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Surname

Other names

Pearson Edexcel
International GCSE

Centre Number

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Candidate

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English as a Second Language

Paper 1: Reading and Writing

Wednesday 7 June 2017 – Afternoon

Time: 2 hours

Paper Reference

4ES0/01R**You must have:**

Insert for Part 1, Part 2 and Part 3 (enclosed)

Total Marks

Instructions

- Use **black** ink or ball-point pen.
- **Fill in the boxes** at the top of this page with your name, centre number and candidate number.
- Answer **all** questions.
- Answer the questions in the spaces provided – *there may be more space than you need.*
- Dictionaries may **not** be used in this examination.

Information

- The total mark for this paper is 100.
- The marks for **each** question are shown in brackets – *use this as a guide as to how much time to spend on each question.*

Advice

- Read each question carefully before you start to answer it.
- Try to answer every question.
- Check your answers if you have time at the end.

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Pearson

READING

Part 1

Read the webpage below on the workplace and answer Questions 1–10.

You won't believe the perks some companies are offering...

- A** Can't find the time to have your car washed? Or pick up a coffee? A growing number of companies are handling these errands on behalf of their employees. Perks like these are part of an expanding list of incentives being offered to supplement standard benefits in an effort to attract and retain staff.
- B** Companies have many financial incentives to offer such perks. The cost of replacing a member of staff can be as high as 90 to 200 per cent of that person's annual salary. Also, there is evidence that perks boost loyalty. In a recent survey, half of employees stated benefits are an "important reason" they remain with their employer.
- C** Some companies are offering paid maternity and paternity leave for the first year after the child's arrival. Another approach being taken is to help ensure employees have appropriate childcare on business trips. Travel, hotel fees and meals for an accompanying caregiver are all covered for up to a year following the child's arrival.
- D** The sight of a mobile farmer's market van pulling up outside an office at lunchtime is turning fewer heads these days. It is just one of many emerging lifestyle perks cropping up across the country. *Johnson's Concierge Service* returns employees' library books and picks up their dry cleaning. These types of exclusive perks are mostly offered to executive employees who have high demands on their time.
- E** On-site fitness centres have been available for many years, with 20 per cent of employers now offering them to staff. In addition, one-third of employers are subsidising or reimbursing off-site fitness memberships. Some companies are taking wellness a step further by offering on-site pharmacies and weight management consulting. Others are considering extending reduced-rate gym membership programmes to the partners of employees.
- F** All work and no play make workers less inclined to stay. Firms are showering their employees with perks aimed at getting them, their partner and their children out of the house with discounted tickets to theme parks, museums and even ski resorts. Google puts such a premium on seeing the world that it offers its staff travel insurance on personal holidays.
- G** Some employees in urban areas are now getting group travel discounts, while those in suburban and rural areas can take advantage of parking and petrol benefits. Other workplaces offer travel and car-sharing subsidies, shuttle services to and from certain train stations, an emergency lift home programme and secure bike parking.

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- H** Many firms are involved in supporting local charities and encourage staff to contact their HR departments for details. In fact, a third of companies have programmes through which they give a certain amount for every pound an employee collects. Some also offer employees paid leave for their volunteering.
- I** Consideration is also being given to offering staff extended time off. Employees would not be able to have as much time off as they wanted, but would have the flexibility to take off more than two weeks at a time. For this scheme to be successful there needs to be some link to performance and the achievement of work goals.

(Source: adapted from <http://www.cnn.com/2014/12/18/you-won't-believe-the-perks-some-companies-are-offering.html?slide=6>)

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Questions 1–10

Identify which paragraph (A–I) contains the information listed in Questions 1–10 by marking a cross for the correct answer ☒. If you change your mind about an answer, put a line through the box ☒ and then indicate your new answer with a cross ☒.

You must choose answers only from the information given in the webpage. Paragraphs may be used more than once or not used at all.

This paragraph refers to...

