Cambridge IGCSE

Cambridge International Examinations
Cambridge International General Certificate of Secondary Education

FIRST LANGUAGE ENGLISH **0500/21**

Paper 2 Reading Passages (Extended) **May/June 2016**

2 hours

READING BOOKLET INSERT

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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.

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Part 1

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

Passage A: Honey Hotel

Al, the owner of the Honey Hotel, wants to attract new business to his hotel and hopes that his competition winner will help him.

Al waited at the airport – unusual for a hotel owner. He wanted to impress these guests. Besides, they might have difficulty persuading a taxi to drive out as far as his place. Honey Hotel's remoteness meant a two-hour, suspension-challenging drive each way.

Last month, Al had advertised online: images of classical architecture, legendary landscapes and his newly-extended dining room would entice tourists in more profitable numbers, he felt sure. Struggling to describe his hidden paradise, he'd hit on the idea of offering the chance to stay for free to anyone booking who successfully completed in less than 100 words, 'Why I want to visit…' There'd been a handful of entries amongst the dozen or so enquiries he'd received.

'Mostly mediocre,' his wife had observed. 'This one's amazing though,' she'd said, passing him the name of the winner. 'Really understands the spirit of the place.'

He agreed. Reading the winning entry, he'd been entranced by the sensitivity with which its gifted writer staged scenes of ancient civilisations and romantic journeys along half-forgotten sandy roads – conjuring a charming mirage of white-washed walls, embroidered gowns and orange trees laced with sunlight.

Al had been immediately anxious to meet the winner: M. R. Head. Correcting the poor punctuation, he'd moved Mr Head (and his wife) to the best suite, sighing over the half-full booking list. Perhaps Mr Head could be persuaded to write a glowing review for the website? The week's itinerary had been carefully planned to encourage this.

On the second morning, Al sourced ingredients fresh from the market as usual – doubling up on everything – an unnecessary expense, but he didn't want popular dishes to run out again tonight. Laden with the rainbow of produce he'd procured, Al worked his way back through the beehive that was the Old Town. Mr Head had seemed unimpressed during their tour here yesterday, complaining loudly to his wife of 'straggling market stalls, tatty trinkets and bits of cloth'.

He'd refused even to visit the animal sanctuary or 'that pile of rubble on the hilltop'. At dinner, he scoffed at 'boring' plans for the next day, bullying Al into including him in a planned excursion for a group of white-water rafters who came back year after year. Other guests said they'd also enjoy a trip on the water, so finally a small coach was hired. 'Stay on flat water if you like,' Mr Head goaded as guests piled onto the vehicle after breakfast. 'I'm with the white-water boys.'

Only later did Al realise Mrs Head had not gone too. She sat with a notebook under the palms on the hotel terrace. Al worried what to offer her. The coach party had decimated the breakfast banquet like a hoard of locusts. He had only mint tea for his own elevenses he explained; she was welcome to that. She accepted gratefully, remaining for nearly an hour sipping the tea and idly fussing a stray cat playing around her feet.

Still later, he noticed her talking with the gardener about his bees – curious to know more about the health benefits of their honey, saddened they were threatened by farmers guarding precious crops against other less friendly insects.

Al expressed concern that the 'pain in her neck' she'd given as her reason for not joining the others might have been caused by the pillows. He offered to change them for others less soft.

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'No,' she smiled. 'The pillows are perfect. The pain has gone now. Please, call me Maria.'

That evening Al was busy, so wasn't paying full attention when the coach party returned. He caught only snippets of sniggered conversation as guests re-entered the lobby dispersing to their rooms. 'Told him... should've listened… good job the others knew what they were doing.' He noticed Maria listening to one of the rafters in the corner, nodding softly, stopping only to raise her eyebrows and smile apologetically.

The word 'hospital' caught his attention. Al strained anxiously to hear more: 'Nothing serious – a few bruises, hurt pride. Told us he knew what he was doing…' finished the rafter.

