Cambridge Assessment International Education

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FIRST LANGUAGE ENGLISH **0500/12**

Paper 1 Reading **February/March 2024**

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 **Text A**, and then answer **Questions 1(a)–(e)** on the question paper.

Text A: ***Could a wolf ever adopt a human?***

A new 'Jungle Book' movie is in cinemas. Originally inspired by ancient Indian fable texts, the tale of Mowgli, an orphaned boy raised by the jungle's animal inhabitants, is once again delighting audiences.

The movie's story never fails to win viewers over thanks to its fantastic take on a human living among animals in the wild, leaving cinema-goers wondering if there's any truth behind a boy being raised by wolves. There are various mythological whisperings about babies being reared in this way, including Tarzan – looked after by great apes – and Romulus and Remus, the supposed founders of Rome, who were also said to have been nurtured by wolves. So is there any evidence or science behind such tales?

Of other similar stories drifting around, perhaps the most intriguing is that of a boy named Ramu found in a forest in 1976, who, just like Mowgli, was raised by Indian wolves – or so it seemed. He even had claw-like nails. But Ramu's story soon began to unravel, with people spotting parallels to other published stories. Ultimately, Ramu's tale could not be confirmed.

But the key here is not whether children can survive in the wild – they can – but whether animals of a different species would want to protect someone who isn't one of their own. Chimpanzees, with their remarkable social traits, are seen as the closest living evolutionary cousins to humans, though this doesn't necessarily mean they'd adopt a human child. They certainly show empathy and kindness, but they're also documented as engaging in violence to defend their territory. Nevertheless, chimpanzees do adopt orphaned chimps, both in captivity and in the wild.

And there are plenty of cases of animals befriending members of other animal species – cats nursing baby squirrels, even a pod of sperm whales caring for a bottlenose dolphin. Researchers note that 'instinctive adoption' (when a creature adopts a member of its own species) happens most often, ensuring DNA that's similar is passed on to the next generation.

There's a little less scepticism floating around the Internet than usual when it comes to tall tales like Mowgli's – people like to believe that an animal might adopt an alien-looking, resource-swilling human infant. Perhaps a young human could be adopted by a wild animal if they contributed something useful. We just haven't seen verifiable documented evidence of it just yet.

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Read **Text B**, and then answer **Question 1(f)** on the question paper.

Text B: ***How is the wolf perceived?***

The writer of this article has been living alongside a pack of wolves for a number of years, studying and protecting them.

For many people, their understanding of wolves is a mixture of fact, fiction and half-truths.

Ridiculous tales told to children (such as a 'big bad wolf' who eats a grandmother whole) have corrupted the imagination of generation after generation. In folklore, the wolf's native pack-hunting talents – social planning, coordination and surprise – have been interpreted as undesirable human characteristics such as deception and trickery.

Classic horror films portray werewolves fanged and bloodthirsty by the light of the full moon. Oh dear! Misleading stereotypes still resurface in popular culture and music today, with wolves constantly portrayed as dangerous threats. People are taught to fear the wolf, so many still believe that wolves pose a perpetual threat to human life, ignoring evidence to the contrary.

For some cultures the wolf is an animal of great wisdom, revered as a spiritual guide; this is often distorted by modern wolf enthusiasts to make wolves seem otherworldly and unreal. Their view holds the wolf in great esteem, but often does so at the expense of recognition of its place in our ecosystem.

Scientists, such as biologists, ecologists and zoologists, study how humans affect wolves and vice versa, which is very important for the conservation of this species. But scientists can't get too close to the wild animals without dramatically influencing and altering natural pack behaviour. Much research is therefore conducted remotely with the use of technology such as camera traps, 'howl boxes' and tracking devices such as radio collars. The body of knowledge produced by scientists continues to expand and enrich our understanding of wolves. But studying wild wolves remotely or from a great distance has limitations in what can be observed, making it very difficult to develop an understanding of the nuances of the wolf's character, individuality, devotion to its family, and capacity for communicating emotion and needs. For example, pups ask adults for regurgitated food by licking their muzzles. If there is food around, an adult may growl at pack members to keep them away until they have finished eating. Mistakenly, people often interpret this language as being vicious and evil.