- 1 the opportunity to buy food products.
- 2 a perk that varies according to where you live.
- 3 incentives particularly for senior staff.
- 4 helping to raise money.
- 5 offering incentives to improve recruitment.
- 6 an incentive targeted at the immediate family.
- 7 how employees feel about company perks.
- 8 a possible incentive for the future.
- 9 a perk available for a fixed length of time.
- 10 a long-established incentive.

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	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I
Question 1	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Question 2	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Question 3	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Question 4	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Question 5	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Question 6	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Question 7	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Question 8	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Question 9	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Question 10	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

(Total for Questions 1–10 = 10 marks)

(Total for Part 1 = 10 marks)



Part 2

Read the article on urban greenhouses and answer Questions 11–30.

Coming to a rooftop near you – the urban growing revolution

London, New York and other cities could be self-sufficient in fruit and vegetables by converting unused roof space into gardens and greenhouses. The benefits of doing this include cutting down the amount of waste produced; improving energy efficiency, sustainability and food security; and having healthier, more connected citizens.

Oscar Rodriguez is an architect who runs a design consultancy called Architecture & Food (A&F). He is on a mission to convert London's cityscape into an urban rooftop farmland. Based on his extensive surveys, he has identified exactly how many hectares of roof space have the potential to be used as growing space. After considering the flat and pitched roofs of much of London's housing stock, Rodriguez developed a portfolio of appropriate designs to suit residential, institutional and commercial properties. According to Rodriguez, if we were to convert half the identified area into horticultural greenhouses, it would be possible to supply all London residents with enough fruit and vegetables to satisfy their daily needs.

His rooftop system designs require a fraction of the energy and water of conventional farming and the designs make the most of all available light, rain and organic waste. These rooftop gardens have the potential to yield five to ten times more food than a system which uses soil. The roof of the host building would have to be reinforced to take the new load, but this would offer an immediate benefit to the owner as the horticultural body using the roof would be responsible for maintaining it.

Ideally, Rodriguez wants residents running the farms but they would need to receive training. He wants to embed horticulture into the community to foster a sense of shared ownership. Essentially, his vision is a community-led, local food system which makes us less vulnerable to the effects of climate change and rising food and oil prices. This is achieved by growing food as close to the market as possible and by using a system free from fossil fuels. Whilst Rodriguez realises this is not the answer to all our food needs, he does have complete faith in the system's potential to maximise growing food in cities.

Existing in Rodriguez's imagination are fictitious families and rooftop greenhouse scenarios. He dreams about a situation where families moving into their new homes in a block of flats are given not just the keys, but also a pamphlet for their local vegetable-box scheme. Under this scheme, fresh produce grown in the rooftop greenhouse above their heads is delivered to their door. Residents receive a discount when they volunteer a few hours a week growing and distributing the food. These new residents also soon discover their energy bills drop substantially due to the insulating effect of the greenhouse.

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These benefits come with some rules. For example, food waste has to be separated from the rest of the household waste. This food waste is then collected weekly and converted into compost for the greenhouse. When there is a glut of crops, residents are encouraged to convert the surplus into chutneys and preserves to be sold online. Such schemes might tempt younger people from cities to consider careers as horticulturalists rather than the more traditional careers such as hairdressers, plumbers and electricians. This scheme would offer paid apprenticeships to facilitate this.

These projects have high initial costs, and they are receiving interest from those offering innovation funding; however, local government funding and funding from investors is proving harder to attract. Little cohesive data on rooftop agriculture exist and the concept has yet to be accepted as a viable business model. When Rodriguez pitched to the top five UK supermarkets, they were interested in having a greenhouse on their flat roofed superstores, but their ultimate response was “not yet”. At A&F, they are aware of the many barriers to implementation and appreciate that rooftop farming is only one part of the solution to feeding the world sustainably. Unfortunately, the current infrastructure would not be anywhere near robust enough should rooftop agriculture become a necessity rather than a nicety.

(Source: adapted from http://www.theecologist.org/green_green_living/2533583/coming_to_a_rooftop_near_you_the_urban_growing_revolution.html)

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Questions 11–20

Answer the following questions. For each question write no more than THREE words taken from one point in the text. You must not answer in complete sentences.

