

NAME:

NO:

CLASS:

RIVERSIDE SECONDARY SCHOOL



PRELIMINARY EXAMINATION 2023

SUBJECT : ENGLISH LANGUAGE

CODE/PAPER NO. : 1184 / 02 COMPREHENSION (INSERT)

LEVEL/STREAM : SEC 4 EXPRESS

DURATION : 1 HOUR 50 MINUTES

READ THESE INSTRUCTIONS FIRST

This Insert contains Text 1, Text 2, Text 3 and Text 4.

This document consists of **6** printed pages.

Section A

Study the online advertisement (**Text 1**) and the online blog post (**Text 2**) and answer Questions 1–4 in the Question Booklet.

Text 1 is taken from an online advertisement by the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals.



Text 2 is taken from an online blog written by an animal activist.

As an animal lover and activist, I am appalled by the rate at which pets are abandoned, thanks to their irresponsible owners. Every day, animal shelters are struggling with the increasing rate of abandonment, and the sad part is, most of these animals are left to die a slow, lonely painful death unless they are lucky enough to be rescued. Tying an animal to a bench and leaving it for dead is murder! Why should pets pay for their owners' ignorance? This atrocity needs to be stopped.

Adapted from: <https://www.behance.net/gallery/6755091/SPCA-Animal-Abandonment-Ad> (Text 1)
<https://dharamsalaanimalrescue.org/animal-abandonment-its-just-not-okay/> (Text 2)

Section B

Text 3

The text below is about a man's perilous journey in a desert.

Read it carefully and answer Questions 5–14 in the Question Booklet.

- 1 The Arizona desert had always been a place I yearned to explore long before my fiancée, Angel, entered my life. For years, I had toiled away in a soul-sucking job, my dreams of exploring the desert acting as a beacon of hope amidst the monotony. Now, as I stood alone in the midst of the desert, I felt a sense of disillusionment. Each step I took seemed to lead me further into the abyss of uncertainty. 5
- 2 Lost in the vast expanse of the Arizona desert, my dream holiday vanished into thin air the moment I was cast adrift in the barren wilderness of Arizona. I had lost my bearing two hours after Angel dropped me off at the start of the desert. I was left stranded in the middle of a furnace, far from civilisation. The once familiar landmarks faded into obscurity as I ventured deeper into the unforgiving terrain, desperately trying to find my way back. The merciless sun drained my energy and clouded my judgment. Phoneless and looking ahead at the endless flat valleys dotted with mountain ranges, I swallowed hard. It would be a miracle if I see Angel again. 10
- 3 Hours had passed. I had heard tales of those lost and teetering on the brink of death in the desert. But I had never expected experiencing such torment on my own journey. Yet here I was, a withered cactus in the unrelenting heat. The cacti scattered all over the desert that had once fascinated me now felt like unwanted companions. The landscape, once so awe-inspiring, now seemed like a treacherous maze, taunting and disorienting me with its boundless stretch of sand and rock. I scrutinised the rocky formations surrounding me. They were beckoning me to ascend their steep slopes. My flesh and bones which felt like they were fading away, summoned the last bit of strength. Despite having no proper equipment or expertise, I stoically embarked on a risky climb to the top of some prominent rocks, hoping to cast my sight on recognisable landmarks. 15 20
- 4 My pursuit was not in vain, or so I thought. The jagged rocks mirrored the tumultuous emotions swirling within me, their sharp edges cutting through my resolve. My muscles strained as I used my entire body to push against the rocks and took deliberate steps to find small ledges or crevices to gain traction. My fingertips gripped tightly onto any available cracks, searching for stability. My legs trembled with each step, battling against self-doubt. My mind was paralysed with indecision. 25
- 5 Time had lost all meaning in this desolate realm. Crestfallen, I found myself pleading for a sign that I was not alone in this forsaken place. But the wind offered no solace, only whispers that echoed through the vastness, mocking my plight. It carried my anguished cries and scattered them into the emptiness, leaving me with only the hollow echo of my own voice. 30
- 6 Overwhelmed with dismay, I stumbled upon a small oasis a short distance away. The sight of vibrant greenery and shimmering water ignited a spark of hope within me. I rushed towards it, my parched lips yearning for a taste of relief. But as I drew closer, the oasis morphed before my eyes, revealing its true nature. The oasis vanished. I sank to my knees, my strength waning, my dreams slipping through my fingers like grains of sand. The desert 35

was going to become my prison, a fatal punishment for daring to chase a dream that was now shattered.

