**Pearson Edexcel International Advanced Level**

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# English Language

## International Advanced Subsidiary
## Unit 1: Language – Context and Identity

**Source Booklet**

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**Text A is an edited extract from an article published in the *New Statesman,* a British political and cultural magazine, in September 2016. The article discusses the issue of falling levels of educational attainment in white working-class boys in England. The Malling School in Kent exemplifies the problem and Carl Roberts, Principal at the school, provides his opinions on the issue.**

The lost boys: how the white working-class got left behind
By Tim Wigmore

One pleasant Thursday at 3.20pm, Carl Roberts, the principal of the Malling School in Kent, walks to the front gates, greeting pupils as they arrive and leave. "It's all about modelling positive behaviour for young people from disadvantaged backgrounds," he explains.

At the Malling School last year only 30 per cent of pupils got five good GCSEs including English and Maths. These results are indicative of a wider trend. Across England, the white working class performs badly. A white working-class boy is less than half as likely to get five good GCSEs, including the core subjects, as the average student in England, and among white boys the gap between how poor and middle-class pupils do is wider than for any other ethnic background.

A few hundred metres away from the Malling School lies the East Malling estate known to local people as Clare Park. About one-third of the school's 700 students live in tower blocks here. Roberts says that, all too often, these pupils "will be worried about their parents, they will be worried about where their next meal is coming from. And suddenly they are no longer worried about passing exams."

Roberts can relate to this. He grew up in the 1980s on a council estate in Tewkesbury, Gloucestershire, and his father was unemployed for many of his teenage years. Roberts attended the local comprehensive and, helped by his supportive parents, got the best GCSE grades in his year. He went on to study at the University of Bath.

"My childhood shaped my values, which is why I now work with children from disadvantaged backgrounds, with a view to ensuring they can have the future I was lucky enough to have," he says.

When pupils arrive at the Malling School at the age of 11, their attainment is already 20 per cent below the national average. Here, as across England, much of the damage to deprived pupils' prospects is done even before primary school begins. In his or her first years of life, a young child with two highly educated parents will receive 40 minutes a day more parental engagement in playing and reading – 240 hours more per year – than one with two low-educated parents. By the age of five, there is an average 19-month gap in school readiness between the most and least disadvantaged children.

"This is a wider issue that's actually nothing to do with schools," Roberts tells me. "If you're going to tackle [it], you need to do it between the ages of nought and two in the family home. It's a social issue, not an education issue."

Parenting seems to explain some of the differences in results between white children and those of other ethnic groups on FSMs*. Studies suggest that ethnic-minority parents often have higher aspirations for their children and are more involved with their education. More engaged parents can transform a child's educational prospects.

Throughout the Western world, boys now work less hard at school than girls and get worse results. Across 64 countries surveyed last year, boys were less likely than girls to do

homework and to read for enjoyment as well as have negative attitudes towards school and turn up late. Girls aged 15 were, on average, a year ahead of their male peers in reading aptitude.

The gender gap is particularly high among the white working class in England. For every two disadvantaged white boys who go to university, three disadvantaged white girls do: the highest gap between boys and girls on FSMs in any ethnic group.

White working-class boys suffer from a lack of positive role models. The decreasing numbers of well-educated, working-class men in public life makes poor white boys less willing to work hard at school. "It's not cool for boys to do well. They have stereotypes to live up to," a girl at Canterbury High School tells me.

Another factor working against young boys is that most teachers in the UK are female and middle class. Less than 15 per cent of primary school teachers in England are male. And poor children are more likely than advantaged children to grow up with only one parent. In nine cases out of ten, children from broken families live mostly with their mother rather than their father, and so have no male role model.

White boys suffer in particular because of the legacy of deindustrialisation and the collapse of secure jobs for life. There is more competition for jobs than ever before. This bodes ill for white working-class boys who now rank bottom for educational attainment in England. Their position relative both to girls and to other ethnic groups has never been lower. In the job market, poor white boys are left standing at the back of the queue.

The gender gap, too, continues to grow. On current trends, a girl born in 2016 will be 75 per cent more likely than a boy to proceed to higher education. For the first time in history, it will become the norm for women to date and marry men with fewer educational qualifications than they have.

Back at the Malling School, Roberts is content as he lingers by the gates. "They've all left incredibly happy, having had a very positive day," he says. Then he pauses, and regrets that many of the children "may not have their own bedroom or their own workspace. They may not even have books in their house." By the time they return to school tomorrow, many boys at the Malling School may have fallen even further behind.

**Glossary**

*FSM*: Free School Meals. These are provided for children from families on a low income.

**Text B is an edited extract of Michelle Obama's speech to an audience of girls and young women in Madrid 2016. Her visit to Spain was part of an international tour to promote her 'Let Girls Learn' initiative. Michelle Obama is the wife of Barack Obama who was President of the U.S.A. from 2009 to 2017.**

Hello, everyone. Hola! And unfortunately, that's the extent of my Spanish.

