Cambridge IGCSE

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Cambridge International General Certificate of Secondary Education

FIRST LANGUAGE ENGLISH **0500/31**

Paper 3 Directed Writing and Composition **May/June 2018**

READING BOOKLET INSERT

2 hours

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READ THESE INSTRUCTIONS FIRST

This Reading Booklet Insert contains the reading passage for use with **Section 1**, **Question 1** 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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Read the passage carefully, and then answer **Question 1** on the Question Paper.

Teenagers, sleep and school

The following passage is an article from a magazine about young people and their health.

For many parents of teenagers, wherever they live, the morning school day regime is a form of torture: while younger children are up earlier than adults may like, their teenage offspring have to be cajoled, nagged or threatened out of bed before anybody in the family can start their day.

Parents the world over need little convincing that adolescents' sleep patterns are different from both younger and older people, but there is growing scientific evidence that teenagers aren't just lazy or lethargic in the mornings. Medical people call it 'phase delay', when puberty seems to make it hard for young people to get to sleep at night and keeps them in their beds for longer in the mornings. It's officially not their fault that the rest of the world runs to a different rhythm. The working world, at least the world of offices where most adults work these days, would need completely restructuring, just for younger employees, if such ideas were to be taken seriously. Having said that, if schools were to take such notions on board, the logistics of getting children of different ages to school at different times doesn't bear thinking about and teachers would surely end up working longer hours.

Hard-pressed parents who struggle to wake these sleepy teenagers in the morning may be interested to learn that 96 per cent of teenagers in a UK project reported that they had used a mobile phone, tablet or other device in the last 30 minutes before sleep. These devices mimic the light from the sun and trick the brain into wakefulness, interfering with the body's natural sleep patterns.

Some studies have shown that average teenagers are seriously sleep-deprived and the consequences for their health and education are startling. In one research study, 87 per cent of high school students in the US were estimated to sleep less than the 8.5 or 9 hours considered essential for them, running the risk of increased levels of obesity, depression and anxiety. With such conditions apparently on the rise amongst young people, some doctors in America are adamant that lack of sleep and the subsequent loss of learning is, as one said, 'a bigger factor in under-achievement than any other single factor'.

Interestingly, one observation made by teachers in schools which have changed to a later start time was that behaviour in class improved, adding weight to the medical evidence that aggression and violence increase when teenagers get too little sleep. It's just common sense that tired students don't learn well, but in schools where lessons start later than average there was better punctuality, less absenteeism, and teenagers enjoyed their lessons more.

Ironically, however, schools these days are often under pressure to start earlier to give pupils as many opportunities as possible in a competitive world. Earlier start times allow for extra-curricular activities of all kinds after school, from revision sessions to sports, drama clubs to debating societies. Students themselves are aware that they need these after-school opportunities to impress colleges and universities as well as potential employers these days. Education specialists, however, argue for schools to start later so that teenagers can maximise their chances of getting a good education and reduce the risk of serious health problems. Even an extra half hour of sleep can make a big difference to both.

Surprisingly, parents and teachers have sometimes resisted moves to change to a later school start time, despite the evidence that early starts harm their teenage children. Some worry that students will have less time for homework or will simply stay up later at night. Older children of working parents are often needed to take care of siblings after school and many have part-time jobs or volunteer after school – all valuable learning experiences in themselves.

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The rest of society, of course, dances to a different beat. Perhaps teenagers are already over-indulged and should simply learn that nobody likes getting up in the morning. But if you're the long-suffering parent of a sleep-deprived adolescent, it might be worth asking what their school could do to make life for your child, and probably the rest of the family, healthier and more productive.

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