Cambridge IGCSE

**Cambridge Assessment International Education**
Cambridge International General Certificate of Secondary Education

**FIRST LANGUAGE ENGLISH** **0500/23**

Paper 2 Reading Passages (Extended) **May/June 2019**

**2 hours**

READING BOOKLET INSERT

*3175988608-I*

**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: Thirst

*A blockade stopping ships from entering the port has caused shortages of supplies on an island. Water rationing is in place. Taps have been turned off and islanders have to make do with just one litre of drinking water a day for the months until the autumn rain.*

We lived by the sea, above abandoned huts we'd repaired and rented out to holiday-makers. I'd gone down there as soon as my neighbour, Marchand, told me about the rationing to collect the pitchers of freshwater I'd left by the rough-hewn plank beds. The visitors had left. I'd checked the toilet cisterns – the rust-coloured water there would soon come in handy, I'd decided, and siphoned it out into another jug. Washing and bathing would have to be done with salt water.

There was one family I recalled whose swimming pool was filled with freshwater. Don Aljafar had the largest house, perched high on a steep hill, a vast stone mansion shaded by trees. I was joined by Marchand and we climbed the hill. At the top, having wound up Aljafar's considerable driveway and past his parked cars, we bellied up to the gate and were astounded to see Aljafar afloat in his pool, a pair of goggles affixed to his face as he did a lazy, dignified, backstroke. We stood mesmerised, watching this spectacle, unsure whether to disturb him. Finally, Marchand shouted hello.

Aljafar stopped swimming. Treading water, he looked around until he saw us.

'Yes?'

'Your pool's freshwater, correct?' I said.

Aljafar shrugged. 'What's it to you?'

'Freshwater is rationed.'

Aljafar nodded. 'So?'

'You should conserve this water. We're all in this together,' Marchand tried to reason.

Aljafar ignored us and started swimming again. His wife emerged from the patio. 'This is our water,' she snapped.

We retreated and stood on the driveway, conferring, until finally we went back down the hill. At that moment, we weren't thirsty enough to proceed further.

Days later, Marchand and I decided that we should pool our reserve petrol and take my motorbike inland to the city. From the road descending the hills, everything still looked normal, donkeys pulling their wagons, bicycles, admittedly fewer cars than before. It was only as we came closer that we noticed differences. The city was quieter than usual, torpid, as if its unlubricated gears and belts had seized up. People seemed to be crumbling, turning to dust and salt, a ghostly, powdery rabble, a strong wind could scatter them into clouds of dead skin. Desiccated, dehydrated adults were too tired to toil or trade, children too sluggish to learn.

On the road back, at the top of the hill by Aljafar's, we stopped and gazed thirstily up the driveway, which now had a chain strung across it and a sign warning to keep out.

'We have to seize Aljafar's water,' Marchand declared, 'for the good of the people!'

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A group of us met after dark. Marchand began to lead us up the hill. The rest of the men wavered until I shrugged and followed.

The gate was closed, but swung open easily. First – we had told ourselves – we would lie down on the dead grass and push our lips against the cool water, drinking till we burst. Then we would find Aljafar and explain to him that the water must be divided equally, among all the families of the urbanisation. But the water was gone. The pool's white cement bottom shined in the moonlight like exposed bone. We turned toward the house where we saw lights hurriedly extinguished and heard whispers.

'They siphoned it,' Marchand said. 'Put it in casks.'

We needed to drink water.

We were surprised to find the house unlocked. Inside was silent. The tile-and-marble kitchen was dry, every vessel empty.

'The cellar!' Someone suggested.

We found the door bolted and banged on it, calling Aljafar's name.

'Leave us alone,' Aljafar called back.

'We want the water,' I shouted.

'We don't have it.'

'Liar!' Marchand pronounced, to murmurs of agreement all around.

'We'll break this down,' I told Aljafar. 'We'll smash it up!'

The others gathered up whatever items looked like they might make a dent. Heavy candelabras, an old olive press, each of them did little against the heavy door.

