CAMBRIDGE
International Education

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ENGLISH GENERAL PAPER **8021/22**

Paper 2 Comprehension **May/June 2026**

INSERT **1 hour 45 minutes**

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INFORMATION

- This insert contains all the resources referred to in the questions.
- You may annotate this insert and use the blank spaces for planning. **Do not write your answers** on the insert.

This document has **8** pages. Any blank pages are indicated.

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Material for Section A

Background

The highly popular television series *Who can get there first?* has reached its final stage.

Three weeks ago, all contestants were provided with a map, a travel guide containing job opportunities along the way (to add money to their limited travel budgets), and $5000 cash to cover all travel, food and accommodation. Over the last three weeks, contestants have travelled through seven different countries using a mixture of cars, buses, trains and their own two feet. Only the three fastest contestants now remain and all of them are determined to reach the finish line first and win the $30 000 prize money. Now, in the country of Pana, the contestants have just been handed an envelope containing the instructions for the final stage of the competition. Before departing, they will have time to plan which of the two routes to take to Tasket in the country of Dora.

The instructions for the final stage of the competition

Congratulations on making it to the final stage of
Who can get there first?

We hope you have enjoyed your night in Gaston before the race to the finish line begins.

All contestants will depart at 09:00.
Your final destination is the town square in Tasket, Dora.

Good luck!

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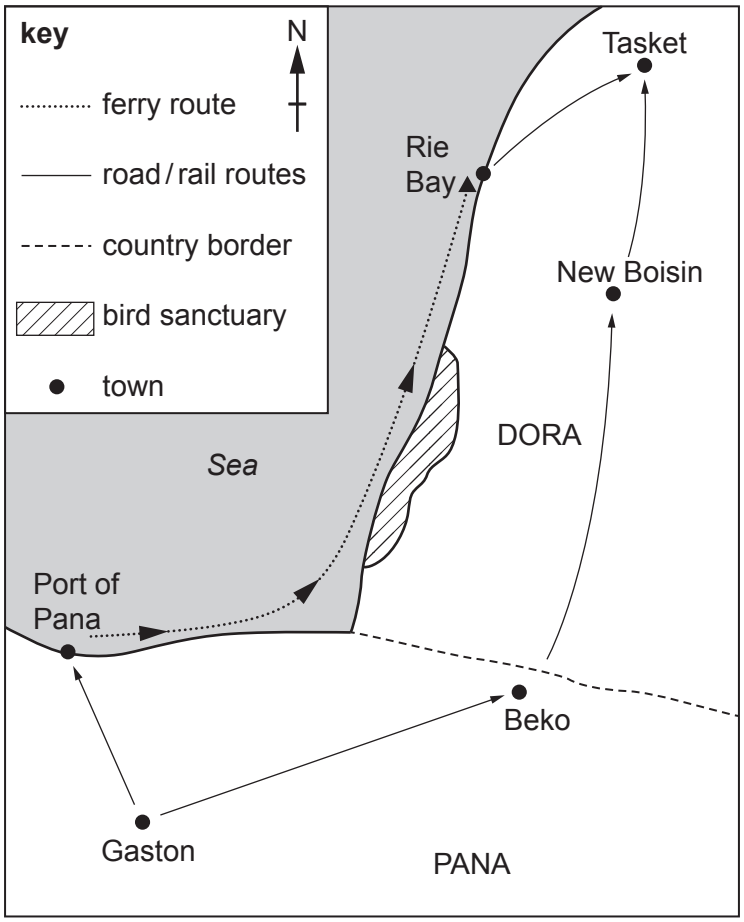
Map showing the two possible routes



Not to scale

Contestants

Lars

Lars works as a sports coach for a local football team in his home town. In his free time, he competes in marathons and is a regular at the local climbing club.

Miriam

Miriam has recently graduated from university. She won the Faculty of Mathematics award after achieving the highest results in her year. Her fiancé comes from Tasket.

Carmen

Carmen is a retired teacher and speaks four languages, including the language spoken in Dora. She spends her free time volunteering with various children's charities and wildlife conservation.

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Job opportunities

- Rie Bay Reading Support will pay $80 for four hours of work in the morning. Teenagers who require help with their homework and studies frequently use this local service.
- A New Boisin family is offering free food and accommodation to those who can work from 20:00 to 02:00 in their family-run restaurant. No experience is necessary.
- Beko Bus Station is offering a free bus ticket to New Boisin in return for six hours of cleaning. This role will include washing the buses inside and out to ensure high levels of cleanliness for passengers. Warning: This role is physically demanding.

Travel guide information

Gaston Buses link the town with both the Port of Pana and Beko, giving passengers the choice of ferry or bus transportation for their ongoing journey.

Buses for the Port of Pana depart three times a day at 10:00, 14:00 and 18:00.
Duration: 90 minutes.

Daily buses heading to Beko depart at 15:00 and arrive in Beko at 22:00.

The Port of Pana is a busy international gateway with ferries to Rie Bay running daily at 15:00 and arriving at 07:00. A standard ticket includes luxurious seating with generous legroom and TV access. The onboard restaurant caters for everyone and offers a good selection of local and international options. What a great way to spend the 16-hour crossing time!

Beko is proud to be known as the major transport hub of Pana. Providing fast links to our neighbouring countries and beyond, there are many options for all keen travellers.

Departing at 08:00 and 18:00, the modern intercity buses provide a high-speed link from Beko to New Boisin, the capital of Dora. After 12 hours spent travelling in style, you will be ready to explore the beautiful city.

Opened in March this year, the New Boisin Express to Tasket allows you to sit back and relax as you take in the scenery of Dora. The five-hour train journey provides picturesque views of the mountains and waterfalls on the approach into Tasket. Take the opportunity to have a break at one of the many stops and take in the mountain air! Four departures per day.

