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CAMBRIDGE
International Education

Cambridge International AS & A Level

ENGLISH LANGUAGE **9093/11**

Paper 1 Reading **May/June 2026**

2 hours 15 minutes

0498181519

You must answer on the enclosed answer booklet.

You will need: Answer booklet (enclosed)

INSTRUCTIONS

- Answer **all** questions.
- Follow the instructions on the front cover of the answer booklet. If you need additional answer paper, ask the invigilator for a continuation booklet.
- Dictionaries are **not** allowed.

INFORMATION

- The total mark for this paper is 50.
- The number of marks for each question or part question is shown in brackets [ ].

This document has **8** pages. Any blank pages are indicated.

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Section A: Directed response

Question 1

Read the following text, which is the opening of an article from an online travel magazine.

(a) You have recently been on a trip to Japan, organised by a travel company. Write a review of the trip, which you will publish on an international travel website. Use **150–200** words. [10]

(b) Compare your review with the article, analysing form, structure and language. [15]

Reasons to visit Japan – officially the best country in the world

Japan was voted the best country in the world in the 2023 Readers' Choice Awards.

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From the magnificent Kinkakuji Temple (also known as the ‘Golden Pavilion’) to the incredible Kiyomizu-dera Temple, there is an abundance of extraordinary monuments.

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Section B: Text analysis

Question 2

Read the following text, which is an extract from a novel.

The story is narrated by a fig tree which has been removed by its owner from Cyprus and is about to be planted in its new home.

Analyse the text, focusing on form, structure and language. [25]

When the Arrivals door opened wide, Kostas exclaimed, unable to control the excitement in his voice, 'We're here, we made it! Welcome to your new home.'

Was he talking to his wife or was he talking to me? I'd like to think it was the latter. Either way, that was more than sixteen years ago. I have never been back to Cyprus since.

I still carry the island with me, though. The places where we were born are the shape of our lives, even when we are away from them. Especially then. Now and again in my sleep I find myself in Nicosia[1], standing under a familiar sun, my shadow falling against the rocks, reaching towards the prickly broom bushes that burst with blossoms, each as perfect and bright as the golden coins in a children's fable.

Of the past we left behind I remember everything. Coastlines etched in the sandy terrain like creases in a palm waiting to be read, the chorus of cicadas[2] against the rising heat, bees buzzing over lavender fields, butterflies stretching their wings at the first promise of light … many may try, but no one does optimism better than butterflies.

People assume it's a matter of personality, the difference between optimists and pessimists. But I believe it all comes down to an inability to forget. The greater your powers of retention, the slimmer your chances at optimism. And I'm not claiming that butterflies have no recollection of things. They have, surely. A moth can recall what it learned as a caterpillar. But me and my kind, we are afflicted with everlasting memory – and by that, I don't mean years or decades. I mean centuries.

It is a curse, an enduring memory. When elderly Cypriot women wish ill upon someone, they don't ask for anything bad to befall them. They don't pray for lightning bolts, unforeseen accidents or sudden reversals of fortune. They simply say,

May you never be able to forget.

So I guess it is in my genes, this melancholy I can never quite shake off. Carved with an invisible knife into my arborescent[3] skin.

'Okay, this should be good enough,' Kostas said as he examined the trench, seeming satisfied with its length and depth.

He stretched out his aching back and wiped the mud off his hands with a handkerchief that he pulled from his pocket.

'I need to prune you a bit, it'll be easier that way.'

Grabbing a pair of clippers, he trimmed my wayward lateral branches, his moves deft, practised. With the help of a nylon rope, he encircled me, fastening my thicker branches together. Carefully, he tightened the bundle and made a square knot, loose enough to avoid damage but snug enough for me to fit in the trench.

* * *

'Right, that's all done,' Kostas said, surveying his surroundings. 'I'm now going to push you down.'

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There was a tenderness to his face and a soft glimmer in his eyes, reflecting the slowly setting sun far in the west.

'Some of your roots will break, but don't worry,' Kostas said. 'The ones remaining will be more than enough to keep you alive.'

Trying to maintain my composure, trying not to panic, I sent a quick warning down below, informing my subterranean limbs. Just as swiftly they responded in hundreds of minute signals telling me that they knew what was coming. They were ready.

With a sharp intake of breath, Kostas bent forward and shoved me down towards the hole in the ground. I didn't budge, at first. Placing his palms against my trunk, he tried harder this time, the pressure careful and balanced but equally firm, constant.

'You'll be fine. Trust me, darling Ficus,' he said, dotingly.

The gentleness in his tone enfolded me and held me tight in place; even a single word of endearment from him had a gravity of its own that drew me back to him.

Slowly, all my fears and doubts abandoned me, floating away like wisps of mist.

[1]*Nicosia*: the capital of Cyprus
[2]*cicadas*: insects that make a loud buzzing sound
[3]*arborescent*: resembling a tree

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