Cambridge Assessment International Education

Cambridge IGCSE™

FIRST LANGUAGE ENGLISH **0500/23**

Paper 2 Directed Writing and Composition **May/June 2023**

INSERT **2 hours**

0322239876-I

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 **4** pages. Any blank pages are indicated.

DC (CJ) 315170/2
© UCLES 2023

[Turn over

Read **both** texts, and then answer **Question 1** on the question paper.

Text A

This text is taken from an article in which the parents of young sportspeople describe their experiences.

Sofia Polowyj, the mother of twin nine-year-old aspiring gymnasts, says that gymnastics is in their blood. 'My husband and I met as young gymnasts, so we know about the joys and pitfalls of the sport, although then there was just the glory of medals to aim for. It's tough on them – the early mornings in the gym, the strict diets, the school holidays spent in training camp rather than at the seaside. But they rarely complain and we're with them every step of the way to make sure they enjoy their successes and refocus when they don't perform so well. Obviously, I want them to succeed and if they ultimately choose a different path, well, that's fine too.'

Budding footballer 10-year-old Ranit Myska, has already played in several international tournaments in Spain and Singapore, organised by his training academy in India. His father, a doctor, funds his training and his foreign travel, and believes that his son benefits hugely from such opportunities. 'I know some parents think I'm insane,' he says, 'and it costs a lot in my time and money but the relentless emphasis on academics when I was young wasn't healthy either.' Ranit's ambition is to join a major football team's programme when he's 15, so he's dedicated and committed to his rigorous training, but he's also doing well in school. 'The determination he's developing in his football has spilled over into his academic work,' says his father. 'There's no downside for him, despite the arduous training and the sacrifices we make as a family.'

In the UK, Sarah Sage's experience with her young athlete daughter has been mixed, but she has few regrets. Her daughter was singled out at school by her sports teacher for what was described as 'her prodigious natural talent' and the next four years were a blur of training and competition. 'Niggling injuries didn't deter her, and she loved her athletics family at the academy. Eventually though, she began to see her school friends' lives as more varied, less intense. She struggled with having every minute of her day pre-planned with no time left for spontaneity or just hanging out. There were tears when she gave up her dream of elite athletics, but she still enjoys running. A punishing training regime at a young age doesn't suit everyone, however talented they are.'

© UCLES 2023

Text B: Should we rethink elite sports for kids?

Given the enormous incomes elite sportspeople can earn, it's no wonder that in many countries across the globe, programmes that aim to identify and develop future elite athletes have been established. Once selected, potential elite footballers, cyclists, gymnasts and others can spend many years being moulded and trained to fulfil their ambitions. These programmes, once entered, can shape the lives of children, and those of their families, for a long time.

It's thought by some coaches that specialising in a specific sport early in childhood is essential to achieve elite levels of success. Just like ballet dancers and musicians, it pays to start early. In sports such as gymnastics and diving, athletes usually peak in their late teens, so specialising in childhood is considered crucial. Athletic careers are also inevitably shorter than most other career choices and children, parents and trainers are often aware of that.

Many children who specialise early develop personal qualities of resilience and dedication that would shame an adult. However, some psychologists suggest that if a child doesn't have other hobbies or doesn't try new activities, it can make them feel like their identity is solely tied to the sport they specialise in, which can affect their development detrimentally.

Delaying intense specialisation might give a young athlete more time to develop outside of their sport. Some think that if young athletes can try a range of different sports, perhaps eventual success at elite levels is more likely, not less. However, with safeguards in place, many child athletes grow up to look back on their years of intense training with pride and gratitude, even if they never make the grade in the elite world.

© UCLES 2023

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 Assessment International Education Copyright Acknowledgements Booklet. This is produced for each series of examinations and is freely available to download at www.cambridgeinternational.org after the live examination series.

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

© UCLES 2023