Cambridge IGCSE

Cambridge Assessment International Education
Cambridge International General Certificate of Secondary Education

FIRST LANGUAGE ENGLISH **0500/12**

Paper 1 Reading Passages (Core) **February/March 2019**

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.

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Part 1

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

Passage A: The unexpected at Delphi

In the following passage the narrator describes the experience of leading a tour group around the ancient Greek site of Delphi.

I took a look at my students and wondered if we should cancel the day trip to Delphi. We had been touring for seven days non-stop with every morning an early one; the students were visibly exhausted. Today I was tempted to give us all a break. We had already visited many of the ancient sites of Greece and Rome and we still had a week to go. Surely, we could skip Delphi, a site I was only vaguely familiar with, without causing undue harm to the students' education? I knew they had wished for more time to hang out in the city, and the three-hour drive each way to Delphi and back sounded gruelling.

'Could we just stay here today?' I asked our guide, careful to stay out of earshot of the students.

'Sure.' He frowned. 'But I think you should go.'

I didn't want to disappoint him. 'OK, then,' I said, 'We're going.' After all, it seemed unfair to deny the interested ones in the group the trek to Delphi.

'It'll be fine,' I said, trying to convince myself as well as the students. 'You can sleep on the bus.'

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When we first began to explore the site at Delphi, I realised I had become captivated by the place and strangely protective of it. There was a power here, although I couldn't tell what it was. Divine? Man-made? Geological?

Certainly, the sheer majesty of Mount Parnassus was striking. I stopped and gazed down the winding Sacred Way below me. With the mountain at my back and the valley below, I understood utterly how the ancients had believed this was the centre of the world. I watched the students on the path spiralling above me, feeling in awe of the timeless magnificence of the surroundings.

We walked on. There wasn't much talking any more. It was as if everyone recognised the significance of the place.

At the top of the site, a small path opened out to an enormous stadium – the site of the Pythian Games, which rivalled only the Olympic Games in importance for the Ancient Greeks. The stadium was flanked on both sides by benches carved out of stone. We stood and stared, overwhelmed by its size and the fact that it had stood there for 2500 years. No one spoke. It was all more, much more, than we'd expected.

We made our way back down. I stopped at the bottom of the Sacred Way and waited for our group. I still couldn't put my finger on what I was feeling. I only knew that this place had existed for thousands of years and that for all these years, others had known about it and I was grateful to have seen it. And to think I almost hadn't come. I was hot and parched and covered in ancient dust. Yet, I felt at home and strangely at ease.

And I realised that this is Delphi's power. There is something shockingly simple about the place. It is, at its core, elemental: rocks, sky and earth. A place full of mystery and revelation. I thought back over my life and felt its connection to this place. As the students approached me on the path, I turned and looked up the mountain again. This was indeed a sacred place.

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Part 2

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

Passage B: Ostia Antica

Ostia Antica, the location of the harbour city of Ancient Rome, is a fascinating and under-visited archaeological site.

Ostia Antica is not far from the centre of Rome, and makes a pleasant half-day (allow longer if you want to lunch there or are particularly interested in archaeology). To get there, take the suburban train line to Ostia from Piramide Station. The train journey takes about 20 minutes. The archaeological area is close to the station, over a footbridge.

Although it is now four kilometres inland, Ostia was originally developed as a sea port, prior to the silting up of the estuary of the River Tiber. Ostia increased in importance approximately 2400 years ago, becoming a major naval and trading base. As Rome's port, the town had obvious commercial significance, and expanded in size and grandeur to match this position. However, about 1700 years ago, its place was taken by a new port at Fiumicino, and within the next couple of centuries Ostia had begun its decline. The Tiber was no longer navigable, the roads were overgrown, and Ostia sank into muddy oblivion.

Nowadays much of the old town has been excavated, and visitors can wander and explore at will; a street plan can be obtained from the ticket kiosk. There is a lot to see. Major sites include the Roman Theatre (there are plays put on here in the summer), the impressive Forum, a large baths complex and several temples. Many of the buildings are preserved up to the second storey, giving a powerful sense of the past.

There are impressive mosaics and columns everywhere, but highlights include the smaller domestic details: the fishmonger's marble slab, the bar with its wares illustrated on the wall, the communal public toilets, the residential villas with peaceful courtyards.

The old village of Ostia, with a papal fortress, is just down the road from the Roman town. Modern Ostia – Ostia Lido – is further away, by the sea. It is a construction of modern apartment blocks and boulevards with little atmosphere and – thanks to high fences – not much of a sea view either.

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