

INTERNATIONAL AS ENGLISH LANGUAGE

Unit 1 Language and context

Friday 9 January 2026

07:00 UK Time

Time allowed: 2 hours

Material

For this paper you must have:

- an OxfordAQA 12-page answer book.

Instructions

- Use black ink or black ball-point pen.
- Write the information required on the front of your answer book.
- There are **two** sections:
 - Section A: Understanding texts
 - Section B: Directed writing.
- Answer Question 1 from Section A **and either** Question 2 **or** Question 3 from Section B.
- Do all rough work in your answer book. Cross through any work that you do not want to be marked.

Information

- The maximum mark for this paper is 50.
- The marks for questions are shown in brackets.
- There are 25 marks for Question 1 and 25 marks for either Question 2 or Question 3.
- You will be marked on your ability to:
 - use good English
 - organise information clearly
 - use specialist vocabulary where appropriate.

Section A: Understanding texts

Answer Question 1.

0	1
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Text A and **Text B** are printed on pages **3**, **4** and **5**.

Text A is an article from an online newspaper.

Text B is an extract from a blog.

Examine how the writers of **Text A** and **Text B** use language to create meanings.

In your answer you should consider different:

- audiences
- purposes
- genres
- modes of communication.

[25 marks]

Text A



OPINION

By Colin Drury

I trained my 5-year-old daughter like an Olympian to win gold at sports day – and I don't care who judges me

Whatever the neighbours might think, all those hours we spent doing drills in the back garden were clearly worth it



Competitive sports days are a dying creature (Photo: Coolpicture via Getty Images/Moment RF)

It was my eldest's first sports day this week, and not to brag (I am bragging), but against talented opponents (six randomly picked five-year-olds), she stormed to gold in the *sack race.

Cheered? You should have heard me. In fact, come to think of it, you may have heard me. I'm afraid I am, it turns out, *that* dad. Well, why not?

I can talk you through it if you want me to. It's sporting drama of the highest order.

When the whistle goes, she's mid-conversation with the girl in the lane next to her. I can't be certain, but I'm pretty sure her teacher Mrs Hurst has to shout at them both to start jumping.

Question 1 continues on the next page

No matter. Once she's off, she's really off; steady at first; finding her rhythm, moving up the field; into fourth, third; someone's fallen! She's second! She's eating up the ground now; focus, power, precision; she's like a kangaroo out there! She's neck and neck with first; an epic battle unfolding before our eyes; the crowd sucks in its breath (it doesn't), and they're both over the line. Who's won? There's nothing in it! Is there photo-finish technology at this school? There's not (why not?!).

Wait a sec, the officials – two year-six girls – are running over with the stickers. They're giving gold to our little one. Our little one's won. She's only gone and won.

I get my phone out. I'm looking up where the 2036 Olympics might be held. I'm spluttering outrage at what I'm reading: how can something like skateboarding be an Olympic event but the sack race isn't? Sort it out, International Olympic Committee!

Never mind. Gold is still gold. Needless to say, whatever the neighbours might think, all those hours I spent training her in the back garden were clearly worth it.

I was reading the other week about how competitive sports days are a dying creature. Fifty-seven per cent of schools are said to hold non-competitive versions these days. The idea is that, if no one wins, no one loses and no one ends up feeling excluded or getting upset. Which seems reasonable enough for a cohort of five-year-olds.

Except, I don't know, doesn't competition – kept friendly, fun and essentially inconsequential – have benefits even at that age? Doesn't it teach resilience, respect, fair play and the value of hard work?

Instead of shielding children from competition because they might not win, shouldn't we be teaching them that there's absolutely nothing wrong with losing as long as they've given their all and they've enjoyed it?

As she crosses the line with a smile on her face, I couldn't be prouder. Who needs an Olympian in the family anyway!

*sack race: a race in which competitors jump forward in sacks

Text B

MEMBERSHIP JOURNALS CARDS PRINTABLES PARENTING
TWEENS & TEENS ADULTS GROWTHMINDED LOGIN

Big Life Journal



GBP

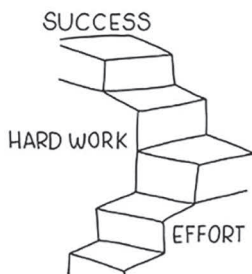


0

SHOP NOW

4 Ways to Foster A Healthy COMPETITIVE MINDSET IN Young Athletes

1 CONNECT WINNING WITH EFFORT 2 RE-DEFINE SUCCESS



- Explain that positive outcomes are the result of lots of **EFFORT**.
- Discuss how the best players **practice** the most and **work** the hardest.
- Help kids notice what went **WELL** in each game or practice, and note how effort created even their smallest gains.

- Explain that accomplishment does not always mean winning.
- Athletes with a growth mindset see "success in **learning** and **improving**, not just winning".
- **Bouncing back** after a loss can also be viewed as an achievement.
- Failure is not only helpful in building resilience, but necessary!



3 LEARN FROM THE COMPETITION

- Kids can learn to be inspired by their competitors. "I bet they practiced so much to get that good. What do you think?"
- Teach kids to compete against their **own past** performance. Explain that their most important competitor is their self.
- Explain that comparisons are **relative**.



4 PRACTICE AT HOME

- Consider family games or activities that kids can potentially win, and keep it **fair**.
- Choose **cooperative** board games to add the element of teamwork.
- Brainstorm with kids about what will happen after they win or lose. Winning feels good and losing feels bad, but neither state is permanent.



Big Life Journal - biglifejournal.com

Turn over for section B

Section B: Directed writing

Answer **one** question from this section.

Either

0	2
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You have been asked to write an article for your school or college website about healthy competition.

The aim of the article is to inform and advise students about how to develop a positive attitude to competition.

You may use the information and ideas in the material in **Section A**.

Write the text for the article using about 400 words.

[25 marks]

or

0	3
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You have been invited to speak in a debate at your school or college. The topic is 'Competition in schools should be banned'.

The aim of your speech is to persuade the audience for **or** against the topic.

You may use the information and ideas in the material in **Section A**.

Write the text for the speech using about 400 words.

[25 marks]

END OF QUESTIONS

There are no questions printed on this page

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