11 What could rooftop farming reduce?

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12 What has Rodriguez done to gather information about London?

.....

13 Which method does Rodriguez’s approach improve upon?

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14 What is required before people become involved in rooftop farming?

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15 What does Rodriguez firmly believe in?

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16 What would greenhouse volunteers benefit from?

.....

17 What become less costly when living beneath a rooftop greenhouse?

.....

18 What would young people have the opportunity to become?

.....

19 What type of support is rooftop farming attracting?

.....

20 What would need improving should rooftop farming become essential?

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(Total for Questions 11–20 = 10 marks)

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Questions 21–25

Indicate your answers to the questions below by marking a cross for the correct answer ☒. If you change your mind about an answer, put a line through the box ☒ and then indicate your new answer with a cross ☒.

21 Rodriguez is...

- A an employee of a design company.
- B interested in a range of properties.
- C transforming all London's roof space.

22 Rodriguez's farming systems...

- A are water intensive.
- B are easy to establish.
- C use soil alternatives.

23 Community farming projects may lead to...

- A residents taking responsibility for them.
- B climate change slowing down.
- C market changes becoming unimportant.

24 In Rodriguez's dream situation, residents...

- A do paid work in the greenhouse.
- B recycle the family's food waste.
- C consume all the food they produce.

25 Rooftop agriculture projects...

- A have expensive daily running costs.
- B would make successful businesses.
- C are being considered by supermarkets.

(Total for Questions 21–25 = 5 marks)



Question 26–30

According to the text, which of the following statements are correct?

Indicate your answers to the questions below by marking a cross for the correct answer ☒. If you change your mind, put a line through the box ☒ and then indicate your new answer with a cross ☒.

Choose FIVE answers.

- A Many major cities have established rooftop farm projects.
- B Rooftop farm projects would help improve community relations.
- C The amount of roof space in London has been estimated.
- D Rooftop farms could produce enough food for everyone in London.
- E Rooftop farms could produce more crops than traditional farms.
- F Structural changes to the roofs of host buildings would not be required.
- G Produce from rooftop farms would be for local residents.
- H Rooftop farms are one of many farming options for urban areas.
- I Excess produce may be used to generate revenue.
- J Residents would be able to invest money in rooftop farm projects.

(Total for Question 26–30 = 5 marks)

(Total for Part 2 = 20 marks)

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Part 3

Read the article in a school newsletter and answer Questions 31–50.

School travel plans

With the children settled in for a new year at school, now is the perfect time to start considering how you get them there. In the UK approximately 32 per cent of students are driven to school, and one quarter of all school journeys made by car are under half a mile. The school run thus contributes significantly to congestion, and traffic levels at peak times make this worse. However, whilst many parents still feel unsafe travelling without the protection of a tonne or two of metal around them, cutting the car out of the school run is beneficial for students, parents and teachers in terms of health, social and environmental factors.

School travel plans aim to reduce car journeys to and from school by identifying barriers to healthier alternatives, and seeking to remove them, while encouraging the use of 'active travel'. The creation of such travel plans was promoted initially by local authorities keen to reduce traffic and meet local health targets, although cuts to their budget have meant that community involvement is now more important than it ever was.

School travel plans are therefore not a new idea, and approximately 90 per cent of UK schools now have one. Many have been offered a significant amount of support to write these plans, but much more needs to be done to convert them into real outcomes: roads around schools still need to be made safer, and parents need to understand that children who walk and cycle improve their overall health by doing so. Strong anecdotal evidence suggests children who walk and cycle to school are much more alert when they arrive. Plenty of studies show the more physically active children are, the more they achieve academically. School travel plans should ideally incorporate curriculum and Healthy Schools' targets to equip children with healthy habits that will last a lifetime and help to tackle obesity and social exclusion.

The most common reason for not cycling to school is the shortage of secure cycle racks, but advice on how to secure partial financial assistance for these can be obtained from the UK Cycling Campaign. Another reason is the lack of engagement by local residents who may not be amenable to groups walking and cycling past their homes. By changing such attitudes in neighbourhoods, a huge difference can be made around the school.

