Cambridge IGCSE

Cambridge International Examinations
Cambridge International General Certificate of Secondary Education

FIRST LANGUAGE ENGLISH **0500/21**

Paper 2 Reading Passages (Extended) **May/June 2018**

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** the questions on the Question Paper.

You may annotate the Reading Booklet Insert and use the blank spaces for planning.
This Reading Booklet Insert is **not** assessed by the Examiner.

This document consists of **4** printed pages and **4** blank pages.

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CAMBRIDGE International Examinations

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Part 1

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

Passage A: My First Job

The narrator is reflecting on his experiences as a 16-year-old student used to spending his school holidays watching cricket on television. Instead, he is about to begin six weeks of work experience in different sections of an electrical company.

Waking at 7:00 am was unpleasant. On the car journey, I was feeling too sorry for myself for conversation.

The first few days I'd be working with the 'grunts' (officially called 'apprentices'). Most were just months older than me, but judged immediately I'd no skill of any use to them. It turned out the factory owner had only agreed as a favour to Dad. Other guys who'd asked for their kids to work there during school holidays had been refused.

Dad ensured I was kitted out in fetching, lightest-blue overalls. Escorting me, he skirted the factory floor to avoid dirtying his suit, but chatted and seemed to get on with everyone from the grunts to the surliest darkest-blue-overall-clad supervisor.

Initially, I'd be helping in the coil-winding department – by not getting in the way and fetching coffee from the machine. I guessed they chatted more freely when I was on a coffee-fetching run, but I did learn there was discontent amongst the workforce, even talk of strike action. The morning dragged by. Eventually, Dad turned up announcing lunchtime. Usually he took a packed lunch, but our respective lethargy and stress that morning meant the sandwiches were still on the kitchen table at home.

At the canteen, workers, already packed in like sardines, formed an overall sea of blue. Dad navigated our way to the brown foodstuffs on offer. What would be my 'something' to accompany my chips? Wittily, I requested salad. Dad's shoulders sank. The canteen staff chuckled. Baked beans were duly slopped onto my plate.

As we ate, I gazed round, vowing silently never to work in industry. It wasn't that I thought myself above them, I just didn't fit in yet.

After only 20 minutes, Dad said, 'Andrew, we'd better get your card.' Nodding dumbly, I trailed blindly after him through a maze of corridors. Finally, we reached the holiest place in the entire company, the Accounts Department, occupied by The One with Absolute Power (the clerk who put together the pay packets). Sufficiently important in the company, Dad was granted an audience. I was told to not say anything stupid as we entered the sanctum. The One issued my number, chiding me for not visiting her immediately after I'd arrived and warning of perilous doom awaiting mortals who failed to clock in on time.

Dad took me to the clocking in machine to get my card stamped. Boards either side of the machine, for 'in' and for 'out', allowed the powers-that-be to tell which of their valued employees were not 'in' at any time and calculate their pay accordingly. I asked Dad where his card was amongst the hundreds there: he muttered almost inaudibly about not needing one.

Thankfully next day, despite differing opinions, it transpired we weren't that late arriving. I even had my sandwiches with me, I pointed out. Through gritted teeth, Dad said he'd a meeting to get to.

I went to clock in and looked on the 'out' board – my card wasn't there. Great, I'd annoyed Dad; now I'd have to face the unbridled wrath of The One for losing my card. I glanced forlornly at the 'in' board. Incredibly there was my card, time-stamped at 8:28 that morning, along with all the others from my section. Each said 8:28. These were punctual guys; all of them had checked in at 8:28 yesterday too.

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I survived the morning. After lunch, I asked an older man about the time-stamp curiosity. He looked at me quizzically, asking me to explain what I meant. I told him about the identical times on the cards, including mine. He said not to worry, asking if I'd mind going to get the coffees. Off I went.

Seconds later, I heard the older man tearing into someone – peering round the coffee machine I saw it was the tallest grunt. He was almost in tears, surrounded by others angry he'd messed up his turn, petrified I'd tell Dad, sure their scheme for dodging lateness penalties had been discovered. Tallest Grunt had picked up my card accidentally with the rest. I ambled back, giving them time to compose themselves, and even got a 'thanks' as I delivered the coffee-brown sludge. Unease remained all afternoon, intensifying as a junior clerk braved the factory floor and smugly invited me to follow him, saying my help was needed.

My comrades panicked: I was a spy, they'd be sacked. Had they realised I was 'needed' to shift a delivery of tinned baked beans – Dad's revenge no doubt – they'd have relaxed sooner.

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Part 2

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

Passage B: Working Underground

This passage describes the feelings and experiences of a young pitman, or coal miner, working in dangerous conditions underground.

Unhurried, the miners are squatting on their haunches, half-leaning, half-sitting against a wall. There's the last desperate gasp of fresh air. Having already picked up their identity checks, they hand in the number on one round tab and attach the other to their oil lamp. This simple safety procedure is a way of registering the men underground. It is a routine which makes no attempt to conceal the daily potential for disaster.

A lot of men joke, making light of going down the pit and actually just try to change the subject, not to think about it. But about four years ago, it started to get really bad for me and I started to dread it: when I got on the cage, when it first dropped away, my heart used to go. I was just terrified by the whole situation, especially after the incident where the brakes failed.

I'd always believed things were intrinsically safe, but then they fitted a new winder at our colliery. It was a sporadic machine; it used to go very quickly to begin with, and there were different bumps on the drum, so the rope fell off more quickly in some places. In the three weeks after it was fitted, we walked out many times, one solid chorus of disapproval. There must have been a dozen strikes at the colliery over that winder. People used to stagger off the cage vomiting when it reached the bottom.

Of course, it's not just me. Most people don't like the journey down into a cavity big enough to take three double-decker buses. People go very quiet in the cage. You'll find people in animated discussion just prior to, and then actually stepping on the cage; but as soon as they know everybody is on, it changes – I always go quiet at that time. Other people tell jokes, trying to get away from the thought of it, you know. And when the cage lifts up and basically hangs at the surface with no support, you have a minute to steel yourself. You know it's going to come. At that moment it's a terrible thing.

One time, men were being wound down our shaft when an electric circuit on the new winder malfunctioned and the automatic stop came on. The men felt themselves falling, maybe seven metres. You can imagine the consternation in that small, packed iron box as they hurtled down the shaft. On rushing over to see the management about this incident, I was assured that it was all hysterics: to them it was a silly incident which had given us an excuse to come out of the pit and hope to be paid our wages. The fact that many men would not return to work for many days escaped them.

However one seeks to, one cannot escape the dread, the loitering presence of death, the tragedy of the dust, a thick, impenetrable deluge of dust. Oddly the unwitting concentration on physical discomforts helps to allay imaginary ones – carelessly-buckled kneepads for example, their straps constantly rubbing, irritate the skin. Sometimes, this occupies the senses and it's possible even to forget why and where and what could happen.

Working in the pit, I was in a seam that averaged a metre. That means you're working on your knees all day. In that dingy graininess, the underground world seems curiouser and curiouser. Great boulders above your head are being held by nothing at all other than the whim of the earth. Hundreds of metres deep, so deep that numbers don't matter any more, the earth is pried open for our industrial convenience. How long will it accept the indignity? Unremitting shadowy images trigger fears of the dark, or being caught in cramped spaces. Childhood horrors scarcely recalled peer out from the unconscious. An ageing miner explained the fears would pass. 'Don't worry,' he said. 'The first forty years are the hardest.'

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