Cambridge International Examinations
Cambridge International General Certificate of Secondary Education

FIRST LANGUAGE ENGLISH **0500/23**

Paper 2 Reading Passages (Extended) **May/June 2017**

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: Out-of-hours vet

When most people are tucked up in bed, the emergency vet, a rare and peculiar breed, goes to work. Rare, because there aren't many of us, and peculiar because, well it takes a certain type. When the telephone rings on the out-of-hours shift you never know what you are going to get. During my time as a vet a number of things have happened to me that I have never forgotten. This passage is about how the first year all began when I decided to announce my resignation from my job at the local, old-fashioned vet practice and start my own emergency, out-of-hours service at a practice nearby…

Unusually, the day I resigned from my previous job, I arrived before the surgery opened. I'd run that day through my head so often I was in danger of being over-rehearsed. I had a cinematic fantasy of how it would play out: my eyes open at dawn, the alarm clock slowly fades in; curtains part, revealing rays of sunlight. An aerial display team whizzes by, spelling out 'Go Marc!' in a trail of rainbow-coloured smoke. The radio warbles the opening bars of 'What A Wonderful World'. I arise, refreshed, alert, ready to face the day with a spring in my step.

Needless to say, it didn't quite pan out like that. I didn't get a wink of sleep all night and was still tossing and turning as I realised I'd just minutes to get to work. We were in the grip of winter. An Arctic blast had iced over roads, cars and pathways. I grabbed the thick, warm jumper my mother had knitted for me and set off on my mission.

The town at the time had a two-legged population of about 150,000. There were several veterinary practices but little provision for out-of-hours. My plan was to eventually serve all practices in a forty kilometre radius, dispensing advice, diagnosing pet problems and conducting emergency surgery if needed. To start with we'd stay local. I'd worked in clinics before with out-of-hours provision and knew it could transform a business, but however I tried, I couldn't convince my current employers of the benefits. So I took the idea elsewhere. After three or four informal meetings, I'd made arrangements at another local practice for myself, a few filing cabinets, a kettle and a nurse.

It was the Monday team meeting. We'd reached that point in the agenda where the real discussions happen, 'Any other business?' These words were normally my cue to come out of hibernation, but today I'd been paying careful attention, checking off agenda points. We'd already received the events of the past week and heard what was coming up in the next. The senior partner had sombrely read a note from someone who'd asked to remain anonymous: 'Could we make sure we wash up our own mugs, not just leave them in the sink?'

I suppose I could've taken the senior partner to one side, but I wanted all three partners to hear this. 'I'm resigning,' I said.

The partners were sitting in an arc around me like a council of elderly wizards on comfy chairs. 'You are?' said the senior partner, his eyebrow curling imperceptibly upwards. I looked from one grey partner to another, finding nothing but blank expressions. We hailed from different planets. I was well-travelled, impulsive, energetic; they were my parents' generation, had never ventured far and fervently disapproved of flip-flops. On my third week there, I'd found an anonymous envelope positioned on top of my rucksack. It contained a photocopied page of my employment contract, the section entitled 'Appropriate Dress'. The words 'no piercings' had been highlighted.

'Well,' I said, 'if that's all. Can I just say thanks for the, er… times we've had.'

The council of wizards nodded. The senior partner opened his mouth as if to say something, then stopped. Five weeks before I'd held showdown talks in the very same room, presenting my ideas. They'd told me in turn, 'you're too immature', 'no one wants to work with you' and, 'you don't know

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the first thing about business'. A ball of tumbleweed had rolled past, made up of every parent-child disagreement my dad and I ever had over the eight years and five jobs from university to now.

I started to get up from my chair, then stalled.

'Oh, one more thing,' I said. 'From next week, I'm starting an out-of-hours surgery just up the road.'

The wizards fell out of their seats.

***

It had been hours since we'd opened for business. All Ruth and I had to show for ourselves were empty coffee cups. The telephone had rung three times and two of those were wrong numbers. Our only proper patient had arrived at midnight, his birdcage cloaked in a thick blanket and strapped securely to the back of a huge motorbike.

Our second night couldn't have been more different to the first. Patients were in and out of the surgery as if a neon sign had been planted in the car park. Word was quickly spreading. Our phone didn't stop from 6 pm onwards and Ruth booked our first home visit…

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Part 2

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

Passage B: Young Vets

This newspaper article is about a documentary filmed over a number of weeks at the world famous Royal Veterinary College (RVC). The documentary showed how difficult and challenging it can be to even train as a vet.

To say that studying for finals is nerve-racking would be an understatement, so imagine being followed by a camera crew while trying to revise for examinations in the library or finish a piece of coursework at the eleventh hour.

Young Vets, a new documentary series on the BBC, will follow ten of the final-year students at the Royal Veterinary College (RVC), University of London, as they complete their coursework on farms and in animal hospitals. Challenges the students face during the series include learning how to carry out caesareans on sheep and even helping to mend the wing of a canary.

'To start with, being filmed made everything a bit scarier,' says Jo Hardy, 24, who reached the semi-finals of a beauty competition during filming, but couldn't attend because of her university commitments. 'But by the end, we had a nice relationship with the film crew – they were like mates,' says Hardy, of the filming that lasted until last month.

The animals weren't phased by the cameras. 'They had bigger things to worry about and, as always, we were taking their well-being and owners' wishes into account,' says Judy Puddifoot, 38, who had already completed two degrees and was running a business when she applied to the RVC.

The documentary-makers sought out students who were approachable and outgoing. The cast seem to have thrived on the experience. But there's a darker side to being a student vet.

'It's draining – physically and emotionally,' says Judy. 'Largely because of the long days. You sometimes have to go in at 6:30 am to clean out the animals and might be on the go until 10 pm – possibly on-call all night, too. I can't imagine there's one person who has breezed through the course without bursting into tears.'

There is plenty of support available for student vets, including counselling, but Jo Hardy agrees with Judy that the best therapy is having outside interests: 'It's important for vets to have extracurricular activities because it's a very mentally demanding career. If it becomes your life and you're working all the time, you're going to be unbelievably stressed. I go horse riding, play the piano and violin, play sport and run.'

According to research, the fear of making professional mistakes leading to client complaints or litigation compounds the stress that pushes vets to the edge.

Despite the challenges, places on vet courses are fiercely contested. Getting on to a veterinary medicine degree course, which lasts at least five years, is notoriously difficult. To qualify as a veterinary surgeon you must study at one of the seven universities with courses approved by the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons (RCVS) – Nottingham, Liverpool, Glasgow, Edinburgh, the RVC, Cambridge or Bristol. The universities require top science results, often combined with extensive work experience, which can make it tough for pupils from state schools to get a place. In 2012–13, just 16.7% of students beginning medicine, dentistry and veterinary science were from working-class backgrounds.

So, is the course's reputation for being dominated by rural, well-heeled horse-lovers justified?

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‘It is,’ says Judy Puddifoot. ‘The largest demographic of students are middle-to-upper-class and high-achieving. I obviously buck the trend – I didn’t go to a posh school, haven’t got any money and have never owned a horse in my life.’

This ‘trend’ is problematic because vets can be posted to work anywhere in the country, with clients from a wide range of backgrounds. The RVC runs a widening-participation programme, targeted at aspiring vets from under-represented backgrounds, including those from lower socioeconomic groups, black or minority ethnic communities and students with disabilities. ‘State schools could do more to encourage students who show a desire to become vets early on,’ says Amy Clithero. ‘I didn’t feel supported in my career choice. Schools and colleges say it’s really hard to get in; are you sure there’s nothing else you want to do? But if you’re sure, don’t let anyone put you off.’

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