In addition, parents who drive on busy roads every day tend to overlook the local walking and cycling routes. Schools can give parents information about these by holding 'awareness' workshops and by encouraging parents to talk about travel issues at other school events. Most local authorities employ a school travel adviser who is able to help with any concerns around travelling to school, such as bullying or crime, as he or she often has contacts with school safety teams.



How can you get involved?

Contact your child's teacher or Head Teacher. Each school with a travel plan will have a School Travel Plan Champion, such as a teacher or a parent who is the first point of contact on sustainable transport. Set up a working group if one is needed, or if one already exists, volunteer to join. This group can comprise teachers, student representatives and parents who draw up proposals for the new school travel plan, the deadline for which usually falls around March or April – refer to the local authority website for the exact date.

When drawing up a new plan, start by looking at your school, its student numbers and types, and catchment area. Then conduct surveys of how students and teachers currently get to school and establish whether the new plan needs to be any different to the old one. If it does, ask why this is the case. Needs change as students join and leave and to reflect this, school travel plans should be reviewed regularly.

Your designated school travel adviser can provide invaluable information and support on funding and grants. Sadly, government grants will be cut next year and this role may disappear as a result. However, many councils will offer reduced funding for sustainable travel measures and will have some form of travel plan. Advice on obtaining such funding in the future can be sought from the road safety or sustainable travel team.

Your school travel adviser can also supply you with a toolkit with survey templates to identify common obstacles to cycling and walking, and help you create targets to work towards: anything from decreasing car use by 20 per cent to doubling the number cycling to school. You may decide cycle training is the way to go, or cycle clubs with repair workshops, or bag storage for those who choose to go on foot. Cycling England runs cycle training courses for schools, which used to be called Cycling Proficiency but are now known as Bikeability.

(Source: adapted from http://www.theecologist.org/campaigning/schools/631209/school_travel_plans_how_to_successfully_get_your_kids_walking_and_cycling_to_school.html)

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Questions 31–35

Read the statements below. Decide whether they are TRUE, FALSE or NOT GIVEN according to the text.

Mark a cross for the correct answer. If you change your mind, put a line through the box and then indicate your new answer with a cross .

	True	False	Not Given
31 School travel plans have cut the number of short car journeys.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
32 Local councils established the idea of school travel plans.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
33 Funding for school travel plans is on the rise.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
34 Schools can obtain cycle storage facilities at no cost.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
35 If children cycled to school, parents would be most concerned about crime.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

(Total for Questions 31–35 = 5 marks)

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Questions 36–45

Complete the following sentences using no more than THREE words taken from one point in the text.

- 36 Doing the school run can be challenging.
- 37 School travel plans aim to promote to travelling by car.
- 38 The of school travel plans depend on changes in attitudes and infrastructure.
- 39 Children are after an active start to the day.
- 40 A school travel plan should also aim to develop in students.
- 41 Schools can host to educate parents.
- 42 It may not be necessary to form a new
- 43 School travel plans need to be to keep them relevant.
- 44 Schools can acquire a which includes help with target setting.
- 45 For those students walking to school can be provided.

(Total for Questions 36–45 = 10 marks)

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Questions 46–50

Complete this summary of the text using words from the box below. Each word may be used once or not used at all.

School travel plans are being used in an effort to reduce the number of car journeys to and from school. It is hoped that this will have a positive effect not only on the environment but also on student [46] In order for school travel plans to work, it is essential to [47] the local community and gain support from residents.

Many schools already have travel plans but additional work is needed to make them more [48] Those parents who have time to help can get in touch with the [49] and speak to the relevant contact. In general, more [50] needs to be made available to all interested parties and there needs to be a combined effort to make school travel plans successful.

effective	survey	practical	school	attendance
information	council	performance	finance	involve

(Total for Questions 46–50 = 5 marks)

(Total for Part 3 = 20 marks)

TOTAL FOR READING = 50 MARKS



WRITING

Part 4

It is your birthday at the weekend. You want to celebrate it by having a meal with your friends. Write an email to your friends.

