UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE INTERNATIONAL EXAMINATIONS
International General Certificate of Secondary Education

FIRST LANGUAGE ENGLISH **0500/11**

Paper 1 Reading Passage (Core) **May/June 2012**

READING BOOKLET INSERT

1 hour 45 minutes

READ THESE INSTRUCTIONS FIRST

This Insert contains the reading passage for use with all questions on the Question Paper.

This document consists of **3** printed pages and **1** blank page.

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Read the following passage carefully and then answer all the questions on the Question Paper.

Gerald (Gerry) Durrell, an author and animal lover, spent part of his childhood in the 1930s on the Greek island of Corfu. In this passage he describes Mr Kralefsky, who was one of his private tutors.

My Tutor Kralefsky

Kralefsky lived in the top two storeys of a square, mildewed, grand old house that stood on the outskirts of the town. I climbed the wide staircase and rapped a sharp tattoo on the knocker that decorated the front door. I waited, glowering to myself and digging the heel of my shoe into the wine-red carpet with considerable violence. Just as I was about to knock again there came the soft pad of footsteps and the front door was flung wide to reveal my new tutor.

I decided immediately that Kralefsky was not a human being at all, but a gnome who had disguised himself as one by putting on an antiquated but very elegant suit. He had a large, egg-shaped head with flattened sides that were tilted back against a smoothly rounded humpback. This gave him the curious appearance of being permanently in the middle of shrugging his shoulders and peering up into the sky. A long, fine-bridged nose with widely flared nostrils curved out of his face, and his extremely large eyes were liquid and of a pale brown colour. They had a fixed, far-away look in them as though their owner were just waking up out of a trance. His wide, thin mouth managed to combine primness with humour, and now it was stretched across his face in a smile of welcome, showing even but discoloured teeth.

'Gerry Durrell?' he asked bobbing like a courting sparrow, and flapping his large, bony hands at me. 'Gerry Durrell, is it not? Come in, my dear boy, do come in.'

'Through here; this is the room we shall work in,' fluted Kralefsky, throwing open a door and ushering me into a small, sparsely furnished room. I put my books on the table and sat down in the chair he indicated. He leaned over the table, balancing on the tips of his beautifully manicured fingers, and smiled at me in a vague way. I smiled back, not knowing quite what he expected.

'Friends!' he exclaimed rapturously. 'It is most *important* that we are friends. I am quite, quite certain we will become friends, aren't you?'

I nodded seriously, biting the inside of my cheeks to prevent myself from smiling.

'Friendship,' he murmured, shutting his eyes in ecstasy at the thought, 'friendship! That's the ticket!'

His lips moved silently, and I wondered if he was praying, and if so whether it was for me, himself, or both of us. A fly circled his head and then settled confidently on his nose. Kralefsky started, brushed it away, opened his eyes, and blinked at me.

'Yes, yes, that's it,' he said firmly. 'I'm sure we shall be friends. Your mother tells me that you have a great love of natural history. This, you see, gives us something in common straight away … a bond, as it were, eh? I am by way of being an aviculturist, but only an amateur,' he volunteered modestly. 'I thought perhaps you might care to see my collection of birds. Half an hour or so with the feathered creatures will, I venture to think, do us no harm before we start work. Besides, I was a *little* late this morning, and one or two of them need fresh water.'

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He led the way up a creaking staircase to the top of the house, and paused in front of a green door. He produced an immense bunch of keys that jangled musically as he searched for the right one; he inserted it, twisted it round, and drew open the heavy door. A dazzle of sunlight poured out of the room, blinding me, and with it came a deafening chorus of bird song; it was as though Kralefsky had opened the gates of Paradise in the grubby corridor at the top of his house. The attic was vast, stretching away across almost the whole top of the house. It was uncarpeted, and the only piece of furniture was a large wooden table in the centre of the room. But the walls were linked, from floor to ceiling with row upon row of big, airy cages containing dozens of fluttering, chirruping birds. The floor of the room was covered with a fine layer of bird seed, so that as you walked your feet scrunched pleasantly, as though you were on a shingle beach. Fascinated by this mass of birds I edged slowly round the room, pausing to gaze into each cage, while Kralefsky (who appeared to have forgotten my existence) seized a large watering-can from the table and danced nimbly from cage to cage, filling water-pots.

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