GCSE
ENGLISH LANGUAGE
Paper 2 Writers' viewpoints and perspectives

Time allowed: 1 hour 45 minutes

For examiner use	Mark
1	
2	
3	
4	
5	
Total	

Materials

A black pen.

Instructions

• Answer every question.

• Write in the answer spaces provided.

• Keep your answers inside the page borders.

• Use the additional lined pages if you need more space and identify the question number.

• Cross out rough work you do not want marked.

• Do not use a dictionary.

Information

• This paper carries 80 marks: 40 for reading and 40 for writing.

• Marks are shown beside the questions.

• Write clearly and use accurate English.

Advice

Allow about 15 minutes to read the sources and questions. Plan your writing response and leave time to check your answers.

Source A

An original contemporary opinion article considers what town centres should provide for people travelling after dark.

A town does not become empty when its shops close. Cleaners are still at work behind the glass, a kitchen porter is waiting for a bus, and somebody is walking home from a late shift. The day has ended for some people, but not for everyone. Yet many town centres seem designed on the assumption that the last customer takes the last human need away. A shutter can close a business. It cannot close the lives around it.

Look at the things a person can use without buying anything. A bench may be fenced off, the public toilets locked, the shelter occupied by an advertising display. There may be light enough to read a menu but not enough to read the timetable beside it. Someone waiting for transport can see plenty of places to spend money and very few places simply to wait. We have made a peculiar bargain when comfort is available only with a receipt.

It is easy to answer that people should plan better. Take an earlier train. Arrange a lift. Carry a phone. Each suggestion may help an individual, but together they quietly move every responsibility away from the place itself. A cancelled service is not corrected by a fully charged battery. Nor can every late worker choose when a shift finishes. Planning matters; so does recognising that some journeys are shaped by decisions their passengers did not make.

A useful town after dark need not resemble a festival. Most people waiting for a bus are not asking for entertainment. They want a readable sign, somewhere dry to stand and a route home that does not turn the last ten minutes into a puzzle. Small provisions can have a dignity that grand projects lack. A working light above an ordinary doorway may offer more practical welcome than an illuminated slogan announcing how much a town values its community.

Our language gives the problem away. We call the shops the heart of a town, as though the heart could be switched off with the tills. But a place has other pulses: footsteps on a pavement, a bus turning the corner, a cleaner locking a side entrance. After dark these quieter rhythms become easier to hear. They remind us that a town is not a shop window. It is a shared room, and some of its occupants come home later than others.

There are difficult choices. Lighting, maintenance and transport cost money, and an unattended building cannot simply be left open without thought. A damaged shelter helps nobody. Those limits deserve honest discussion rather than a promise that every facility can stay available all night. But limits should begin a practical conversation, not end it. Listening to the people who travel after the rush hour would reveal which changes are useful and which merely look impressive in a photograph.

That conversation should include people whose journeys are easily overlooked. The person using a walking frame may need a seat; the person carrying shopping may need a clear route; the worker finishing late may need accurate information about the last service. Their needs differ, and no single improvement will answer all of them. Asking, observing and checking again would be a better start than imagining one convenient traveller and arranging the entire town around that imaginary person's timetable.

We often judge a place at its busiest, in daylight, when the doors are open and the photographs are taken. We should sometimes judge it at the edge of its working day. What does it offer the person who has finished serving everyone else? A town earns its welcome in the ordinary details it leaves available when the welcome signs have gone dark. The question is not whether people can stay out later for pleasure. It is whether those already out can get home with dignity.

Source B

Charles Dickens describes walking through London at night when he was unable to sleep.

Some years ago, a temporary inability to sleep, referable to a distressing impression, caused me to walk about the streets all night, for a series of several nights. The disorder might have taken a long time to conquer, if it had been faintly experimented on in bed; but, it was soon defeated by the brisk treatment of getting up directly after lying down, and going out, and coming home tired at sunrise.

