

Cambridge IGCSE[®] (9–1)

SET A

FIRST LANGUAGE ENGLISH

0990/02

Paper 2 Directed Writing and Composition

INSERT

2 hours

INFORMATION

- This insert contains the reading texts.
- You may annotate this insert and use the blank spaces for planning. **Do not write your answers** on the insert.

Read **both** texts, and then answer **Question 1** on the question paper.

Text A

The following passage is an article from a national newspaper about school uniforms.

School uniforms: free children and families from this tyranny

The most sensible and useful thing would simply be to abolish school uniforms. Hated and subverted by pupils, generator of considerable time-wasting "discipline" problems or hassles for schools and teachers, often impractical (or at least useless as everyday clothes) and, of course, often wildly expensive.

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If that is too much and the school must have the "correct" logo or coat of arms to brand its pupils, it could sell the badge separately as a brooch or a patch to attach to ordinary garments.

Children are conscripted to attend school (and mostly for their own good), but I can see no good reason to insist on quasi-military uniforms to brand them as attending this or that school. If it is a good one, they and their friends will feel part of it anyway. If it is a bad one, imposed uniforms will not make any difference.

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Yes, the kids will invent their own group "uniforms" instead, which may or may not be school differentiated. The key point here is "their own". In adults, it is called "choice" or "fashion". And anyone who thinks a uniform protects the poorer kids from looking different has forgotten their own school days and the myriad cues to affluence and status that can be displayed in allegedly identical garb. Accept that schools are for learning for real life and clothes are mostly irrelevant. Remove one significant problem from school days.

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Text B

The following passage is taken from an interview with a Deputy Head.

Wearing a school uniform make students feel that they belong to something bigger than themselves. The simple act of putting on a uniform makes every day an occasion, and indicates a readiness for the day ahead; just as the sports person pulls on their team kit and the judge a wig, each 'uniform' in its own way brings feelings of pride and of purpose.

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Uniform is a great leveller. No two students are the same: some live in London, others much further afield in the UK or overseas; a number come from privileged families, others no experience of school at all; many excel in sport or the arts, while others are incredibly strong academically.

Whatever they bring to the school, they all come together on equal footing, to be identified and judged by their character and contribution alone.

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Facebook CEO Mark Zuckerberg recently jokingly asked his 48.5 million followers for help in deciding what to wear on his first day back after paternity leave, presenting a row of identical grey t-shirts and hoodies hanging in his wardrobe.

"I really want to clear my life so that I have to make as few decisions as possible about anything except how to best serve this community," he explained. Here is one of the world's most successful men, realising the significance of focusing on the important and not being distracted by the superficial.

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Many of the arguments against wearing uniforms revolve around the idea that they stultify pupils' abilities to think creatively and hinder them from expressing any form of individuality.

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But it's worth considering whether uniformity on the outside actually frees us up to focus on those authentic issues that really define us.



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