

Please check the examination details below before entering your candidate information

Candidate surname					Other names				
Centre Number					Candidate Number				

Pearson Edexcel International GCSE (9–1)

Thursday 21 May 2026

Morning (Time: 2 hours 15 minutes) **Paper reference** **4EA1/01**

English Language A

PAPER 1: Non-fiction Texts and Transactional Writing

You must have:
Source Booklet (enclosed)

Total Marks

Instructions

- Use **black** ink or ball-point pen.
- **Fill in the boxes** at the top of this page with your name, centre number and candidate number.
- Answer **ALL** questions in Section A and **ONE** question from Section B.
- Answer the questions in the spaces provided
– *there may be more space than you need.*
- Plan your answers in the lined spaces provided. Plans will not be marked unless no other response is provided.

Information

- The total mark for this paper is 90.
- The marks for **each** question are shown in brackets
– *use this as a guide as to how much time to spend on each question.*
- Quality of written communication, including vocabulary, spelling, punctuation and grammar, will be taken into account in your response to Section B.
- Copies of the *Pearson Edexcel International GCSE English Anthology* may **not** be brought into the examination.
- Dictionaries may **not** be used in this examination.

Advice

- Read each question carefully before you start to answer it.
- Check your answers if you have time at the end.
- You are reminded of the importance of clear English and careful presentation in your answers.

Turn over ►

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SECTION A

Reading

Answer ALL questions in this section.

You should spend about 1 hour and 30 minutes on this section.

The following questions are based on Text One and Text Two in the Source Booklet.

Text One: *Surviving the Surf*

1 From lines 3–5, select **two** words or phrases that describe the surfers.

1

.....

2

.....

(Total for Question 1 = 2 marks)

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In your own words, explain what we learn about C.J. Macias.

(Total for Question 2 = 4 marks)



(Total for Question 3 = 5 marks)

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Text Two: From *127 Hours: Between a Rock and a Hard Place*

Remind yourself of the extract from *127 Hours: Between a Rock and a Hard Place* (Text Two in the Source Booklet).

4 How does the writer, Aron Ralston, use language and structure in **Text Two** to present his experiences in the canyon?

You should support your answer with close reference to the extract, including **brief** quotations.

(12)

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(Total for Question 4 = 12 marks)



Question 5 is based on both Text One and Text Two from the Source Booklet.

5 Compare how the writers present their ideas and perspectives about the events described.

Support your answer with detailed examples from both texts, including **brief** quotations.

(22)

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(Total for Question 5 = 22 marks)

TOTAL FOR SECTION A = 45 MARKS



SECTION B**Transactional Writing****Answer ONE question in this section.****You should spend about 45 minutes on your chosen question.****Begin your answer on page 15.****EITHER**

- 6** Joining a new school or college can be exciting but may be challenging.

Write a guide for students on how to 'survive' a first term at a new school or college.

Your guide may include:

- strategies to help students approach new subjects/situations
- advice on how to get on with fellow students and staff
- any other points you wish to make.

Your response will be marked for the accurate and appropriate use of vocabulary, spelling, punctuation and grammar.

(Total for Question 6 = 45 marks)

OR

- 7** A newspaper report has stated that although peer pressure may be seen as a negative influence, it can often have a positive effect on people.

Write a letter to the newspaper editor in which you give your views on this topic.

Your letter may include:

- ways that peer pressure may have a negative influence
- ways that peer pressure could have a positive effect
- any other points you wish to make.

Your response will be marked for the accurate and appropriate use of vocabulary, spelling, punctuation and grammar.

(Total for Question 7 = 45 marks)

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Indicate which question you are answering by marking a cross in the box ☒. If you change your mind, put a line through the box ☒ and then indicate your new question with a cross ☒.

Chosen question number: **Question 6** ☒ **Question 7** ☒

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TOTAL FOR SECTION B = 45 MARKS
TOTAL FOR PAPER = 90 MARKS



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English Language A

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Do not return this Booklet with the question paper.

Turn over ►

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SECTION A

READING

Read the following extracts carefully and then answer Section A in the Question Paper.

Text One: *Surviving the Surf*

In this extract, the writer describes an accident that happened to American surfer, C. J. Macias, in Nazaré in Portugal.



Nazaré is the pinnacle¹ of big-wave surfing. It is consistently the biggest wave in the world and perhaps its most visually spectacular.

Stand well back from the clifftop, with its small red lighthouse on top, and you see its full ferocity. Within it, surfers look like mere dots as they are towed in by the jet skis and fight to stay on their boards, striving for survival.

5

The place has an inexplicable pull. It brings adrenaline junkies from all over the planet. None are the same but they all share the same interest: to surf the biggest wave in history and stay alive while doing so.

