

**OXFORD CAMBRIDGE AND RSA EXAMINATIONS
GCSE**

A633/02/RBI

ENGLISH LANGUAGE (NI)

Information and Ideas (Higher Tier)

READING BOOKLET INSERT

TUESDAY 3 NOVEMBER 2015: Morning

DURATION: 2 hours

plus your additional time allowance

MODIFIED ENLARGED

INSTRUCTIONS TO CANDIDATES

The materials in this READING BOOKLET INSERT are for use with the questions in SECTION A of the Question Paper.

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IS THE FOCUS ON COMPETITIVE SPORTS STILL KILLING PE FOR THOSE WHO AREN'T 'GOOD ENOUGH'?

by Phoebe Doyle, The Guardian

The picture shows three girls dressed in PE kit. They are sitting together on one end of a bench in a gym. On the other end of the bench another girl is sitting on her own.



When I was at school I hated PE. Dreaded it. Not only that, I thought I was rubbish at it; in fact I *was* rubbish at it. I was the one running away from the hockey ball (they're hard, those balls, y'know).

SHEER HUMILIATION

Once I'd tired from the years of humiliation from being last to be picked, I took to bringing letters (a combination of fake and real) getting me out of it. I had all manner of ailments and injuries which rendered me too poorly for PE yet remarkably sparky for English and history.

I'd sit on the field with the other twice-weekly rebels; we'd talk about boys and doodle on our class books about who we loved 4eva that week – it wasn't physical, or educational. It was at best passing the time, and at worst learning that exercise just wasn't for us.

The picture shows children head-on, running hard. Underneath, it says 'Exhilarating for the talented – but what about the rest?'



Exhilarating for the talented – but what about the rest?

I remember cross-country particularly. A regime seemingly invented purely to put us off ever wanting to run. We'd do it in January. Just put on our PE pants and polo shirts and off we'd go – no training, no stretching and no warm-up – just straight out to cover three miles of our local town as an act of sheer humiliation.

On return, the fast kids who'd covered the distance effortlessly would be waiting at the finish line to laugh and jeer at us as we ran in.

WHY I LOVE RUNNING NOW

The amazing thing is, these days I love fitness. Now I run, go to the gym and do Pilates, but it took me a good five years after leaving school to rid myself of the 'useless' label slapped onto me by myself, my teachers and my peers.

Once I got into running I really loved it; what's more, it immediately had an impact on all areas of my wellbeing. I didn't want to smoke or drink too much if I was going to be getting up early to run 10K. During the few weeks in which I decided I liked running – that I might actually be able to do this – my whole life and my whole outlook changed. School PE can take zero credit for this.

Don't get me wrong: my PE teachers weren't failing to spot some Olympic level talent here. I run, yes. I never said I was good though! I'm OK. I can do around half marathon distances if I really work hard – I never time myself though: I would find it stressful. Who cares about my time? For me it's got nothing to do with 'being good' – it's just about being fit and feeling energised.

FASCINATED BY FITNESS

Not only do I like exercising but I'm fascinated with the theory of fitness: the biology, chemistry, and psychology at play when we workout. I write professionally for top fitness and sports magazines regularly now, the best bit being that I get to chat to sports psychologists, personal trainers and competing athletes about training methods, kit and improving form. This stuff is so exciting to me, yet at school there was none of this. You were either 'good at games' or not. I wasn't.

Today, there remains a focus on team sports and competitiveness, and why? I feel it's only very few adults who go on to play team sports out of school and that only a fraction of these are actually good at them. What we should be encouraging is fitness and wellbeing for everyone over competitive success for the few. I love it when I hear of secondary schools having yoga classes and similar activities – there needs to be so much thinking out of the box to get all children involved. Then PE will be fully, wholeheartedly inclusive.

FITNESS THROUGH FUN

The picture shows a group of children playing a game. Underneath, it says ‘Let’s get all children involved!’



Let’s get all children involved!