I want to thank all of you – so many brilliant, ambitious, accomplished young women. You all are so fortunate to live in a country that gives you so many opportunities to learn and to follow your dreams for your lives and for your careers.

But unfortunately, many young women today aren't so lucky. The fact is that right now, more than 62 million girls worldwide – girls who are just as smart and talented as all of you - can't develop their full potential because they don't have the chance to attend school. And that doesn't just affect their life's prospects, it affects the prospects of their families and their countries, and it affects all of you and your country as well.

See, what we know is that when girls don't go to school, they earn lower salaries. They get married earlier. They have higher infant and maternal mortality rates. And they're more likely to contract HIV, less likely to immunize their children. So when girls can't go to school that affects their families' health and the public health of their nations. It can even affect the strength of their economies and the security of their countries. And in today's interconnected world, all of that can affect the health, prosperity and security of our countries too.

And that's part of the reason why I'm here today in Spain after my visit this week to two countries in Africa, Liberia and Morocco, where many girls struggle every day to get an education. It is my hope that sharing their stories of struggle and triumph will inspire you and young women like you around the world to advocate for change.

So let me first give you a sense of the challenges these girls face. In Liberia the average family lives on less than two euros a day. So often parents just can't afford to educate their daughters. Teen pregnancy is common, and pregnant girls are often shamed and pressured to drop out of school. And sometimes it's not even safe for girls to go to school in the first place. Some girls face dangerous commutes to and from school, and girls are sometimes even sexually harassed or assaulted at school.

The girls I met in Morocco face a whole different set of obstacles. Nearly all Moroccan girls attend school until they're about 12, but for girls in rural areas, that's often when their education ends since the nearest secondary schools are often hours away from their homes. In fact, just 14 percent of girls in rural Morocco attend high school. Instead, girls are often kept home to do household labor; many get married when they're just barely teenagers and start having children of their own.

And so many of these girls, they have big plans for their lives. The girls I met this week dream of attending university, dream of becoming doctors and teachers, engineers, entrepreneurs. But so often, brilliant, ambitious, accomplished just isn't enough simply because of their gender.

It's not just about whether parents can afford school fees or countries can build enough schools. It's also about whether families and communities think that girls are even worthy of an education in the first place. It's about whether girls are valued only for their bodies, for their labor, for their reproductive capacities – or are they valued for their minds as well. And it's about whether women are viewed as second-class citizens, or as full human beings entitled to the same rights and opportunities as men. Because I believe

that a society's willingness to truly value women and girls is directly connected to its willingness to invest in them as full people.

So the question is, how do we begin to change these inequalities in our cultures – to not just change laws and policies, but to change hearts and minds? And that's where all of you can help. I think that some of that challenge falls on your generation.

And that's why, last year, my husband and I launched an initiative called Let Girls Learn, an effort that isn't just about investing more money in girls' education but also about changing how women and girls are viewed and valued around the world. And I am thrilled that as part of Let Girls Learn, this week, we announced a series of new U.S. government initiatives to help break down barriers for girls all across Liberia and Morocco. We're doing this because we want girls from all backgrounds to be seen as worthy of an education.

We can't pretend that we don't have the capacity to make a difference. Because unlike those 62 million girls, we have a voice. Every single one of you has access to social media – I know my daughters have it - and I know that most of you have your smartphones with you here today, so you can reach hundreds, thousands, maybe even millions of people right now, right from where you're sitting today. You can get on Instagram and Snapchat and Twitter - and I'm sure there's other stuff out there that I don't even know exists and every one of you can start educating people about the challenges girls face as they try to go to school.

And even more important, you can take action to help these girls. If you need help, go to 62MillionGirls.com, which is a site that's available in both English and Spanish, and you'll find all kinds of projects that you can support today – things from building school bathrooms for girls to creating girls' leadership and mentorship programs. So many girls are counting on you. They need you to step up and create an international movement of young women and men who are telling their stories, who are finding ways to support their ambitions.

And if you think this challenge seems too big or too difficult, I just want you to think about the challenges that these girls are facing and overcoming every single day. What I tell myself is that if these girls can overcome the most overwhelming odds to get their education I know that we all can find a few hours to get on social media and tell the world their stories. I know that we all can support efforts to help them go to school. And I know that we all can change our cultures here in Spain and around the world to honor and respect women and girls, to see them as leaders worthy of an education, capable of achieving their dreams. I know we can do this, because I believe in the power of young women like all of you to truly change the world.

And I want to end today by letting you know just how impressed I am by all of you. I have heard about you and read your stories, and I know what you have to offer this world. And let me tell you, I can't wait to see everything you all will accomplish in the years ahead. So stay strong, work hard, and keep pushing forward. Is that a deal?

Thank you all so much. Thank you so much. Gracias.

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