Read **Text C**, and then answer **Questions 2(a)–(d)** and **Question 3** on the question paper.

Text C: *In the company of wolves*

The writer is a journalist who is reviewing an unusual stay at Aurora Park in the north of Norway.

I drive past piled-up snow and stop by the darkened log cabin. No one comes out of 'Reception'. I check the park's website on my phone: 'Experience Arctic nature up close. Live amongst our rare semi-wild wolves at the ultra-exclusive Wolf Lodge. Revel in the unique feeling of being watched by curious amber eyes; be part of a new story for these marvellous, mythical, misunderstood creatures …'

I extinguish the car lights and step out into the freezing air just as a snowplough comes up the road, driven by my 'devoted host' and 'wildlife expert', Head Keeper, Stig Hansen.

'Follow me in your car,' Stig says softly. 'At the top, when we get out, don't make sudden movements or noises.'

The snowploughed track leads us between two reassuringly high fences trimmed with electric wire. I leave the car by a gate in the fence, beyond which a tunnel leads up to a brightly lit lodge on a small snowy hill. The purpose of that tunnel, I know, is to access the lodge without the inhabitants of the enclosure accessing me.

Then the howling starts: a long primeval cry that reaches deep into the mind, evoking shivers of excitement. An answering howl draws Stig's attention, 'Sometimes I think there are not just ours out there.'

From the edge of extinction wolves are making a comeback in Europe, bringing with them a cascade of biodiversity and environmental health. Stig's team monitors wolves living in some of the largest enclosures among animal parks in the world. His wolf visits were established to ensure better welfare for wolves in captivity, and to offer humans a unique, life-changing experience. Many wolves in captivity, unfamiliar with people, are fearful, and live in stressful conditions. Many people fear wolves. The wolves at Aurora Park are accustomed to human contact and enjoy human company as part of their natural environment.

Dedicated animal keepers guide you into the enclosure, where you will meet these extraordinary creatures of fairy tales face to face. That's why I am here: to join a group staying the night inside the wolf enclosure in this secluded valley and, hopefully, make contact. I say hopefully as no matter the eye-watering expense of the experience, wolves, it seems, are not to be relied upon.

'Be very slow and steady,' Stig reminds us, lighting the fire to prepare supper. 'Wolves can get excited. We don't allow under-18s to meet them. If the wolves knock you over, keep calm and wait for the keepers to move them away.'

From inside the plush mountain lodge, I've been promised a view of the Northern Lights. I peer out of the large viewing windows. As my eyes adjust to the night, I see a green glow: at first just smudges that grow, forming a cosmic phantom that flutters, swirls and moves mysteriously across the vast sky. Surfacing from the depths of the darkness we hear a sudden, vicious wolf-fight. 'Siblings working out their hierarchy,' says Stig casually. 'We don't interfere.' We finish dinner in eerie silence, gazing at a shimmering white moon – silhouetted against it are the swift shadows of running wolves.

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Next morning, emboldened by a hearty breakfast, Stig and I venture out and immediately spot the wolf pack loping eagerly towards us. They jump up excitedly, licking our faces. Two of them have a snarling stand-off over who should lick me first but then agree to lick my camera instead. Apart from that one moment, it's all remarkably non-threatening. We stroll to a low snow-covered hill where they do a bit of a howl and hold a wrestling contest. Only when I drop my phone is there a sudden intimation of what can happen. They are instantly curious and pushy, flooded with predatory instincts and the power of the pack. Moving slowly, I retrieve my phone and retreat to a respectful distance. Cute they may be, but cuddly toys they are not.

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