



Cambridge International AS Level

ENGLISH GENERAL PAPER

8021/23

Paper 2 Comprehension

October/November 2025

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1 hour 45 minutes

INFORMATION

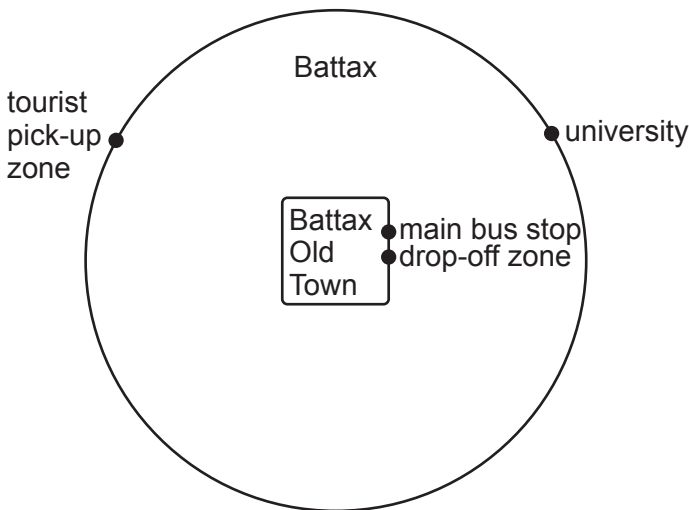
- This insert contains all the resources referred to in the questions.
- You may annotate this insert and use the blank spaces for planning. **Do not write your answers** on the insert.



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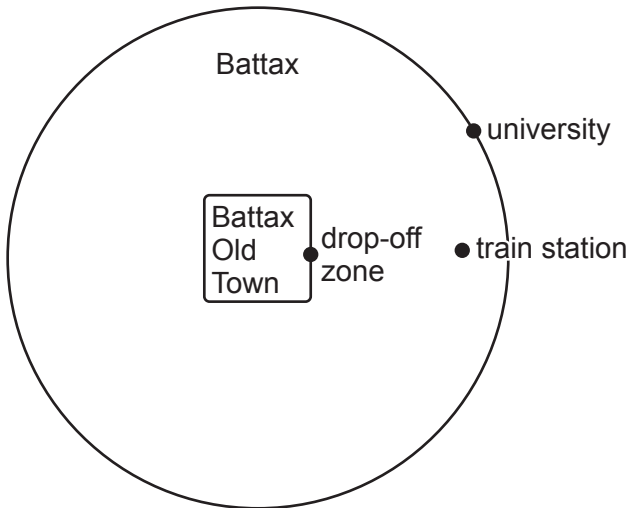
Material for Section A**Background**

Battax Old Town, the historical town centre of Battax, has many well-known ancient sites and world-renowned museums. In recent years, Battax Old Town was designated a cultural heritage site resulting in a sharp increase in tourism ever since. Many of the streets in Battax Old Town were laid in the eighteenth century, so the area is protected by strict planning regulations. Battax Old Town is pedestrianised, but nearby there is a drop-off zone for taxis. Furthermore, Battax is home to an expanding university which has a world-leading engineering department. The university is situated eight kilometres away from the centre of town. The majority of students use the university bus service to travel to the campus. Buses run every twenty minutes throughout the day from the main bus stop, which is located next to the drop-off zone. Residents have recently complained to the local council* regarding the traffic issues in Battax Old Town. Town planners have been tasked with finding alternatives which would reduce the volume of traffic around the centre of town. They have decided on two options:

Option A

Battax Council will introduce a free shuttle bus service for tourists from the pick-up zone to the drop-off zone. Taxis will no longer be permitted to transport tourists to the drop-off zone. The university bus service will continue as normal from the main bus stop.

* administrative body

Option B

The university bus service will relocate its main bus stop to the train station and the university will double the number of buses. All university buses will follow an alternative route which will avoid the area around Battax Old Town. Taxis will continue to be used by tourists and the drop-off zone will remain in use.

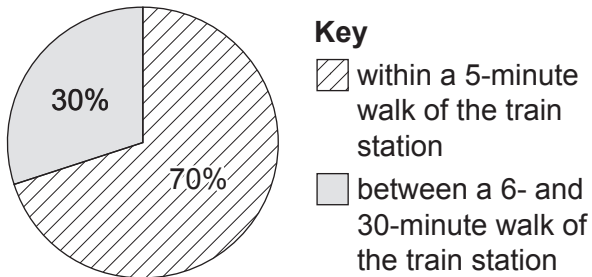
Recent reviews left on the Battax Tourism website

Everyone talks about the Battax Buns and we can see why! The chocolate ones were my favourite, and I certainly did try plenty of flavours. We walked into Battax Old Town, avoiding the busy roads, so we were able to fully appreciate the history and beauty of the place. Highly recommended.