In your email you **must**:

- invite your friends to your birthday meal
- state which restaurant you will be going to
- explain why you have chosen this restaurant.

You **must** write between **75 and 100 words only**.

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(Total for Part 4 = 10 marks)



Part 5

Your school is having a film week. You have been asked to write a report about your favourite film for the School Magazine.

In your report you **must** state:

- what motivated you to see the film
- **two** details about your favourite character
- **two** reasons why you would recommend the film.

You **must** write between **100 and 150 words only**.

(20)

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(Total for Part 5 = 20 marks)



Part 6

You are doing a project on taking a gap year. Read the text below and write a summary for your teacher.

Many students decide to take a gap year between leaving school and going to university. For those intending to go travelling, it is essential to plan well, especially if it involves spending months away from home.

Make an appointment with your doctor before you depart to find out what injections you may need for the countries you are visiting. If you are on regular medication, make sure you have enough for the duration of your trip and always keep it with you while you are away. If you are flying, pack it in your hand luggage. Remember to leave all medication in its original packaging and get a note from your doctor. It is also a good idea to buy a first-aid kit to take with you.

In terms of organising your actual trip, if you decide to use a gap year company which specialises in this type of experience, research the company thoroughly before committing yourself. Find out how long it has been operating and how many people it has arranged trips for in the past. Another tip is to speak to people who have already been on a gap year via the company to find out about their experiences.

Tell friends and family your plans before you go and keep in regular contact, especially if you change your plans. A good precaution is to make a copy of your itinerary and other important documents, such as your passport, insurance policy, tickets etc. and leave these with a trusted friend or family member back home before you leave.

In order to stay in touch, consider taking a roaming-enabled mobile so that you can contact people at home and they can reach you. You could also set up an email account which you can access from anywhere in the world to help you keep in contact. There are public internet cafes in most major cities around the world where you can log into your email and inform those back home where you are and what you are doing. If you are going to be out of reach for a few days, let family and friends know where you are heading to and with whom. Remember to let them know when you plan to be back in touch.

Top Tip...

Buy a suitable guidebook and carry out a bit of research into your destination before you go, including its laws, customs and language. This will help you understand what is acceptable in the country you are visiting and avoid potentially awkward situations. A bit of local knowledge can go a long way to enhance your travel experience and earn you respect in the country you are visiting. It is a good idea to try learning some key phrases and words in the local language. This can make a huge difference to your trip and to the reception you get and might help in an emergency. Your guidebook may also have the layout of the town or city you are visiting which can prove very useful.

(Source: adapted from <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/gap-year-foreign-travel-advice>)



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In your summary you **must** give:

- **two** ways of preparing for a gap year
- **one** way of letting people know what you are doing
- **two** reasons for buying a guidebook.

You **must** write between **100 and 150 words only**. You **must** use your own words where possible.

(20)

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(Total for Part 6 = 20 marks)

TOTAL FOR WRITING = 50 MARKS
TOTAL FOR PAPER = 100 MARKS



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Pearson Edexcel International GCSE

English as a Second Language

Paper 1: Reading and Writing

Wednesday 7 June 2017 – Afternoon

Insert for Part 1, Part 2 and Part 3

Paper Reference

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READING

Part 1

You won't believe the perks some companies are offering...

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(Source: adapted from <http://www.cnn.com/2014/12/18/you-won't-believe-the-perks-some-companies-are-offering.html?slide=6>)

Part 2

Coming to a rooftop near you – the urban growing revolution

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Oscar Rodriguez is an architect who runs a design consultancy called Architecture & Food (A&F). He is on a mission to convert London's cityscape into an urban rooftop farmland. Based on his extensive surveys, he has identified exactly how many hectares of roof space have the potential to be used as growing space. After considering the flat and pitched roofs of much of London's housing stock, Rodriguez developed a portfolio of appropriate designs to suit residential, institutional and commercial properties. According to Rodriguez, if we were to convert half the identified area into horticultural greenhouses, it would be possible to supply all London residents with enough fruit and vegetables to satisfy their daily needs.

