

Cambridge International AS Level

ENGLISH GENERAL PAPER

8021/21

Paper 2 Comprehension

May/June 2026

INSERT

1 hour 45 minutes

INFORMATION

- This insert contains all the resources referred to in the questions.
- You may annotate this insert and use the blank spaces for planning. **Do not write your answers** on the insert.



This document has **8** pages. Any blank pages are indicated.

Material for Section A

Background

Mr Perez owns and manages Fit Shoes, a company which manufactures sports shoes. The business operates from premises* on the outskirts of Port-Francis. In the last six months, crime rates in Port-Francis have risen. There has been a series of thefts, as well as a sudden increase in mindless vandalism by teenagers. Concerned by this trend, Mr Perez wants to improve the out-of-hours security of Fit Shoes' premises. Having researched two companies online and had an initial conversation with a representative from each, Mr Perez has created a table to help him compare them more easily, and make his decision.

**premises*: buildings occupied by a business

Details of what the two companies offer

Hi-Tech Secure (HTS): a new alarm system	Watch-My-Office (WMO): a specialist security firm
state-of the-art security system	security team would be on site 21:00 to 06:00 Monday to Friday
CCTV cameras set to record 24/7; website says these provide 'top quality images'	hourly inspection visits to the premises all weekend (21:00 Friday to 06:00 Monday)
movement sensors (inside and outside the building, about 20 in total) linked to alarms	two guards would be on duty outside the building, with keys for inside access if required
alarms linked to client's smartphone/tablet computer	weekly security report emailed to client
CCTV images also viewable and saved online	free consultancy session offered on possible additional security improvements
automatically dials local police headquarters every time the alarms are triggered	guards authorised to call police if necessary
	would also call client any time this happens
HTS has been operating nationwide since 2016	WMO is a new local company, established three months ago
initial installation cost: \$6000	no up-front costs
annual fee for data storage of CCTV images: \$700	monthly cost of the security guards: \$1500
annual maintenance checks: \$300	additional hours and days, if required, subject to negotiation (\$30 per hour)
36-month initial contract period	rolling monthly contract; cancel at any time

Mr Perez's notes, taken last week at a local business meeting focusing on security measures

- Senior police detective spoke well; strongly in favour of technology, especially security cameras (visual deterrent)
- From their questions, some of my fellow business owners don't seem at all concerned about crime ...
- Police detective mentioned legal obligations relating to CCTV installation – must check that out
- Hanif Ahmed, Head of Security over at the port, says they have just installed new HTS systems – very easy to contact them when maintenance needed
- Regional government buildings no longer patrolled by WMO – apparently, the guards quite often weren't there when they were supposed to be – unbelievable!
- Nobody from WMO is even here at the meeting today (disappointing)
- Spoke briefly to the detective after the meeting. He's confident they'll catch the thieves soon – good news!

Additional Information

- 1 One professional gang of thieves currently seems to be targeting commercial premises in Port-Francis, stealing high-value but easily portable electronic equipment.
- 2 Fit Shoes is open from 08:00 until 16:00 daily, though Mr Perez occasionally works later than that. On Wednesday afternoons, the business is closed from 13:00.
- 3 When the police are called out unnecessarily, they charge \$100 to households and \$500 to businesses.
- 4 National law states that, wherever CCTV cameras are installed, there must be prominent signs alerting people to their presence. Without such signs, any pictures obtained by the cameras cannot be used as evidence in criminal law cases.
- 5 Mr Perez currently pays \$10 000 per year to insure Fit Shoes' premises.
- 6 A new computer system was recently installed at Fit Shoes, and Mr Perez is particularly proud of the top-of-the-range tablet computers all 160 of his employees now use at work.
- 7 When he retires, Mr Perez is looking forward to being able to spend more time working in his garden and going on holidays with his wife of 32 years.
- 8 WMO's website states that all their security guards are either former local police officers or military personnel, and that their work is subject to frequent checks.
- 9 The local youth club closed down last year. It used to be open every weekday evening from 18:00 until 20:00.
- 10 When Mr Perez's wife looked at HTS's website, she found a number of spelling and grammatical errors. There were also several hyperlinks which either did not work at all, or which brought up out-of-date content.
- 11 Port-Francis is home to a huge commercial port, the world's fifth busiest, which has been in operation for over 200 years.
- 12 Mr Perez's insurance company told him they would reduce his annual premium for Fit Shoes by 30 per cent if he were to choose HTS, and by 10 per cent if he were to choose WMO.
- 13 Mr Perez's solicitor has advised him about the potential financial and legal obligations if anyone guarding Fit Shoes' premises were to be injured while on duty.

Material for Section B

Adapted from an article by Rupert Wingfield-Hayes

The Philippines: The 70s nuclear relic that may open at last

A cool breeze blows into a grove of mango trees some 100 km west of the Philippine capital, Manila. Sitting rather incongruously in this rural scene is the vast concrete hulk of the Bataan nuclear power plant. This is South East Asia's first nuclear power plant, completed in 1986. Except it has never produced a kilowatt of electricity. It was never even put into operation.

