Cambridge International Examinations
Cambridge International General Certificate of Secondary Education

FIRST LANGUAGE ENGLISH **0500/22**

Paper 2 Reading Passages (Extended) **February/March 2018**

2 hours

READING BOOKLET INSERT

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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 **5** printed pages and **3** blank pages.

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Part 1

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

Passage A: Walk on the Wild Side

Thousands of people a year go 'through-hiking[1]' along the Appalachian Trail. This feat of endurance takes about six months, and hikers need immense mental and physical strength to complete the 3500-kilometre journey. Bo was bored with his comfortable life and decided to challenge himself by hiking the trail alone.

Bo stared at his brand new backpack and wondered how everything would fit in. A change of clothes, a super-light sleeping bag and a tiny tent would take up most of the space, leaving just enough room for some dry food, water purification tablets and some rudimentary cooking equipment.

Now that the day had arrived, his stomach was churning with nerves. Bo wasn't unfit but he'd never hiked alone before. He wondered if successful hikers were city kids like him, more used to traffic than birdsong. He'd read all the advice about arranging for food parcels in small towns along the route, and his family would ensure that he could pick up money at regular intervals. He'd even planned in the occasional break in hotels so he could shower and sleep in a real bed. The experts stressed the importance of regular rest days. But Bo was still scared of all the things that could go wrong: dangerous wild creatures, poisonous plants, a careless slip down a rocky slope – and nobody to call for help. A mobile phone would be useless: this wilderness would be too remote for any signal.

Taking a deep breath, Bo hoisted the heavy pack on to his back and started walking. Within half an hour he'd spotted the first white trail marker and stepped on to the pathway that would be central to his life for the next six months. He could even see another hiker, climbing up a distant slope, their fluorescent jacket vivid against the vista of greenery. It was probably an expert, judging by their smooth progress. Bo wondered again why he hadn't tried a shorter trail first.

Soon he was surrounded by ancient forest, footsteps muffled by centuries of discarded leaves. Myths of terrifying forest guardians suddenly seemed much more plausible as the endless acres of trees stood watch, stern sentinels of the trail. The silence was spellbinding as Bo crept onwards, down an almost subterranean tunnel of primeval greenery. Forwards, always forwards, an intruder in a magical garden.

As the sun rose higher in the sky, the trees thinned out again and Bo was able to see the distant blue-green of the mountain ranges ahead. He felt calmer, more resolved – and very hungry. Resting for a moment, he ate an energy bar and filled his flask from a nearby stream, adding a water purification tablet. He also carried an emergency water filter: unsanitary water was a much bigger danger than any accident.

Bo's feet were a little sore but he had good thick socks to avoid blisters – he'd have to wash them out every evening and hope they'd dry. Finishing his sparse meal, he set off again. Bo hoped to do at least twenty kilometres a day and knew he couldn't pitch camp until at least dusk if he wanted to hit his target. The other hiker had disappeared but Bo wasn't too troubled by the solitude, not while the sun was shining anyway.

Hours later, Bo crawled into his hastily erected tent and stretched out his aching limbs. Night had fallen and Bo suddenly felt vulnerable. He hadn't seen a living soul for hours, apart from the occasional glimpse of a deer bounding away. No people, no civilisation, no alternative. He crept into the sleeping bag and closed his eyes, wishing he could just wake up and be back in his safe and comfortable bedroom.

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Was it minutes or hours later? A sharp crack, loud as a gunshot, snapped him to attention. Ears straining, Bo quivered, listening for ravenous forest monsters ready to devour him in one gulp; or maybe a rogue bear or wild boar, hungry for hiker meat? Bo lifted the tent flap and peered into the gaping throat of the darkness, ready to be swallowed.

As his eyes became accustomed to the gloom, he saw the dim silhouette of a human figure stumbling over the gnarled tree roots. Bo froze: The Wild Man of the Woods – it must be! The mythical figure who roams ancient woodland, spiriting away foolish humans. He could even see spiked antlers, looming above the head. Terrified, he fumbled for the torch. As it fell, the light flashed across the 'antlers', a large branch held aloft by the bedraggled figure, recognisable as the distant hiker he'd seen earlier.

'Hey, did I scare you? My name's Alex and I'm completely lost – and very hungry. Can you …?'

Notes:
[1] *through-hiking*: hiking a long-distance trail from start to finish

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Part 2

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

Passage B: A Simpler Life

In the summer of 1980, the narrator, his wife and their three-month-old son moved 'off-grid', meaning living away from mains services. They wanted a simpler, more independent lifestyle, so bought a small cabin with land on a rural island.

Here I sit, many years later, with time to reflect on the challenges of living and raising a family 'off-grid'. My vision for the upcoming years is to keep things pretty much the way they are. But keeping it simple hasn't always been easy. We had to accept that many common tasks could take longer and be more difficult.

The biggest difficulty we had living 'off-grid' was lighting. We used various alternatives, like propane lamps and candles. We tried solar power, but found that when we needed it the most, there was the least amount of solar energy available. Over time, we adapted our habits to seasonal daylight patterns, for example, reading more in the summer and going to bed earlier in winter. We arranged the furniture to make best use of available light from the windows. The development of LED bulbs is promising, however, because they require much less energy.

No ice for drinks in summer and no easy way of dealing with food leftovers as we'd no means of refrigeration. Most of the food we ate was fresh from the garden or the sea, or preserved in jars in the pantry.

The children enjoyed being allowed to wash in an old bathtub in the garden, and I started washing clothes by hand, but after a few sessions of this I gave up. We were forced to take our dirty clothes to the laundrette each time we would go 'off-island' to the nearest town.

To our delight, cooking 'off-grid' seems to deliver the best tasting meals with relatively little work. We use an ancient, and temperamental, wood-burning stove which usually provides all our hot water. Our home has a wood heater, and in winter we use this for baking – we love to hear the crackling fire and smell the scents from the oven curling through the room. And is there any aroma more wonderful than fresh baked bread? We've also learned to be patient in 'off-grid' cooking because water doesn't boil as fast in winter.

Learning to use hand tools was fundamental to getting anything built or fixed, since we did not have a generator to run power tools. An invaluable tool for building has been the chainsaw, although it's expensive to maintain. Cutting firewood is essential, and the chainsaw makes it a lot easier.

Living without the TV, movies and video games while raising children was not a problem for us. We had board games, crafts, musical instruments, books and all sorts of natural learning materials. Every night my wife would read a book out loud for an hour. Being able to raise children with our own values, and without the distraction of electronic entertainment, was one of the main reasons we wanted to live 'off-grid'.

Our experience is neither unique nor stereotypical. Although our community has no electric service, different homes have different degrees of self-generated electricity. Some people have wind generators, others have solar panels or use small streams for hydroelectric power. With recent advances in appliances and technologies, 'off-grid' living can be the same as living anywhere else. Of course, you still need a certain amount of money, and that isn't always easy to come by. But for our family, we felt there was more to be learned by building things by hand, creating our own family culture, and having to live a little more at the pace of nature. It's difficult to get along when there aren't many other people around, but we also learned the art of compromise.

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So if you are thinking of living ‘off-grid’, I suggest you start simply, and gradually ‘power up’ if your needs increase. And as you evaluate future electric needs, keep in mind what you may be losing as well.

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