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FIRST LANGUAGE ENGLISH **0500/22**

Paper 2 Directed Writing and Composition **February/March 2023**

INSERT **2 hours**

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INFORMATION

- This insert contains the reading texts.
- You may annotate this insert and use the blank spaces for planning. **Do not write your answers** on the insert.

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Read **both** texts, and then answer **Question 1** on the question paper.

Text A: The paradox of fast fashion and the young

If the last few years have taught us anything about Generation Z (those born after 1996) it's that they're environmentally aware. Protesting the state of the Earth they're set to inherit is part of their routine.

And yet when it comes to one of the most polluting industries on Earth, Generation Z presents something of a paradox. Their coming-of-age has coincided with the height of social media and the advent of ultra-fast fashion brands that target young people online with enticing discounts and influencer partnerships. Environmentally engaged but seduced by what's new and 'now', young people face a dilemma.

Lauren Bravo is an author who tackles the effects of our shopping addiction. She understands why fast fashion is attractive to young people. 'The cost of living has rocketed over recent years; it's hardly surprising that today's teens and twenty-somethings are buying cheap clothes as small "pick-me-ups",' she says. 'When expensive holidays and home ownership are off the agenda, what do you do? You buy a cheap garment.'

'Slow fashion' advocate Caroline Jones attracted press coverage when she committed to wearing only recycled outfits from second-hand clothes shops for a year. She has two teenage children and can relate to that youthful frenzy of discovering new trends for the first time and developing your own style. 'For me, in my 50s, I've seen all of these trends before,' she says, 'but when you're young, everything's shiny, new and exciting. You see on social media what these influencers are styling up and the brands of affordable clothes being promoted.' Her daughter sometimes swaps clothes with her friends, but with the staggeringly low cost of clothes from some outlets, she could purchase a new outfit for every event. Yet according to experts, simply doubling the length of time we keep our clothes would cut carbon emissions by 44 per cent.

Text B

The following passage is taken from an interview with a young student of fashion design, for a fashion magazine.

Interviewer: Georgio, you're about to study for a degree in fashion design, so I imagine fashion is an essential part of your life!

Georgio: Of course, but I think most young people look to develop their own style, their own identity and use clothes and fashion to express themselves. We're not all obsessed with being on trend. For young professionals like me, the prospect of a lifetime of drab suits, a strict uniform or appropriate work attire is depressing. Many young people spend years encased in ugly school uniforms and can't wait to experiment with a range of different looks. Fashion is an inexpensive way to lift your mood at a time when young people face many challenges.

Interviewer: The way that particular brands dominate the teenage market seems to suggest there's not much experimenting going on. I've read that an outfit worn more than three times is considered 'old'!

Georgio: Not everyone has the confidence to use clothes in a unique way. Young people also use fashion to identify themselves as part of a group with its own look. But it's easy for older people to criticise. You've found a style that suits your lifestyle, your body and your image but that takes time. Social media, advertising and so-called 'influencers' who promote certain brands can make choices more confusing for young people, but we're not mere followers. We're aware of the effects of our choices on the environment and on people who produce our clothes. While older people can afford to limit their wardrobe to those expensive, 'classic' items, young people are already doing their fair share of saving the planet in other ways. It's a relatively short phase in their lives when fashion provides a much-needed creative outlet.

Interviewer: What are your plans when you qualify as a fashion designer?

Georgio: The fashion industry can certainly do better, for the environment and its young clientele. The vintage fashion market is burgeoning, which shows there's an appetite for more sustainable fashion that isn't being met by companies producing cheap, synthetic clothes. But we must accept that young people aren't ready at 16 or 18 to buy only those items they'll still be wearing at 28 or 30. Expecting them to do that would deny them an important rite of passage that their parents' generation had.

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