Cambridge IGCSE

Cambridge Assessment International Education
Cambridge International General Certificate of Secondary Education

FIRST LANGUAGE ENGLISH **0500/32**

Paper 3 Directed Writing and Composition **May/June 2019**

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.

This document consists of **2** printed pages and **2** blank pages.

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

This letter was written to the headteacher of a school attended by the writer's children.

Dear Mrs Ahlberg,

My two eldest children attended your school and have grown to be intelligent, successful young people. I'm sure you remember them? Their success can be attributed to the academic excellence and good pastoral care they experienced from the very able teaching staff there. My third child is now about to begin his IGCSE studies at the school and I have equally high hopes for him. From my experience of packing my older two off to college and university to fend for themselves, I would like to suggest how your school could help even more by teaching students about life beyond its safe confines.

Take, for example, my daughter's experience in her first term at university. Having encouraged Anna for years to focus on her education at the expense of almost everything else, imagine my distress when I soon discovered she had become very well-educated but also useless, with little idea of how to take care of herself. She found the washing machine in her shared accommodation much trickier than the assignments her tutors demanded of her and she burned a hole in her favourite outfit the first time she plugged in an iron. She seemed to spend too much on what I would call luxuries, such as fast food and new clothes, because she had no idea how to budget or how to cook a simple meal.

My second child fared little better when he began to train as a nurse. Having watched his sister flounder, Jon took the easy option of a college much nearer home so that he still had his family to lean on. He tried not to be as wasteful with money as his sister but didn't realise how much interest he was paying on his credit card bills or what a false economy it was to miss insurance payments on his belongings. His room was so chaotic and often downright unhygienic that I had to visit him regularly just to keep it clean enough to satisfy the landlord.

Of course, both of them will learn how to do these basic, practical tasks for themselves in time. However, I am determined that my youngest child will be better equipped when he leaves home. I must admit though that it's difficult to find the time as working parents and we have rather old-fashioned ways of managing our lives compared to those young people want to use. He wants a career in medicine and, encouraged by your excellent teachers, works hard to achieve it, leaving very little time and energy to learn skills he doesn't need while he's at home. I do worry, however, that he will waste valuable time making the same mistakes as his siblings when he leaves home or will find it easier to stay home and take even longer to become independent.

I realise, of course, that schools these days need to focus relentlessly on academic achievement and that students won't need these more practical skills until they are older and have left school. My youngest child even believes that he will be able to afford to employ others to perform all these simple tasks when he is a well-paid doctor. However, I have read recently that 'life skills' are becoming a compulsory part of the curriculum in some schools. Students are taught basic DIY such as replacing a fuse or changing a car tyre, some basic first aid, routine household tasks and a range of financial management skills – things not all adults are good at – to help them make the transition to adult life. Some even teach students what they need to know when buying a house or a car and how to invest money to make a good return. If you feel that the school curriculum for older students is already crammed, perhaps these skills could be taught to younger children so that they grow up knowing how to do such things. Some less important subjects, or those which students no longer need to study for their chosen career, could be reviewed and possibly replaced with these essential lessons. Whichever option you choose, I ask you to consider carefully how the excellent education you offer in your school could be greatly enhanced by teaching young people these important skills.

Yours sincerely,

A. Ifan

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