Cambridge IGCSE

Cambridge International Examinations
Cambridge International General Certificate of Secondary Education

FIRST LANGUAGE ENGLISH **0500/32**

Paper 3 Directed Writing and Composition **February/March 2017**

READING BOOKLET INSERT

2 hours

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READ THESE INSTRUCTIONS FIRST

This Reading Booklet Insert contains the reading passage for use with **Section 1**, **Question 1** 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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Read the passage carefully, and then answer **Question 1** on the Question Paper.

In this speech to parents, the headteacher expresses concerns about the health of school children.

Healthy Bodies, Healthy Minds

As parents, I hope you will agree with me when I say that the state of children's physical health has never been more a matter of concern. You might think that, as your child's headteacher, all I care about is healthy brains generating academic excellence. Yes, it has been shown that physical health is linked to academic performance. But my concerns are broader than this.

Over the years I've seen parents' ability to promote healthy choices for their offspring decline. It's all too easy to take the path of least resistance and let your child sit quietly in front of the television. It's exhausting trying to coax a reluctant teenager into physical activity. And as for participating in an activity alongside them, how many parents can be bothered to make the effort? It's obvious too that we can't rely on young people themselves to take responsibility for their physical health. Social media and computer games are more attractive to youngsters than leaving the house for physical exercise.

Our children's lifestyles have never been more sedentary. It's not just their lifestyle at home that's to blame: school too is a place where students spend the majority of their time sitting down. As parents, you should know that spending so much of their time in a state of physical inactivity has a negative effect on children's health. It slows the metabolism, which affects the body's ability to regulate blood sugar, blood pressure and break down body fat. It's no wonder so many youngsters are overweight. I can't control the nutritional quality of the food you allow your children to eat but I can, and will, take steps to promote their physical fitness in school.

It is my intention to introduce a programme of compulsory fitness sessions. We will start the school day thirty minutes earlier to facilitate this. The emphasis is on the word compulsory: you and your children need to understand that if you will not make physical activity a priority then I, in my role as headteacher, must impose a regime to benefit each and every young person in my care. To maintain a basic level of physical health young people need to participate in at least sixty minutes of physical activity each day. Our school playground is the ideal environment for half of that recommendation to take place.

The World Health Organization advises that young people should participate in a range of activities of both moderate and vigorous intensity. My proposal is that our students have a circuit training session involving sit ups, press ups, skipping and running. There will be no need for expensive equipment and the benefits will be significant. Every student will be expected to work to their full physical capacity. Those who don't will be named and shamed in front of their peers – a lesson to all youngsters.

Most importantly, circuit training promotes aerobic fitness. This means that heart rates will be raised, calories will be burnt off and, in the long term, there will be a decrease in obesity levels. The other benefit is that circuit training exercises strengthen bones and muscles, providing not only immediate health benefits but helping to counteract weakness in later life. However, the benefits aren't just physical. Studies have shown that physical activity promotes social development, building self-confidence through interaction with friends outside the classroom.

As your child's headteacher, I am of course keen to promote academic excellence, and physical fitness can help here too. Physical activity increases the oxygen flow to the brain and this leads to improvements in the areas responsible for learning, memory and higher thinking skills. We all want the best examination results possible – teachers, parents and pupils alike. I firmly believe that having a compulsory fitness session each day is a way to achieve this. Physical activity will also lead to better levels of concentration and behaviour – a positive outcome for all of us.

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All in all, I am sure you will see that the benefits of my proposal are wide ranging. Yes, it would be wonderful to think that youngsters have the foresight and dedication to make healthy choices for themselves, but we know that, sadly, this is not the case. I hope you will join with me in promoting the benefits of my scheme. Healthy minds and healthy bodies: what more should we desire for the children in our care?

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