

Cambridge IGCSE™ (9–1)

FIRST LANGUAGE ENGLISH

0990/02

Paper 2 Directed Writing and Composition

For examination from 2027

SPECIMEN INSERT

2 hours

INFORMATION

- This insert contains the reading texts.
- You may annotate this insert and use the blank spaces for planning. **Do not write your answers** on the insert.



This document has **4** pages. Any blank pages are indicated.

Read **both** texts and then answer **Question 1(a)** and **1(b)** on the question paper.

Text A: Teamwork

Wiser employers have always known that the key to a productive business is investing time and effort in understanding what makes people happy at work. Yes, promotion opportunities and bonus pay for individual success are important, but employee happiness is dependent on so much more. Increasingly, workers place greater value on things such as wellbeing and working conditions, where flexible working, collaboration and a great team spirit are essential parts of the company culture. 5

‘This is the era of the collaborative workplace,’ says Grace Chi, a lecturer in business studies. ‘The best places to work are those where colleagues help each other to complete projects and celebrate others’ success, not try to outdo each other or impress the boss at someone else’s expense.’ 10

‘I love having a workplace that embraces collaboration,’ agrees Ali Perez, whose small family business creates and sells personalised gifts. ‘We respect everyone’s opinion and make decisions together for the good of the company. We include all employees in new projects, whatever their skills or experience. We have opportunities to mentor colleagues who find their work challenging or difficult, developing their expertise by sharing our own. Yes, tasks may take a little longer to complete, but the end result is better when everyone has an equal say and works equally hard.’ 15

Many organisations are shifting to this kind of ‘flatter’, more equal, management structure. The traditional hierarchy – where a worker could expect one manager to be watching over their shoulder and another higher-paid manager watching over the first – may in the future become a thing of the past. In a collaborative model, responsibility lies with the individual worker to play their part – if there are people in the team not contributing, that leaves more work for everyone else and soon enough that person is not going to be popular. 20

Text B: Competition

Competition such as bonuses, performance management and promotion can motivate employees, making them put in more effort, and building a sense of personal pride in the results. Similarly, employees competing to find new clients or devising a way to bring a new product to market faster can result in a real commercial advantage for organisations. However, pressure to achieve can affect people in different ways, tempting some workers to follow unethical paths, including cheating or stealing someone else's ideas, with high long-term costs for everyone. 5

Some kinds of competition create fear and anxiety, because they focus employees on the threat of dismissal, losing income or being publicly humiliated. One manager described a weekly 'Cash or Cabbages Day' when, employees who missed their sales targets were given cabbages instead of cash bonuses. Other incentive schemes focus employees on winning a coveted award or public recognition, making them feel excited. Anxiety and excitement are very different emotional responses to competition. More importantly, these emotions make people behave differently. Studies show that when workers feel anxious about employment policies, they are significantly more likely to cut corners or sabotage colleagues, something former salesperson, Jaz Gupta, knows only too well. 10 15

'I'd worked for months to cultivate one prospective client,' explains Jaz. 'Everyone knew winning a big order from that client could be a deciding factor in which of us from the international sales team got promoted. Then I discover from a junior colleague that Ravi's also trying to net this wealthy individual, even though Ravi knew I was already in pursuit! I knew if I ignored the situation, he'd just seal the deal, profiting shamelessly from all my slaving away, and our boss would promote Ravi. But if I'd directly confronted Ravi, it could've made me look petty and selfish. At the time, I calculated the best way to fight back was to be just as devious as Ravi.' 20

BLANK PAGE

Permission to reproduce items where third-party owned material protected by copyright is included has been sought and cleared where possible. Every reasonable effort has been made by the publisher (Cambridge University Press & Assessment) to trace copyright holders, but if any items requiring clearance have unwittingly been included, the publisher will be pleased to make amends at the earliest possible opportunity.

Cambridge International Education is the name of our awarding body and a part of Cambridge University Press & Assessment, which is a department of the University of Cambridge.