Cambridge International Examinations
Cambridge International General Certificate of Secondary Education

FIRST LANGUAGE ENGLISH **0500/23**

Paper 2 Reading Passages (Extended) **May/June 2014**

READING BOOKLET INSERT

2 hours

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READ THESE INSTRUCTIONS FIRST

This Reading Booklet Insert contains the reading passages 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.

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

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Part 1

Read **Passage A** carefully, and then answer **Questions 1** and **2** on the Question Paper.

Passage A

The writer goes with Tom Murphy, a wildlife expert, in search of a bear in Yellowstone Park, U.S.A.

Finding a Grizzly

The sun was rising over the Absaroka Mountains, rising behind some high, thin clouds so that the light that spilled into the valley was shadowed and broken. It was a moving watercolour of a morning. Waves of subtle pastels were flowing gently across golden August pastures. We drove in silence. The light reached the river, and for a moment the living expanse of water was a rippling mirror of shimmering pink and gold.

'You're pretty sure he'll be there?' I asked.
'He'll be there all right,' Tom said. 'He had something buried, a bison carcass I think. He was feeding on it all day yesterday.'
'What's the land like where he is?'
'It's a prairie location. Rolling hills and sage. No trees to climb in case he, uh …'. I didn't know what he might do. Nobody knows what a grizzly bear might do. One grizzly might simply ignore a man on foot, while another one could feel obliged to rip him to shreds.

We parked by the side of the road and began walking. Five kilometres in, we saw several ravens perched on a ridge ahead of us. Tom thought this might mean there was a bear below, feeding on something. We belly-crawled to the top and peeked over. We saw a few bison, grazing peacefully, but not too far away was some grizzly dung. Tom broke it open with his boot and handed me a porcupine quill. I stood there with the white needle in my hand, and it scared me as badly as anything I'd ever heard or read about grizzly bears. I couldn't imagine any animal eating a porcupine, quills and all. We walked down a hill and across a marsh that was full of meandering streams. If there was a bear, he would be on the other side of the ridge ahead of us.

When we got there, we saw him in a bowl-shaped depression about 20 metres away, standing on a mound of dirt. He was a glistening black, and his coat scintillated in the sun. In proportion to his massive body, his claws were almost delicate. They were bone white: the mark of an older bear. He began digging in the mound. In less than two minutes he had extracted a bison carcass. He used his claws very dexterously, almost like fingers. There was a disconcerting sound of breaking bones as the bear gnawed away on the bison's shoulder.

Tom and I heard, very faintly, the sound of a cracking branch from the stand of trees to the west. There was a dark shape, moving slowly, deep in the woods. With the binoculars I could see that it was a bison. The bear stiffened and stared into the trees. It is said that a grizzly's hearing is far more sensitive than a human's. Some people believe grizzlies don't see well, and in fact they may not see as well as we do. We retreated and crouched down at a distance of 75 metres. I was certain that he did not see us.

After an hour or so, he began digging a second hole adjacent to the first. He used the dirt to cover the carcass. Then he lay down in the second hole and took a nap in the sun. He was on his back, and you could just see the tip of his nose sticking out of the ground. It looked silly, and I wanted to laugh, and I knew I shouldn't, so a series of muffled giggles came snorting up through my nose. The fear that I'd been living with for 20 hours had stretched itself to breaking point and finally snapped. The bear couldn't see us, and now he was taking a nap.

Tom moved in closer now that the bear was asleep. I chose to stay where I was. Tired of staring at the bear's nose through my binoculars, I moved behind a small wall of sage and lay on my back, feeling just a tad bearlike. A dim drowsiness began a slow descent …

I'm just going to have to live with it. I'm the guy who spent so many sleepless hours being terrified of a grizzly bear that, when I finally saw him, I fell asleep.

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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 article is from a wildlife conservation magazine.

Saving the Polar Bear

The polar bear is listed as 'vulnerable' on an International Red List of endangered species. We're helping protect polar bears from the increasing threats they face in several ways, such as supporting field research in and around the Arctic and helping to reduce the impact of a warming planet on the bears. There are an estimated 20,000–25,000 polar bears in the world, living in 19 subpopulations across the Arctic, where they inhabit the ice-covered waters. Many scientists believe that polar bears could have disappeared from their present locations within 100 years. We are working to maintain and restore the rich marine eco-systems and develop a long-term vision in order to secure the future of this fragile region.

Unlike the major threat to other at-risk mammals (such as tigers and rhinos), it is not hunting that is having the most damaging effect on the polar bear population. They used to be heavily hunted, from the 1600s right through to the mid-1970s, but then strict regulations were agreed internationally to protect the species. The big threat to polar bears nowadays is climate change. This is affecting the Arctic sea ice that polar bears rely on to catch food, especially important during the two-year period when mother bears are raising their dependent young, which do not survive if food is scarce. A recent study shows polar bear litters are also decreasing in size because of the decline of the sea ice.

The polar bear – whose Latin name means 'sea bear' – spends much of its time at or near the edge of the sea ice. As the Arctic ice cap melts in the summer, some bears follow the retreating ice to stay close to their prey, while others become stranded and spend their summers on land, living off stored body fat. When the ice returns in the autumn, the bears go back to the sea ice once again. Because of climate change, the sea ice is melting earlier and forming later each year, leaving polar bears with less time to hunt. This means the bears are fasting for longer, which dramatically reduces their body weight and physical condition, making it harder for them to survive the summer season. They have a good sense of smell and can detect seals, their main food, from almost one kilometre away. However, despite their reputation as fearsome hunters, less than 25 per cent of polar bear hunts are successful, and their access to seals is declining because of the dwindling ice.

Polar bears are being forced to spend more time on land, where they are more likely to come into conflict with people because of their hunger. Increased industrial activities in the Arctic, including shipping, fishing, and oil and gas exploration, are speeding up the deterioration of the polar bear's remaining habitat. There is no proven technology to combat oil spills in ice-covered water; a large oil spill could devastate the Arctic marine environment and affect all species.

Toxin levels increase the further up the food chain you go, and are highest in top predators such as polar bears. Spilt oil and other toxic chemicals harm the insulating properties of their fur and reduce the effectiveness of their camouflage – necessary for hunting – by making their coats less white. They can also cause hair loss and irritate skin and eyes. Polar bears like to keep themselves clean and after feeding they usually wash; they also reduce overheating by rolling in the snow or taking a swim. When the polar bear grooms itself, it ingests the toxins from the snow and seawater, which can lead to brain damage, kidney failure and harm to the digestive system, and is sometimes fatal.

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Passage B © http://www.wwf.org.uk/what_we_do/safeguarding_the_natural_world/wildlife/polar_bear/; 23 September 2012.

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