Three surfers are admitted to hospital in the course of just one January day in 2022. C.J. Macias is one of them. A former high-level beach volleyball player, at 6 feet 5 inches, he stands far taller than any other surfer in that particular stretch of the Atlantic Ocean. At the season's start, he talked almost as though he was slightly reluctant to tackle the wave on its biggest days.

10

However, on the day preceding the accident, things have finally clicked for him and demons from past poundings put out of his mind. In those moments, he has at last a sense of belonging. Riding one explosively powerful wave, he comes out of it absolutely euphoric. Macias laughs at the recollection: he was so elated in the moment, his first comments were "Is it the world record, is it the 100-foot wave?" Others laughed too, at the time. It was barely half that.

15

If the wave of the preceding day was big, the one he tackles the following afternoon is comfortably the biggest he has ever ridden and, for a time, he looks to have it completely under control, with a confidence matched by the cheers that greet him in the water and from those watching on the clifftops. Buoyed by his new-found confidence, he steadily gets himself into a more critical position on the wave. Just ever so slightly mistiming his exit, he quickly loses control and is thrust forward. 20 25

He is just a fraction away from escaping, his first reaction being, "Oh my God, I made it," before his arm crosses his midriff as he tries to steady himself at such high speed. Instead, it has the opposite effect and throws him totally off balance. "At that point, I knew I was done for." He tries to turn his way out of the danger, but it is too late and he is flung like a 6-foot skimming stone across the water's surface. The natural instinct is to put out his arm to break his fall – a move that, in hindsight, has pretty catastrophic consequences – hitting the water's surface rapidly and then being thrust deeper and deeper towards the bottom of the ocean by the ferocity of the wave. 30

In addition to his arm positioning, the other major error is his choice of vest over the top of his wetsuit – a white one. Despite his gargantuan size, in the similarly coloured white water, no one can spot him. The jet skis circle, the spotters go silent on the radios, straining their eyes through binoculars to catch sight of the latest stricken surfer. For five minutes, he is gone. 35

All Andrew Cotton, a fellow surfer, recalls hearing over the radio is shouts of, "We can't see him! We can't see him!" He remembers the feeling of helplessness as he bobbed up and down on his jet ski trying to spot Macias, waiting for the radio call to go to scoop him to safety. By this point, Macias is all too aware that no one can see him. 40

"I'm getting ripped all over the place and I'm going deep. And then, oh man, my arm. I could suddenly feel it really hurting." His life vest automatically inflates, allowing him up to the surface. At points, he is unable to work out which way is up as he is repeatedly thrust under the surface. 45

By now, he is going into damage-limitation mode, holding the hurt arm to protect it from further harm. A keen yoga enthusiast, his great strength is his breathing. He grabs the morsels of breath whenever he can amid the washing-machine effect of his pounding. By this point, the waves have settled down to 12, maybe 15, feet high. 50

It's now been a solid five minutes – an agonisingly long time. He is finally spotted. Alemão de Maresias, a Brazilian surfer and jet ski driver, locates him on the third peak of waves, way out from where he initially comes off the board and just 30 metres out from the beach. De Maresias reaches out an arm to pull him up on to the sled at the back of the jet ski. Macias hands over the one functioning limb but can't find the strength to get himself up on the sled at the back of the jet ski, causing him to spill out into the water once again. He is washed up on the shore moments later. 55

Macias remembers putting his feet on the ground, relieved to have survived the nastiest wipeout of his life, but then the pain surges through his body, making him feel physically sick. People are shouting at him to dig his feet into the sand to make sure he doesn't get sucked back out to sea. Instead, he collapses in the water and starts being dragged back in. 60

As Cotton helps to drag him on to the beach, his first thought looking at the state of the arm is that Macias has snapped it. A trained lifeguard, he has never seen anything like it, the arm disfigured and bent in an impossibly wrong direction. Cotton says: "It was great to have him back on dry land, but his arm is really damaged. I thought, 'How has he done 65

that?’ And then you feel a bit responsible – he’s out there because we’re urging him on. But he wanted to be on the rope, he really enjoyed it right up until that point.”

Macias gets in the back of the ambulance that has pulled up on the beach and a whole other journey to recovery begins. Later, he readily admits some moments are almost comical in their recollection, despite the severity of his situation at the time, and he’s laughing just 24 hours on. “I’m in this surreal moment looking up at the blue sky. I’m grateful to be breathing, I know my spine’s OK and I’m not paralysed. Then someone would slightly touch my arm and I’m like ‘argh’, I’m in so much agony. Then I start seeing loved ones, everyone’s so happy to see me alive and I’m happy to be alive.”

70

75

The episode brings back myriad emotions and continues to do so for weeks and months afterwards, although a future in which Macias might not return to Nazaré seems unlikely. There’s something about Nazaré that brings people back even after the very worst moments there.