While my own children are a while off secondary school age, I already feel on guard about the stresses around school sport. My daughter loves to run. We regularly jog together around a lake near to where we live. She skips each day to school, and she scoots into town. I can see it in her – this energy she gets from getting her heart pumping faster, the love of feeling that ‘huff puff’ of her breath.

I just hope that when she’s waiting for her PE lessons it’s with a sense of excitement about this feeling and not the old-style dread of not being good enough.

Phoebe Doyle is a former primary school teacher who now writes on education, parenting and health issues.

From: 'Look Who It Is! Alan Carr, My Story.'

Comedian and TV presenter Alan Carr is the son of football player and manager Graham Carr.

I remember running and touching a tree, any tree, and then running back to my father and then running to a tree that was a little bit further away and then back to my father and so on. I seemed to have spent my whole childhood breathless, touching trees. If there weren't any trees available, Dad would bring bollards. There would be no escape from the tree touching.

Whilst I was running, I would see all the other kids in the park having a kick-around, taking it in turns to be in goal, playing keepy-uppy, their playful laughter and squeals of joy slowly being drowned out by Dad's 'One, two, three, four! Quicker, move quicker, you useless lump!' from the other side of the park. He would shout using the same booming voice with just a hint of Geordie that he used every Saturday on the touchline to his own players. I would see them try to shout back, only to be blasted again with that voice, the fools. It would be like arguing with a hand-dryer.

I first started running to try and dislodge some of the puppy fat. It would be just a leisurely run around the fields, nothing too strenuous. Strangely, although I hated sports, I did enjoy running; bounding along the country lanes seemed to clear my head and sharpen my mind. I remember running after school around a field at the back of my house, and as I approached the winning line, which was in fact an old tree with a dangly branch, who did I spot emerging from behind a bush? Yes, my father, with a stopwatch.

'That's 29 minutes, 38 seconds. If you'd pushed yourself a bit harder on that hill, you would have made 28 minutes easy.'

Not only had he been spying on me running, I later found out he had tried to enrol me in the local boys' running team, the Overstone Phoenixes, without me knowing.

'What's the point of running if you're not up against someone?' he would say. 'There's no point, Alan, if there's no challenge!'

I was a twelve-year-old spectacle wearer with a weight problem. The only challenge I had was finding sports shorts with an elasticated waist. As my father would tell me, football wasn't about scoring goals; it was about discipline and fitness.

'Alan, see those kids over there?'

'What, the ones laughing and having fun?'

'They'll never be any good because they're just kicking the ball about. We're getting your thighs built up, so they will protect your knees and you won't get arthritis in later life.'

Dad sure knew how to inject a bit of fun into the proceedings. Arthritis prevention, anyone? Apparently, if I followed Dad's exercise routine and did the relevant number of sit-ups every day, I would become a top professional footballer, an athlete. Well, that was the plan anyway.

To be frank, Dad put me off playing football. Obviously, I realise you have to do the groundwork, and put the effort in to succeed in your chosen field, but what he didn't understand was that a child has to be tempted into it in the first place. It is the exhilaration of scoring a goal that enchants a seven-year old, an exhilaration that would then hopefully blossom into a career. No-one becomes a pilot because they'd enjoyed a nutritious in-flight meal; no, they had to want to fly the plane. My father had inadvertently managed to extract all the fun out of games for me; on that playing field it was all work, work, work with him.

School didn't make it any better. Physical Education is the only lesson on the school syllabus where you don't get any help if you're no good at it. Physical it is, Education it ain't. No arm around your shoulder, no comforting word from a teacher, just a great big dollop of contempt and sarcasm. Can you imagine the headlines if little Susie in English couldn't spell scissors, and so was forced to do an extra lap of the library in her vest and pants and then have a thwack from a wet towel?

You can see why kids today don't want to exercise and would rather sit at home playing martial arts games on their Nintendo. I wish I'd done that.



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