

# X115/301

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NATIONAL  
QUALIFICATIONS  
2010

WEDNESDAY, 12 MAY  
9.00 AM – 10.45 AM

ENGLISH  
HIGHER  
Close Reading—Text

**There are TWO passages and questions.**

Read the passages carefully and then answer all the questions, which are printed in a separate booklet.

You should read the passages to:

understand what the writers are saying about the changing nature of cities (**Understanding—U**);

analyse their choices of language, imagery and structures to recognise how they convey their points of view and contribute to the impact of the passage (**Analysis—A**);

evaluate how effectively they have achieved their purpose (**Evaluation—E**).



## PASSAGE 1

*In this passage, the journalist Deyan Sudjic, writing in The Observer newspaper in March 2008, considers the irresistible growth of cities in the modern world.*

### THE FUTURE OF THE CITY

In a world changing faster now than ever before, the dispossessed and the ambitious are flooding into cities swollen out of all recognition. Poor cities are struggling to cope. Rich cities are reconfiguring themselves at breakneck speed. China has created an industrial powerhouse from what were fishing villages in the 1970s. Lagos and Dhaka  
5 attract a thousand new arrivals every day. In Britain, central London's population has started to grow again after 50 years of decline.

We have more big cities now than at any time in our history. In 1900, only sixteen had a population of one million; now it's more than 400. Not only are there more of them, they are larger than ever. In 1851, London had two million people. It was the largest  
10 city in the world by a long way, twice the size of Paris, its nearest rival. That version of London would seem like a village now. By the official definition, London has getting on for eight million people, but in practical terms, it's a city of 18 million, straggling most of the way from Ipswich to Bournemouth in an unforgiving rash of business parks and designer outlets, gated housing and logistics depots.

15 Having invented the modern city, 19th century Britain promptly reeled back in horror at what it had done. To the Victorians exploring the cholera-ridden back alleys of London's East End, the city was a hideous tumour sucking the life out of the countryside and creating in its place a vast polluted landscape of squalor, disease and crime. In their eyes, the city was a place to be feared, controlled and, if possible,  
20 eliminated.

Such attitudes continue to shape thinking about the city. Yet, like it or not, at some point in 2008, the city finally swallowed the world. The number of people living in cities overtook those left behind in the fields. It's a statistic that seems to suggest some sort of fundamental species change, like the moment when mankind stopped being  
25 hunter gatherers and took up agriculture.

The future of the city has suddenly become the only subject in town. It ranges from tough topics such as managing water resources, economic policy, transport planning, racial tolerance and law enforcement to what is usually presented as the fluffier end of the scale, such as making public spaces people want to spend time in and deciding the  
30 colour of the buses. But it is this diversity which powerfully affirms the city as mankind's greatest single invention.

For all their agonies, cities must be counted as a positive force. They are an engine of growth, a machine for putting the rural poor onto the first rung of urban prosperity and freedom. Look at London, a city that existed for several centuries before anything  
35 approximating England had been thought of. It has a far stronger sense of itself and its identity than Britain as a whole or England. It has grown, layer on layer, for 2000 years, sustaining generation after generation of newcomers.

You see their traces in the Spitalfields district, where a French Huguenot chapel became, successively, a synagogue and a mosque, tracking the movement of waves of  
40 migrants from poverty to suburban comfort. London's a place without an apparent structure that has proved extraordinarily successful at growing and changing. Its old residential core, sheltering in the approaches to its Tower of London fortress, has made the transition into the world's busiest banking centre. Its market halls and power stations have become art galleries and piazzas. Its simple terraced streets, built for the

45 clerks of the Great Western Railway in Southall, have become home to the largest Sikh community outside India.

And all of these worlds overlap in space and time. London is different for all its people. They make the most of the elements in it that have meaning for them and ignore the rest. A city is an à la carte menu. That is what makes it different from a village, which  
50 has little room for tolerance and difference. And a great city is one in which as many people as possible can make the widest of choices from its menu.

