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CAMBRIDGE
International Education

Cambridge International AS & A Level

ENGLISH LANGUAGE **9093/13**

Paper 1 Reading **May/June 2026**

2 hours 15 minutes

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 [ ].

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Section A: Directed response

Question 1

Read the following text, which is an extract from an article about being average.

(a) Your teacher has asked you to write a section of a mental wellbeing leaflet for students in your school. Write the section about the benefits of being less competitive. Use **150–200** words. [10]

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

Why we should embrace being average

Cornell is regularly ranked amongst the top Ivy League universities in the United States.

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‘It robs people of the ability to be present and to be happy and to feel peaceful,’ says Dr Rhodes.

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Section B: Text analysis

Question 2

Read the following text, which is an extract from a transcript of a podcast about map-making.

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

Art Matters podcast: the artistry behind maps

How often do you think about maps? You probably use a map application on your phone when you're going to a new place. Maybe you can recall using paper maps years ago on a road trip. They are a practical tool to help us get from one place to another, but they are not neutral.

'I think the earliest surviving maps are from the Babylonian era and the clay tablet from Mesopotamia, which shows a map of a locality,' says Nick Millea, a Map Librarian. 'Nothing as a conventional map, as we might think, really survives until the Renaissance ... Some Islamic and Chinese maps that survive are earlier than surviving Western maps.'

We often think of maps as offering a two-dimensional bird's-eye view of an area, but ways of representing places can vary greatly. One of the earliest surviving maps is carved on a mammoth tusk. Lines curve around the three-dimensional object and almost appear as simple decorative scratchings to modern eyes. Even on a two-dimensional surface, there are many approaches to map-making.

An eleventh-century map from the Islamic world shows the Mediterranean as a simplified oval with 121 dots around its edge. These represent ports in their proper order, but are not necessarily accurate in their spacing and placement.

'So you can go from one to the next and you would know which port would come next,' says Nick. 'What is confusing is the actual interior of the scene. There are 116 circular islands and two rectangular islands. These islands are just dotted around at random in the sea, so they bear no resemblance to geography whatsoever. They're all named, but they have absolutely no practical use if you were choosing to navigate across the sea.'

It takes a fair amount of artistic and scientific skill to render a map that accurately represents a sense of space, delineates borders and conveys any other required information. Today we refer to the people who make maps as cartographers, but early mapmakers in the sixteenth century were probably surveyors who recorded measurements and landmarks in graphic form.

'Ptolemy, working in Alexandria in the Roman Empire, was creating or had records of coordinates for thousands of settlements across the world,' says Nick. 'These were effectively lost, and then in the Renaissance rediscovered and people started using them to create maps based on these geographical locations. And so you get a graphic representation of what Ptolemy had written about, with these odd-looking world maps ... So there's a world without the Americas, which really is focused north of the equator.'

One interpretation of Ptolemy's atlas produced in the fifteenth century is more of a map of Europe than the world. The map stretches from present-day Spain in the west to a small portion of China in the east. The shape of Europe is loosely correct, but some countries, like India, appear more squat. The northern portion of Africa is relatively close

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in shape, but it quickly morphs into a vague suggestion of further territories to the south. Text towards the bottom of the African continent reads ‘terrain incognita’, indicating unknown lands.

Outside of the practicalities of making maps, artists sometimes flexed their creative muscles when designing cartouches and compass roses. Cartouches are the decorative areas surrounding maps and the compass rose typically helps orient the viewer with the cardinal directions.

‘You’ll get all sorts of artistic representations of wonderful things. It could be classical scenes and nautical scenes,’ says Nick. ‘Nothing to do with the map’s content at all in terms of geography, but a real opportunity for the mapmaker to throw in some spectacular artistic interpretation as to what they’re talking about.’

For a spectacular example of the artistry that went into creating some maps, you can look to the work of Dutch cartographer and artist Frederik de Wit. He worked during the height of the Dutch Golden Age and painted maps with elaborate and colourful scenes around the edges. Some show whimsical scenes with mythical creatures, while others show personifications of ideas, such as the four seasons. De Wit even created a vibrant celestial map, showing the animals and figures that represent the major constellations.

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