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# OXFORD AQA INTERNATIONAL GCSE **ENGLISH LANGUAGE**

PAPER 2 – SOURCE-BASED READING AND DIRECTED WRITING

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## Insert

Tuesday 22 May 2018

07:00 GMT

Time allowed: 2 hours

The six sources that follow are:

- **Source A:** Myanmar Puppets
- **Source B:** John Walsh's First Visit To The Odeon Cinema
- **Source C:** Can Computer Games Sharpen Your Mind?
- **Source D:** Audiences In Shakespeare's Time
- **Source E:** Should We Put Up With Disruptive Behaviour At The Theatre?
- **Source F:** The Night Circus

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Source A:

## Myanmar Puppets



Myanmar marionettes are wooden puppets manipulated by a series of strings. They are as popular today as they have ever been. Dating back several centuries to the times of the Myanmar kings, marionette puppets took the place of humans who were not allowed to dance on stage. These puppets were allowed freedoms that real actors were not, such as wearing the robes of a king or a monk when human performers would not be permitted to do so.

But the privileges of the marionettes did not stop at being able to wear these costumes. Although 'voiced' by real people, the puppets were also allowed a freedom of speech that could not be enjoyed by humans. News of corruption and bad behaviour could easily be reported to the king through the mouths of these wooden characters.

This was not the only service the puppets offered the people. There were no newspapers to report information from the capital and other places. The puppet theatres, however, travelled amongst the towns and villages, bringing news from afar. The puppets acted out stories of intrigue and politics to the waiting villagers. Clearly, their purpose was more than just to entertain.

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**Source B:****John Walsh's First Visit To The Odeon Cinema**

The Odeon loomed above us and seemed to bulge with light, eclipsing all the other buildings on one side of the square. We walked towards it in a hushed gaggle, impressed beyond words, and stopped to consider its immense beauty. Up the wall, above the huge ODEON sign, the film's title shouted across the square in a blaze of million-watt illuminations: MUTINY ON THE BOUNTY.

We were standing in a great big cave that was the Odeon's lobby. Everything about it was plush – the carpets felt four inches thick, the white walls featured a thick, frieze-like wedding-cake-decoration motif and even the staircase in the distance seemed to lie back luxuriantly on soft pillows. There was a manager in a formal tuxedo and bow-tie, and two ladies in strict red-and-white stripey uniforms selling things. One had a tray that hung around her neck on long ribbons, full of tubs of ice-cream.

Instinctively, Mr Breen, our teacher, had become our intrepid native scout, guiding us through the jungle of the modern commercial cinema. The foyer of the Odeon didn't look much like a jungle, though. It was more like a big sofa. The atmosphere was almost creepily tactile, like velvet or suede, something you could run your finger along, something you could almost fondle.

We shuffled upstairs, marvelling at the airy splendour.

It was like going over the top in a war. I could see nothing but a massive sheet of screen on our left.

While the others took their seats around me, I stood looking at the gigantic plaque of light, transfixed, turned to stone by my first encounter with the big screen, oblivious to my co-scholars and the rest of the audience, gazing at the bright cloudless day in front of me, feeling a strange longing to get up on-stage and walk straight into it.





Source C:

## Can Computer Games Sharpen Your Mind?

Finding a way to wind down in your spare time is crucial to getting through the stresses of university.

When I need to relax, I find solace in computer games. But could this 'wasted time' be helping me? It might sound crazy, but I'm here to tell you that even that hour spent playing mini-golf online could be helping your studies in the long run.

One study, completed in 2010, looked at the effect of playing different video games on young adults and argued that they 'reduce depression and hostile feelings in players through mood management' and help them cope better with stress. The researchers acknowledged that this probably wouldn't come as a surprise to gamers. It doesn't.



As little as an hour of game play helps me go back to work with a newly focused and clutter-free brain, ready to tackle the mammoth task of essay writing.

Problem-solving games are particularly good. Playing a few levels of a simple puzzler allows me to take my mind off an essay question, meaning I can go back to it without stale ideas rattling around my head.

As for proofreading, a study from the University of Rochester in the US found that playing computer games for a few hours each day improves people's ability to recognise letters. This demonstrates how video games can help you focus on finer details.

You don't have to fly solo. Playing with friends can increase the stress-relieving qualities and make for a great social night in.

I regularly play with a small group of friends and our games of choice always involve a high level of teamwork and co-ordination. Indeed, playing with friends can help you develop a surprising number of those transferable skills beloved of potential employers: co-operation, communication, money management, critical thinking, decision-making under pressure. And you're picking up these skills while searching dungeons for loot!

