Cambridge International Examinations
Cambridge International General Certificate of Secondary Education

FIRST LANGUAGE ENGLISH **0500/11**

Paper 1 Reading Passage (Core) **May/June 2014**

READING BOOKLET INSERT

1 hour 45 minutes

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READ THESE INSTRUCTIONS FIRST

This Reading Booklet Insert contains the reading passage for use with all questions 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 passage carefully and then answer all the questions on the Question Paper.

Barry Stone, the writer, describes a trip to Kamchatka, a remote area of Russia.

Russia's Far East

Alexey, our park ranger, released the safety catch on his shotgun, and moved a hand toward the flare gun on his belt—always the preferred option when confronted by an adult bear and the threat of danger. We didn't intend to come between the mother and her cub, but the river in which they'd been gorging themselves on salmon moments earlier had separated them. Its glacial current was carrying the cub downstream and past our huddled group of 16 intruders. Now, through no fault of our own, we were in the one spot humans should never be. When the mother bear raised herself to a height of two metres and looked straight through us in search of her cub, our many cameras clicked as one. This was despite there being nothing between us and death, except for just a few metres of Kamchatkan scrub and Alexey's powerful rifle.

Fortunately this story had a happy ending. Kamchatkan brown bears are nowhere near as aggressive as their cousins, the American grizzly, and feed almost exclusively on the region's plentiful supplies of salmon, supplementing their diets with pine nuts, berries, and the occasional rodent. According to Alexey, only one in every hundred encounters here ends in a bear attack. That said, having spotted maybe 150 bears over the last three days, I was probably overdue for a mauling. But who dwells on statistics when they're having the time of their life?

The Kamchatka Peninsula is in the Russian Far East, a little over two hours' flying time from Tokyo. It hangs off the end of Siberia like a fish tail, with the Sea of Okhotsk on one side and the Bering Sea on the other. How many bears live here? Nobody knows. Estimates range from as few as 8,000 to more than twice that number. Gathering information about bear populations (or anything else for that matter) in such a huge and unpopulated region isn't easy.

Remote Kurilskoye Lake is the largest breeding ground for red salmon in Eurasia. From the comfort of our lodge on its shores, we watched bears chase one another over open meadows, mother bears feeding their young, and cubs nestling with siblings. We saw them strolling along the perimeter of the electric fence, and we watched as 650-kilo adult males barged their way through crystal-clear rivers in their hunt for salmon.

If you're after real nature, then it's hard to beat Kamchatka. Every encounter was wild, spontaneous and thrilling (and even potentially fatal, like the time a bear lumbered out from behind a bush as we collected driftwood along the lakeshore for the evening bonfire). When our first pair of sea eagles appeared overhead showing off two-metre wingspans, one with a full-grown salmon hanging limply from its claws, the birdwatchers among us went into a frenzy. Where were you supposed to point your binoculars in this place? Up? Down? Sideways?

Kamchatka is not easy to get to. Even though it is attached to the mainland, it might as well be an island, as the terrain is so impenetrable that no road has ever been built and more than half of Kamchatka's 400,000 residents live in the capital. In an area that has a population of fewer than one person per square kilometre, and where almost a third of the land is designated a wilderness reserve, once you leave the city, it won't be long until you're at one with nature.

And what nature! More than 300 snow-dusted volcanoes, of which 29 are active, protrude from the harsh landscape. It has been called the Land of Fire and Ice. Mount Koryaksky, just 28 kilometres from the capital, looks positively menacing. It's a 'Decade Volcano', one of just 16 in the world constantly watched because of their eruptive history and proximity to significant population centres. Koryaksky last erupted in 2009, when it ejected an enormous ash plume into the sky—which is as good a reason as any to get out of town.

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