

Please check the examination details below before entering your candidate information

Candidate surname		Other names	
Centre Number		Candidate Number	
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Pearson Edexcel International GCSE (9–1)

Thursday 21 May 2026

Morning (Time: 3 hours)

Paper reference **4EB1/01**

English Language B

PAPER 1

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, the question in Section B and **one** question in Section C.
- 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 100.
- The marks for **each** question are shown in brackets
– *use this as a guide as to how much time to spend on each question.*
- 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 1 hour on this section.

Read Text One in the Source Booklet, adapted from an article called *Yes, research shows teenagers' screen time is shocking – but smartphone bans aren't the answer*.

- 1 Using lines 12–18, identify **one** negative consequence of smartphone use in young people.

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(Total for Question 1 = 1 mark)

- 2 In lines 37–44, the writer offers some advice about how to reduce the negative effects of smartphone use.

State **one** piece of advice she gives.

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(Total for Question 2 = 1 mark)

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3 Explain how the writer presents her ideas about smartphones.

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

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(Total for Question 3 = 10 marks)



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Read Text Two in the Source Booklet, adapted from an article called *I Spent 72 (Uncomfortable) Hours Without A Phone. This Is What It Taught Me.*

4 Using lines 1–7, state **one** of the problems the writer has when she spends 72 hours in Zagreb unable to use her phone.

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(Total for Question 4 = 1 mark)

5 In lines 22–30, the writer describes her experiences without a phone.
Identify **two** experiences she has.

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(Total for Question 5 = 2 marks)



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6 Explain how the writer presents her experiences of being without a phone.
You should support your answer with close reference to the passage, including **brief** quotations.

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(Total for Question 6 = 10 marks)



Refer to BOTH Text One and Text Two to answer the following question.

- 7 Compare how the writers present their views and perspectives about smartphones.
Support your answer with examples from **both** texts.

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(Total for Question 7 = 15 marks)

TOTAL FOR SECTION A = 40 MARKS



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SECTION B

Reading and Writing

Answer the question in this section.

You should spend 1 hour on this section.

Use ideas from BOTH Text One and Text Two in the Source Booklet to answer this question.

8 You have been asked to give a talk to your peers about the ways smartphones are used.

You should include:

- the positive ways smartphones are used
- the negative aspects of smartphones
- advice to help overcome the problems with smartphones.

Write the text of your talk.

Think carefully about the purpose of your talk and the audience for whom it is intended.

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(Total for Question 8 = 30 marks)

TOTAL FOR SECTION B = 30 MARKS



SECTION C

Writing

Answer ONE question from this section.

You should spend 1 hour on your chosen question.

Do not re-tell events from Text One or Text Two in the Source Booklet.

Write approximately 400 words on one of the following:

EITHER

- 9 'People are entitled to freedom and choice about how they spend their time and what they do, as long as it doesn't harm others.' To what extent do you agree with this statement?

(Total for Question 9 = 30 marks)

OR

- 10 Write a story (true or imaginary) entitled 'Lost and found'.

(Total for Question 10 = 30 marks)

OR

- 11 Describe the view from your window.

(Total for Question 11 = 30 marks)

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 9 ☒ Question 10 ☒ Question 11 ☒

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TOTAL FOR SECTION C = 30 MARKS
TOTAL FOR PAPER = 100 MARKS



Pearson Edexcel International GCSE (9–1)

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Morning (Time: 3 hours)

Paper
reference

4EB1/01

English Language B
PAPER 1



Source Booklet

Do not return this Booklet with the question paper.

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Text One

Yes, research shows teenagers' screen time is shocking – but smartphone bans aren't the answer

adapted from an article by Devi Sridhar

In this passage, the writer presents her ideas and some evidence about smartphones and how teenagers use them.



A few weeks ago I was scrolling through social media, and I saw a graphic showing the average number of hours a teen in the US spends per day on their phone or other screens. The Center for Disease Control and Prevention has estimated it to be six hours for 8-10-year-olds, nine hours for 11-14-year-olds and 7.5 hours for 15-18-year-olds. These are shocking numbers. Although the irony of using a screen to make me reflect on how much time we're spending on screens isn't lost on me.

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Like many people, I check my smartphone's screen time usage and am surprised at how many hours are logged. But I also feel uncomfortable with the blanket criticism of these devices, as if the creation of mobile phones has been, overall, terrible for humanity. At their core, they are useful, practical tools for communication and connection. Somehow the positives that they bring are too easily forgotten.

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There is definitely emerging scientific evidence that extended periods of screen time, as well as certain social media experiences, have negative consequences, especially for younger users. Smartphones distract children from learning and other real-world experiences. Quite simply, they drain valuable time. Constantly observing other people's filtered posts and lives can give us FOMO (fear of missing out) and lead to constant comparisons with others, a recipe for feeling low. At their most extreme, phones can be used for cyberbullying and for targeting vulnerable teens.

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Much of the discussion on the impact of phones has focused on adolescence, a crucial developmental stage when the brain and body go through major changes. Experts have debated the role of smartphones in the rise of teen depression and anxiety since 2010. While the pandemic accelerated rates of mental health issues, these trends were evident almost a decade before. In 2017, Professor Jean Twenge from San Diego State University shared research from 2010 to 2015 that documented increases in depression among teens from every background and linked this to smartphones.

The crude reaction to these types of studies is to move towards banning smartphones for under-16s. Aside from being hard to implement, decades of public health research has shown that banning certain products, especially those which bring positive benefits too, can lead to criticism from the public, preventing the possibility of any regulation. People are entitled to a certain level of freedom and choice about how they spend their time and what they do (including how they parent their children), as long as it doesn't harm others.

