Cambridge International Examinations
Cambridge International General Certificate of Secondary Education

FIRST LANGUAGE ENGLISH **0500/12**
Paper 1 Reading Passages (Core) **May/June 2018**
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: The Telegram

This passage is set in a town in North America during the Second World War.

I said once that, by the time the telegram came, I already knew. Here's what happened.

It was in the snow. Mother and I were on the front porch. A tram passed the house and rumbled slowly, wheels slipping and spinning uphill toward the end of town. A man came up the pathway. Through the snow I heard him whistling. I laughed. Snow was blowing in front, behind, around him. It was climbing his legs and wrapping his face. It looked as if you could see right through him, as though pieces of him were being carved away by the wind. He looked alive inside with snow.

I laughed some more. He heard me laugh and looked up. He saw me on the porch with my mother. He looked at the door behind me then at the envelope in his hand. Mummy was buttoning me into the wool snowsuit, already wet from the blowing snow. I laughed and she turned to see. She saw the man coming and stopped, with her fingers at the button by my mouth. I could smell cold, wet wool and my mother's warm skin, smooth and fragrant.

The street was empty. The hill was white all the way to where it disappeared. Black sticks stuck out, here and there: trees; a skeletal fence; telephone poles. The tram tracks were black lines along the way, then they glazed over white, then vanished. The wind howled and, for a minute, the street faded into white, then vanished, too. The man disappeared with the rest of the world. I thought, 'Good. He's gone. Daddy'll be alright.' Then the wind dropped its voice; the man stepped onto our porch and shook the snow from his hat vigorously.

He wiped his glasses with his finger like a windshield wiper. They fogged up again and he took them off and squinted at the paper.

'Mrs. Er-ness-toe De Angel ... ?'

Mother nodded. 'DeAngelo, yes. Ernest. It's just Ernie. His name is. Yes. Ernesto. But he's just Ernie.'

He brushed the snow off the envelope, gently. She reached for it, took it, held it, turned it over in her hands. He said, 'Sign here,' and gave her a book and a pen. It would not write.

'Sorry,' she said. He took back the pen and blew on it, then rolled it between his two hands, shook it and gave it back. It worked and Mummy wrote in the man's book. She put the cap back on the pen and handed it to him. Then he was gone toward town. Another blast of wind rolled the snow, but I could still see him. A tram slid downhill on the rails. Sparks showered into the snow. It stopped. Silent for a moment. The tram and the man were all we could see in the world. The man got into the tram. The bell clanged, sounding very close in the woolly snow and the silence. The tram disappeared toward town, its wheels growling against the tracks. Mother held the envelope. I had been forgotten. The button at my mouth was still undone.

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Part 2

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

Passage B: Franklin and the North-West Passage

In this article, written for a newspaper, the writer describes the disastrous attempt to find the North-West Passage, between the North Atlantic and the Pacific Oceans.

It remains one of the greatest mysteries of polar exploration. In 1845, a well-provisioned Royal Navy expedition, commanded by Sir John Franklin, embarked to find the North-West Passage between the North Atlantic and the Pacific Oceans. A total of 129 men set sail on Franklin's two ships, HMS Erebus and HMS Terror. No-one returned.

The disaster was the greatest single loss of life suffered by any polar expedition. Only a few scattered remains – papers and bones – have since been found of Franklin's men on Northern Canada's frozen islands. These testify to the dreadful hardships suffered by the men as they made a vain attempt to reach safety.

In the intervening years, there have been many attempts to explain why Franklin's well-provisioned expedition failed, with one recent idea finding particular popularity. Analyses of the skeletons of three Franklin crew members, whose graves were found on Beechey Island in Northern Canada, showed they had suffered from severe lead poisoning that would have had 'catastrophic' consequences for themselves and for their fellow crewmen.

Lead poisoning causes abdominal pain, confusion, headache, anaemia and, in more serious cases, seizures, coma and death; it could be traced to the ships' canned food which was contaminated by its lead containers. This theory has achieved widespread acceptance.

Not every scientist agrees, however, and several studies have since argued that the support for the idea is poor. High levels of lead were common in men and women at the time of the expedition. Drinking water and food were often contaminated and some medicines also contained lead. The lead found in the men's bones could easily have come from food eaten at home.

As to the real cause of the loss of the expedition, that remains open to speculation. 'However, it was probably ice, not lead, that killed them,' one writer argues. Extreme cold trapped the expedition for two winters near King William Island in Northern Canada. 'By the following year, provisions would have been running short. By then, Franklin and 23 others had died. We don't know why. The surviving men had no option but to desert the ships and trek south to the mainland. But they were ill-equipped, and probably in poor health, so escape was beyond them. Their plight was desperate and all died in the attempt.'

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