His rooftop system designs require a fraction of the energy and water of conventional farming and the designs make the most of all available light, rain and organic waste. These rooftop gardens have the potential to yield five to ten times more food than a system which uses soil. The roof of the host building would have to be reinforced to take the new load, but this would offer an immediate benefit to the owner as the horticultural body using the roof would be responsible for maintaining it.

Ideally, Rodriguez wants residents running the farms but they would need to receive training. He wants to embed horticulture into the community to foster a sense of shared ownership. Essentially, his vision is a community-led, local food system which makes us less vulnerable to the effects of climate change and rising food and oil prices. This is achieved by growing food as close to the market as possible and by using a system free from fossil fuels. Whilst Rodriguez realises this is not the answer to all our food needs, he does have complete faith in the system's potential to maximise growing food in cities.

Existing in Rodriguez's imagination are fictitious families and rooftop greenhouse scenarios. He dreams about a situation where families moving into their new homes in a block of flats are given not just the keys, but also a pamphlet for their local vegetable-box scheme. Under this scheme, fresh produce grown in the rooftop greenhouse above their heads is delivered to their door. Residents receive a discount when they volunteer a few hours a week growing and distributing the food. These new residents also soon discover their energy bills drop substantially due to the insulating effect of the greenhouse.

These benefits come with some rules. For example, food waste has to be separated from the rest of the household waste. This food waste is then collected weekly and converted into compost for the greenhouse. When there is a glut of crops, residents are encouraged to convert the surplus into chutneys and preserves to be sold online. Such schemes might tempt younger people from cities to consider careers as horticulturalists rather than the more traditional careers such as hairdressers, plumbers and electricians. This scheme would offer paid apprenticeships to facilitate this.

These projects have high initial costs, and they are receiving interest from those offering innovation funding; however, local government funding and funding from investors is proving harder to attract. Little cohesive data on rooftop agriculture exist and the concept has yet to be accepted as a viable business model. When Rodriguez pitched to the top five UK supermarkets, they were interested in having a greenhouse on their flat roofed superstores, but their ultimate response was “*not yet*”. At A&F, they are aware of the many barriers to implementation and appreciate that rooftop farming is only one part of the solution to feeding the world sustainably. Unfortunately, the current infrastructure would not be anywhere near robust enough should rooftop agriculture become a necessity rather than a nicety.

(Source: adapted from http://www.theecologist.org/green_green_living/2533583/coming_to_a_rooftop_near_you_the_urban_growing_revolution.html)

Part 3

School travel plans

With the children settled in for a new year at school, now is the perfect time to start considering how you get them there. In the UK approximately 32 per cent of students are driven to school, and one quarter of all school journeys made by car are under half a mile. The school run thus contributes significantly to congestion, and traffic levels at peak times make this worse. However, whilst many parents still feel unsafe travelling without the protection of a tonne or two of metal around them, cutting the car out of the school run is beneficial for students, parents and teachers in terms of health, social and environmental factors.

School travel plans aim to reduce car journeys to and from school by identifying barriers to healthier alternatives, and seeking to remove them, while encouraging the use of 'active travel'. The creation of such travel plans was promoted initially by local authorities keen to reduce traffic and meet local health targets, although cuts to their budget have meant that community involvement is now more important than it ever was.

School travel plans are therefore not a new idea, and approximately 90 per cent of UK schools now have one. Many have been offered a significant amount of support to write these plans, but much more needs to be done to convert them into real outcomes: roads around schools still need to be made safer, and parents need to understand that children who walk and cycle improve their overall health by doing so. Strong anecdotal evidence suggests children who walk and cycle to school are much more alert when they arrive. Plenty of studies show the more physically active children are, the more they achieve academically. School travel plans should ideally incorporate curriculum and Healthy Schools' targets to equip children with healthy habits that will last a lifetime and help to tackle obesity and social exclusion.

The most common reason for not cycling to school is the shortage of secure cycle racks, but advice on how to secure partial financial assistance for these can be obtained from the UK Cycling Campaign. Another reason is the lack of engagement by local residents who may not be amenable to groups walking and cycling past their homes. By changing such attitudes in neighbourhoods, a huge difference can be made around the school.