Turn over ►

Source D: From the Globe Theatre website

## Audiences In Shakespeare's Time



**By 1600, London theatres, like the Globe, could take up to 3000 people for the most popular plays. With several theatres offering plays most afternoons, this meant between 10,000 and 20,000 people a week going to London theatres.**

### **How did the audience behave?**

Some of the audience went to the theatre to be seen and admired, dressed in their best clothes. But these people were not necessarily well-behaved. Most didn't sit and watch in silence like today. They clapped the heroes and booed the villains, and cheered the special effects. Thieves were common in the audience and sometimes fights broke out. In 1612, magistrates banned music at the end of plays at the Fortune Theatre, saying the crowd had caused 'tumults and outrages' with their dances.

### **What effect did the audience have on the success of a play?**

With such large audiences, plays only had short runs and then had to be replaced. Between 1560 and 1640 about 3000 new plays were written. To attract the crowds, these plays often re-told famous stories from the past, and they used violence, music and humour to keep people's attention. This was vital because, if audiences didn't like a play, they made their feelings known. At the Swan Theatre in 1602, the audience damaged the chairs, stools, curtains and walls. And, in 1629, a visiting French company was hissed and pelted with apples by the audience. This was because the company used women to play the female roles, something which outraged the audience. Since it was so involved in the performance of a play, the audience was vital to its success.

**Source E: A newspaper journalist expresses her views on a recent trip to the theatre.**

## **Should We Put Up With Disruptive Behaviour At The Theatre?**

Audiences are increasingly fed up with bad behaviour in the theatre – and they are taking the law into their own hands.


Many have applauded the actions of theatre-goer, Kevin Williamson, who reacted to another audience member's refusal to stop using their phone during the performance by seizing it and tossing it across the theatre. Others have pointed out that this in itself created further disruption, which was disrespectful to the performers.

In a perfect world, nobody should have to police anybody else in the theatre. Everybody should know that using mobile phones to text is as rude as talking throughout.

But they don't. There are plenty of people who seem to think that they haven't actually experienced something unless they have photographed and videoed it – and that extends to their theatre-going.

I've been to shows for under-fives where a substantial number of adults in the audience have spent the entire performance Facebooking merrily away. Theatre managers take no action, but maybe that's because they are too busy protecting the stage from being stormed by the kids left to roam entirely free by their texting parents.

The situation will not improve as long as managers stand idly by. Persistent texters are allowed to type with impunity. Latecomers are admitted to seats in the middle of rows despite notices that say 'no latecomers'. People are permitted to take lavatory breaks on a whim and are re-admitted when it suits them. And those who think the 'no photographs' rule doesn't apply to them are allowed to get away with it. For as long as such leniency exists, the enjoyment of the vast majority of theatre-goers will be compromised by the rudeness of the minority.



**'Everybody should know that using mobile phones to text is as rude as talking throughout.'**

**Turn over ►**

**Source F: Extract from the opening of a novel by Erin Morgenstern.**

## **The Night Circus**

The circus arrives without warning.

No announcements precede it, no paper notices on downtown posts and billboards, no mentions or advertisements in local newspapers. It is simply there, when yesterday it was not.

But it is not open for business. Not just yet.

Within hours everyone in town has heard about it. It is impressive and unusual news, the sudden appearance of a mysterious circus. People marvel at the staggering height of the tallest tents. They stare at the clock that sits just inside the gates that no one can properly describe.

And the black sign painted in white letters that hangs upon the gates, the one that reads:

*Opens at Nightfall  
Closes at Dawn*

"What kind of circus is only open at night?" people ask. No one has a proper answer, yet as dusk approaches there is a substantial crowd of spectators gathering outside the gates.

You are amongst them, of course. Your curiosity got the better of you, as curiosity is wont to do. You stand in the fading light, the scarf around your neck pulled up against the chilly evening breeze, waiting to see for yourself exactly what kind of circus only opens once the sun sets.

The ticket booth clearly visible behind the gates is closed and barred. The tents are still, save for when they ripple ever so slightly in the wind. The only movement within the circus is the clock that ticks by the passing minutes, if such a wonder of sculpture can even be called a clock.

The circus looks abandoned and empty. But you think perhaps you can smell caramel wafting through the evening breeze, beneath the crisp scent of the autumn leaves. A subtle sweetness at the edges of the cold.

The sun disappears completely beyond the horizon, and the remaining luminosity shifts from dusk to twilight. The people around you are growing restless from waiting, a sea of shuffling feet, murmuring about abandoning the endeavor in search of someplace warmer to pass the evening. You yourself are debating departing when it happens.

All over the tents, small lights begin to flicker, as though the entirety of the circus is covered in particularly bright fireflies. The waiting crowd quiets as it watches this display of illumination. Someone near you gasps. A small child claps his hands with glee at the sight.

When the tents are all aglow, sparkling against the night sky, the sign appears. Leaning to your left to gain a better view, you can see that it reads:

*Le Cirque des Rêves*

Some in the crowd smile knowingly, while others frown and look questioningly at their neighbors. A child near you tugs on her mother's sleeve, begging to know what it says.

"The Circus of Dreams," comes the reply. The girl smiles delightedly.

**END OF SOURCES**

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