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FIRST LANGUAGE ENGLISH **0990/11**

Paper 1 Reading **May/June 2026**

INSERT **2 hours**

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INFORMATION

- This insert contains the reading texts.
- 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.

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Read **Text A**, and then answer **Questions 1(a)–(e)** on the question paper.

Text A: ***Changes in the food industry***

Fast food, mass-produced food products designed for quick and efficient preparation and distribution, is perhaps most associated with chain restaurants that typically offer take-out and drive-through services, as convenience is prioritised. Common fast foods include burgers, pizza and burritos.

Critics say the production of fast food often subordinates quality to efficiency, affordability and profit. Fast-food products are often highly processed and may contain artificial preservatives in addition to high levels of salts, refined grains and sugars; thus, the term 'fast food' has also come to carry negative connotations regarding health.

Exponential growth has impacted both fast-food and allied industries. Fast-food chains are often cited as the biggest buyers in the world of the key products they use, with high demand encouraging 'factory farming' – considered by many to be an inhumane and environmentally unsustainable way of producing food. A recent surge in customer volume at fast-food drive-throughs has brought with it further unpleasant side effects, including more traffic congestion and longer wait times for customers, with some restaurants opting to reduce menus to speed things up.

As technology has evolved, self-order kiosks in many restaurants now allow customers to order and pay for their food more efficiently on a screen. Some drive-throughs have already implemented mobile ordering, which eliminates waiting altogether by enabling customers to order ahead on their own device and pick up their food at a dedicated mobile-order lane. Increased automation may play a major role in the future: smart menu boards that incorporate AI could one day identify drivers, predict and take their orders.

Today fast-food restaurants, despite pledging to reduce emissions, have an image problem: they saturate cities, stifling competition, and are thought to reduce access to nutritious food in some urban areas. No wonder they spend billions on advertising! Aware of the ethical issues associated with the term 'fast food', some restaurants have shifted the language around their service models – for example, adopting descriptors such as 'fast-crafted' or 'quick-service' restaurant.

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Read **Text B**, and then answer **Question 1(f)** on the question paper.

Text B: ***Why I don't rely on documentaries***

Over twenty years ago, one documentary film gained significant attention for its exploration of the fast-food industry and the impact of a month-long fast-food-only diet on the filmmaker's health. I remember watching the film in the cinema with friends, curious to see what all the hype was about and being horrified by its sensationalised revelations. At the time, the unscientific approach didn't worry me or undermine the film's credibility, even though its conclusions about the effects of fast food were based entirely on this one case study.

The documentary examined a lifestyle built around consuming only fast food and the negative impact on health that could entail. Even now I remember the distasteful effects the filmmaker described that he was suffering just a few days into his 30-day self-imposed experiment to find out what would happen if he ate a diet comprising only the fries, burgers and nuggets I loved to snack on. The extreme dietary approach taken in the film – consuming fast food for every meal, including the maximum available portions – exaggerated the typical eating habits of an average person and was way beyond what my friends and I as typical cash-strapped teenagers could afford to be eating.

The film also explored the fast-food industry's corporate influence, arguing that it encourages poor nutrition for its own profit and gain, quite rightly prompting widespread debate. It has since come under scrutiny for the accuracy of its science and the truthfulness of some of the filmmaker-narrator's on-camera claims.

While the film correctly raises concerns about the impact of fast food on public health, it overlooks the fact that individuals have choice. By solely blaming the fast-food industry, the film detracts from the importance of education and balance in maintaining a healthy lifestyle.

The documentary focused heavily on portraying one global chain of fast-food outlets as the primary cause of the problem, ignoring other factors, such as the influence of media and fashion in shaping eating habits, creating a skewed representation of the fast-food experience. Though the documentary may have contributed to changes made by the fast-food industry to offer healthier options, it did not acknowledge them.

Paving the way for an equally lucrative sequel, the film won an award for best screenplay – yes, it's worth remembering that, like any film, it was scripted. It's essential to evaluate 'real-life' documentaries like this critically and consider a broader range of perspectives to form well-rounded opinions about the topics they address.

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Read **Text C**, and then answer **Questions 2(a)–(d)** and **Question 3** on the question paper.

Text C: ***The Kamogawa Diner and Detective Agency***

This text is about Hideji. He has not seen his old friend Nagare for a long time and has something to ask of him.

'I'm looking for "The Kamogawa Diner and Detective Agency"?'

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‘They pay whatever they want.’

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