

## **English A: language and literature – Standard level – Paper 1**

- Write a guided analysis of text 1 **or** text 2.
- The maximum mark for this examination paper is **[20 marks]**.
- 1 hour 15 minutes



Write a guided analysis of the following text:

## What's the Point of a Fashion Magazine Now?

Glossy magazines sell fantasy. Now they have to reckon with reality. It's complicated.

**By Elizabeth Paton and Jessica Testa**

April 9, 2020

Last week, Vanity Fair Italy's cover star was not a supermodel lounging on a yacht in an Etro caftan, or a movie star in Gucci, but rather a lung specialist in a starched white lab coat.

In Britain, front line workers from the National Health Service graced four special edition covers of Grazia magazine. The April issue of Russian Glamour featured a pop star in pigtails, a yellow puffer jacket and a white respirator mask.

Vogue Portugal opted for a monochrome image of two models kissing through face masks under the words "Freedom on Hold."

Fashion magazines are vehicles for luxury fantasies. They sell readers on consumerist dreams, sandwiching glossy images of supermodels and stars between advertisements for \$50,000 watches and \$250 moisturizers.

The new coronavirus pandemic and lockdown orders have derailed those dreams. As a result, fashion magazines have been derailed both in production and purpose.

It's not just that 2020 is set to be the worst year in the history of the modern luxury business, with supply chains in free-fall and media advertising budgets slashed. It's not just that shoppers have stopped shopping, or that fewer people in the fashion industry, from seamstresses to salespeople, are able to go to work.

It's that magazines were already a fraught business. It's that many people have been re-evaluating their moral relationship with consumption. It's that resentment and even rage has risen toward celebrities and other elites — a pampered pool of cultural figureheads who fill the pages of contemporary fashion publications.

And now there's a pandemic to address.



A cover of the April 6 issue of Grazia. via Grazia

## The Two-Month Lag

While some international magazines have turned doctors into models, mainstream fashion newsstands look the same as ever: a lot of celebrities posing with half smiles, not a face mask in sight. Many editions on sale now were finished before the outbreak was declared a pandemic; monthly magazines with large circulations are typically produced two to three months before hitting newsstands or mailboxes.

And so Rihanna fronts the May issue of British Vogue as the first cover star to wear a durag. In the United States, Vanity Fair's most recent cover has Reese Witherspoon dressed up in candyfloss pink ruffles; Town & Country has Gwyneth Paltrow power-posing in a crisp white suit; and Vogue has Gal Gadot — fresh off her “Imagine” video backlash — wearing sequins in the desert. (All four titles posted disclaimers on Instagram about how the issues were finalized before the pandemic.)



Daniel Craig on the April GQ. Lachlan Bailey for GQ.

Reese Witherspoon on the April Vanity Fair.

GQ's April cover features a reclining Daniel Craig, who was promoting the new James Bond film, which has been postponed until fall.

While some editors were able to insert last-minute references to the pandemic in their May issues, print magazine readers shouldn't expect to see coronavirus content in earnest until June. Which means that,

unless the editors pull from older unused material, there will be no jet set photo shoots, in-person interviews or coverage of Champagne-soaked red carpet events — the fabric of most fashion magazines — this summer.

“The next wave of print stories that come out have been made with the coronavirus crisis in mind,” Will Welch, the editor of GQ, said, referring to the magazine's June-July issue. “I wouldn't want to look back at the GQ that we're making during this time and have it feel like business as usual.”

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## **What Happens to This Business Now?**

Some fear that fashion advertisers could pivot further toward influencers, digital marketing specialists and their own social media channels as preferred communication mediums with their audiences — trends underway before Covid-19 began. But the industry isn't willing to declare disaster yet.

Also some new print sales patterns have emerged. While airport newsstand sales are down (no one is flying), “we're seeing a real uptick in supermarkets,” Ms. Lewis, of Hearst, said. They suspect that shoppers stocking pantries may be tossing more magazines into their carts at checkout. As of now, those issues have no coronavirus content whatsoever.

“It's nice to get that feeling that during a time like this, we're a comfort to people,” she said. “Readers want the kind of things we've always provided. Even when the world is topsy-turvy, that feels reassuring.”

(Extract taken from The New York Times Magazine 2020)

- Discuss how different features are used in this article to inform and engage the reader.