city. At the Jungle Bar Moskito, people almost outnumbered the mosquitoes.

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My flight back to La Paz was better than I feared, arriving in the early hours at another deserted airport where the first person I saw was my original taxi driver. He seemed almost as pleased to see me as I was to see him, but what he was doing there I never discovered – as he didn't speak any English.

## Text Two

### Things I'd Tell Any New Traveller

adapted from a blog by Matt Kepnes

*In this passage, the writer, an American, offers advice to people travelling the world for the first time.*



Hope. Fear. Excitement.

Travelling for the first time provided me with a wave of conflicting emotions. When I left to travel the world, I didn't know what to expect. I wasn't well travelled. No one I knew had ever done this before. I was young and inexperienced, and I made a lot of basic travel mistakes.

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It was as if I had a big sign hung over my head that said "I HAVE NO IDEA WHAT I'M DOING".

Now, with 10 years of travel under my belt, I know better. If I could sit my younger self down before he left for his world trip, I would give him this advice:

**Don't be scared.**

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Fear is a powerful deterrent. Taking the leap into the unknown is scary, but you aren't the first person to travel the world. You aren't discovering new continents or exploring uncharted territories. There is a well-worn travel trail out there and people to help guide you along the way. If millions of people can make their way around the world each year, so can you.

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You may feel scared and nervous but you're just as capable as anyone else.



## **Don't live by your guidebook.**

Guidebooks are useful for a general overview of a destination, but you'll never find the latest off-the-beaten-path attractions, bars or restaurants in them. People are your best resource for up-to-the-minute travel information. Unless a guidebook is digital and updated often, it's probably out of date, so don't live and breathe by it. 20

## **Travel slow.**

It can be tempting to try to see it all. With limited vacation time, we are always trying to squeeze everything in – rushing through 20 cities in 20 days, or 100 countries on our round-the-world trip. In the end, all we have to show for it are photos, stress and a whirlwind of experiences, but no real knowledge of the places we went. 25

Don't rush your trip. Make time to spend a relaxing day in the park or just sitting in a café people watching. Slow down. It gives you time to drink deep from a culture and take it all in.

## **You don't need a lot of gear.**

Pack light. You'll have less to carry. Buy a small bag so you aren't tempted to pack everything under the sun. If you truly need something, you can pick it up as you go. 30

Trust me, you won't need as much gear as you think!

## **Get a phone.**

You'll meet a lot of people on the road who you will want to see again. While Facebook can be handy for staying in touch, it isn't ideal for planning meet-ups when people are constantly on the move. Did your friends get the message? Will they be there?! Who knows! 35

Cheap phones and SIM cards are available worldwide. Invest in one so you can stay in touch with your new friends. That way you won't wonder if you were stood up or if your friends just changed their plans and went to Rome. 40

## **Go with the flow.**

When every day is planned out and there are timetables to follow, you get stressed. Very stressed. You rush. And when you plan too much, there's no room to experience the happy accidents of travel.

Put some flexibility into your schedule and go with the flow. Plan one or two activities and let the rest of the day happen. It'll be a more enjoyable and less stressful experience. You'll be surprised by what happens (like when your friend invites you to an island in Thailand and you stay a whole month). 45

Let life unfold.

## **Take extra money.** 50

Travel isn't as expensive as you think but you'll learn there are always unexpected expenses.

Have a financial cushion! No matter how well you budget, you can never plan for all the disasters or itinerary changes. No matter how well you plan, something can always come up and throw your budget into chaos.

Take more money than you think you'll need. You'll be happy you did. 55

**Be adventurous.**

I know you don't like heights. I know you don't like sports. And while you'll hurt your tailbone, you won't regret jumping off the boat in the Galápagos. You may have screamed, but you loved that canyon swing.

Challenge yourself. Take risks. Try new things. You may hate some, but you won't regret any of it. You'll walk away more self-confident. 60

**You are not alone.**

Wherever you go, there is a network of travellers who will be your friends, give you advice or tips, and help you out. They will guide you, point you in the right direction and be your mentors. You aren't out there on your own. You will make friends. You will be OK. Though you are travelling alone, you will never be alone. 65

So take a deep breath, relax and enjoy!

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Sources taken/adapted from:

Text One: Into the heart of darkness By Ben Mallalieu © The Oldie

Photograph: © Angelo DeSantis/Getty Images

Text Two: Nomadic Matt's Travel Site

<https://www.nomadicmatt.com/travel-blogs/new-traveler-advice/>

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