



EUNOIA JUNIOR COLLEGE
JC2 Preliminary Examination 2024
General Certificate of Education Advanced Level
Higher 1

GENERAL PAPER

8881/02

Paper 2

28 August 2024

INSERT

1 hour 30 minutes

READ THESE INSTRUCTIONS FIRST

This Insert contains the passages for comprehension.

This document consists of **4** printed pages.

[Turn over

Passage 1. *Maura Kelly questions the value of modern-day travel.*

- 1 If anything makes me feel like a stranger in modern life, it is a resolution I made after turning thirty: I will travel only when exceptional circumstances arise. When I did fly frequently, in my twenties, it was not because I was seeking ‘enjoyment’ or to ‘escape’. What I wanted was education and experience: some sense of the peoples and cultures of different places. However, I was instead disappointed by how familiar many cities were, with ubiquitous coffeehouse chains like Starbucks, and the same collection of fast fashion outlets. 5
- 2 This is not to say that travel is devoid of benefits. Indeed, travelling to places remote enough (like a rainforest in Belize or the exotic Amazon) would affect one powerfully. Looking up at trees that seem to reach straight through the clouds to the heavens would not only make one feel the transcendent majesty of nature but also one's own insignificance in a universe vast in space and time. Yet, it is also common for travellers who visit places as exotic as the Amazon to be troubled by guilt, as if simply by being in these pristine places, they would have played a role in degrading them. As David Foster Wallace puts it in his book, *Consider the Lobster*: "To be a mass tourist is to spoil the very unspoiledness you are there to experience." 10 15
- 3 Another often cited reason for travelling is to gain knowledge. However, travelling no longer seems like a very efficient method of education as one can learn far more through regular trips to the library. For example, a single audiobook, *The Meaning of Life*, can offer a philosophy course that enables one to learn about texts as diverse as *The Bhagavad-Gita*, and the *Meditations* of Marcus Aurelius; about spiritual leaders like the Dalai Lama and the Native American medicine man Lame Deer; and about belief systems like Confucianism, and Jainism. No single destination can offer this (at the comfort of our living room, no less). While learning from books may be less visceral than seeing the ruins of Greece or the temples of Sri Lanka, it is no less worthwhile. 20 25
- 4 Indeed, the modern obsession with travelling is ludicrous. In a month, in just the United States alone, companies cancelled 49,000 flights and delayed 30,000, affecting 30 million travellers who racked up \$2.5 billion in related expenses — presumably for hotel rooms, cabs and emergency phone sessions with counsellors in order to maintain their basic sanity. There is nothing calming about travelling. Travellers place themselves in a dystopian metropolis that is the airport: the sprawl, noise pollution, automobile traffic, stop-and-frisk policies, and infuriating bureaucratic nonsense. 30
- 5 Ultimately, the rage for travelling (along with consumerism and workaholism) serves as a distraction that muffles the inner voices asking important yet challenging questions: *Who am I? Why do I feel so lonely? Am I living an authentic life that is in keeping with my values?* Perhaps, there is merit in quelling our wanderlust. As Ralph Waldo Emerson aptly puts it, "Our minds travel when our bodies are forced to stay at home." 35 40

Passage 2. *Meena Singhal considers the value of modern-day travel.*

- 1 Most people today want to travel as a respite from the monotony of daily life. Yet, many put it off, dismissing it as an indulgent expense; convinced that money spent on airplanes, accommodation, and tours could be better spent elsewhere, like paying off a home loan. On the contrary, travelling has countless rewards and can be life changing in so many incredible ways. 5
- 2 For most people, travelling helps them feel refreshed as they are removed from the hustle and bustle of everyday life. It also improves physical well-being. Travel means being physically active because one is walking, hiking, paddle boarding, or swimming so that in itself lowers blood pressure and builds stamina. Besides, travel can also help to detoxify negative thoughts, which consequently helps to boost productivity. 10
- 3 Another important benefit of travel is how it facilitates appreciation of cultural diversity. Learning about other cultures during our travels encourages us to be more open-minded as we come to respect other ways of being. It also helps dispel negative stereotypes and personal biases against different groups of people, especially when we experience the kindness extended to us (by strangers, no less) in times of need. 15
- 4 Travelling also allows us to learn beyond the walls of a classroom. While there is value in formal education, we can learn so much more about history, geography, sociology, economics, and language through firsthand experience. Books can convey information and theories, but travel brings to life what we read in books.
- 5 Lastly, one of the most significant advantages of travel is its profound impact on personal growth. This can happen when travellers find themselves in uncharted circumstances. Whether they are robbed in a dimly lit street or injured on an unfortunate hike, learning to deal with these travel misadventures makes them more confident about handling stressful situations in unfamiliar environments. Travel misadventures therefore increase our mental resilience, inspiring us to grow wiser. 20 25
- 6 There is no better time than the present to make our travel dreams a reality. The question we now need to ask is not where we want to go next, but what do we hope to change about our lives, and then travel to make that happen.

Passage 3. *Samuel Cornell and Amy Peden discuss a concerning trend of modern-day travel.*

- 1 In the age of selfies, the act of taking photographs of yourself has become a daily ritual. Driven by social media algorithms, many of us now flock to natural places for the best selfie background. Unfortunately, our quest for the perfect shot has begun to harm the very nature we aim to appreciate.
- 2 For many modern-day travellers, traditional safety measures are not enough. At Moran Falls in Queensland's Lamington National Park, a famous view across the gorge had been obscured by vegetation (an attempt by authorities to reshape nature to make better scenery and keep visitors safer). This led some visitors to jump the fence at the viewing platform and stand directly on top of a tall cliff for the perfect selfie. Their pursuit of travel aesthetics has caused injuries, even fatalities. But travellers continue to engage in such preposterous risk-taking. To them, it is a worthwhile endeavour if it means garnering admiration on social media. 5 10
- 3 Even if travellers do not resort to such risky photography, accommodating increased interest while conserving nature remains a thorny challenge. This is because all travellers need to do is pin their location or geotag these natural hotspots. It will invite a horde of tourists that trample on plants and disturb wildlife, causing long-term damage to delicate ecosystems. 15
- 4 What we need now are responsible selfie and tourism campaigns on social media that help to manage the spurt of interest while keeping people and nature safe.

Copyright Acknowledgement:

Reading Passages © Adapted from Maura Kelly; *Stay Home: Travel Is Overrated*; 09 March 2014; <https://time.com/14283/stay-home-travel-is-overrated/>
 © Adapted from Meena Singhal; *The Transformational Power of Travel*; 07 October 2019; <https://community.thriveglobal.com/the-transformational-power-of-travel/>
 © Adapted from Samuel Cornell & Amy Peden; *Trampling plants, damaging rock art, risking your life: taking selfies in nature has a cost*; 23 August 2023; <https://theconversation.com/trampling-plants-damaging-rock-art-risking-your-life-taking-selfies-in-nature-has-a-cost-211901>