Cambridge Assessment International Education

Cambridge IGCSE™

FIRST LANGUAGE ENGLISH **0500/12**

Paper 1 Reading **May/June 2020**

INSERT **2 hours**

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INFORMATION

- This insert contains the reading texts.
- You may annotate this insert and use the blank spaces for planning. **Do not write your answers** on the insert.

This document has **8** pages. Blank pages are indicated.

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Read **Text A**, and then answer **Questions 1(a)–1(e)** on the question paper.

Text A: Paper is back: why 'real' books are on the rebound

Digital books (also called e-books) are electronic versions of books designed to be read on a tablet or screen (e-reader).

The latest numbers for book sales are reported to be surprising and encouraging. For the first time since the invasion of their newest enemies, e-books and e-readers, real books are fighting back.

The result of the battle looks more like co-existence than conquest. For now.

Publishers, tracking what readers are buying, found the number of paper books sold went up 2.4 per cent last year, in all types of bookstores. At the same time, e-books have hit a plateau.

Apparently, print books are selling better than they have since sales of e-books exploded in 2010. The paper book hit rock bottom in 2012, but has since fought back in lucrative categories such as children's books. Students, apparently, are rediscovering paper. Several recent studies find a strong preference for printed textbooks, notably among those in colleges and universities who have tried both types. In one survey, 57 per cent preferred print; only 21 per cent preferred an e-textbook.

Multiple studies find that we pitiful humans read differently when given the same text on the screen of a tablet and on a printed page: less of what we read electronically sticks in our minds. Many e-books aimed at kids are designed to include animations, games and other technological temptations. On tablets, adults find navigating the book less natural and can be distracted by notifications of incoming email and social media.

Some people still like the feel, even the smell, of a book. There is also brilliant, large cover art and the ever-present reminder that you own a book: it's there on your shelf.

The near-term future won't be 'paper-or,' but 'paper-and pixels'[1]: until and unless the two become indistinguishable to the reader in terms of factors, features and feel.

[1] *pixels*: small dots which are combined to form an image or text on an electronic screen

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Read **Text B**, and then answer **Question 1(f)** on the question paper.

Text B: The rebirth of the bookshop

This article explains how bookshops have changed in recent years.

Time was when bookshops appealed for being old-world and fusty with their confusing layouts, musty smells and eccentric proprietors. Now a new breed of bookshops is emerging. Luminous and spacious **–** the very opposite of the traditional bookstore.

Changing tastes in architecture and interior design are partly responsible for this trend, but so, too, are economics and new book-buying habits. Fierce competition from online retailers, cut-price supermarkets and e-books has seen the market for physical paper books dwindle, causing many bookshops to close, but booksellers are fighting back. One of their tactics is to hire cutting-edge architects to design shops with an alluring, contemporary feel to help attract customers day and night.

A case in point is Foyles bookshop, London, once famous for its quaintly chaotic warren of rooms with books piled up everywhere **–** not just on shelves but in nooks under tables. Last June, however, the mammoth store relocated. Interviewed recently, Foyles' chief executive, Sam Husain, said that one reason why the shop moved was that its original layout was old-fashioned **–** 'higgledy piggledy and inefficient'. By contrast, the new shop boasts 6.4 kilometres of orderly bookshelves and stocks over 200,000 titles. Its interior is clean-lined, minimalist and easy to navigate, geared to convenience in an age when customers are used to snapping up goods online at lightning speed. Customers can also use an in-store mobile search tool to see if the book is in stock and, if so, where. With the aid of an interactive map, the book can be located.

Another survival tactic for this new generation of bookshops is to operate as a cultural centre, not just a bookstore. To use that retail cliché, shops today must offer an 'experience' **–** not just a 'shopportunity' **–** if they are to succeed. According to retail expert Matthew Brown: 'Shops have never been about buying stuff **–** we can get that online. We expect hospitality and service.'

