

**Pearson Edexcel International GCSE**

# **English Language B**

**Paper 1**

Thursday 9 June 2016 – Afternoon  
**Extracts Booklet**

Paper Reference  
**4EB0/01R**

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## Text One

### 'I am a Sports Fan'

adapted from an article by Karin Swanson



I don't pretend to enjoy all sports, nor do I claim to know more about a player, team, or game than the next fan. But I don't take basketball lightly and find it insulting when people tell me I only enjoy attending or watching games because I want to prove I can 'hang out with the guys'. Part of the issue for women like me who enjoy sports is that some girls do perpetuate the stereotypes by watching sports to get attention from men. There are also plenty of men who don't enjoy following sports (least of all college basketball). It's fine if you don't like sports - regardless of your gender.

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Some men, and women too, feel the need to assert their superior sports knowledge over female sports fans. In my experience it's a fine line - guys typically find it attractive that a girl likes sports, but don't like a girl who claims to know more about them. But, there are many different sorts of fans - some people just care about a particular team or even a specific player in one sport or only feel compelled to watch during high-profile sporting events such as the football World Cup or the Olympics.

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Personally, I am not the type of person who intensely scrutinises every aspect of every play during every game. But just because I might not know which sports blog had the best recap of last night's game or find myself concerned that a certain player is being traded, that doesn't make me any less of a fan. I applaud the fans who admit they don't know much about sports but enjoy watching the game to be a part of the shared experience.

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To me, watching sports has always been about feeling connected to something you have no control over. It's about putting blind faith in a group of people you will probably never meet, but feeling their triumphs and failures with them. Marvelling at their athletic abilities while accepting you will most likely never possess their skills.

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While I am passionate about more than just college basketball, I have been a devoted supporter of my team, University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA), for a solid five years now. I have stuck with them through thick and thin (let's be real, more so the latter) - cried for them, sacrificed sleep (among other things) for them, and suffered a handful of anxiety attacks for my boys in blue and gold.

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I'm not very patriotic, but when I watch my team hit the court, I feel a unique sense of pride. It's this feeling that keeps me up at night on the East Coast of America, streaming the UCLA basketball game, often unapologetically alone, in my room. 30

The lack of predictability in any sports game or match is what I find most appealing. You can never really know with absolute certainty how any given play will develop, as even the simplest move can be interrupted. While this is an obvious statement, it never fails to entertain me. I live for the surprises and the upsets, the underdogs and the last-minute winners. 35

In my varied experience of both playing and watching sports, I've met some unusual characters and bonded with complete strangers. I chatted with a professor from Columbia University at a basketball game, played a game of pick-up soccer with local Peruvians at 12,000 feet along the Inca Trail, and was stampeded by Spanish teenagers when they won the European Football Cup. 40

At the end of the day, sports bring us together, regardless of gender or class or ideology or age. Whether or not you know or care about the logistics of the game – whether you're a loyalist or a fair-weather fan – you can appreciate this feeling.

## Text Two

### 'Fever Pitch'

adapted from the autobiography by Nick Hornby



On Saturday, 15th March, League Cup Final Day, I went to Wembley Football Stadium for the first time. First Division Arsenal were playing Swindon Town, a Third Division team, and no one seemed to have any real doubts that Arsenal would win the game, and therefore their first cup for sixteen years. I wasn't so sure. Silent in the car all the way there, I asked Dad on the steps up to the stadium whether he was as confident as everyone else. I tried to make the question conversational sports chatter between two men on a day out - but it wasn't like that at all: what I really wanted was reassurance from an adult, a parent, my father, that what I was about to witness wasn't going to scar me for life. 'Look,' I should have said to him, 'when they're playing at home, in an ordinary League game, I'm so frightened they'll lose that I can't think or speak or even breathe, sometimes. If you think Swindon have any kind of chance at all, even a chance in a million, it's best if you take me home now, because I don't think I'd be able to cope.'

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But I simply asked him, in an assumed spirit of idle curiosity, who he thought would win the game, and he said he thought Arsenal would, three or four nothing, the same as everyone else did, and so I got the reassurance I was looking for; but I was scarred for life anyway. My father's happy confidence later seemed like a betrayal.

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I was so scared that the Wembley experience - a crowd of a hundred thousand, the huge pitch, the noise, the sense of anticipation - passed me by completely. If I noticed anything about the place at all it was that it wasn't Highbury (the Arsenal home ground), and my sense of alienation simply added to my unease. I sat shivering until Swindon scored shortly before half-time, and then the fear turned to misery. The goal was one of the most ridiculously stupid ever given away by a team of professionals: a clumsy pass, followed by a missed tackle, followed by a goalkeeper slipping over in the mud and allowing the ball to trickle over the line just inside the right-hand post. For the first time, suddenly, I became aware of all the Swindon fans sitting around us, with their awful accents, their absurd innocent glee, their delirious disbelief. I hadn't ever come across opposing fans before, and I loathed them in a way I had never before loathed strangers.

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With one minute remaining in the game, Arsenal equalised, unexpectedly and bizarrely, a diving header from a rebound off the goalkeeper's knee. I tried not to weep with relief, but the effort was beyond me; I stood on the seat and yelled at my father, over and over

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again, 'We'll be all right now, won't we? We'll be all right now!' He patted me on the back, pleased that something had been rescued from the dismal and expensive afternoon, and told me that yes, now, finally, everything would be OK.

It was his second betrayal of the day. Swindon scored twice more in extra time, one a scrappy goal from a corner, the other after a magnificent sixty-yard run, and it was all too much to bear. When the final whistle went, my father betrayed me for the third time in less than three hours: he rose to his feet to applaud the extraordinary underdogs, and I ran for the exit.

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When my father caught up with me he was furious. He delivered his ideas on sportsmanship with great force (what did I care about sportsmanship?), marched me to the car, and we drove home in silence. Football may have provided us with a new medium through which we could communicate, but that was not to say that we used it, or that what we chose to say was necessarily positive.

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### Sources taken/adapted from:

Text One:

[http://www.huffingtonpost.com/karin-swanson/being-a-female-sports-fan\\_b\\_4950252.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/karin-swanson/being-a-female-sports-fan_b_4950252.html)

Photo:

[http://www.askingsmarterquestions.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/07/female\\_fans1.jpg](http://www.askingsmarterquestions.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/07/female_fans1.jpg)

Text Two:

*Fever Pitch* by Nick Hornby, Penguin Books

Photo:

[http://1nildown2oneup.net/wp-content/uploads/2012/12/gun\\_\\_1217942541\\_fans\\_scarves.jpg](http://1nildown2oneup.net/wp-content/uploads/2012/12/gun__1217942541_fans_scarves.jpg)

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