



Oxford Cambridge and RSA

Tuesday 7 November 2023 – Morning

GCSE (9–1) English Language

J351/01 Communicating information and ideas

Insert

Time allowed: 2 hours



INSTRUCTIONS

- Do **not** send this Insert for marking. Keep it in the centre or recycle it.

INFORMATION

- Use this Insert to answer the questions in Section A.
- This document has **8** pages.

Details of text extracts:**Text 1**

Text: adapted from *The New Wizard of the West*

Author: Chauncy Montgomery McGovern (1899)

Text 2

Text: adapted from *Net Prophet*

Author: Lesley White (1995)

Text 1

In this magazine article, Chauncy Montgomery McGovern describes his visit, in 1899, to the laboratory of Nikola Tesla, a famous electrical engineer who designed the modern electricity supply system.

Fancy yourself seated in a large, well-lighted room, with mountains of curious-looking machinery on all sides. A tall, thin young man walks up to you and, by merely snapping his fingers, creates instantaneously a ball of leaping red flame, and holds it calmly in his hands.

As you gaze you are surprised to see it does not burn his fingers. He lets it fall upon his clothing, on his hair, into your lap, and finally puts the ball of flame into a wooden box. You are amazed to see that nowhere does the flame leave the slightest trace, and you rub your eyes to make sure you are not asleep. 5

The odd flame having been extinguished as miraculously as it appeared, the tall, thin young man next signals to his assistant to close all the windows. When this has been done, the room is as dark as a cave. A moment later you hear the man say, 'Now my friends, I will make for you some daylight.' 10

Quick as a flash the whole laboratory is filled with a strange light as beautiful as that of the moon, but as strong as that of the sun. As you glance up at the closed shutters on each window, you see that each of them is as tight as a vice, and that no rays are coming through them. Cast your eyes wherever you will, you can see no trace of the source of the odd light. 15

To tell of these and a thousand other wonders that Tesla does in a trice gives only a faint conception of their effect on the visitor. To really appreciate them one must see and hear and feel them in the flesh. It is a scientific treat of a lifetime, but it is a treat that few can enjoy for the laboratory of Tesla is securely locked against everyone not provided with an introduction from a personal friend of the audacious wizard. 20

Mention is made in this paper of only those inventions which have passed beyond the experimental stage. But there are hundreds of other promised wonders in development in the great inventor's miracle-factory. As I have heard one of his admirers express it, an enumeration of these 'sounds like the dream of a half-intoxicated god.'

No one who is privileged to have heard Tesla explain his plans has the slightest doubt that every one of his promises will be fulfilled in an equally successful way. 25

Text 2

In this magazine article, Lesley White describes her interview with Bill Gates. Gates had just written a book about his vision of the future.

Staying ahead for Bill Gates means looking ahead, craning further and further into the unknown. He spends his life in the future, and he can't wait to get there, racing through his schedules, anticipating questions, talking over the slow responses of the people around him. He has even tired of explaining the information superhighway and his 'vision' of the next century, so he has written his new book because he wanted to stop repeating himself.

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The miracles of the future are detailed in his book: the wonder of the wallet-sized PC that will make cash redundant; of telecommuters and video-conferencing; of hiring entertainment, ordering shopping and making friends without meeting another person.

He wants the world to share his optimism and he sees his book as a way of inviting everyone to join the discussion 'about how should we be shaping the future'.

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Throughout our precisely adjudicated hour together he was polite, bemused, like he was switching into first gear for the irksome business of communicating with a mortal. Strange, in a way, that a man whose life's work is communication, finds it problematic in the flesh, but any old pop psychologist could tell you that his empire was built as a compensation for personal inadequacy.

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His book's analogies lean on the pioneering past of his country, the internet likened to the building of the national highways, and technological advances to the search for gold in California, a search in which many are wounded and some are left behind, but the bravest and best march on to conquer a new frontier, Gates's wagon at the head.

Gates speaks of caution, but he is so wrapped up in the potential and possibilities of the Information Age that his excitement is almost childlike, his prophecies extraordinary. Most transforming of our lives will be the wallet PC, a combination of credit card, entry ticket and best friend: we will no longer need to carry our keys, cash or cameras – all will be contained in one small computer.

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The history of the future is littered with ludicrous predictions, and equally with those who defied and denied progress even as it was happening. Gates gleefully tells the story of the Oxford professor who in 1878 dismissed electric lighting as a gimmick.

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The point of genius like Gates's is being absolutely, arrogantly certain that you, just you, have got it right.

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