In addition, parents who drive on busy roads every day tend to overlook the local walking and cycling routes. Schools can give parents information about these by holding 'awareness' workshops and by encouraging parents to talk about travel issues at other school events. Most local authorities employ a school travel adviser who is able to help with any concerns around travelling to school, such as bullying or crime, as he or she often has contacts with school safety teams.

How can you get involved?

Contact your child's teacher or Head Teacher. Each school with a travel plan will have a School Travel Plan Champion, such as a teacher or a parent who is the first point of contact on sustainable transport. Set up a working group if one is needed, or if one already exists, volunteer to join. This group can comprise teachers, student representatives and parents who draw up proposals for the new school travel plan, the deadline for which usually falls around March or April – refer to the local authority website for the exact date.

When drawing up a new plan, start by looking at your school, its student numbers and types, and catchment area. Then conduct surveys of how students and teachers currently get to school and establish whether the new plan needs to be any different to the old one. If it does, ask why this is the case. Needs change as students join and leave and to reflect this, school travel plans should be reviewed regularly.

Your designated school travel adviser can provide invaluable information and support on funding and grants. Sadly, government grants will be cut next year and this role may disappear as a result. However, many councils will offer reduced funding for sustainable travel measures and will have some form of travel plan. Advice on obtaining such funding in the future can be sought from the road safety or sustainable travel team.

Your school travel adviser can also supply you with a toolkit with survey templates to identify common obstacles to cycling and walking, and help you create targets to work towards: anything from decreasing car use by 20 per cent to doubling the number cycling to school. You may decide cycle training is the way to go, or cycle clubs with repair workshops, or bag storage for those who choose to go on foot. Cycling England runs cycle training courses for schools, which used to be called Cycling Proficiency but are now known as Bikeability.

(Source: adapted from http://www.theecologist.org/campaigning/schools/631209/school_travel_plans_how_to_successfully_get_your_kids_walking_and_cycling_to_school.html)

Part 6

You are doing a project on taking a gap year.

Many students decide to take a gap year between leaving school and going to university. For those intending to go travelling, it is essential to plan well, especially if it involves spending months away from home.

Make an appointment with your doctor before you depart to find out what injections you may need for the countries you are visiting. If you are on regular medication, make sure you have enough for the duration of your trip and always keep it with you while you are away. If you are flying, pack it in your hand luggage. Remember to leave all medication in its original packaging and get a note from your doctor. It is also a good idea to buy a first-aid kit to take with you.

In terms of organising your actual trip, if you decide to use a gap year company which specialises in this type of experience, research the company thoroughly before committing yourself. Find out how long it has been operating and how many people it has arranged trips for in the past. Another tip is to speak to people who have already been on a gap year via the company to find out about their experiences.

Tell friends and family your plans before you go and keep in regular contact, especially if you change your plans. A good precaution is to make a copy of your itinerary and other important documents, such as your passport, insurance policy, tickets etc. and leave these with a trusted friend or family member back home before you leave.

In order to stay in touch, consider taking a roaming-enabled mobile so that you can contact people at home and they can reach you. You could also set up an email account which you can access from anywhere in the world to help you keep in contact. There are public internet cafes in most major cities around the world where you can log into your email and inform those back home where you are and what you are doing. If you are going to be out of reach for a few days, let family and friends know where you are heading to and with whom. Remember to let them know when you plan to be back in touch.

Top Tip...

Buy a suitable guidebook and carry out a bit of research into your destination before you go, including its laws, customs and language. This will help you understand what is acceptable in the country you are visiting and avoid potentially awkward situations. A bit of local knowledge can go a long way to enhance your travel experience and earn you respect in the country you are visiting. It is a good idea to try learning some key phrases and words in the local language. This can make a huge difference to your trip and to the reception you get and might help in an emergency. Your guidebook may also have the layout of the town or city you are visiting which can prove very useful.

(Source: adapted from <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/gap-year-foreign-travel-advice>)