

Paper Reference(s) 4EB1/01
Pearson Edexcel International GCSE (9–1)

English Language B
PAPER 1

Tuesday 07 November 2023 – Morning

Time: 3 hours

Source Booklet

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

Text One

Ways to Learn a New Skill

adapted from an article from an American website by Jade Anderson

In this passage, the writer offers advice about learning and developing new skills.

A group of four teenagers sit on a sofa on the street outside a house and under a tree. All four are concentrating on knitting.



(continued on the next page)

Turn over

Text One continued.

Have you ever wanted to learn a new skill and then found you just didn't have the time to do it? Maybe you want to be able to speak Spanish, make fresh pasta, learn how to knit or master surfing but somehow you can't fit it into your schedule. Learning new skills is a great form of self-development and those who are most successful in life, whether it be in a professional arena or not, are those who are always learning and developing new skills. No matter the skill you want to learn, there are ways you can ensure that you commit to learning that skill. 5 10

1. Pick A Passion

If you're looking to learn a new skill, a good place to start is to pick a skill that relates to an interest or passion of yours. If you love desserts, learning how to bake is a great option whereas if you love the outdoors and adventure, rock climbing might be a new skill you could focus on. If you're passionate about what you're doing, the learning process will come more naturally to you and the hours of dedication that it takes to learn a new skill will seem like part of the fun rather than a chore. 15 20

(continued on the next page)

Text One continued.

2. Focus On One Skill At A Time

Learning a new skill takes time, focus and concentration. This means that in order to acquire a new skill, it's best to put your efforts into one skill at a time. While being able to multitask is a positive quality in many situations, when it comes to being able to pick up a new skill quickly it's best to focus your attention on that alone. For example, there is no point in trying to learn two languages at once because you'll just end up tired and confused. In order to increase your chances of success and mastery, you're better off making the learning process as manageable as possible.

25

30

(continued on the next page)

Text One continued.

3. Break Down the Skills Into Sub-skills 30

The first part of learning a new skill is to analyze that skill. Start by doing some research into the skill you want to learn and the different components that make up learning that skill. As you find out more about the elements involved in learning the skill, start to think analytically about how you can divide the skill into sets of sub-skills. By identifying these sub-skills you can start small in your learning process. By learning in this way, all those sub-skills will eventually come together and make up the whole skill. If you're learning to surf, you might start off by learning the technique of standing on the board while on the sand. Once you've mastered this aspect, the process of learning to stand on the board in the water will be much easier than going straight into the water to begin with. 35 40 45

(continued on the next page)

Text One continued.

4. Learn By Doing

While reading and researching about different topics can be an important aspect of the learning process, most of our learning takes place not by learning theory, but by practicing our skills. Alternate between researching and practicing. When you're learning a language, for example, important as it is to learn the correct grammar and new vocabulary, you should also be going out and speaking to native speakers so that you can have the chance to speak the language yourself. It is through physically engaging with the skill that you'll be able to better identify your weaknesses and strengths in the skill.

50

55

(continued on the next page)

Text One continued.

5. Optimize Your Time

When it comes to learning a skill, time is your most valuable asset and your success will really be defined by how much quality time you dedicate to that skill. A lot of us feel that we have no time left in our days for extra-curricular activities or hobbies but, in reality, the problem is not that we have no time, it's just that we are not making the most of the time we have. Consider your day-to-day activities. Do you spend hours on Instagram or waste the nights away bingeing on Netflix? Identify the things you spend time doing that aren't of much value and use this time towards honing your new skill. Even if you only have one hour to spare in the evenings, if you use the hour wisely you can make a lot of progress in a short amount of time.

60

65

70

Text Two

The joy of finally learning how to swim

adapted from an article by Jay Willis

In this passage, the American writer describes learning to swim as an adult.

A young woman kneels at the side of a swimming pool and talks to two middle-aged men who are in the pool and are learning to swim.



GLOSSARY

¹nemesis—worst enemy

²euphoria—intense joy or happiness

(continued on the next page)

Turn over

Text Two continued.