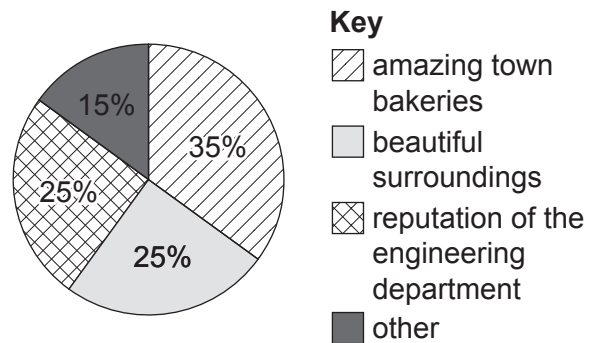
Avoid! The traffic fumes were overpowering and extremely unpleasant. We paid a fortune to get to Battax Old Town. We wasted an hour waiting for a taxi and then spent another 40 minutes stuck in a traffic jam. The locals told us to walk, but we're getting old and it was just too far. This was not the relaxing break we'd hoped for.

A selection of the Battax University student questionnaire feedback

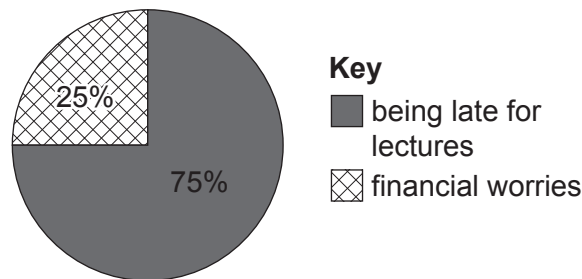
Location of student accommodation



Favourite aspects of studying in Battax



Main concerns of student life



Conversation between students on the university bus

Miriam: *(looking agitated)* We're not going to get there in time. I can't be late again after the chaos yesterday.

Lola: *(sighing and nodding in agreement)* Did you see the post from the visiting engineer?

Miriam: *(appearing curious)* No. I haven't looked at my phone. I had so much to catch up on after missing my first lecture.

Lola: *(finding the post on her phone)* Here it is. This guy was due to introduce all of the keynote speakers and he was stuck at the bus stop. He filmed the queues and it's gone viral!

Miriam: *(open-mouthed)* No way! 72 000 views in a day... .

Additional Information

- 1 The engineering department at Battax University hosts conferences three times a year. They are very highly regarded and welcome engineering lecturers from over 30 top universities.
- 2 Peace4Communities was set up by the residents of Battax last year. They currently have over 60 active members who are committed to reducing the noise and traffic pollution in the town.
- 3 Battax is expecting up to three million tourists next year.
- 4 The university plans to install bus shelters at the train station for its students. They estimate this could take six months to complete.
- 5 The council has plans to use double-decker buses for its shuttle service, and each bus could carry 120 tourists.
- 6 Recent data suggests that 60% of tourists take a taxi to Battax Old Town. Others travel on foot.
- 7 The suggested change to the university bus route would take buses through Serenity Park, an affluent and tranquil suburb where many members of Peace4Communities reside.
- 8 Battax's highest rated bakery, We8theBakes, is located across the road from the train station.
- 9 The student feedback questionnaire was handed out during the first lecture of the day.
- 10 The weather in Battax is variable, and over the last two years the town has recorded an average of 281 rainy days per year.
- 11 University students currently pay \$2.50 for a single bus ticket. The alternative route would cost \$2.00 for a single bus ticket.
- 12 Residents have expressed concern about the increasing amount of noise and litter around the train station.
- 13 30% of students completed and returned the feedback questionnaire.
- 14 Battax University's engineering department recently submitted an application for the Engineering University Accreditation at gold-standard level. The results are due to be announced in the next three months.
- 15 The alternative bus route to the university will be four kilometres long.
- 16 The proposed shuttle service for tourists would see buses departing every 15 minutes.

Material for Section B

An article by Joel Snape

‘Eight hours’ sleep! And you must eat breakfast!’ The truth behind some of the biggest health beliefs

Should we really be aiming to walk 10 000 steps a day, or drink two litres of water? Time to sift fact from fiction.

