Cambridge IGCSE

Cambridge International Examinations
Cambridge International General Certificate of Secondary Education

FIRST LANGUAGE ENGLISH **0500/32**

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

READING BOOKLET INSERT

2 hours

5701611686-I

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.

DC (LK) 143889/3
© UCLES 2018

CAMBRIDGE International Examinations

Read the passage carefully, and then answer **Question 1** on the Question Paper.

Boredom is not a problem to be solved: it's the privilege of a free mind

The following passage is an article from a daily newspaper and explores the issue of boredom.

'Embrace boredom, not your smartphone screen: you'll learn more about yourself and the world around you than you think.'

Confessing to boredom is like confessing to a character flaw. Popular culture is littered with advice on how to shake it off: find like-minded people, take up a new hobby, find a cause and work for it, take up a musical instrument, read a book, or clean your house. Certainly, you must not let your children be bored: keep them active, inspire them, sign them up for swimming, football, dance, church groups – anything to keep them from relieving their boredom by gravitating towards much worse activities. To do otherwise is to admit that you're not engaging with the world around you, or that your children are deprived, or that your mobile phone has died.

But boredom is not tragic. Properly understood, boredom helps us understand time, and ourselves. Unlike fun or work, boredom is not about anything; it is our encounter with pure time. With screens and hand-held devices all around us, we don't get to have that experience very often any more for all this, that and the other that bombard our senses wherever we go. We should teach young people to feel comfortable with time on their hands and nothing to see or do.

I live and teach at a university in a small town, and some of my students from bigger cities tell me that they always go home on a Friday because they are bored here. 'You know the best antidote to boredom?' I ask them. They look at me expectantly, smartphones dangling from their hands. 'Thinking,' I tell them. 'Thinking is the best antidote to boredom. I am not kidding, kids. Thinking is the best antidote to boredom. Tell yourself, I am bored. Think about that. Isn't that interesting?' They look at me incredulously. Thinking is not how they have been brought up to handle boredom.

When you're bored, time moves slowly. The German word for 'boredom' is 'Langweile': a compound made of 'lange', which means 'long', and 'weile', meaning 'a while'. Slow-moving time can feel like torture for people who can't feel peaceful alone with their minds. Learning to do so is why learning to be bored is so crucial. It is a great privilege if you can do this without having to visit a psychiatrist.

So embrace boredom, that intense experience of time untouched by beauty, pleasure, comfort and all other temporarily attractive sensations. Observe it, see how your mind responds to boredom, see what you feel and think when you get bored. This form of meta-thinking, or 'thinking about thinking', can help you overcome your boredom, and learn about yourself and the world in the process. If meditating on nothing is too hard at the outset, you can try reflection. It can fill empty hours while teaching you, slowly, how to sit and just be in the present.

Don't replace boredom with work or fun or habits. Don't pull out a screen at every idle moment. Boredom is a privilege of the free mind. Don't believe people who try to persuade you that you must fill every waking moment with purposeful activity. Boredom is your opportunity to develop judgement, discernment and taste. In other words, always trust when boredom speaks to you. Instead of avoiding it, listen to its messages, because they will keep you true to yourself.

It might be beneficial to think through why something bores you. You will get a whole new angle on things. Hold on to your boredom; you won't notice how quickly time goes by once you start thinking about the things that bore you.

© UCLES 2018

BLANK PAGE

© UCLES 2018

BLANK PAGE

Permission to reproduce items where third-party owned material protected by copyright is included has been sought and cleared where possible. Every reasonable effort has been made by the publisher (UCLES) to trace copyright holders, but if any items requiring clearance have unwittingly been included, the publisher will be pleased to make amends at the earliest possible opportunity.

To avoid the issue of disclosure of answer-related information to candidates, all copyright acknowledgements are reproduced online in the Cambridge International Examinations Copyright Acknowledgements Booklet. This is produced for each series of examinations and is freely available to download at www.cie.org.uk after the live examination series.

Cambridge International Examinations is part of the Cambridge Assessment Group. Cambridge Assessment is the brand name of University of Cambridge Local Examinations Syndicate (UCLES), which is itself a department of the University of Cambridge.

© UCLES 2018