When people learn that I can't swim, the first thing they ask is how my parents could have condemned me to endure such a shameful existence. But my deficiency is not their fault. Every summer until sixth grade, over my strident objections, they would enrol me in the age-appropriate week-long lessons at the community centre pool.

5

I hated them. (The swimming lessons, not my parents.) I hated them because I was awful: all flailing limbs and frequent stops to 'clean out my goggles,' during which I would take as many furtive steps forward as I could without the teacher noticing. I loathed putting my face in the water. I dreaded holding my breath. By the time I started middle school, I had decided that I would be fine never entering water in which my feet couldn't touch the bottom again.

10**15**

(continued on the next page)

Text Two continued.

About one in five Americans can't swim, according to the Red Cross. The reasons range from inadequate facilities to a lack of affordable instruction, from bad childhood experiences to an instinctive, not-totally-irrational fear of being immersed in a substance that makes it impossible for mammals to breathe. Urban residents are less likely to have learned as children than their pool-having, lake-enjoying, suburban and rural counterparts. The same is true of those who come from less-wealthy families. 'Half the kids in New York City don't even get to see a pool,' one swim instructor told me. 20 25

Of adults who can't swim, 28% of city-dwellers report that they don't enjoy the water, and the same overall percentage of respondents said they just aren't interested in learning. Others don't want to admit that they cannot do something as adults that they 'should' have learned as children. 30

I have never been proud of not being able to swim. But a few months ago, I decided that, at this point in my life, the real thing couldn't be any more challenging than the various coping mechanisms I had developed to avoid it. I bought a pair of goggles, signed up for adult lessons, and prepared to confront my oldest, wettest nemesis¹. 35 40

(continued on the next page)

Turn over

Text Two continued.

Here is my first review of swimming: I have never been more aware of the independent existence of all four of my limbs, none of which seem interested in what the others are doing. My legs churn in frantic spurts, 45 and my arms chop down on the water like I'm trying to push my torso up out of it. When I think about kicking, I forget to move my arms. When I think about my arms, I forget about kicking, and my legs start to sink. I start to panic, a chain reaction that ends with my feet settling 50 on the ground beneath me and my arms, determined to keep the sinking ship afloat, still splashing valiantly at the surface.

While I am preoccupied with trying not to die, in the section next to me a dozen bored fourth-graders 55 are taking turns zipping up and down their lanes, obediently switching to different strokes as their coach calls out instructions. They appear to be putting as much effort into this task as they would into, 60 say, skipping.

(continued on the next page)

Text Two continued.

Midway through the third lesson, after dozens of halting trips across the pool's shallow end—and, before that, three decades of unbridled terror whenever my feet would cast about for solid ground and find only a darker, colder layer of water underneath—I 65
 make a go of it. The good news is that, to my genuine astonishment, I can swim. The bad news is that I am panic-sprinting, convinced that if I move at anything less than top speed, I will lose all momentum and slip into the deep end's rich, soothing shade of blue. 70

With great effort, I manage to complete five laps by the end of the day. My pace remains laughably unsustainable, and I leave an unnecessary volume of white water in my wake, like a panicked trout getting dragged towards its future as a meal drenched in 75
 garlic butter.

I do it, though. I am a little better during the next class, and then the one after that. For the first time in my adult life, I might even derive some semblance of pleasure from the experience. 80

(continued on the next page)

Text Two continued.

Everything seems to come so naturally when we are kids, existing in a constant state of absorbing complex, foreign concepts without even thinking about the process. Opportunities to try truly new things become rarer as an adult. Eventually, we all accept implicit limitations on the scope of what we will do with our time on this earth.

85

Swimming is not like traveling to the moon. But, even so, learning to perform a discrete, measurable task as an adult that you could not do a half-hour earlier elicits a sense of euphoria², the kind that reminds you that childhood is not the only stage of life in which anything is possible, even if that thing is just swimming 25 meters uninterrupted.

90

Sources taken/adapted from:

Text One: <http://homeschoolingteen.com/article/6-great-ways-to-learn-a-new-skill/>

Photograph: Betsie Van der Meer/Getty Images

Text Two: <https://www.gq-magazine.co.uk/lifestyle/article/how-to-swim>

Photograph: SolStock/Getty Images