'Sorry to trouble you,' Maria began, approaching the desk. 'It looks like my husband will need collecting. Could we stop off on Friday on the way back to the airport perhaps? I'll sign any forms you require now – it wasn't anyone else's fault. He won't be putting in any kind of complaint, I promise.'

Relieved, Al received the incident form dated and signed: Maria Rose Head.

'M. R. Head,' he noted. Now he understood.

Part 2

Read **Passage B** carefully, and then answer **Question 3** on the Question Paper.

Passage B: The Honeybee

The writer of this letter is responding to an article entitled 'Buzz off, see if I care', about the disappearance of bees.

Dear Sir,

I was appalled by your article regarding that most fascinating of insects, the honeybee. You reveal your ignorance by dismissing the potential demise of honeybees as part of a 'natural cycle' – crassly celebrating that your picnic is 'less likely to be disturbed by nasty buzzy things'. Firstly, if it weren't for bees, your picnic probably wouldn't exist. Over 30% of world crops rely on bee pollination – apples, nuts, and all our favourite summer fruits like cherries and strawberries. Your peanut butter and jam sandwich would be looking a bit thin if bees disappeared altogether, wouldn't it?

Perhaps you might like to consider that the extinction of bees could lead to widespread global starvation. We need to understand the value of bees and the precarious state of their existence. We could lose a lot of healthy food from our world or wind up paying exorbitant costs for farmers to use some other, less efficient, pollination technique to replace the work of these natural pollinators. Passing from flower to flower searching for nectar, bees transfer pollen on their fur, as they pollinate plants. Bees are effectively unpaid labour for the global food industry. Plus, bee health tells us lots about environmental health – the decimation of honeybee colonies worldwide is serious.

You're right that honeybees aren't native to many parts of the world, but were introduced by settlers. What you haven't understood is that the honeybee is one of the oldest forms of animal life still in existence from the Neolithic Age. Over 500 Egyptian medicines used honey. The earliest records of man interacting with bees are rock paintings in Spain thought to be 8,000 years old. Modern picnic-man has responsibilities here.

As you say, wild bees can be significant pollinators of plants and crops, but their numbers have decreased too. Should honeybees become extinct, their wild cousins are unlikely to be around to help.

Millions of bees abandoning hives, flying off to die, is a comparatively recent phenomenon. Known as Colony Collapse Disorder (CCD), it's unlike anything seen before. Bee keepers find beehives virtually empty. The few bees left inside the hive carry almost every known bee virus, as well as fungal infections. It's as if bees' immune systems are being suppressed somehow. Perhaps, like ants, bees flee their colonies when they sense they're diseased. Honeybees may have too little genetic diversity, making the species as a whole susceptible to widespread disease.

You incorrectly claim GM crops and radiation from mobile phones damage bees, overlooking the bee's worst enemy, a blood-sucking mite called Varroa Destructor. This renders the bee susceptible to a deformed wing virus and is certainly a main suspect in this murder mystery.

Misleading readers, you say pesticides aren't necessarily a death sentence for bees. The pesticides you refer to are insect nerve agents, used as seed dressings, which means they end up in every part of the crop they protect, including pollen and nectar. Even if properly applied, these chemicals cannot be used safely. Just small amounts are thought to fog bees' brains, altering behaviour fatally.

In some regions of the world, chemicals are so widely used that all the bees have disappeared; fruit trees are pollinated by vast armies of human workers. Elsewhere, remaining beehives are routinely stacked up on trucks and transported around the country to pollinate orchard after orchard. This is almost certainly causing bees to suffer from stress and is bound to depress their immune system, expose them to additional pathogens and affect their navigational abilities. A changing climate and bizarre local weather systems also threaten bees.

Bees need a habitat with bee-friendly flowers for good nutrition. You're wrong to suggest that urban beekeeping is the answer to honeybee decline. More honeybees in the city could just mean less nectar available to the wild bee population.

Nowadays, most scientists believe CCD results from an unfortunate cocktail of multiple causes working to increase stress and reduce honeybees' immune systems.

Yours faithfully,
J. C. Brown

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