



Cambridge O Level

ENGLISH LANGUAGE

1123/12

Paper 1 Reading

May/June 2025

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2 hours

INFORMATION

- This insert contains the reading passages.
- You may annotate this insert and use the blank spaces for planning. **Do not write your answers** on the insert.



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

Read **Text A** and answer **Question 1** and **Question 2** on the question paper.

Text A: *The elephant and the boy*

Jahan's job is to look after a young elephant that is being transported by ship to the Sultan's palace in Istanbul as a gift for the Sultan.

- 1 The boy named Jahan had barely completed twelve years of his life when he saw Istanbul for the very first time.

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Jahan offered him handfuls of sweet almonds, which he always carried ready in his sash, smiling as Chota popped the nuts into his mouth with a swing of his trunk.

Read **Text B** and answer **Question 3** on the question paper.

Text B: Local residents against plans for city zoo

- 1 Local residents fighting to stop the closure of a city centre zoo say they are still confident they can force bosses at the famous tourist attraction to change their minds.
- 2 The residents are challenging plans to close the existing zoo – established over 130 years ago – and move it to a new rural location over 40 km and two bus rides away. Funds for the move will be raised by selling off the historic zoo site for building development – something protesters living nearby are furious about. ‘Can you imagine the disruption of all that construction work?’ asks longtime local resident Mo Gurley. ‘There are plans to build 220 apartments! And offices – who even needs those? It’s so sad. I remember visiting that zoo as a child and as a parent taking my own children there too.’ 5
- 3 Last month, in a bid to calm fears that new generations of city youngsters would miss out on seeing rare and endangered wild animals up close, the zoo released computer-generated images of plans for the new visitor attraction, ‘Project Planet’. “Project Planet” – our virtual reality zoo and wild area – will still feature some of the older zoo residents, including the black-eyed lemurs, in their new, far larger enclosures,’ explains the zoo’s director Benjamin Bentley. He confirms, however, that the lions and tigers, some of the more popular animals, will be sold to other zoos. 10 15
- 4 ‘And we’re excited about our collaboration with innovative design media companies and renowned conservationists. Most notably, we have worked with animal welfare campaigner, conservationist and documentary maker, Lucy Graves, to develop 4D documentary films and interactive displays. These aim to show the role of zoos in the bigger world picture,’ adds Bentley. ‘We’re also delighted that from next year there will be a free direct bus service from the city.’ 20
- 5 Of course, opinions on zoos are often divided and controversial: some say that zoos do important research, playing a part in raising awareness to protect at-risk species and habitats; others find that claim less convincing. The plan to close the traditional zoo has been met with mixed reactions from environmental campaigners and conservationists. They are pleased to see the focus moving from entertaining to educating but are worried about the departure of some of the big cats to other zoos. There’s a responsibility to keep these animals safe and stress free – transporting them over long distances to other zoos is a concern. 25 30
- 6 Meanwhile, employees working for the zoo say there is growing anxiety, and even anger, at the potential loss of jobs and the way the plans are being decided. ‘It is unthinkable that this beautiful, iconic place, loved by generations of city dwellers, could be abandoned with no public consultation,’ says one employee who asks not to be named. ‘The reality is that only a tiny percentage of the animals will be able to move to the new site. There’s much less land available for them than bosses are suggesting and apparently parking will be restricted, so even if people wanted to drive all that way to visit, they wouldn’t be able to.’ 35
- 7 Benjamin Bentley is not backing down. ‘We’ve worked closely with conservationists to develop our species survival plan so that we can really focus our resources on animals that most need our help, maximising the impact we can make in the future,’ he insists. 40

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