

Pearson Edexcel International GCSE

Monday 14 January 2019

Morning (Time: 3 hours)

Paper Reference **4EB1/01R**

English Language B

Paper 1

Extracts Booklet

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Text One

The importance of being organised

adapted from a contribution to a website by Sophie Allen

In this passage, the writer presents her ideas on being organised.



Anyone that knows me is probably already aware I'm maybe, sort of, just a tiny bit absent-minded. Okay - so I'm very absent-minded. My thoughts are scrambled, I'm incapable of remembering anything important and I'm probably one of the messiest people I know. I also consistently forget at least one essential item when I get the train between college and home; usually it's a toothbrush, once it was trousers and recently I forgot my tablet and my train ticket. Great.

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Knowing from experience how annoying being so scatter-brained can prove to be, I know first-hand the value of effective organising. When it comes to college, school, work, business and even social lives, getting yourself organised could not only save you time and money, but a whole lot of stress, too. Clutter (both physical and mental), bad time management and poor accounting can make a hugely negative impact not only on business, but on personal and academic productivity.

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At this time of year, with exams, assessments and, for some, the dreaded 'real world' job search looming, keeping organised is essential if you want to be super-productive and really achieve your best. So, here is a brief guide to how to start getting your life in check, by someone who really knows.

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Probably one of the most essential items in my organisational survival pack is my beloved academic planner. When I say 'beloved', that's probably a bit of an understatement. I'm more or less obsessed with it. A well-kept planner can help you to keep track of the work you need to do, people to call, people to see, shifts at work and, well, everything, as well as being a pretty nice way of looking back on what you've been doing and achieving once it's full. Having your whole life in one place is extremely useful. Unless you lose it of course.

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'I haven't started yet. I'm making lists.'

Sometimes it can be easy to get important tasks jumbled up – even if you've written them in your planner – which makes it difficult to get on and complete them. A 'To Do' list can really help when you're struggling to manage your workload or even tasks like making important phone calls or tidying your room. It's important, though, to list tasks effectively. Break down big tasks like 'do literature essay' into tasty, bitesize chunks, or maybe even into little crumbs if it's a particularly hefty task you have on your plate, to avoid giving yourself mental indigestion. If you stick to your list of small jobs to do, that big task that seemed so scary will be completed in no time. 25

This is great for working on essays and revision, but also a valuable tip for you all – become a ruthless task splitter and, if you're not working alone, don't be afraid to delegate the chunks or discuss sharing them out. You will really start getting things done. As someone who has a tendency to experience an emotional breakdown when things get too much, I find that well-written lists are absolute lifesavers. 30

'Tidy room, tidy mind ...'

Jess, my little sister (she's 18, but still little to me) uses this as her mantra. Whenever she gets stressed, or has a lot of coursework or revision to get on with, the first thing she does before she starts anything else is tidy her room. It's usually pretty tidy anyway compared to mine, which looks like I've either been burgled or have been setting off explosives, but the fact is that a cluttered and untidy environment can really hinder productivity. 35

If your working environment is untidy, it can be difficult to find things, it can disrupt your concentration and it can stop you from being able to spread out. Removing physical clutter is like removing mental clutter – having clean, organised surroundings can make you feel calmer and more in control and more prepared to get on with the tasks at hand. 40

Finally ... Remain calm.

You won't always achieve all of the tasks you set out to do, but getting flustered, stressed out or upset when you realise you haven't had time to do something will only make things worse. Stay calm, keep your mind organised and take things a step at a time. 45

So, there we have it. A few easy steps to making things that bit more manageable, and preventing any major meltdowns be they related to work, school, college or just life in general. 50

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Text Two

The Bedroom as Battleground

adapted from an article by Jan Hoffman

In this passage, the writer discusses the problems that untidiness can cause.



Kristyna Krueger took a deep breath, bracing herself to enter her 14-year-old son Brandon's bedroom. Then she gingerly stepped in and described the spectacle.

'Every drawer is open,' Ms. Krueger said. 'His desk, the bedside table, his computer desk, his wardrobe. You cannot walk without stepping on clothes, cords for charging things, cologne and body-spray bottles.'

