



Cambridge International AS Level

ENGLISH GENERAL PAPER

8021/21

Paper 2 Comprehension

October/November 2020

INSERT

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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This document has **8** pages. Blank pages are indicated.

Material for Section A

Situation

Two old friends, Hansi and Lexa, have decided to catch a film together. They are now discussing which film to go and see: the comedy film *Road Trip to Nowheresville* or the science-fiction film *Voyage to Jupiter's Moons*.

Extract from the friends' conversation

Hansi: (*excitedly*) I am so glad you have time in your busy schedule to fit in a trip to the cinema with me Friday evening. Can't wait to have a catch-up. It's been a long time! Actually, thinking about it, wasn't the last time we caught up with each other a cinema trip? Last year, I seem to recall.

Lexa: (*wearing a long-suffering expression on her face*) Yes, you made me go and see some dreadful film – nearly three hours of just one action shot after another, minimal dialogue that I could hardly hear and a plot that a three-year-old child could have written better ... Can we agree on a film together this time, please? (*laughing and giving him a friendly push*)

Hansi: You never said at the time! I'm so sorry. Gosh, I didn't realise.

Lexa: (*smiling*) No worries. Apart from that, we'd had a lovely time and I didn't want to spoil the day.

Hansi: But I don't want you not to want to go to the cinema with me. So, what do you suggest then?

Lexa: *Voyage to Jupiter's Moons* is on and ...

Hansi: (*looking crestfallen*) Oh, I was hoping that you were going to say you fancied *Road Trip to Nowheresville*. We could have a good laugh together, couldn't we?

Lexa: Well, I'm not sure ...

Hansi: Tell you what, let's have a look at the blurbs in the newspapers and reviews on them on MouldyPeaches.com and see what we both think then.

Lexa: Yes, that's a good idea. Let's do that as I don't know anything about *Road Trip to Nowheresville* ...

Extracts from the two film companies' press releases printed in the local paper

Road Trip to Nowheresville

This sequel to the highly successful *Road Trip to Somewheresville* finds our two heroes Fin and Jed enjoying another rip-roaring adventure. This time it is a case of mistaken identities. A gang of incompetent criminals – who think that Fin and Jed are the ones who took their suitcase full of forged banknotes – are chasing the two young men across the country. The laughs come thick and fast as the criminals get closer and closer to catching Fin and Jed, but hilarious disasters befall them all at every step, culminating in the funniest ending to a film in the history of cinema. Expect top quality physical humour, witty dialogue and memorable punchlines.

Voyage to Jupiter's Moons

A highly original film, this latest work by award-winning and innovative director Zak Xenon is unmissable. The three crew members, handpicked by the faceless regime in control of twenty-second century Earth, are on a mission to find out which of Jupiter's moons would be the most suitable to colonise so that Earth's elite could be transported there before Earth is destroyed by the largest asteroid ever seen. However, disasters strike, and the crew members have to make difficult decisions and try to overcome seemingly impossible odds in order to survive. The outstanding cinematography, special effects and the soundtrack all come together to create a haunting atmosphere that will keep you on the edge of your seat right to the very end. A nail-biting finale indeed!

Reviews from MouldyPeaches.com (about all things film)

Road Trip to Nowheresville

A film critic's review: 'Not quite as side-splittingly funny as *Road Trip to Somewheresville*, but still worth seeing as it does lift the spirits with several laugh-out-loud moments.'

A cinemagoer's review: 'I could see the slapstick humour coming a mile off – the typical falling in and out of cars, the doors slammed in faces, the tripping over suitcases – but it still managed to make me laugh on occasion with some clever dialogue.'

Voyage to Jupiter's Moons

A film critic's review: 'Despite dealing with tried-and-tested science-fiction themes, it is worth seeing. The disasters might have all been seen before, but the production values and quality of acting are good.'

A cinemagoer's review: 'Not quite up to Zak Xenon's normally excellent standards, as I could predict the outcome a third of the way into the film, but would still recommend seeing it as I enjoyed it despite this!'

Additional Information

1. Lexa remembered that Hansi's mother had told her recently that Hansi was having a hard time at work at the moment.
2. Hansi is a keen composer of all types of contemporary music on his keyboards.
3. Zak Xenon has had to crowdfund his next film project because the studios are not interested in its themes.
4. Lexa has just completed an introductory session in assertiveness training, provided by her employer.
5. The local cinema has seen an upsurge in attendance since they instigated 'half-price Wednesdays'.
6. Hansi is interested in keeping up-to-date with the latest film techniques as he likes to create and upload his own vlogs (video blogs) and is thinking that he might make a career out of this.
7. Lexa's brother is always telling her that she needs to lighten up about everything.
8. *Road Trip to Elsewheresville*, the next instalment, is already in pre-production and will be released next year.