Rie Bay ferry terminal has a non-stop, direct bus service to Tasket. Departing daily at 09:00 and 15:00, you will arrive in Tasket just in time for lunch or dinner.

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Additional Information

1 All contestants are prohibited from using air travel, credit cards and mobile phones.

2 Carmen enjoys sampling new foods and flavours.

3 Beko hotels are well known as the most expensive accommodation in Pana.

4 In the previous stage of the competition, Miriam travelled non-stop, surviving on very little sleep, which highlighted to the other contestants what a strong competitor she is.

5 The town square in Tasket can only be accessed on foot and is located at the top of 400 steps.

6 Contestants have all overspent in the previous stages of the competition.

7 Tasket is a very traditional town with most inhabitants only able to speak their local language.

8 Carmen is missing her home comforts, and is looking forward to watching her favourite game shows and reality programmes when the competition is over.

9 Since its opening, the New Boisin Express has been extremely popular, with some tourists unable to buy tickets at short notice.

10 Drivers around Tasket frequently report traffic delays due to rockfalls and landslides.

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Material for Section B

The social housing secret: how Vienna became the world's most liveable city

The first place that Max Schranz moved into after leaving his family home is the kind that many young professionals dream of inhabiting at the peak of their career. At only 26, he lives in a bright fifth-floor apartment with high ceilings, overlooking a European capital city, 10 minutes from the central station and within walking distance of cinemas, theatres and bars.

No lottery win or parental trust fund was needed to make that dream a reality: Schranz, who is a postgraduate student, pays $650 a month for his 54 m^2 two-bedroom apartment – a fraction of typical rents for similarly sized and similarly located apartments in other major European cities. What's more, he didn't have to put down a deposit and his rental contract is unlimited – in theory, he's allowed to pass it on to his children or a sibling when he eventually decides to move on. 'I'm aware it's a pretty stress-free existence,' Schranz says. 'My friends in other European cities are a bit jealous.'

Welcome to Vienna, the city that may have solved the problem of how to keep inner-city housing affordable. As other cities battle spiralling rental prices, partly fuelled by inner-city apartments being used as short-term holiday rentals or being kept strategically vacant by property speculators, the Austrian capital does not follow the trend.

Part of the reason Schranz's apartment is so affordable is simple: it's owned by the city. In Vienna, that is (almost) the norm. The landlord of approximately 220 000 socially rented apartments, it is the largest home-owning city in Europe.

Many of these apartments came into being a century ago, as part of an enormously ambitious building programme after the end of the First World War, when Vienna was awash with people uprooted by the collapse of the Habsburg Empire*.

These 'superblocks' from the 1920s and 1930s do not look like ordinary social housing. For example, with the modernist influence of the Bauhaus** school yet to capture the imagination of Austrian architects, the superblocks have not got flat roofs.

The majority of the city's council-owned estates were built after the Second World War and look more familiar, but even they do not tend to have the stigma of poverty and crime associated with similar developments in Europe. Schranz's apartment is inside the Theodor Körner-Hof, a 1950s-built group of 14 housing blocks in the Margareten district that are far from fancy, yet still well-maintained enough that Schranz likes to hang out in the green inner courtyards on summer evenings to read his books.

The Viennese term for estates like these is 'communal buildings', which hints at their underlying philosophy. 'One of the key concepts to understanding Vienna's approach to housing is social sustainability,' says Maik Novotny, an architecture critic for the Austrian newspaper *Der Standard*. 'In order to avoid the creation of ghettoes and the costly social conflicts that come with them, the city actively strives for a mixing of people from different backgrounds and on different incomes in the same estates. Social housing isn't just for the poor.'

As a student without a disability or any dependants, Schranz would have no hope of applying for social housing in countries such as the UK, but in Vienna the city attracted him with a programme for first-time tenants under 30.

'Keeping a mix of people from different paths of life in social housing is key, and yes, it isn't always easy,' says Kathrin Gaal, Vienna's deputy mayor and executive councillor for housing. One tactic is an income maximum for applicants of $62 400 a year for single people and $92 975

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for two-person households. But ‘once you’ve moved into a “communal building” as a young student, if you start earning more once your career progresses, we don’t check on you, because your situation could also worsen again,’ says Gaal. *45*

Vienna’s social housing programme is more than a policy – in the city it is a foundational ideal that is a source of immense pride. Talk to ‘communal building’ residents such as 76-year-old Heinz Barnerth, a retired mechanical engineer who has lived for the past seven decades in the Reumannhof estate in Margareten, and he will be unswerving in his praise of the idea that brought his block into existence in the 1920s. ‘Vienna’s model is more necessary than ever, because rental prices are hard to contain,’ he says. *50*

But the reality doesn’t always live up to the ideal, and Barnerth is even more animated when complaining about the time it takes the city to carry out repairs in his estate. The light by the stairs leading to the basement has not been working for three weeks, and when a door lock breaks, the residents usually do not bother waiting for central management to fix it. One of the downsides of having a single large company in charge of managing and maintaining so much housing stock in the city is that logging and commissioning caretakers’ tasks can lead to bottlenecks. *55*

The other downside of the Vienna model is that while 60 per cent of the city’s residents have hit the jackpot by getting into a ‘communal building’ or subsidised co-op, that still excludes a large chunk of the population of a city in which 80 per cent are renters. Only those who have resided permanently in Vienna for two years can apply for social housing, and those who stay in private rentals face problems more familiar from other European cities. *60*

**Habsburg Empire*: refers to the territories formerly ruled by the Habsburg dynasty, including Austria and surrounding countries
***Bauhaus*: key features of the Bauhaus design include clean lines, geometric shapes and a lack of decoration, emphasizing function over form

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