In the course of those nights, I finished my education in a fair amateur experience of houselessness. My principal object being to get through the night, the pursuit of it brought me into sympathetic relations with people who have no other object every night in the year.

The month was March, and the weather damp, cloudy, and cold. The sun not rising before half-past five, the night perspective looked sufficiently long at half-past twelve: which was about my time for confronting it.

The restlessness of a great city, and the way in which it tumbles and tosses before it can get to sleep, formed one of the first entertainments offered to the contemplation of us houseless people. It lasted about two hours. We lost a great deal of companionship when the late public-houses turned their lamps out, and when the potmen thrust the last brawling drunkards into the street; but stray vehicles and stray people were left us, after that. If we were very lucky, a policeman's rattle sprang and a fray turned up; but, in general, surprisingly little of this diversion was provided. Except in the Haymarket, which is the worst kept part of London, and about Kent-street in the Borough, and along a portion of the line of the Old Kent-road, the peace was seldom violently broken. But, it was always the case that London, as if in imitation of individual

citizens belonging to it, had expiring fits and starts of restlessness. After all seemed quiet, if one cab rattled by, half-a-dozen would surely follow; and Houselessness even observed that intoxicated people appeared to be magnetically attracted towards each other; so that we knew when we saw one drunken object staggering against the shutters of a shop, that another drunken object would stagger up before five minutes were out, to fraternise or fight with it. When we made a divergence from the regular species of drunkard, the thin-armed, puff-faced, leaden-lipped gin-drinker, and encountered a rarer specimen of a more decent appearance, fifty to one but that specimen was dressed in soiled mourning. As the street experience in the night, so the street experience in the day; the common folk who come unexpectedly into a little property, come unexpectedly into a deal of liquor.

At length these flickering sparks would die away, worn out--the last veritable sparks of waking life trailed from some late pieman or hot-potato man--and London would sink to rest. And then the yearning of the houseless mind would be for any sign of company, any lighted place, any movement, anything suggestive of any one being up--nay, even so much as awake, for the houseless eye looked out for lights in windows.

Section A: Reading

Answer all questions in this section.

You are advised to spend about 45 minutes on this section.

0 1 Read again the first part of Source A, from lines 1 to 12.

Choose four statements below which are true.

- Shade the circles inside the boxes beside the statements you think are true.
- Select a maximum of four statements.
- Cross out the whole box if you make a mistake.
- To restore a statement you crossed out, draw a circle around that box.

[4 marks]

A. Some people are still working after shops close. ⬭

B. The writer says everybody should stay at home after dark. ⬭

C. A worker is waiting for a bus. ⬭

D. The writer believes a shutter can end people's needs. ⬭

E. Public toilets may be locked. ⬭

F. Every transport shelter has been removed. ⬭

G. There may be too little light to read a timetable. ⬭

H. The writer says waiting always costs nothing. ⬭

0 2 You need to refer to Source A and Source B for this question.

Both sources describe being in a town or city at night.

What can you infer about the differences between the experiences of people outdoors at night in Source A and Source B?

[8 marks]

0 3 You now need to refer only to Source A, from lines 25 to 30.

How does the writer use language to present the town as a living community?

[12 marks]

0 4 For this question, you need to refer to the whole of Source A together with the whole of Source B.

Compare how the writers convey their different feelings and perspectives about town or city life at night.

In your answer, you could:

- compare their different feelings and perspectives
- comment on the methods the writers use to convey their feelings and perspectives
- support your response with references to both texts.

[16 marks]

Question 04 continued

Section B: Writing

You are advised to spend about 45 minutes on this section.

Write in full sentences.

You are reminded of the need to plan your answer.

You should leave enough time to check your work at the end.

0 5 "Public spaces should serve people after the shops close, not just while they are spending money."

Write a letter to your local council in which you argue your point of view on this statement.

24 marks for content and organisation; 16 marks for technical accuracy.

[40 marks]

Question 05

Question 05 continued

Exam Stash, Original contemporary opinion article (2026).

Charles Dickens, Night Walks (1860).