Material for Section B

Simon Broughton explores the Ayyanar temples of India.

Terracotta* Horses

There are locations that simply have an air of sanctity about them. Hills and mountains are often chosen as holy places, making you feel closer to the heavens. For example, the rocky monastic retreat of Skellig Michael, Ireland, where Christianity hung on in the ninth century; the mountain-like Buddhist temple of Borobudur, Java, and China's spectacular sacred mountains.

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The place I'm headed in India is nothing like these, yet it also feels sacred. It's low down, tucked away, almost invisible until you stumble upon it. As I follow a path up a rocky bluff, a disgruntled peacock scuttles out of my way. Then at the foot of a rocky plateau there is a grove of trees, and I can feel this is the place.

The Ayyanar temples of Tamil Nadu are usually hidden away in a shady glade at the edge of a village. Here it's a magical combination of landscape, leafy trees and rows of coloured terracotta horses that makes the sanctity of the space.

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This particular temple is called Narthamalai. There's a small open-air altar with stone statues, each swathed in red or white cloth. A carved elephant standing on a plinth faces the altar. Gathered around are dozens of wide-eyed painted horses looking into the clearing as if waiting for a ceremony to start. Looking more closely, I see that it's not just horses, but cows and elephants too – a terracotta menagerie, once brightly painted, but now fading as lichen grows, the paint peels off and they eventually crumble back into the earth. A symbol of the cycle of life, death and reincarnation.

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Tamil Nadu is famous for its Hindu temples. The spectacular temple of Meenakshi dominates Madurai city with its vast painted gates and pylons; the 1000-year-old Brihadeeswarar Temple, Thanjavur, has a rounded tower of honey-coloured granite. These and others feature in many guidebooks. But the humble and more enigmatic Ayyanar temples are little known to outsiders, making them particularly intriguing. They exude a natural, agile and tranquil serenity.

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So, who is Ayyanar? He's the protector of the village, its inhabitants, their cattle and their crops. He rides a white horse and patrols the village at night, keeping evil spirits at bay. Ayyanar is usually depicted as a moustachioed warrior with a sword, but he's a benign figure. He does, however, have a companion called Karuppu, a more fearsome character, and they work as a 'good cop, bad cop' duo. Ayyanar gives the orders, and Karuppu executes them. 'Ayyanar is pure and Karuppu is impure. Ayyanar is vegetarian, while Karuppu is non-vegetarian,' says one devotee at the shrine of Pallathur, one of the most impressive in the region, with its large paved courtyard surrounded by hundreds of horses gazing in from under the trees. He's wound a ribbon round a horse's ears and placed rice on a banana leaf at its feet. Another visitor makes an offering to avert rains, which have already caused severe flooding in Chennai.

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Most of the temples have images of Ayyanar made out of concrete. These are quite realistic, ornate and brightly painted. Ayyanar and Karuppu are usually seen leading their horses, and rarely riding them. Maybe this is because this gives more interesting sculptural possibilities. But it's the terracotta horses – the village offerings – that are the most beautiful. Many are given by individuals. Others are collectively given by a whole community and are called *ure-kuthirai* ('village horse'). A horse is the preferred

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offering, as it's Ayyanar's mount, but at Pallathur there's also the occasional elephant, and at other sites there are lots of cows too.

Each temple has an annual festival, during which the statues are gifted, at the end of the agricultural year, during the hot season. Work has stopped, the soil's parched, the cattle are thirsty, the villagers are suffering from the intense heat, and divine assistance is most needed. The festival can last two or three days, with prayers, offerings, music and the appearance of the *Samī*, the deity in human form, who oversees the proceedings. Finally, the horses are placed in the sacred site – a place they will never leave, so the gods can ride them at will. 45 50

The temples are full of life at festival time, but they're most magical when they're tranquil. Birds coo in the trees, monkeys leap from horse to horse in search of offerings, and although there may be no one else around, you're silently watched by hundreds of wide equine eyes. 55

The area around Karaikudi is particularly rich in Ayyanar temples. Near Narthamalai is Urepatti, where the vast horses are thought to be over a century old. These are more elegant and finely made, with intricate breastplates. The Ilayankudipatti temple is one of the most celebrated, with a sacred path flanked by thousands of horses leading to the altar under a tamarind tree. Kuthadivayal temple has the tallest horses, while Punniyavayal and Karuppur are the most ebullient, with their ranks of brightly coloured steeds like opposing rows of riderless cavalry. 60

What's most fascinating about these temples is that they are largely unknown. But they're also organically evolving. The terracotta crumbles, the horses get worn away by the rains, the trees and vines reclaim the menagerie. Nature, sacred in Hinduism, is always in control. 65

*a type of fired clay, usually of a brownish-red colour, used as a decorative building material or in models

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