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- 7 But just as I was ready to surrender my body to the merciless desert, a glimmer of hope emerged. A faint, familiar voice called out to me. I had somehow reached the end of the desert. With tears streaming down my face, I stumbled towards Angel. At that moment, I realised that the true oasis was not a physical place, but the love and connection between individuals. Angel smiled radiantly, oblivious to the tumultuous journey I had just been through. As we walked away, hand in hand, I knew that I would never forget this beautiful punishing lesson learnt in the desert's embrace.

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Adapted from A Desert Dream, by Keelan LaForge
<https://blog.reedsy.com/short-story/96v5u5/>

Section C

Text 4

The article below is about extreme sports.

Read it carefully and answer Questions 15–21 in the Question Booklet.

- 1 Participating in an extreme sport is an unfathomable indulgence that ordinary people do not get. Extreme sports cover all kinds of high-risk activities such as snowboarding, rock climbing, skydiving and paragliding. The level of commitment and fearlessness required is something that many find difficult to understand or relate to. There is something about extreme sports that attracts men and women to take that plunge and just go for it. They pursue their passions without restraint, to achieve instant gratification. 5
- 2 Extreme sports actually require the ultimate planning and agonising over fine details. Like other sports, they demand dedication, practice, and a commitment to improving one's performance. Cyclists and climbers obsessively analyse every minute of a long route and their gear; BASE jumpers¹ and skydivers regularly check weather conditions and all their rigs; and backcountry athletes actively seek new techniques, strategies and skills, getting rigorous intel from guides and mountain experts, to progressively take on larger mountains. 10
- 3 Extreme sports often take place in non-traditional environments that are inherently challenging. These extreme terrains can include mountains, cliffs, oceans and deserts which require highly specialised skills to surmount. It is mind-boggling how there seems to be an endless supply of individuals who are just dying to climb towering peaks or fling themselves off them, turning extreme sports into a multi-billion-dollar global industry. This has boosted tourism and created jobs. Destinations for extreme sports have also witnessed more developed amenities to satisfy the desires of extreme sports enthusiasts. 15
- 4 Studies say that extreme sports participants feel the need to experience the thrill in risk-taking in an otherwise tensionless daily life. They understand the unpredictable nature of the activities and strive to make the most of each experience. Many of these extreme sports like snowboarding, rock climbing, bungee jumping and skydiving, allow them to challenge themselves both physically and psychologically. One ethical consideration of extreme sports is the risk that rescue teams have to face in emergency situations where they have to save participants from dangerous feats such as scaling Mount Everest and cave-diving. However, this does not hinder extreme sports participants. 20 25
- 5 Modern technology has accelerated the popularity of extreme sports. Technological advances have brought about safety devices and sports equipment, making various sports a more accessible and pleasurable activity for even the common man. The worldwide spread of extreme sports is attributed to the media. Television and movies have been responsible for gaining a widespread participation in extreme sports. Some people take part in thrilling sports activities for the publicity and to experience the adrenaline 'high' when they emerge triumphant. They get an opportunity to appear on television by participating in extreme sports game shows. This commercialisation of extreme sports has led to concerns about the influence of sponsors and media on the athletes. Critics argue that the pressure to perform spectacular stunts for lucrative endorsements can lead to compromised safety. 30 35

¹ BASE jumpers are athletes who leap from the top of fixed structures and use a parachute to return to the ground.

- 6 These extreme sports pose safety concerns due to their tendency to be dangerous if not performed carefully or with the right equipment. Serious injuries are common among adrenaline junkies and many fatalities are reported every year. In the first half of 2023 alone, there was a staggering 17 fatalities on Mount Everest, marking the deadliest year in history. Certain extreme sports, like off-road motorcycling or extreme skiing, can have a detrimental impact on the environment. They can damage natural habitats, cause erosion, disturb wildlife, and contribute to pollution. 40
- 7 It is true. Extreme sports are riddled with dangers. This sets them apart from other sports, which typically have lower inherent risks and prioritise player safety through established rules and regulations. To some, this is a risk taken to avoid the greater risk: living a life without adventure. Mahatma Gandhi once said, 'Live as if you were to die tomorrow. Learn as if you were to live forever.' Perhaps this is the mantra people who participate in extreme sports hold dear to their hearts. 45
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Adapted from

<https://www.mensjournal.com/adventure/balanced-madmen-psychology-extreme-sports>
<https://www.bbc.com/future/article/20120302-extreme-sports-a-risky-business>
<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC8395983/>