Cambridge Assessment International Education

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FIRST LANGUAGE ENGLISH **0500/11**

Paper 1 Reading **May/June 2021**

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.

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

Text A: Bicycle touring

So what is bicycle touring?

Well, it's completing self-contained cycling trips for pleasure, adventure and the sense of freedom, rather than for sport, commuting, or exercise. Touring can range from single to multi-day trips, even years. Tours may be planned by the participant or organised by a club, or charity as a fund-raising venture.

People of all ages, backgrounds, and regions of the world choose the bicycle as their favourite means of travel. Travelling by bike appeals to a broad spectrum of people and is attractive for many reasons: it's an exciting challenge that allows us to explore new landscapes and cultures, build fitness, and experience the joy of breathing fresh air.

The good news is that you don't need to be a super-athlete to enjoy cycling. However, you'll want to spend some time training on a bike before your trip. Be realistic about what you can do and create achievable goals. Then, work your strength up to riding the same daily distances you plan to cover while carrying the same gear you plan to travel with. You're physically ready if you can do back-to-back day rides as long, or longer, than you are planning for your tour, and feel as if you could ride again on day three.

A reasonably fit adult carrying less than 9 kilograms of additional equipment on their bike can expect to travel at an average pace of 100 kilometres per day on paved roads and still have time to stop and sightsee. In particularly flat or mountainous terrain, the average will increase or decrease accordingly. You'll need to decide if, after your daily exertions, you want to camp (inexpensive, independent, closer to nature) or stay in hotels (comfortable, less stuff to carry). If you're camping in the wild, start looking for the spot a couple of hours before dark.

Bicycle riders are usually perceived to be non-threatening and on the whole are treated warmly by strangers, especially if they run into difficulties on the road. The chances of something bad happening to you during a bicycle tour are probably no different from those in your everyday life at home.

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

Text B: Is cycle touring right for you?

Riding around the world seems like a romantic way to travel – just you, your bike, and the open road, tackling whatever comes your way. However true that is, there's a flip side to cycle touring: the dark, cold, wet side, where misery lurks.

Even sitting in your office beforehand, dreaming about getting out and seeing the world, that rough side can seem scary. Before I left home, I wasn't sure I'd last more than a couple of weeks on the road. I nearly didn't go.

Instead of looking forward to those cosy campsites in the middle of unspoilt forests, I pictured myself at the side of the highway in the rain, with a broken bike and no way to fix it. Rather than those perfect rest days spent lounging on quiet beaches, I imagined terrifying nights in the tent and bandits in the hills. Not realising I'd be talking about life, love, and politics with welcoming locals, I had worried about loneliness.

Perhaps, like me, you find it impossible to imagine that your regular old body, the one that struggles just walking up a steep hill, could handle riding the vast distances involved in a bike trip. Truth is, we discover that we're capable of so much more than we ever thought possible.

At the end of a long day, I was often tired, sore and dreading getting back on the bike the next morning. But after a night's sleep, I'd feel excited and ready to climb back in the saddle to see what the day would bring.

Before leaving on tour, I'd often wondered if cycle touring might turn out to be boring – all that pedalling. I turned out to be right on this one: some days on the bike are dull. But the boredom is far outweighed by the excitement of seeing flowers and animals that you'd never notice from a car.

Cycle touring's not for you if you want to check off every famous sight in your guidebook. A typical cycle tour is about the small things: the tiny villages you pass through, other cyclists who help you along the way, the incredible (sometimes incredibly bad) meals you eat in a roadside shack in the middle of nowhere.

Cycle touring does have its ups and downs (pun intended), but the triumphs of travelling by bicycle far outweigh the inconveniences.

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

Text C: Into the sunrise: cycling the world, part 2

The narrator, Chris, is currently travelling alone through Canada. He has stopped at a visitor centre to use their telephone and buy a map. He is about to leave, when someone approaches, pushing a small touring bike.

I'd just met Vivian.

She ate my food; I fixed her wheel.

She was short, dressed in fluorescent yellow and barely paused for breath: 'I ran out of water. I think I saw a bear. My bike broke. I lost all my food.'

Vivian's goal, she explained, was to cycle the 3200 kilometres across Canada to raise money for a children's charity. She'd never ridden long distance before this trip.

Vivian and I were going in the same direction; riding together made sense.

'I'm quite slow,' Vivian warned.

All went well, until we arrived at the first climb. Vivian stepped off her bike and pushed. 'The hills are steep,' she explained.

I couldn't believe it. Had she been doing this all the way? I stopped and checked her bike. She was in completely the wrong gear. Once in the right gear, Vivian cycled minutes only before resorting to pushing again. I went on ahead and waited for her at the top, secretly delighted she was slower than me.

'You really should have a mirror,' I told her as she caught up. 'For staying safe in traffic.'

'I threw it away to save weight.'

'Okay. Well you're very bright at least.'

'I don't think so,' replied my new companion, screwing up her face.

'No, Vivian. I meant your high-visibility jacket – it's bright, so at least you can be seen.'

After more walking / cycling we closed the day making camp by Lake O'Hara. I'd found a great spot with inspirational views of snowy peaks. Vivian seemed concerned about wildlife, particularly bears: 'I've been camping on petrol station forecourts.'

'Are you serious?'

'Yes. I decided it was safer.'

Vivian wasn't exactly happy but began to erect her tent and unpack. I did the same, somewhat faster, then cooked us dinner on my trusty stove. Vivian's stove was one of the many things she'd thrown away.

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I woke next morning to wails of, 'Nooo, my iPhone!' and 'Eww, a slug!' I smiled. She was a city girl plucked out of her comfort zone and thrust into the alternative universe of long-distance touring. Conquering this trip might boost Vivian's ailing confidence, perhaps help her too to discover her direction in life.

Later that morning, as I stopped to get my map out, Vivian shot off past me.

It was hours before I caught up with her again – or rather she 'caught up' with me. A pick-up truck overtook me and rolled to a stop. From the passenger seat, jumped a small bright bundle of energy. As Vivian hauled her bike out of the truck, I greeted her, asking the obvious question.

'I got lost,' she explained.

Apparently, a fresh list of things had gone wrong since I'd last seen her. She'd nearly quit, but instead found a café with WiFi (how?), arranged hosts for us in the next town through www.warmshowers-for-cyclists and hitched a lift in the café owner's pick-up.

We cycled on into the National Park. Vivian remembered this was bear country – disappointingly no bears showed themselves. And by evening we rendezvoused with our wonderful hosts who apparently often hosted cross-Canada cyclists. We cooked dinner to thank them.

For weeks Vivian and I rode on together, following the unrelenting, unbending highway. The now empty green scenery had become mind-numbingly boring, but we were getting along surprisingly well, playing my guess-the-animal game for entertainment. Finally, we began to spot trees. At first they were sporadic, but before long grouped together, calling themselves forests. We'd made it across the prairies. It felt like a significant achievement. The heavily forested area we were headed into was dotted with tempting lakes, ponds and rivers – ideal habitat for the shy creatures missing from my 'collection': beavers. I said I'd like to cycle separately for the rest of the day.

Vivian looked hurt. Before I could explain, she rode off.

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