Then Marchand appeared with a rusting axe-head he'd found in the workshop. Several blows later, the door began to split.

'Stop!' Aljafar shouted. 'I'll let you in.'

We heard him fumbling theatrically with the catch and prised open the door, shoving Aljafar aside. The cavernous cellar was stocked ceiling-high with precious casks of water. Marchand took the axe-head to one cask, releasing a translucent torrent of crystal-clear water that we attached ourselves to lips-first like ticks to a sheep. Aljafar had enough water to keep us for weeks, and here he was hoarding.

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**[Turn over**

## Part 2

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

### Passage B: Bottled water

*The speaker in this text explains their objections to bottled water.*

Okay, hands up if you're happy to pay over 1000 times the cost for anything. No hands showing? So why does it happen with water?

Even in areas where tap water is safe to drink, demand for bottled water is increasing. Each year, billions of litres are purchased worldwide, at an eye-watering cost to consumers and the environment, in the belief – often mistaken – that it's better than clean water from a tap. Tests show that most consumers can't even taste a difference between bottled and tap, yet worldwide, bottled water consumption has surged.

This global boom is driven by fear – among developing-world consumers worrying about water quality from the tap, and developed-world consumers concerned about the health impacts of sugary drinks. Yet global sales forecasted to reach 400 billion prompt further fears. The most obvious relates to imports. Branding for bottled waters is often linked to their place of origin far away from the intended market. It doesn't need environmentalists to tell us that carting water from one country to another in plastic bottles makes zero sense.

In contrast to tap water (distributed through energy-efficient infrastructures) transporting bottled water long distances involves burning massive quantities of fossil fuels. Nearly 25 per cent of all bottled water crosses national borders to reach consumers, transported by boat, train and truck. Last year, for example, one company shipped 1.4 million bottles of Finnish tap water 4300 kilometres from its bottling plant in Helsinki to Saudi Arabia. And bottled water is not just sold to water-scarce countries – Americans and Australians import water from Fiji, Italy and France to meet demand for chic, exotic bottled water.

And where does all this bottled water come from? Clean, peaceful rivers and bubbling mountain brooks as depicted on the bottles? Hardly. It's mostly bore-water extracted from the ground by pump, then packaged, transported and chilled before reaching consumers – unregulated use of precious resources. Indeed, it takes three times the volume of water contained in a bottle to manufacture it. Fossil fuels are also used in the packaging. The most commonly used plastic for water bottles is polyethylene terephthalate (PET) derived from crude oil. Under 40 per cent of water bottles are recycled and the balance ends up in landfill, waterways and oceans. Bottles used to package water take over 1000 years to bio-degrade and if incinerated, produce toxic fumes.

In addition to the strains on our ecosystem through production and transportation, rapid growth in this industry means water extraction is concentrated in communities where bottling plants are located. Water shortages near bottling plants have been reported in Texas and in the Great Lakes region of North America. Farmers, fishers, and others who depend on water for their livelihoods suffer.

Studies show that consumers associate bottled water with healthy living. But it isn't guaranteed to be any healthier than clean tap water. In fact, roughly 40 per cent of it begins as tap water; often the only difference is added minerals with no marked health benefit. The French Senate even advises people who drink bottled mineral water to change brands frequently because the added minerals – helpful in small amounts – may be dangerous in higher doses.

There's no disputing that clean, affordable drinking water is essential to the health of our global community, just that bottled water is not the answer. It doesn't solve problems for the billion-plus people who lack a secure water supply. Improving and expanding existing water treatment and sanitation

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systems is more likely to provide safe, sustainable sources of water over the long term. In villages, rainwater harvesting and digging new wells can create more affordable sources of water.

In some places, bottled water is actually being banned. Instead, people are being asked to use reusable containers. So dig out a glass or mug. (Remember that receptacle with a hole at one end that you fill up with liquid?) It's time to go back to the tap.

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