The cities that work best are those that keep their options open, that allow the possibility of change. The ones that are stuck, overwhelmed by rigid, state-owned social housing, or by economic systems that offer the poor no way out of the slums, are  
55 in trouble. A successful city is one that makes room for surprises. A city that has been trapped by too much gentrification or too many shopping malls will have trouble generating the spark that is essential to making a city that works.

Successful cities are the ones that allow people to be what they want; unsuccessful ones try to force them to be what others want them to be. A city of freeways like Houston or  
60 Los Angeles forces people to be car drivers or else traps them in poverty. A successful city has a public transport system that is easy to use; an unsuccessful city tries to ban cars.

A successful city has room for more than the obvious ideas about city life, because, in the end, a city is about the unexpected, about a life shared with strangers and open to  
65 new ideas. An unsuccessful city has closed its mind to the future.

## PASSAGE 2

*The following passage is adapted from 'The Dreaming City, a report about Glasgow's future produced by a political think tank in 2007.*

Glasgow is a city which has experienced constant change and adaptation, from its period as a great industrial city and as the Second City of Empire, to its latter day reinvention as the City of Culture and the Second City of Shopping. This is a city with pull, buzz, excitement, and a sense of style and its own importance. It has a  
5 potent international reach and influence. Glasgow's story continually weaves in and out of a global urban tapestry: following the trade threads of Empire, there are nearly two dozen towns and cities around the world named after Glasgow—from Jamaica to Montana to Nova Scotia. And there is even a Glasgow on the moon.

Glasgow's constant proclamation of its present success story is justified on the basis  
10 that it benefits the city: confidence will breed confidence, tourists will visit, businesses will relocate and students will enrol. But, despite the gains this approach has brought for Glasgow and cities like it, there are signs that the wind is starting to come out of the sails. What felt radical when Dublin, Barcelona and Glasgow embarked on the city makeover path in the late 1980s and early 1990s, now feels derivative and is delivering  
15 diminishing returns. When every city has commissioned a celebrity architect and pedestrianised a cultural quarter, distinctiveness is reduced to a formula.

Yet "official" Glasgow continues to celebrate its new-found status as a shopping mecca and top tourist destination, revelling in the city's new role as a place for conspicuous consumption, affluent lifestyles and global city breaks. There are several problems  
20 with this. One is that this is a city with historic and deep inequalities, a city of sharp

divisions in income, employment, life chances and health. Another is that it can be seen as promoting a way of living that is unsustainable in terms of people's disposable income and growing levels of debt. And yet another problem is the clutter of cities on the world-class trail with the same familiar formula supporting  
25 their campaign—shopping, tourism, mega-events, cultural events, iconic architecture and casinos—leaving little room for distinctiveness.

The politicians and the Establishment talk the language of “opportunity”, “choice” and “diversity” for the people of the city, but do not really believe in or practise them. They impose a set menu, rather than the choice offered “à la carte”,  
30 confident that they know best. For all the rhetoric about new ways of working, partnership and collaboration, there can still be a very old-fashioned top-down approach in parts of institutional Glasgow that retains a faith that experts and professionals must hold all the answers. There is an implicit belief that people are poor because of low aspirations and Glaswegians are unhealthy because they won't  
35 accept responsibility, make the right choices and eat healthily.

This dichotomy between the powerful and the powerless undermines the whole concept of the “resurgence” of cities such as Glasgow. At the moment, the city and its people only come together for mega-events such as the Commonwealth Games or City of Music bids. The question is whether this unity can be mobilised in a more  
40 sustained way. There is an urgent need to find some new shared values and vision to help bridge the gap between the city and its people—to close the gap between the cities people want and the cities people get.

[END OF TEXT]

**[OPEN OUT]**

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Close Reading Passage 1—Article is adapted from “Cities on the Edge of Chaos” by Deyan Dudjic, taken from *The Observer*, 9 March 2008. Copyright Guardian News & Media Ltd 2008.

Close Reading Passage 2—Passage is adapted from *The Dreaming City* by Gerry Hassan/Melissa Mean/Charlie Tims ISBN 9781841801865. Reproduced by kind permission of DEMOS.