UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE INTERNATIONAL EXAMINATIONS
International General Certificate of Secondary Education

FIRST LANGUAGE ENGLISH **0500/31**

Paper 3 Directed Writing and Composition **May/June 2013**

READING BOOKLET INSERT

2 hours

READ THESE INSTRUCTIONS FIRST

This Reading Booklet Insert contains the reading passage for use with **Section 1**, **Question 1** on the Question Paper.

You may annotate this Insert and use the blank spaces for planning. This Insert is **not** assessed by the Examiner.

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Read the following article carefully, and then answer Question 1 on the Question Paper.

In this article, Ravenna Reach expresses her views about the prominence given to the modern Olympic Games.

Olympic Overkill

Well, now it's over and we can count the cost. Everyone will say that it was worth it. However, there is great suffering in the world, and there's never enough money to provide healthcare, education, food and water for those who need it so much. Instead we spend billions building the Olympic stadium, providing accommodation for athletes and famous visitors, making huge processions and letting off countless fireworks. These pollute the atmosphere which we spend good money trying to keep clean. £30 million went on simply preparing the British team for 2012, and that amount ran out a year before the opening ceremony, when money for looking after the elderly and providing facilities for young people had been cut owing to the general economic situation.

There are two odd things about the Olympics. One is that despite the superficial packaging and decoration, it all comes down to people running round tracks and swimming in pools much as they have done for countless years. There is nothing that necessarily demands vast expense, although no doubt the athletes wear flashy fashion sportswear. The whole thing could be organised for a fraction of the cost and yet provide 100 per cent competition and entertainment. It just needs plenty of room!

The other odd thing is that each time the Olympic Games takes place you would think that it was the last because of the huge build-up and nations attempting to outdo each other. Yet the Olympic Games happens every four years, so that as soon as the media hype about one competition ends, the same old stories are repeated for the next. Will the stadium be finished in time? Will the athletes who took part in this competition be better or worse in four years' time? Will the security arrangements be sufficient? It never ends!

I'm not against the Olympics: far from it. It's a marvellous part of living history that something which started 2,700 years ago at Olympia in Greece, in honour of the god Zeus, should still continue. Did you know that a month before the original Games, a truce between warring factions was declared in the region so that people could travel and enjoy them in peace? Hence the Games were always associated with peace and friendship. At the first one-day Olympic Games, the only event was a sprint from one end of the stadium to the other. Gradually more events were added to make four days of competitions. Amazingly, athletes from all over the world still compete in these events. I think it's marvellous that in recent years there has been such a constant growth in the number of athletes taking part and the variety of sports, which now include taekwondo and synchronised swimming. What a spectacle! It is awe-inspiring to see so many athletes taking part and so many countries in harmony, at least in theory, over the period of the Games.

Lastly, one of the very best things about the Olympics is the inclusion of the Paralympic Games, held immediately after the main games and given the same status and ceremonies. This event allows disabled athletes to compete at the highest level in sports that include cycling, football five-a-side and wheelchair tennis. Apart from the athletes' magnificent achievements, this is excellent spectator sport.

So if you measure up the arguments about the Olympics, you see that they are pretty evenly matched. The Games can be one of the strongest messages for world peace in our often quarrelsome international community. For a host country, the newly built stadiums and other facilities can encourage more people to enjoy sport. After all the preparations, the excitement and the competition live on!

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