

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

Text C: A Journey to Mount Langshan

Robert worked in China and had a dream trip to explore mountainous provinces in the southern area. In this passage, he was entering Hunan, where there was a beautiful mountainous location called Mount Langshan.

In front of me lay a small village. This ancient car glided through a peaceful atmosphere of small houses among farms and trees. I had been warned of the hostile conditions of rural China but what I witnessed now was a fine road that allowed our rotting car to move as smoothly as floating through a waveless sea.

I set off on this journey in a good spirit, but with little expectation. I had picked the one unknown to the world--the one less travelled by. Try visiting any Chinese tourist agency in your city, I guarantee that Mount Langshan never appears in any brochures!

True enough, the village was quite small in size with only a few cars appearing on the road. I took a deep breath, inhaling the white mist that covered our path; it made me feel like we were entering a mysterious kingdom where there was a dragon hid behind those wondrous mountains. Fubin, my local guide, took the role of a chauffeur. He stopped the car in the middle of an open space--clearly a newly-made car park. Yet, the first thing that came to my mind was fear. It was too quiet! We were the only group of people here, apparently. Fubin led me towards a very small hut that was almost hidden by the thicken fog. It was a ticket counter.

Ticket! I was surprised to realise that the place had been managed so well despite its lack of visitors. The ticket booth was quite modernised with a clear board clarifying the fee, both in Chinese and English. However, the sign "UNESCO Geopark" on the wall seemed ironic as the silence around me confirmed how the world ignored this place! I did not want to walk into a cemetery-like park after all. The sight of the cable-car station was beyond my expectation. I did not find any source that described the existence of these colourful cable cars. I had prepared myself to walk up the hill but Fubin protested that it was too high. I tried to look up to estimate the height but could see nothing as the scene was obscured by white mist. The cable car, apparently, was the best method.

It was a two-seater one: very small. I felt like two grown men were too many to jam inside, but we did! I regretted as the creaking sound of the cable line started to work--it sounded like this was the first time after it had been left rusted for a year. Another thing I noticed was how we were swaying! As in a nightmare, my eyes searched for the empty cable car in front of ours and realised that it was also swaying like thin branches to the wind!

"Look!" Fubin's sudden burst of voice caught my attention.

I then looked to the right-side window and saw that we already climbed up above the thick mist below. What I witnessed was out of this world. It was like we were floating up into heaven. Various-size tips of mountains appeared above the sea of fluffy clouds--creating an image of a mythical kingdom where gods and goddesses lived. It was too tantalising to explain. I did not even notice that my fear had gone as I tried to get as many shots of photographs as possible.