Worldwide there's an emergence of a new wave of bookstores **–** businesses which have diversified their product ranges, have increased their scope. Bookstores like Livraria Cultura in São Paolo also sell electronics, DVDs, toys and stationery, and they function as event and meeting spaces for book and product launches. Livraria Cultura boasts an exhibition space, conference area and garden café. It's as much a see-and-be-seen hangout as a bookshop. White bookshelves incorporating LEDs, laminate surfaces and glass handrails on the staircases all contribute to the shop's luminous, transparent feel. The shop also has two basement levels, with the lower one devoted to children's books, and featuring a funky, rainbow-striped ramp providing access to shelves, and beanbags to recline on and read.

In short, bookshops are turning over a new leaf as they battle to survive in the internet age.

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Read **Text C**, and then answer **Questions 2(a)–2(d)** and **Question 3** on the question paper.

Text C: Mr Penumbra's 24-hour bookstore

The narrator, Clay, is young and talented, but struggling to find a new job. After months of searching, including walking the streets each day looking for advertisements in shop windows, he finds just one job to apply for.

Lost in the shadows of the shelves, I almost fall off the ladder. I'm exactly halfway up. The floor of the bookstore is far below, the surface of a planet I've left behind. The tops of the shelves loom high above. It's dark up there **–** books are huddled together, not letting any light through. The air might be thinner, too. I think I see a bat. I'm holding on for dear life, one hand on the ladder, the other on a shelf, fingers pressed white.

Many of the books have the look of antiquity **–** cracked leather, gold-leaf titles; others are freshly bound with bright crisp covers. All are in such excellent condition that they might as well be new.

My eyes search the spines. I spot it - the book I've been sent up for.

But wait – let me explain how I got here:

I was unemployed, a result of the great food-chain contraction sweeping through the country, leaving bankrupt burger chains and shuttered sushi empires in its wake.

The job I'd lost was at the corporate headquarters of a very new company. It wrote software to design and bake the perfect burger bun: smooth toasted skin, soft interior. It was my first job out of art school. I started as a designer, making marketing materials to explain and promote this tasty treat: menus, diagrams and posters for store windows.

There was lots to do: first, redesigning the company's logo, then, the website. I was the company's voice on social media, attracting followers with a mix of fast-food trivia and digital coupons.

Then the economy nose-dived. It turns out that in a recession, people want good old-fashioned food, not smooth alien-spaceship snacks. I was jobless.

Next to the bus stop I'd seen the handwritten advertisement:

MR PENUMBRA'S 24-HOUR BOOKSTORE

HELP WANTED

LATE SHIFT

I pushed the bookstore's heavy wooden door, making a bell tinkle brightly, and stepped slowly through.

Inside: imagine the shape and volume of a normal bookstore turned on its side. This place was absurdly narrow and dizzyingly tall. The shelves went all the way up, fading smoothly into the shadows as if they might just go on forever. Shelves were packed so close together it felt like I was standing at the border of a forest – an old Transylvanian forest, full of wolves, witches and dagger-wielding bandits all waiting just beyond

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moonlight's reach. There were ladders that clung to the shelves and rolled side to side, stretching up ominously into the gloom. I stuck to the front half of the store, where bright midday light pressed in.

'Hello there,' a quiet voice called from within. A figure emerged – a man, tall and skinny, in a light blue cardigan. He tottered as he walked, running a wrinkled hand along the shelves for support. He was very old.

He nodded at me. 'What do you seek in these shelves?'

That was a good line; for some reason, it made me feel comfortable.

'I'm looking for a job.'

Mr Penumbra blinked, then nodded and tottered over to the desk beside the front door. It was a massive block of dark-whorled wood, a solid fortress on the forest edge.

'Employment.' Penumbra nodded again. 'Have you ever worked at a bookstore?'

'Well …' I said.

'No matter,' Penumbra said. 'Tell me about a book you love.' I knew my answer immediately. No competition.

I told him, 'The Dragon-Song chronicles.'

Penumbra smiled. 'Good … very good,' he said, then squinted at me. His gaze went up and down. 'But can you climb a ladder?'

And that's how I find myself on this ladder, up on the third 'floor' of Penumbra's Bookstore. The book I've been sent up to retrieve is over an arm-length to my left. Obviously, I should return to the floor and scoot the ladder over. But down below, Penumbra is shouting, 'Lean across! Lean!'

And I really need this job …

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