Cambridge International Examinations
Cambridge International General Certificate of Secondary Education

FIRST LANGUAGE ENGLISH **0500/12**

Paper 1 Reading Passages (Core) **February/March 2017**

READING BOOKLET INSERT

1 hour 45 minutes

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READ THESE INSTRUCTIONS FIRST

This Reading Booklet Insert contains the reading passages for use with **all** questions on the Question Paper.

You may annotate this Reading Booklet Insert and use the blank spaces for planning.
This Reading Booklet Insert is **not** assessed by the Examiner.

This document consists of **3** printed pages and **1** blank page.

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Part 1

Read **Passage A** carefully, and then answer **Questions 1** and **2** on the Question Paper.

Passage A: A Moorland Lesson

In this passage, the narrator describes a journey across a moor (an expanse of uncultivated land) which taught a valuable lesson. The narrator's brother and sister usually live in the city but on this occasion choose to accompany the narrator across the moor.

Although I have lived happily on the moor all my life, I know that its charm is not universally appreciated. My brother and sister enjoy living and working in the city, preferring a life of busy streets, chatter-filled restaurants and dizzying skyscrapers to my isolated world. I love the moor's grand views, the vast range of wildlife and the whirling wind that makes your skin tingle. All around you are expanses of purple heather and sunburst yellow gorse, two plants that are characteristic of any wild landscape. Raw beauty of this sort demands total respect. One February I discovered why.

We were emerging from a particularly cold winter; a few courageous wild flowers could be seen making a tentative appearance. I even cleaned my car to share in the joyful mood filling the moorland. My brother and sister were visiting me that weekend. We had all been invited to a friend's birthday party in a neighbouring village and, determined to enjoy the sudden improvement in the weather, they hastily agreed to dress in lightweight cotton rather than our warmer winter clothing. As the sun was beginning to set, I drove my ancient car with its erratic heating system over bumps and potholes, to meet the main road across the moor and tried to ignore the chorus of complaints from my passengers.

The skies promised rain, but I was sure we could reach my friend's house before the weather became too threatening. It was when I saw the 'Road Closed' sign blocking our way that I remembered a letter I had received previously, stating that the main road would be closed for essential repairs. As I took the road indicated by the brightly-coloured diversion sign, I felt a twinge of unease. This minor road was unfamiliar to me. I had travelled down it only a handful of times in bright daylight, never when the evening sky scowled with such ominous intent. I then recalled that my map, torch and blanket were nestling cosily on the kitchen table next to my water bottle, high visibility jacket and petrol can. I had removed these essential items from the car in order to clean the interior and, in my haste to get to the party, had forgotten to return them. Our original route took us past my local petrol station where I had intended to fill up with fuel, but I was now travelling along a strange road and had little idea of where, or even whether, I would find somewhere to do so. Peering nervously at the fuel gauge, I realised with horror that finding a petrol station had become my priority.

It started to rain heavily but worse was to follow as, worryingly, this soon turned to sleet and then snow. My flimsy shirt offered little protection as the temperature began to plummet. We shivered as we continued our slow progress along unfamiliar roads. Then the inevitable happened. With a spluttering cough, my car shuddered to a halt: it was out of petrol. Worse still, none of our phones could get a signal. Feeling thoroughly miserable, we prepared ourselves for a long, cold night, overwhelmed by the prospect of finding our way through the lace-like labyrinth of moorland roads.

The insistent blaring of a car horn brought me sharply back to the present, followed by a gentle tapping at my window.

It was my neighbour.

'You look as if you need some help,' she grinned as she handed us three welcome woollen blankets.

Using her sturdy tow rope, I attached my car securely to hers and soon arrived at the party, a little warmer and definitely much wiser.

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Part 2

Read **Passage B** carefully, and then answer **Question 3** on the Question Paper.

Passage B: Avocados in Andalusia

In this passage, the writer describes how and why avocados are grown in Andalusia, a region in southern Spain.

The traditional orchard in Andalusia used to contain, almost exclusively, an assortment of orange and lemon trees, but times and tastes are changing. Now you are equally likely to see rows of avocado trees. The reason for this change is chiefly commercial: avocados are a valuable crop. Avocados are sub-tropical; they require a frost-free climate and are, therefore, well-suited to the hot summers and mild winters of Andalusia. The high winds experienced regularly in Andalusia, however, can limit avocado production as they can affect pollination, dehydrate the flowers and reduce humidity. Adequate hydration is central to the successful cultivation of avocados so crops must be watered at least once every four days to prevent the tree's shallow roots drying out. Andalusian farmers employ traditional methods to water their orchards, still using the system of irrigation channels constructed over ten centuries ago.

'Hass' is the preferred avocado variety as it is the only one that is largely disease-resistant. Avocados provide one crop a year but are prone to 'biennial bearing' which means that if a tree yields a good crop one year, it will produce little the following year. Another concern for farmers is the decline in the bee population. They rely on bees to help with pollination as avocado trees are only partly self-pollinating.

The fruit matures on the tree and only ripens once it is picked. After harvesting, the ripening process usually takes one or two weeks. This means that all avocados do not need to be harvested at the same time but can be left on the tree (sometimes for several months). This can be useful for farmers who are trying to get the best prices for their produce. Nonetheless, if the fruit remains unpicked for too long, it falls to the ground and is worthless commercially.

Green-skinned and fleshy, avocados are also a valuable source of nutrients and monounsaturated fats which can help to lower cholesterol and improve heart health. They are a welcome addition to many dishes. The benefits of avocados are not felt by all, however: avocado skin and leaves can be harmful to grazing animals like goats, donkeys and horses.

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