

Read **Text A** and answer **Question 1** and **Question 2** on the question paper.

Text A: The north shore

The writer is attempting to navigate his way alone in a canoe across Northern Canada's mainland Arctic. At this point in his story, he is travelling the length of a huge lake.

- 1 Despairingly, I swung my paddle again into the icy water, the fierce wind driving me towards the land. I had to find somewhere to make camp; the gusts were growing too strong to continue.
- 2 Ahead on the north shore, the one I'd been faintly tracing in my canoe for many inhospitable kilometres, I thought I spotted a tiny patch of grass between the vast heaps of ancient boulders and rocks that lay scattered inland. Blasted by the frosts of a hundred million winters, they would not permit a tent to be pitched – and with the arctic winds no tent could last long unanchored. A dried strip of grass was perhaps not what most people would consider an attractive campsite, but to me, just now, it looked inviting. I headed for it. 5
- 3 When at last I came to the grass amid the rocks, I made camp, pegging down my tent securely with extra guy lines. Then I carried up my canoe – worn, battered, almost paper thin from months of grinding against the rocks and ice floes – and overturned it beside the tent. 'Just a little longer my old friend,' I whispered to the vessel. 10
- 4 I sat in the tent listening to the wind's howling grow louder as it whipped up waves and sent them smashing into the barren shore. Across the lake's turbulent water rose a range of gracefully sloped mountains, their lower flanks a brilliant orange. A flock of snow geese passed high overhead, emphasising the emptiness of the landscape. I hid in my sleeping bag, hunkering down for the night. I was thankful to have found this spot among the rocks when I did. 15
- 5 I'd heard of canoeists being windbound on such shores, stuck for weeks. It was not an encouraging possibility. Ahead of me lay powerful river rapids; unlucky travellers had been known to get into trouble there. If my journey was delayed, I'd have to navigate them late in the season, when the weather was at its worst. That night the wind blew ceaselessly, shaking my little tent as I lay huddled inside. I pinned my hopes of escape on the morning calm. 20
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- 6 But the dawn brought no respite: the skies were grey and dismal, the gales as unrelenting as ever. All day I waited anxiously for a break in the wind that would enable me to launch my canoe and leave my camp. None came. The frigid gusts seemed only to grow stronger, wailing eerily across the lifeless landscape. A second night passed with me still stranded in the same spot. Growing more anxious, I watched as yet another day slipped away without any break in the wind and waves, making paddling impossible and trapping me on that desolate grey rock-strewn point. 30
- 7 Glance at any satellite image of Northern Canada and you'll see that there are three million lakes, creeks, ponds, and rivers. With that many different waterways, the number of potential route combinations is infinite. You could live a thousand lifetimes and not even begin to scratch the surface of paddling all the possibilities. 35

Read **Text B** and answer **Question 3** on the question paper.

Text B: Plogging

Ever been on a run through the woods and noticed litter spoiling the otherwise natural scenery? Not only unpleasant to look at, it's a reminder of how careless and inconsiderate people can be. Then there's the bigger problem: the deadly effects of rubbish on the ecosystem, as well as on innocent wildlife.

Environmental campaigners argue that the solution to the waste epidemic requires multipronged efforts, including reviews of existing laws, but we can all help – even on our routine jogs – by 'plogging'. Plogging is simply picking up litter while jogging, and it started in Scandinavia. The word comes from 'plocka upp', which means 'pick up' in Swedish, and 'jogging'. This fitness trend is rising in popularity globally.

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Picking up stray pieces of rubbish here and there may not seem enough to make an impact, but community action groups plogging together regularly in an area can make a noticeable difference. Small efforts really can add up to tackle a massive problem.

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However, for others, the problem begins much earlier. 'Much of the litter we see is stuff we don't even think of as litter to start with,' explains environmental campaigner Anna Ruiz, who feels businesses and their customers have a bigger part to play. 'Our consumption habits are the problem. There are ways to improve the situation that don't involve expecting someone else to use their free time to pick up your mess.'

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But collecting abandoned takeaway cups and plastic bottles isn't an activity confined to joggers. The rise in outdoor swimming over the past few years is having a knock-on effect on the amount of litter bagged and binned from our riverbanks and shores. The Outdoor Swimming Society even includes a call to collect rubbish in and out of the water in its most recent swimming guide.

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Dr Damien Gee, doctor, author and a keen outdoor swimmer, recommends plogging if only because of the proven benefits of being in nature. 'Research has confirmed what we learned as kids – going outside in nature makes you feel good,' Dr Gee says. 'In Japan, they call this "forest bathing". Time in nature improves heart rate, blood pressure and even our immune functioning.'

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A particularly fascinating argument for plogging is that such an activity is part of human nature. From a medical standpoint, plogging (or how about 'plalking', which would be walking and picking up litter) naturally emulates human body mechanics. Our prehistoric ancestors walked long distances, and from time to time would bend over to pick up fruit, nuts and bugs from the ground to eat.

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Another good thing about plogging is you can also do it as a family. Plogging teaches children the importance of looking after their local environment, although you need to keep an eye out for sharp or dangerous objects.

'You can clean anywhere, anytime. You can run a plogging group and get your whole community involved or join a clean-up in your local area. All of your cleaning action counts,' says final-year student Ravi, whose school is one of hundreds taking part in a school project. On one beach recently, students joined other volunteers, surfers and walkers to clear the one tonne of debris left behind by seaside sunseekers.

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'I first heard about plogging about a year ago. Eco-minded influencers who I follow online, were making a sport out of their usual hikes, jogs and swims and picking up litter along the way,' explains Ravi's teacher. 'It seemed such an effective fusion of exercise and environmental action for our students.'

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