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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.



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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 5 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 10 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.

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1. Pick A Passion

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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.

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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.

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3. Break Down the Skills Into Sub-skills

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.

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4. Learn By Doing

**While reading and researching about 70
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 75
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 80
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. 85**

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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.

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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

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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 20

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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, 25
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 30
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 35
don't even get to see a pool,' one swim instructor told me.

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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. 40 45

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. 50

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Text Two continued.

Here is my first review of swimming: 55
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, and my arms chop 60
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 65
to panic, a chain reaction that ends with
my feet settling on the ground beneath
me and my arms, determined to keep
the sinking ship afloat, still splashing
valiantly at the surface. 70

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Text Two continued.

While I am preoccupied with trying not to die, in the section next to me a dozen bored fourth-graders are taking turns zipping up and down their lanes, obediently switching to different strokes 75 as their coach calls out instructions. They appear to be putting as much effort into this task as they would into, say, skipping.

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Midway through the third lesson, after 80
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 85
water underneath—I 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 90
speed, I will lose all momentum and slip
into the deep end's rich, soothing shade
of blue.

With great effort, I manage to complete
five laps by the end of the day. My pace 95
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 garlic butter. 100

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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. 105

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. 110

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. 115 120

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