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She sidestepped his workout equipment but nearly tripped over a bowl of crushed potato chips that had been obscured by a sports award plaque.

'There are maybe thirty hangers in his wardrobe, but they're empty. Except for the clothes he would never wear, like a suit, which have been pushed to the back. But the bottom of the wardrobe, that's where his clothes are. On top of shoes. Which are on top of papers. And empty shoe boxes.' She concluded, 'His room is an absolute wreck.'

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Yet Ms. Krueger's tone was surprisingly matter-of-fact. With two older teenagers at home, she has become accustomed to the fury and frustration familiar to parents who have ventured into the teenage wasteland their offspring proudly call a bedroom.

'Parents are embarrassed,' said Deborah Silberberg, an owner of ShipShape, a professional organising company. 'They wonder whether it represents their lack of parenting control. It's hard for parents to have to let go of their child.'

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As Dr. Barbara Greenberg, a psychologist and author of 'Teenage as a Second Language,' observed, 'The more you make it an issue, the more you'll prolong the problem. It's in their nature to assert boundaries and say no. So parents have to do what seems paradoxical: let it go. Otherwise, the child will have identified it as a wonderful way to misbehave.'

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Teenagers are on a long march toward independent adulthood, as psychologists like Dr. Marsha Levy-Warren, the author of 'The Adolescent Journey,' points out.

'Kids are so preoccupied during adolescence with who they want to be that they are inside themselves,' Dr. Levy-Warren said. 'They lose sight of what's outside. They don't even see their rooms. There's a lot for them to figure out. Most kids are quite chaotic internally, and rooms reflect the degree of chaos.'

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His mother may call his room an 'absolute wreck,' but what does it mean to Brandon Krueger, who practises with the marching band at 6.45am, practises football daily, plays three games a week and maintains an A-minus average in school? 'My privacy, my place to relax and to get some peace. I don't clean it very often. I am busy and tired all the time.'

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Kristi has a 13-year-old daughter whose room is an archaeological site of dirty socks, sports-drink bottles, ripped papers and empty snack wrappers. Despite moving house her daughter has new friends, has made the gymnastics and volleyball teams and gets straight As. So Kristi is fine with her daughter's bedroom-as-rubbish tip. 'It's the one place where she gets to be herself,' Kristi said.

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Parenting blogs reverberate with cries for guidance about how to deal with teenagers and their rooms. But there is a parallel universe on teenagers' blogs, where teenagers seek advice about how to deal with the mess. Prominent among the clean-up tips: 'Get in the mood by blasting your favourite music' and 'Limit Facebook breaks to 30 minutes.'

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Also, to many teenagers, attacking the wreckage can feel overwhelming. Gina Atanasoff has just about given up. 'My room has so much clutter,' she said, 'that it's too hard to penetrate.' But she has reframed the task and given herself a pat on the back. 'I read online somewhere that creative people function better with mess,' she said.

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The question looms: How do you get teenagers to do something they don't want to do?

First, experts say, praise their accomplishments, assuring them that you don't consider them to be out-of-control messes personally. Then what? Threats? (No phone and no weekend plans for the foreseeable future.) Bribery? (Offer movie tickets when the teenager evicts the village of bacteria living under the bed.) Kidnapping? (Shove the teenager's clothes into a rubbish bag and return them once designated areas of the room have been cleaned.)

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Experts say that because adolescents are stubborn and defensive, harsh approaches tend to have limited success. Try to pop the tension of the power struggle with a pinprick of humour. Like the mother who rented a white biohazard suit and helmet. She appeared at her daughter's door and shouted to an invisible crew, 'Come on in, boys!' The daughter started laughing and allowed her mother in. Together they got to work. Others have put yellow crime-scene tape across the bedroom door. One mother knew she couldn't get her sons to clean up, but she did want to defuse the arguments. So she posted a sign on their door: 'Monkey Cage.'

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Sources taken/adapted from:

Text One: <http://enterprise.shef.ac.uk/2012/04/importance-organised-terminally-scrambled>

Text Two: <http://www.nytimes.com/2012/11/01/garden/teenage-bedroom-as-battleground.html?mcubz=0>

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