



**English B – Higher level – Paper 2 – Reading comprehension**  
**Anglais B – Niveau supérieur – Épreuve 2 – Compréhension écrite**  
**Inglés B – Nivel Superior – Prueba 2 – Comprensión de lectura**

3 May 2023 / 3 mai 2023 / 3 de mayo de 2023

Zone A afternoon	Zone B morning	Zone C afternoon
Zone A après-midi	Zone B matin	Zone C après-midi
Zona A tarde	Zona B mañana	Zona C tarde

1 h

**Text booklet – Instructions to candidates**

- Do not open this booklet until instructed to do so.
- This booklet accompanies paper 2 reading comprehension.

**Livret de textes – Instructions destinées aux candidats**

- N'ouvrez pas ce livret avant d'y être autorisé(e).
- Ce livret accompagne la partie de l'épreuve 2 portant sur la compréhension écrite.

**Cuadernillo de textos – Instrucciones para los alumnos**

- No abra este cuadernillo hasta que se lo autoricen.
- Este cuadernillo acompaña a la parte de comprensión de lectura de la prueba 2.



Text A

## Top Future Transport Innovations

A recent report released by the US Department of Transportation (DOT) identified a critical need for improvement of the nation's transportation system. While the DOT has begun accelerating the improvement of the country's highways and bridges, new forms of transit are being developed and will most likely be implemented soon.

5 These five innovations will revolutionize transportation in the near future.

1. **Hyperloop transportation systems**

Hyperloops are essentially transportation tubes where pods of passengers or freight pass through a pressurized track at high speeds. Hyperloops run at an average of 600 miles per hour. There are several companies currently working to advance the technology. One company hopes to launch its first passenger service in the next year or two.

2. **Self-driving electric buses**

Automated city buses and shuttles will be in operation in the near future. Autonomous vehicles use cameras, radars and GPS systems to recognize and communicate with traffic lights and have impressive safety records. These buses of the future will reduce the impact on the environment because they are electric. Such buses are already in operation in China and Germany, and are being tested in the US.

3. **Elevated buses**

While automated buses are being developed worldwide, China is working on a bus system that will reduce traffic congestion. The bus "straddles" traffic by running on special tracks that allow regular vehicles to drive underneath. A system currently being designed in China is expected to reduce traffic congestion by thirty percent.

4. **Flying hotel pods**

A fleet of flying hotels is being designed by a company in Canada. Driftscape is a mobile, self-sustaining hotel that uses drone technology. Driftscape allows guests to travel while sleeping, and to roam or to touch down in diverse locations. It consists of several modular units including food and beverage elements. Driftscape offers spectacular panoramas and has minimal impact on the environment, preserving the integrity and authenticity of the locations visited.

5. **Satellite-based air traffic control**

Air traffic control systems in operation today are ground-based, using technology that dates back to the 1960s. Control systems using satellites allow air traffic controllers to be more efficient. The US is currently working on such a system: NextGen, which is being implemented in stages through 2025. GPS technology will be used to increase accuracy and shorten routes. NextGen will save time and fuel, reduce late arrivals, increase flight capacity and permit controllers to monitor aircraft with improved safety margins.



Text B

## The Kanneh-Mason Family in Concert



**1 Harriet Smith unpacks the success of the seven gifted Kanneh-Mason siblings.**

What makes the Kanneh-Mason siblings so remarkable? Is it the fact that all seven of them seem equally obsessed with music? They are, by order of age, Isata (24), Braimah (22), Sheku (21), Konya (20), Jeneba (18), Aminata (15) and Mariatu (11), and all play either piano, violin or cello or a combination. Or is it the fact that their parents Stuart and Kadiatu – neither of them musicians but both musical – didn't go down the more obvious hot-housing<sup>1</sup> route with specialist music schools but instead opted for state education in Nottingham at a school that truly integrated music into the curriculum? Or is it the fact that they are equally at home playing Bob Marley, Mozart or tunes from the musicals?

**2** One of the most striking things about the family is the way that music is music. They grew up surrounded by music – reggae, rap, rock, country & western, as well as classical. That was undoubtedly the secret to their semi-final success in Britain's Got Talent<sup>2</sup> in 2015, where, after their medley of classical and electronic rock music, even the most prickly judge waxed lyrical, commenting that they were 'probably the most talented family in the world.' A fellow-judge hit the nail on the head when she summed up their performance with the observation: 'So many younger people might think this music is stuffy and you give it personality and character and fun: I think you could probably introduce it to a whole new audience of people who have never really appreciated that kind of music before.'