It's easy to think that science is constantly changing its mind on all things dietary and health-based. In fact, our collective understanding is getting more nuanced, with ever-emerging studies and reviews getting us closer and closer to the truth about what is good for our bodies. Here are some widely held beliefs and what science says now – so you can start making informed health decisions this year.

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‘Breakfast is the most important meal of the day.’

This is a tricky one. Although there is nothing about the first meal of the day that makes it especially magical, the timing of meals is increasingly recognised as an important factor in weight loss, alongside metabolic and cardiovascular health. One study on overweight female volunteers found that those who ate a large breakfast saw greater weight loss and waist circumference reduction than another group who had a low-calorie breakfast and larger dinner, even when overall calories were considered.

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‘This might be because missing breakfast leads to increased hunger levels later in the day, resulting in people overeating,’ says Brady Holmer, a researcher at Examine.com, a database of nutrition and supplement research. ‘People who eat a big breakfast instead of a big dinner also tend to lose more weight, feel less hungry and can regulate their blood sugar levels better.’ Although the evidence is mixed, some studies have found that eating more calories earlier in the day could have benefits for metabolic health.

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The bottom line? Breakfast is important if it's something that you enjoy, or helps you to follow a well-balanced diet, and missing it may have varying effects on appetite, weight and energy for different people.

‘You should walk 10 000 steps a day.’

A surprising one: this number wasn't based on any science when it first appeared in the 1960s, but it might be good advice. A study released in 2022 found that walking may reduce the risk of premature death from cardiovascular disease and cancer, with returns diminishing after the 10 000-step ideal. Another study found similar results for dementia, with as little as 3800 steps a day proving effective. But it's also worth stepping up the pace, as the dementia study saw a power-walker's pace showing benefits above and beyond the number of steps walked. Diminishing returns are evident around the 10 000 mark – but up to there, do more if you can, slightly faster if possible.

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‘You need eight hours of sleep.’

It's easy to think of sleep as an individual thing: some people need eight hours, while others can get by on seven. Margaret Thatcher* apparently managed on four, and new parents somehow cope on even less. But in one of the largest ever sleep studies, launched in 2017, participants who reported sleeping the doctor-endorsed seven to eight hours performed better cognitively than those who slept more or fewer than that, regardless of age. Those who slept four hours or fewer performed as if they were almost nine years older. Lack of sleep can also affect testosterone production in young men, and a review of studies published in 2010 suggests it can raise the risk of mortality.

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None of this will help when you are tossing and turning in bed, so give yourself the best chance of a decent night's shuteye by keeping good habits. 'Establish a routine,' says Steve Magness, author of *Do Hard Things*. 'If we repeat things often enough, the brain and body figure it out and synchronise the hormonal and neurochemical release in anticipation of that event – and the same goes for sleeping. Try to get outside early in the day to see some sunlight, which helps to regulate your circadian rhythm** – and cut down on your device use at night.' Another good reason to open an actual paperback book. 45

'You should aim to eat five portions of fruit and veg a day.'

Bad news if you are not already doing this: five might actually be the minimum. 'The five servings recommendation is sound advice, but also somewhat arbitrary,' says Holmer. 'Many studies have found that roughly this number is associated with improved health, but there is also evidence that up to 10 servings per day of these foods can be beneficial.' In general, those who consume more fruits and vegetables have lower risks for cognitive decline and dementia, and diabetes, and may even experience decreased levels of stress. 50
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'You need to drink two litres of water a day.'

Good news for anyone already sick of going to the toilet a dozen times daily: staying hydrated is important, but the recommendation to drink two litres of water a day, while reasonable advice, is not based on hard science. In 1945, the US National Research Council wrote: 'A suitable allowance of water for adults is 2.5 litres daily in most instances ... Most of this quantity is in prepared foods.' And in 1974, a book by leading US nutritionist Dr Frederick J Stare stated: 'How much water each day? This is usually well regulated by various physiological mechanisms, but for the average adult, somewhere around six to eight glasses per 24 hours, and this can be in the form of coffee, tea, milk, soft drinks, etc. Fruits and vegetables are also good sources of water.' The bit about getting your hydration from hot drinks or celery often gets lost. 60
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* Prime Minister of the United Kingdom from 1979 to 1990

** physical, mental and behavioural changes that follow a 24-hour cycle

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