Now, more than three decades after it was finished, there is growing support for opening it. A rising energy bill and the ever-present threat of climate change are once again turning the tide in favour of nuclear power across the world. So, why not in the Philippines, a developing economy where electricity is essential but expensive and often dirty? But the real question is: how easy is it to start up a 38-year-old nuclear power plant that has never been used?

Ambitious or outlandish?

The early morning calm outside the Bataan nuclear power plant is broken by the noise of an approaching helicopter. Minutes later, Congressman Mark Cojuangco leads the way into the plant. Passing through a semi-lit machinery room, he points to the maze of pipes and electrical wires: 'Look at the quality of that wiring. Look how neatly it is laid out.'

He walks into the main reactor building. The walls are 1.5 m-thick concrete; the whole containment structure is lined by a 30 mm-thick welded steel layer. 'Please feel the welds,' he says, patting the walls. 'I challenge you to find welding as nice as this anywhere in the Philippines. In the US they are required to do X-ray inspection of 20 per cent of the welds [in a nuclear plant]. Here it was 100 per cent, so arguably this building is better quality than in the United States.'

For more than a decade, Mr Cojuangco has been waging an uphill battle to open the plant. It is an ambitious, some would even say outlandish, idea.

So, who would want to take responsibility for this? The answer is President Ferdinand Bongbong Marcos Jr. For President Marcos Jr, the plant is unfinished family business. In the mid-1970s, with the world's economy reeling from the 1973 oil price shock, President Ferdinand Marcos Sr decided to bring nuclear power to the Philippines.

It would have put the country alongside Japan and South Korea as a pioneer of nuclear energy in Asia. By the end of 1985, the first reactor was complete and ready to be loaded with nuclear fuel. But in February the following year, Marcos Sr was forced from power as two million protesters took to the streets of Manila, seeking a new government. Just eight weeks later, reports began to emerge of a terrible accident at a nuclear power plant in the then Soviet Union. A new word entered the global vocabulary: Chernobyl. Plans to load fuel into the Bataan plant were put on hold indefinitely.

Stepping back into the 1970s...

Inside the plant, the main control room looks shockingly old and outdated, almost like a museum. Mr Cojuangco dismisses these objections: 'People always use the analogy of cars or motorcycles. But the way a nuclear reactor ages is from neutron bombardment. So far, this reactor has had none, so effectively it's brand new.'

He does not deny that the plant will need plenty of work, nor that it will cost time and money. Mr Cojuangco repeatedly points out that Bataan would not be the first mothballed* nuclear plant to be put into operation. It has been done before – in Tennessee. ‘In 2016, it became America’s newest nuclear plant. If it’s ok there, then why not here?’ he asks. 40

For President Marcos Jr, this might well be the best opportunity to revive his father’s dream. Electricity prices have doubled in the last 12 months as the country becomes more dependent than ever on imported fossil fuel. 45

The ‘sleeping monster’

The impact is greatest among the poorest. Marilou Calica, a 47-year-old mother of six and part-time cleaner in a government office, lives in one barangay**. ‘I haven’t paid my electricity bill for the last three months,’ she says. ‘After I have bought food, there is nothing left.’ She pulls out a final notice from the electricity company. 50

Despite the struggles of poor Filipinos, the move to reopen the Bataan plant faces stiff opposition. Anti-nuclear groups say re-commissioning the plant will take years. Instead, they say the government should be investing in local solar and wind projects that are cheaper and much quicker to build.

‘If they get it running, by 2040 it will contribute only 2.5 per cent of the power in the Philippines,’ says Derek Cabe, who leads the Nuclear Free Bataan Movement. Marilou Calica says her parents’ generation fought to stop the plant in the 1980s and she is ready to do the same now. ‘We cannot let the monster live again,’ she says. ‘We call it the sleeping monster and we cannot let the monster be awakened.’ 55

Those who oppose the plant draw comparisons between the Bataan plant and the one in Fukushima, Japan, which was destroyed in the 2011 tsunami. Both countries sit on the so-called Pacific Ring of Fire. The Philippines has two dozen active volcanoes, is regularly hit by earthquakes and is also vulnerable to tsunamis. 60

Around 60 per cent of Filipinos now say they support nuclear power, and there appears to be no scientific reason to stop this 1970s relic from producing electricity one day. And for Mr Cojuangco the moment is now. After 37 years, history has come full circle. ‘In the 1980s, we wanted to be independent of fossil fuels,’ he says. ‘Now in 2023, we have an energy crisis again, and there is another Marcos president.’ 65

* *mothballed*: stopped using a piece of equipment or building but kept it in good condition so that it can readily be used again

** *barangay*: poor neighbourhood

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