



Cambridge International AS & A Level

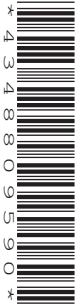
ENGLISH LANGUAGE

9093/12

Paper 1 Reading

May/June 2025

2 hours 15 minutes



You must answer on the enclosed answer booklet.

You will need: Answer booklet (enclosed)

INSTRUCTIONS

- Answer **all** questions.
- Follow the instructions on the front cover of the answer booklet. If you need additional answer paper, ask the invigilator for a continuation booklet.
- Dictionaries are **not** allowed.

INFORMATION

- The total mark for this paper is 50.
- The number of marks for each question or part question is shown in brackets [].

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

Section A: Directed response

Question 1

Read the following text, which is an extract from a book by an explorer and adventurer.

- (a) You work for a travel agency that organises expeditions to remote locations for young adults. Write the text for a section of a leaflet advising travellers of the landscapes that they will encounter in Suriname. Use 150–200 words. [10]
- (b) Compare the text of your leaflet section with the extract, analysing form, structure and language. [15]

Forgotten Forest

Suriname

'Rock!' The shout goes out. Through the giant rainbow a boulder swoops. We hold our breath. Just the thunder of the waterfall. And then, half a dozen heartbeats later, a boom resonates back up to us. The echo ricochets round the stadium of rock, calamitous cliffs lumbering over the deluge. I'm hanging on a line over the biggest waterfall in the nation. The ancient rock that surrounds me is too old to bear fossils as it was formed before life on earth. The falling boulder has just smashed into my ropes, lying on the rock far below me. The same ropes that we are relying on to ascend, and also to continue on down the gorge. There will be nervous moments later as I check every inch of them for frays or tears. For now, though, there are more pressing concerns. I'm hanging under the tumult, the fierce flow filling my lungs, blasting me backwards and forwards like a fly caught in a storm-blown web. Someone shouts down at me from above, but above the roar I can't hear what they're saying. 5 10

After three weeks in some of the most remote and impenetrable forest remaining on planet Earth, I was dying to get to something approaching civilisation and have a chance to speak to Helen¹, possibly even to hear a gurgle or two from my little boy. But when we finally made it back to something approaching a town, we only had a few hours free, the internet connection for my one call home in five weeks was poor and the pressure just too much. We ended up arguing. It was a bleak start to the next few weeks in the interior. There were hot, sleepless nights ahead, missing home desperately, pondering how an unrepeatable chapter of my baby's childhood was slipping away while I was getting eaten by bugs in a dark patch of forest. 15 20

Suriname had renewed my hope for the future of exploration and the potential future of tropical rainforests, but because of that everything that threatened its perfection was like a dagger to the heart. As I write this, energy companies prowl offshore, coveting the 13 billion barrels of oil located beneath the nation. At one point in our expedition, we stopped off at an illegal gold mine, expecting to see minor riverside camps as I'd seen across the border in Guyana. Instead, this was a monster operation, covering several square miles. The forest had been felled and was now sandy slop, with huge pits filled with murky orange water. The soil had been blasted away with big hoses, and then run over filters to remove the heavier flakes of rock. 25 30

The gold mine itself was proper Wild West frontier territory, the hardmen who worked there in the ferocious sun covered in homemade tattoos and brandings. They lived out in the middle of nowhere for months at a time, getting paid a percentage of what they got out of the ground. Some months they earned nothing at all. And yet they also told tales of the month when they pulled up a nugget the size of a human fist, and everyone went home with \$10 000 apiece. 35

This time our journey began in the Central Suriname Nature Reserve. The central region of the nation is much more mountainous than I had expected. Until we flew over, I'd only really studied satellite imagery and maps, and they hadn't given me the impression of a massively contoured landscape. Once in the air, though, it was as if we were soaring over a shallow green swamp, with scores of slumbering dragons lying immersed in the mire, their armoured spines soaring up above sea level. 40

Some of the peaks breaking out of the trees were granite, with exposed rock cliff faces. My initial idea had been to try to find one of these we could climb. The main drawback was that even to get to the base of any of these peaks would have taken weeks of jungle hacking. Which was a shame. Especially as one of them, named the Devil's Egg, was a perfect sugar loaf peak, with an even more perfect egg of rock balanced precariously on top. It would have been an unbeatable(!) expedition, but it would have taken a month we did not have. 45 50

¹*Helen*: the writer's wife

Section B: Text analysis

Question 2

Read the following text, which is an article about how scientists plan to build biocomputers to emulate the human brain.

Analyse the text, focusing on form, structure and language.

[25]

Scientists reveal plan to make computers out of brain

New materials could help scientists borrow the performance of the brain for computing, they hope.

Scientists want to create computers out of the same materials that power the human brain.

Computer developers have long looked to emulate the performance of the human brain, especially with artificial intelligence. But those techniques have never been able to match the variety of achievements that humans have made while using their own organic brains.

5

Scientists now hope that building biocomputers, made out of three-dimensional collections of brain cells, could help them get closer to that dream. They would work as something like biological hardware that would allow for the rapid development of new kinds of computers, they claim.

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Researchers have already trained such a brain-based computer to play the video game *Pong*¹, and hope to scale it up and replicate it so that it can produce a kind of new capability that is akin to artificial intelligence.

'We call this new interdisciplinary field "organoid intelligence" (OI),' said Thomas Hartung of Johns Hopkins University. 'A community of top scientists has gathered to develop this technology, which we believe will launch a new era of fast, powerful, and efficient biocomputing.'

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A host of researchers have proposed new work that would look at brain organoids to power computers. Those are grown in a lab but share important aspects of the function and patterns of the brain, including many of the cells that are used for things like learning and memory.

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Researchers hope that would allow such biocomputers to learn much more quickly than silicon-based computers. The organic computers would also be more efficient, they hope, as well as able to store far more detail.

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'Brains also have an amazing capacity to store information, estimated at 2500 terabytes,' Hartung said.

'We're reaching the physical limits of silicon computers because we cannot pack more transistors into a tiny chip. But the brain is wired completely differently. It has about 100 billion neurons linked through over 10¹⁵ connection points. It's an enormous power difference compared to our current technology.'

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A host of work is required before the biocomputers could be anything like practical for actual use. They would need to be much bigger – current brain organoids have about 50 000 cells, but scientists would need 10 million of them for organic intelligence – as well as being able to communicate by sending and receiving information to understand what they are thinking.

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As well as improving computing, the organic computers could also help tell us more about the brains that inspired them. Researchers could compare how healthy organoids learn with that of people who may have neurological conditions, for instance, as well as testing how substances damage the brain.

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Researchers note that producing brains that are able to learn, remember – and perhaps even understand – in the same way that humans do could bring ethical challenges.

‘A key part of our vision is to develop OI in an ethical and socially responsible manner,’ Hartung said. ‘For this reason, we have partnered with ethicists from the very beginning to establish an “embedded ethics” approach. All ethical issues will be continuously assessed by teams made up of scientists, ethicists, and the public, as the research evolves.’

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The new work is described in a paper, ‘Organoid intelligence (OI): The new frontier in biocomputing and intelligence in-a-dish’, published in the journal *Frontiers in Science*.

¹*Pong*: a video game produced in the 1970s; a simple game by contemporary standards

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