UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE INTERNATIONAL EXAMINATIONS
International General Certificate of Secondary Education

FIRST LANGUAGE ENGLISH **0500/23**

Paper 2 Reading Passages (Extended) **May/June 2013**

READING BOOKLET INSERT

2 hours

READ THESE INSTRUCTIONS FIRST

This 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 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

A disturbing train journey is the final cause of a life-changing decision.

All Change!

You are travelling on a train. The journey so far has been without remarkable event. As usual, you have had to run for your train which, ironically, has been delayed. You long to be home but have to endure the frequent stops at dull stations. You have watched unsmiling commuters hurry down the platforms, leaving the train until it is almost empty. You are tired, hungry, frustrated.

You have seen the city disperse, as all cities do, with the train dissecting the suburbs, exposing their endless rows of backyards and shopping centres. You are in the last carriage of the train, in the last compartment, with just one other person, another man in his mid-thirties, wearing a bright yellow raincoat, in the window-seat diagonally opposite your own. He stares through the window at an angle at the fading lights of the metropolis; you watch, at a similar angle, the approaching lights of the outer suburbs. You also watch him, or, more correctly, his reflection, in your window.

You think of your day, your life perhaps, like an overseer surveying his workers' efforts. You seem dissatisfied. Then you worry about the future: what will come tomorrow, and what should you do in preparation? You decide that your day is all essentially routine, and therefore without consequence. You consider the long hours. You look at your watch again. You feel uncomfortable.

As far as you can make out, there is no one else in the carriage. You hesitate to turn and look, as you know this may tell the man something of what you are thinking. He folds his arms.

A light rain streaks the window through which you stare. You approach a crossing, and its bells, which grow until they clang loudly in your window, and you see for a few seconds the blinking red lights and the cars, waiting patiently, like cows, with their un-blinking eyes. Then you are gone, and you are left with just the memory, and the fading sound of the bells.

As the light outside the carriage darkens again beyond the crossing, you return your attention to your fellow passenger. As you stare at his reflection, you feel your eyelids droop. You force them open, but they close again, and you reach the edge of consciousness.

The man has begun to smile. You realise that he too can see you in his window. It is possible that he has been intently watching you watching him for some time. Your gaze is frozen, unsure where to look. He stops smiling abruptly and suddenly leaps up and rushes impulsively at you like a wild beast. You turn to face him, throwing up your arms and legs helplessly for protection. He stops within a hair's breadth of your buckled legs.

'Sorry to have alarmed you,' he says, in a tone that surprises you by its calm, 'but I must get off here. I almost missed my stop.' And you realise that the train has been stopped at your station for some moments. He opens the carriage door by your shoulder and climbs down. 'Goodnight,' he says. 'I only just made it.'

The whistle blows and the train pulls out of the station. You can only stare as it passes, because of what has just happened, and now it is too late for you to get out. The train speeds away from your station.

You swear out loud. Then you look where the man has been. He has left a small paper bag.

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The train blows its whistle for another crossing. You walk awkwardly across the rocking carriage and sit in his seat. There is no one else in the carriage. You pick up the paper bag and look inside: it is empty but you notice that there is something written on the outside. It is a poem of sorts, a haiku, like the ones you used to write at school.

Watching the landscape
From a train window at night
Reflecting yourself

The train stops at the next station. You leave, taking the poem with you. The stationmaster says there are no trains back to your station until morning and that there are no taxis at this time of night. You ask him where you are, and he replies by raising his eyebrows and staring sarcastically at the name sign behind him.

'I suppose I'll have to walk,' you say. You ask if the road leads back to your station.

'What am I, an information bureau?' he snaps, turning back into his office where you see a newspaper spread upon his desk. He shuts the door.

You decide that there is nothing for it but to walk home. As you set off, the rain gets heavier and you resign yourself to getting soaked to the skin. Your only thought is, 'Enough is enough', which runs repeatedly through your mind like the last line of a haiku.

Part 2

Read **Passage B** carefully, and re-read **Passage A**. Then answer **Question 3**, which is based on both passages. Answer on the Question Paper.

Passage B

This passage describes a train so luxurious that it is called 'The Palace on Wheels'.

To Rajasthan in India by Rail

Though India has left much of its past behind, the romance of the train lives on – at least for many foreign visitors. In 1982, to cater for this nostalgia, Indian Railways, in conjunction with the Rajasthan Tourist Board, produced a train to resurrect a glamorous past. They called it 'The Palace on Wheels'. It was assembled from appropriate coaches unearthed from sources throughout the subcontinent, many rusting away in obscure sidings and some once owned by long-deposed maharajas. Restored to their former glory, they became the pride and joy of Indian Railways.

What set the final seal of authenticity were the two superb steam engines chosen to head them. To complement the image of the golden coaches, these giant monsters, with their shining brass-work, glistening pistons and proud coats of arms at the front of their boilers, were named 'Desert Queen' and 'Fort of Jodhpur'. Furthermore, the drivers were carefully chosen for the most prestigious train in all India.

One of the coaches, bearing the insignia of the Jaipur state railway, was one that had carried the once great Maharaja of Bikaner, while a more recent passenger had been Mrs Gandhi, the late Indian Prime Minister. It was the most opulent and historic carriage of all, with pink upholstery, silver-embroidered curtains, teak wall panels and traditional carpeting. The suites consisted of a bedroom, generously proportioned with a wide bed, a wardrobe and a bedside table, and a comfortable lounge equipped with sofas and armchairs. Two servants attired in smart Rajasthani costumes were constantly at their guests' beck and call. Included in the train were a restaurant car serving gourmet dinners and fine wines, an observation car and library.

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The travellers found Rajasthan a state made for such a train. The five towns on the tour, starting with Jaipur, were fairyland cities: pink-stoned, rock-pinnacled lakeside oases, dominated by fortresses and palaces, each boasting an epic history engraved upon dramatically beautiful buildings.

Having rumbled through the night, the 'Palace on Wheels' arrived at its destination where, after breakfast in bed, guests were invited to emerge onto the platform strewn with flowers to be welcomed by a pipe band, elephants in regalia and troupes of dancing girls. Suitably garlanded, the travellers were whisked away for the day's programme, which included a superb lunch in a real palace.

A none-too-smooth, metre-gauge track, definitely not continuously welded, made sleep a little difficult for those not lulled by train travel. From the one-time centre of historic India – Delhi – a traveller could begin a journey such as he or she was unlikely ever to experience again.

Alas, the original magnificent train is no more, but another of the same type and with similar facilities has taken its place, so this tradition of luxurious travel lives on. Guests can still book an eight-day tour culminating in a visit to the Taj Mahal and 'The Palace on Wheels' proved so popular that additional tourist trains now exist.

Copyright Acknowledgements:

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