Cambridge International Examinations
Cambridge International General Certificate of Secondary Education

FIRST LANGUAGE ENGLISH **0500/12**
Paper 1 Reading Passages (Core) **May/June 2017**
READING BOOKLET INSERT **1 hour 45 minutes**

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READ THESE INSTRUCTIONS FIRST

This Reading Booklet Insert contains the reading passages for use with **all** the questions on the Question Paper.

You may annotate this Reading Booklet Insert and use the blank spaces for planning. This Reading Booklet 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: El Dorado

Europeans of the sixteenth century presumed that somewhere, deep in South America, was a vast city called El Dorado that contained unimaginable riches. Many European adventurers made perilous journeys to find it but without success.

Europeans first learned of El Dorado through rumours that circulated among South American peoples. There was a small grain of truth to the story: high in the eastern range of the Andes, in what is now Colombia, the local people mined gold and emeralds freely, and built a highly organised and developed society. When they appointed a new chief, they covered the man in balsam gum and then blew gold dust all over his body through cane straws until he resembled a statue of pure gold. Although this practice had died out by 1480, the story of the 'gilded one' became part of the legends of South America, and in its retellings, the tale became embellished. The golden, or gilded, one supposedly ruled over a vast kingdom where nearly everything was made from gold, silver or precious stone.

The Spanish explorers became increasingly certain that El Dorado, their translation of 'the gilded one', really existed and assumed that this fugitive empire was flourishing somewhere in what is now Venezuela. Between 1536 and 1541, the Spanish sent out five major expeditions in search of El Dorado. After the journeys proved unsuccessful, they became certain that El Dorado must lie in the jungle basin between the Orinoco and Amazon rivers into which they had not yet ventured.

Meanwhile, the mysterious appearance of a man who spoke of a city of gold, he called 'Manoa', only fuelled their desire. The man's name was Juan Martinez, and he had been an officer, responsible for looking after the gunpowder, on board a Spanish ship exploring the Orinoco River. His group headed deep into the jungle, but the journey came to an end when its gunpowder stores exploded. Martinez was left behind in an open canoe as punishment for the accident. He claimed to have met friendly local people who blindfolded him for days and led him to the city of 'Manoa', where everything in the royal palace was made of gold. Martinez said that riches had been given to him as a departing gift, but they had been stolen on his way back.

This story was told to Sir Walter Raleigh in England, around 1586. Raleigh set sail for South America. After arriving in March of 1595, Raleigh and his party spent weeks sailing along the Orinoco River, but found nothing apart from a massive Spanish anchor, which had been lost when Martinez's ship had exploded.

Raleigh brought back to England some strange plants, animals and also some blue-tinged rocks that suggested there was copper which could be mined. He also wrote an account of his travels including mention of a tribe of headless, club-wielding warriors with eyes and mouths on their torsos.

Raleigh's claims failed to interest Queen Elizabeth I, or other potential investors, who might finance a further search for El Dorado. However, he remained convinced that vast gold mines existed close to the Orinoco River.

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The name ‘El Dorado’ has become linked with a place of fabulous wealth and has fed the romantic imaginations of writers throughout the centuries. However, it is most likely that El Dorado was an excuse used by the European adventurers who were eager to discover the quickest path to riches. *40*

Part 2

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

Passage B: Unicorns

This passage explores the folklore surrounding the mythical creature, the unicorn.

One of the oldest mythical creatures is the unicorn. It has been part of Chinese folklore for thousands of years. Its most familiar form is a beast with the body of a deer, the tail of an ox, a horse's hooves, and a single horn growing from the centre of its forehead. To the Chinese the unicorn was a symbol of good, but to the Japanese it represented fear. It was said that the unicorn could recognise guilt, and could carry out an execution by spearing the guilty party with its horn. Karkadann, an Arabian unicorn, supposedly had magical qualities. Its horn was a good-luck charm against scorpions.

Ctesias, a Greek physician and historian, told stories that came from India about a creature the size of a horse with a white body, red head, blue eyes, and a 45 cm-long horn on its forehead. Ctesias portrayed the unicorn as very swift, untameable and almost impossible to capture. Leonardo da Vinci wrote that the unicorn's love for beautiful women caused it to forget its natural fear of humans. It would, for example, go up to a seated girl, fall asleep in her lap, and could then be captured.

This beast was said to have special attributes. Ground unicorn horn was claimed to cure many ailments including fever, plague, epilepsy, rabies and gout. Unicorn leather made into shoes would assure healthy feet and legs, and worn as a belt would ward off plague and fever. Jewellery made from the horn would protect the wearer from evil. Belief in the unicorn's power was widely accepted in England until the mid-1700s.

Unicorn horn was so expensive that only royalty or the very rich could afford it. Needless to say, many such horns were actually made from bull, goat or more exotic animals. Complete unicorn horns often turned out to be the long spiral tusks of the male narwhal (a large marine animal). The only known land animal to have a single horn is the rhinoceros, so some people believe that the legend comes from European explorers of the African continent. Another theory is that the oryx, an antelope with two long, thin horns on its forehead, which appears to have only one horn when seen from the side, was mistaken for a unicorn.

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