In addition, simply banning phones wouldn't prepare teens for a world increasingly reliant on tech and screens. I'd prefer to see open conversations about how to keep the positive aspects that phones have brought – and more education and awareness on how to reduce the negatives.

We need more guidance for parents, teachers and those in pastoral roles about how to talk to young people about their screen time usage and how it makes them feel. Adults can help by putting limits on screen time or making rules, like putting away phones at an agreed time – for example, to charge overnight in the kitchen. Education about online safety, social media apps and algorithms, and the constant marketing of products and "influencing" through posts should be standard within schools. Schools can also help by creating and enforcing no-phone policies so that students can focus on learning and in-person experiences.

Perhaps our focus shouldn't be on the phone itself, but what teens are using them for. Certain apps (and the companies behind them) that are targeted towards young people, such as TikTok, Snapchat and Instagram, have a lot to answer for. Where we need strong government involvement is with social media companies, which should be compelled to keep certain apps unavailable to younger users.

My home state of Florida has moved towards adopting a bill that would ban social media accounts for under-14s and require parental permission for 14 and 15-year-olds from 1 January 2025. A politician, Paul Renner, said, 'A child in their brain development doesn't have the ability to know that they're being sucked into these addictive technologies and to see the harm and step away from it, and because of that we have to step in for them.'

When smartphones first emerged, and then social media apps on them, it was a wild west with no oversight or regulation. We know enough now to start creating some boundaries, and public policies, to maintain the positive aspects of this technology while reducing the negative consequences. One starting point we can all agree on is that teens spending more than six hours a day on screens is worrying.

Text Two

I Spent 72 (Uncomfortable) Hours Without A Phone. This Is What It Taught Me**adapted from an article by Daisy Jones**

In this passage, the writer presents her experiences of being without a working phone in a foreign country.



It happened while I was on a plane to Zagreb in Croatia. My phone started randomly glitching out. And then it just... died completely. I maniacally jabbed at the screen, which – shockingly – didn't help. Oh well, I thought, tucking the phone away. Life goes on. But that was before the reality of my situation truly sank in: without a phone, I eventually realised, I'd have no boarding pass, no email access, no banking app, no contacts, no map or Uber app, no way to tell the time. Without my phone, I'd have nothing. And I was hurtling towards another country. About to spend 72 hours in Croatia without a phone.

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The first 12 hours were spent in a state of logistical panic. Luckily I was with a relative who could contact my partner, who was able to access my email and locate my boarding pass. So I knew I'd get back okay. And then I borrowed money from various sources. So I knew I'd be fine in that regard. But still, I had no phone, for – did I mention? – 72 hours. Which would be the longest I'd gone without that little light-up box for at least a decade.

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You don't need me to tell you how long we all spend on our phones, but here's a rough idea: recent statistics show that people check their phones on average 58 times a day and spend around 4 hours 37 minutes scrolling per day (which works out to around one day per week). I feel like there was a point in time – maybe around the early 2010s, just as iPhones became ubiquitous¹ – when everyone was panicking about smartphone usage. But in recent years, conversations around tech addiction have dampened somewhat. Not because it's no longer concerning – it is – but because it's too late. Ten-year-olds have iPhones now. They're our constant companions. To try and curb smartphone usage on a widespread or genuinely impactful scale would be impossible.

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But anyway, back to Zagreb. Once the logistics of my return had been sorted, I tried to relax and enjoy this new phone-free world. It was uncomfortable, obviously. Every time I was left alone, which is when I'd usually check my phone, I instead just stared numbly into space. If I saw something I liked, I couldn't take a photo of it, so I had to remember it with my brain. I had zero idea of what was going on in the news, or if anyone was trying to contact me, which felt like a phantom itch. Before I went to sleep, which is when I would usually have swiped through TikTok, I had to simply close my eyes and mentally swipe through my own memories. I couldn't listen to podcasts, so instead I just sat with my thoughts.

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By the second day, however, I actually started to get used to it. It's astonishing how quickly your body adapts, and before long, I'd just accepted the fact that I had to find new forms of entertainment, like reading or visiting museums or chewing on a huge plate of dim sum² and really savouring the taste. While I'd love to say that this was the part where I really discovered myself and learnt to live a more mindful existence, I can't say that was the case. I really missed having a phone. But it was comforting to know that, at least on a brain-body level, I could function without being constantly attached to a device.

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What was much harder was navigating the world more generally. This is not a world that's built for phone-free life. Without a phone, taxis have to be booked at actual ranks (which are few and far between). You have to check maps in order to get to a location. It's frightening just how reliant much of our daily lives are on this tiny digital entity that could fail us at any moment, and it's scary how often it does. On the way home, I had to buy a paper train ticket and remember the easiest route back. It was a bit like how I imagine the '90s, except without everyone else living the same way. I didn't once get stranded, but what would have happened if I had?

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I bought an iPhone the following morning and immediately plugged back into the world. In the 72 hours prior, I hadn't come to any major revelations about spending less time on my phone. In fact, I wanted to spend even more time on there: scrolling! Googling things! Absorbing pointless information from 'online'! Everything I'd missed out on before.

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But what I was left with was a strange taste about the wider world at large. The realisation that, even if I wanted to spend less time on my phone, I actually couldn't. None of us could. We're locked into this life, for everyday activities, for good, and there's no easy way to navigate out of it.

Glossary

¹*ubiquitous* – widespread/very common

²*dim sum* – a traditional Chinese meal made up of small plates of dumplings and other snack dishes



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Sources taken/adapted from:

Text One: <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/article/2024/jul/04/teenagers-screen-time-smartphone-ban-school-parents>

Photograph: © Maskot / Getty Images

Text Two: https://www.vogue.co.uk/article/72-hours-without-a-phone?utm_source=pocket-newtab-en-gb

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