Cambridge IGCSE

Cambridge International Examinations
Cambridge International General Certificate of Secondary Education

FIRST LANGUAGE ENGLISH **0500/12**

Paper 1 Reading Passages (Core) **February/March 2018**

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: The mountain lake

In this passage, the writer describes a remote mountain lake in Ireland and tells what happened on a family trip to fish for brown trout.

There is a lake, halfway up a mountain, where my family and I spend a day or two fishing each year. The climb, over waterlogged ground, drains the energy from our legs and makes us pause every now and then to catch our breath. During these short breaks we turn our backs on the mountain, and face, instead, the open country beneath us. There is plenty to see. The flat green country is divided by the River Shannon. There are lakes everywhere. Some of the larger ones we can name, but the small ones are too many to count; each one a jewel nestled into a fold in the velvet landscape. All around us the air carries the sound of the tiny streams which gather the water from the mountain and begin to steer it, well beyond our vision, towards the ocean.

The mountain lake is not easy to find. It seems unusual to locate a lake by climbing upward and, in many ways, we were lucky to find it at all on our first trip. It is very small and seemingly invisible until you arrive at a ridge and discover it, quite suddenly, at your feet. Sometimes it is not there at all. The dark clouds that graze the mountaintops here may decide to throw a protective fog around it, and steal it back. On such days we are forced to turn away and leave the local fish, the brown trout, to cruise the dark waters undisturbed.

This isolated lake is fed only by a stream which gathers rainfall from the mountain ridge above. How did the trout get here? They are not big fish: the heaviest we have caught is probably just under half a kilo. With their black backs, copper sides and two rows of red spots, they are all very similar in appearance. It seems to me that their strict conformity to a shared dress code might say something about their history. Scientists suggest that fewer physical differences are to be expected in a small population long isolated from others. In my imagination, they are the descendants of ancestors which colonised these waters in prehistoric times; ancestors which swam through channels long since vanished in a landscape of ice and glaciers and a wilderness unseen by human eyes.

I had taken my son, Leo, on a short fishing trip and had decided to go to the mountain lake as its eager fish might offer him the greatest hope of an early catch. Here the brown trout always rise freely, as though to reward us for the effort we have made to reach them. Would these bold trout oblige us by rising to the water's surface as we had hoped? I need not have worried. Sure enough, within ten minutes or so of our arrival, a swirl distorted the mirror of the mountain lake's surface. A few moments later, we were admiring the varnished scales of Leo's first trout before he gently lowered it into the lake once more and let the black water reclaim it.

To celebrate Leo's first trout, I painted a watercolour picture of it. It is framed now and hangs on his bedroom wall. It is not a good painting. While its proportions are approximately correct and its colours resemble the original, I could no more capture its beauty using paints than I now can, using words. If you wish to see for yourself how beautiful these trout really are, you must go there – and hope that, for a few hours at least, the clouds will surrender the mountain lake to you.

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Part 2

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

Passage B: A life-changing decision

In this passage the writer describes the solitary life of John Treagood, a former teacher who decided to change his lifestyle.

John Treagood used to work as a teacher. One day he made a life-changing decision. He decided to go for a walk and hasn't stopped travelling since. He trekked all the way from the north to the south west of England, bought a horse and then built a caravan, based on a traditional design. That was 40 years ago. Nowadays, John can regularly be seen travelling around roads and lanes, in that same handbuilt caravan, pulled by his even-tempered horse, Misty. For him, home is now his one-room caravan, parked on a piece of wasteland, and his chief companion is his horse.

Despite often facing sub-zero temperatures, John, 76, believes that life gets better every year. He says he doesn't feel the cold, adding that winters in the south west of England are mild, one of the reasons why he chose it as his destination all those years ago.

John does not claim a government pension, even though he is entitled to receive it. He makes money from odd jobs such as pruning hedges; he collects water from streams and food from the land. In total, John collects about 70 litres of water each day. He drinks approximately 2 litres of water a day while his horse drinks about 50 litres.

Although he occasionally supplements his diet with fish from the nearby river, he generally eats any berries and vegetables he might discover along the way, always taking care to cut up carrots and apples for his horse. John is rarely ill. One particularly frosty morning, however, he slipped and fell, breaking his arm. He didn't seek help until three days later, having walked nearly 7 kilometres to a friend's house.

His only items from modern life are a radio to listen to music and a mobile phone. He explains, 'A friend said I'd need one for emergencies, but I haven't switched it on for six months.'

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