¹*pinnacle*: peak



Text Two: From 127 Hours: Between a Rock and a Hard Place

In this extract, the writer, Aron Ralston, describes his experience of a rock-climbing accident in a canyon.

I come to another drop-off. This one is maybe eleven or twelve feet high, a foot higher and of a different geometry than the overhang I descended ten minutes ago. Another refrigerator chockstone¹ is wedged between the walls, ten feet downstream from and at the same height as the ledge. It gives the space below the drop-off the claustrophobic feel of a short tunnel. Instead of the walls widening after the drop-off, or opening into a bowl at the bottom of the canyon, here the slot narrows to a consistent three feet across at the lip of the drop-off and continues at that width for fifty feet down the canyon. 5

Sometimes in narrow passages like this one, it's possible for me to stem my body across the slot, with my feet and back pushing out in opposite directions against the walls. Controlling this counterpressure by switching my hands and feet on the opposing walls, I can move up or down the shoulder-width crevice fairly easily as long as the friction contact stays solid between the walls and my hands, feet, and back. This technique is known as stemming or chimneying; you can imagine using it to climb up the inside of a chimney. 10

Just below the ledge where I'm standing is a chockstone the size of a large bus tire², stuck fast in the channel between the walls, a few feet out from the lip. If I can step onto it, then I'll have a nine-foot height to descend, less than that of the first overhang. I'll dangle off the chockstone, then take a short fall onto the rounded rocks piled on the canyon floor. 15

Stemming across the canyon at the lip of the drop-off, with one foot and one hand on each of the walls, I traverse³ out to the chockstone. I press my back against the south wall and lock my left knee, which pushes my foot tight against the north wall. With my right foot, I kick at the boulder to test how stuck it is. It's jammed tightly enough to hold my weight. I lower myself from the chimneying position and step onto the chockstone. It supports me but teeters slightly. After confirming that I don't want to chimney down from the chockstone's height, I squat and grip the rear of the lodged boulder, turning to face back up canyon. Sliding my belly over the front edge, I can lower myself and hang from my fully extended arms, akin to climbing down from the roof of a house. 20

As I dangle, I feel the stone respond to my adjusting grip with a scraping quake as my body's weight applies enough torque⁴ to disturb it from its position. Instantly, I know this is trouble, and instinctively, I let go of the rotating boulder to land on the round rocks below. When I look up, the backlit chockstone falling toward my head consumes the sky. Fear shoots my hands over my head. I can't move backward or I'll fall over a small ledge. My only hope is to push off the falling rock and get my head out of its way. 25

The next three seconds play out at a tenth of their normal speed. Time dilates, as if I'm dreaming, and my reactions decelerate. In slow motion: the rock smashes my left hand against the south wall; my eyes register the collision, and I yank my left arm back as the rock ricochets⁵; the boulder then crushes my right hand and ensnares my right arm at the wrist, palm in, thumb up, fingers extended; the rock slides another foot down the wall with my arm in tow, tearing the skin off the lateral side of my forearm. Then silence. 35

My disbelief paralyzes me temporarily as I stare at the sight of my arm vanishing into an implausibly small gap between the fallen boulder and the canyon wall. Within moments, my nervous system's pain response overcomes the initial shock. Good God, my hand. The flaring agony throws me into a panic. I grimace and growl ... My mind commands my 40

body, 'Get your hand out of there!' I yank my arm three times in a naive attempt to pull it out. But I'm stuck. 45

Anxiety has my brain tweaking; searing-hot pain shoots from my wrist up my arm. I'm frantic, and I cry out ... My desperate brain conjures up a probably apocryphal⁶ story in which an adrenaline-stoked mom lifts an overturned car to free her baby. I'd give it even odds that it's made up, but I do know for certain that *right now*, while my body's chemicals are raging at full flood, is the best chance I'll have to free myself with brute force. I shove against the large boulder, heaving against it, pushing with my left hand, lifting with my knees pressed under the rock. I get good leverage with the aid of a twelve-inch shelf in front of my feet. Standing on that, I brace my thighs under the boulder and thrust upward repeatedly, grunting, 'Come on...move!' Nothing. 50
55

¹ *chockstone*: a stone that has become wedged between rocks

² *tire*: American spelling of tyre

³ *traverse*: cross

⁴ *torque*: rotating force

⁵ *ricochets*: bounces off

⁶ *apocryphal*: doubtful, untrue



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Source information:

Text One adapted from *Nazaré: Life and Death with the Big-wave Surfers*, Matt Majendie, Headline (2023)

Image One: © Giulio Ercolani / Alamy Stock Photo

Text Two adapted from *127 hours: Between a Rock and a Hard Place*, Aron Ralston, Simon & Schuster (2010)