**3** How right she was, and in the years since then the siblings have made their mark both individually and as a family. In 2016 cellist Sheku Kanneh-Mason was the first-ever black musician to win the coveted BBC Young Musician, while pianist sisters Isata and Jeneba reached the keyboard finals in 2014 and 2018 respectively. In 2018 Sheku reached an audience of two billion worldwide when he played at the wedding of Prince Harry and Meghan Markle. Sheku and Isata have both made best-selling recordings and all seven will shortly release a new album together.

**4** But before we get carried away by the fairy-tale aspect of the Kanneh-Masons, let's not forget that this has come about through a mix of talent, hard work and a certain amount of sacrifice too, as their mother relates in her recently published book *House of Music*. She doesn't like the word 'talent' very much though. 'I think all children actually have genius ... and it's all about championing that.' She explains: 'Genius is something you really, really want to do, which is probably more important than something called "talent". It's loving something, wanting to do it, having the thirst to do it, and then channelling that hard work. It's not something you are born with, because if you do nothing about it, it goes nowhere.'

<sup>1</sup> hot-housing: teaching a child to a high level at an earlier age than usual

<sup>2</sup> Britain's Got Talent: a British talent competition and television show



Text C

**“Take us home” – an extract from the  
novel *All the light we cannot see***

*Marie-Laure lives in Paris, France. She is blind.*

Usually Marie-Laure can solve the wooden puzzle boxes her father creates for her birthdays. Often they are shaped like houses and contain some hidden trinket. Opening them involves a cunning series of steps: find a seam with your fingernails, slide the bottom to the right, detach a  
5 side rail, remove a hidden key from inside the rail, unlock the top, and discover a bracelet inside.

For her seventh birthday, a tiny wooden chalet stands in the center of the kitchen table where the sugar bowl ought to be. She slides a hidden drawer out of the base, finds a hidden compartment beneath the drawer, takes out a wooden key, and slots the key inside the chimney. Inside waits a square of Swiss chocolate.

10 “Four minutes,” says her father, laughing. “I’ll have to work harder next year.”

For a long time, though, unlike his puzzle boxes, his model of their neighborhood makes little sense to her. It is not like the real world. The miniature intersection of rue de Mirbel and rue Monge<sup>1</sup>, for example, just a block from their apartment, is nothing like the real intersection. The real one presents an amphitheater of noise and fragrance: on winter days it swims with the  
15 odor of roasting chestnuts; on summer evenings it becomes slow and drowsy, full of sleepy conversations and the scraping of heavy iron chairs.

But her father’s model of the same intersection smells only of dried glue and sawdust. Its streets are empty, its pavements static; to her fingers, it serves as little more than a tiny and insufficient facsimile. He persists in asking Marie-Laure to run her fingers over it, to recognize  
20 different houses, the angles of streets. And one cold Tuesday in December, when Marie-Laure has been blind for over a year, her father walks her up rue Cuvier<sup>2</sup> to the edge of the Jardin des Plantes<sup>3</sup>.

“Here is the path we take every morning. Through the cedars up ahead is the Grand Gallery.”

“I know, Papa.”

25 He picks her up and spins her around three times. “Now,” he says, “you’re going to take us home.”

Her mouth drops open.

“I want you to think of the model, Marie.”

“But I can’t possibly!”

30 “I’m one step behind you. I won’t let anything happen. You have your cane. You know where you are.”

“I do not!”

“You do.”



Exasperation. She cannot even say if the gardens are ahead or behind.

35 “Calm yourself, Marie. One centimeter at a time.”

“It’s far, Papa. Six blocks, at least.”

“Six blocks is exactly right. Use logic. Which way should we go first?”

Six paces seven paces eight. A roar of noise overtakes them. Twelve paces farther on, the bell tied around the handle of a shop door rings and two women come out, jostling her as they pass.

40 Marie-Laure drops her cane: she begins to cry.

Her father lifts her, holds her to his narrow chest.

“It’s so big,” she whispers.

“You can do this, Marie.”

She cannot.

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<sup>1</sup> rue de Mirbel and rue Monge: roads in Paris

<sup>2</sup> rue Cuvier: a road in Paris

<sup>3</sup> Jardin des Plantes: the botanical garden in Paris

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**References/Références/Referencias:**

- Text A** MarshMcLennan Agency, 2018. Top 10 Future Transportation Innovations. *Marsh & McLennan Agency LLC*, [online]. Available at: <https://www.marshmma.com/blog/top-10-future-transportation-innovations> [Accessed 21 December 2021]. SOURCE ADAPTED.
- Text B** Barbican, 2022. Harriet Smith unpacks the success of the seven gifted Kanneh-Mason siblings. *Barbican*, [online]. Available at: <https://www.barbican.org.uk/digital-programmes/the-kanneh-mason-family-in-concert> [Accessed 13 December 2021].
- Text C** Doerr, A., 2014. *All the light we cannot see*. London: Fourth Estate.

