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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

6 November 2025 / 6 novembre 2025 / 6 de noviembre de 2025

| | | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| Zone A afternoon | Zone B afternoon | Zone C afternoon |
| Zone A après-midi | Zone B après-midi | Zone C après-midi |
| Zona A tarde | Zona B tarde | 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.

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Text A

August's Night Sky Notes: Seeing Double

1 During the summer months, we tend to miss the views of Saturn, Jupiter and other heavenly bodies. But it can be a great time to look for other objects, like globular star clusters such as Messier 13, open star clusters such as the Coma Star Cluster (Melotte 111), but also double stars!

2 What Are Double Stars?

If you have seen any movies or read any books that refer to having two suns in the sky, that would be a double star system.

These star systems typically come in two types – binary and optical doubles. Binary stars are two stars that are gravitationally bound and orbit each other, and optical double stars only appear to be close together when viewed from Earth, but in reality, are extremely far apart from each other, and are not affected by each other's gravity. With a small telescope, in moderately light polluted skies, summer offers great views of these stellar groupings from the Northern Hemisphere:



- 3**
- **Double Double:** also known by its technical name, Epsilon Lyrae, this multiple star system appears as one star when observed with the naked eye. But with a small telescope, it can be split into two stars. A large telescope reveals Epsilon Lyrae's secret – what looks like a single star is actually a quadruple star system!
 - **Albireo:** a gorgeous double star set – one blue, one yellow – in the constellation Cygnus.
 - **Polaris:** while technically a multiple star system, our North Star can easily be separated from one star to two with a modest telescope.
 - **Mizar and Alcor:** located in the handle of the Big Dipper constellation, this pair can be seen with the naked eye.
- 4** Aside from looking incredible in a telescope or binoculars, double stars help astronomers learn about measuring the mass of stars, and about stellar evolution. Some stars orbit each other a little too closely, and things can become disastrous, but overall, these celestial bodies make for excellent targets and are simple crowd pleasers.

Text B

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Text C

Linguistic Justice

- 1** English still rules the world, but that’s not necessarily OK. Is it time to curb its power? For fluent speakers, there are clear benefits – for others, there are huge costs. Here are some ways to boost linguistic justice.
- 2** The emergence of English as the predominant (though not exclusive) international language is seen by many as a positive phenomenon with several practical advantages and no downside. However, it also raises problems that are slowly beginning to be understood and studied. The most important challenge is that of fairness or “linguistic justice”. A common language is a bit like a telephone network: the more people know a language, the more useful it becomes to communicate. The question of fairness arises because individuals face very different costs to access the network and are on an unequal footing when using it. Those who learn English as a second language incur learning costs, while native speakers can communicate with all network members without incurring such costs. It’s like getting the latest smartphone model and sim card with unlimited data for free.
- 3** Western European countries spend between 5% and 15% of their education budget on foreign language teaching. In the EU, most of these resources go to the teaching of a single language, English, usually as a compulsory subject. In English-speaking countries, by contrast, foreign language teaching has long been in decline because younger generations feel less need to learn other people’s languages, turning to other subjects instead. This trend translates into considerable savings for the education systems of English-speaking countries, which can then be allocated to other productive public investments.
- 4** A second type of inequality relates to the use of a common language. In most professional contexts, a person is more effective and persuasive when using their native language. This inequality is difficult, but not impossible, to quantify. In scientific research, English is often required for publishing in international journals and obtaining research funding. Non-native English-speaking researchers require as much as twice the time needed by native speakers to read, write or review publications in English. When submitting papers for publication, non-native speakers are about 2.5 times more likely to have their work rejected for linguistic reasons – and they are 12.5 times more likely to have to make language-related revisions. So, even with equal or greater technical competence, they may have fewer career opportunities.
- 5** It is certainly easier to identify a problem than to find solutions, particularly when it comes to global issues. However, some compensatory measures may help reduce global linguistic injustice. Philippe Van Parijs, of the University of Louvain in Belgium, has, somewhat provocatively, proposed a linguistic tax on English-speaking countries to compensate for the costs of teaching English in other countries. This would involve establishing a global tax on countries where the majority of the population speaks English as a native language and distributing the revenue to countries where English is taught in schools as a foreign language. Yet other forms of indirect compensation could be considered; for example, more intensive use of machine translation and artificial intelligence in scientific publications, with the costs borne by the publisher. Criteria rewarding multilingual researchers in applications for funding for international projects could be designed, following the example of policies to promote gender equality in academia.



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