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FIRST LANGUAGE ENGLISH **0500/22**

Paper 2 Directed Writing and Composition **May/June 2024**

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

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

Text A

The following passage is part of a magazine article about telling the truth.

Fibs, exaggerations, embellishments – there are many words we use to disguise the fact we often tell lies to smooth social conversation or deflect minor conflict. For example, if you are late to a meeting, or you've missed a deadline, it is often tempting to manufacture a face-saving excuse which you, and sometimes the person to whom you offer the excuse, know to be untrue. You don't want to talk to someone, so you ask a colleague to tell the person that you're out of the office or in a meeting. We all do it: 'You look lovely' (when they don't) or 'I'll call you' (when you have no intention of calling).

It is difficult to criticise such lies that seem so harmless. However, there is usually a way to manage these cases without lying and still stay out of awkward situations. If you are late, you can simply admit it and apologise. The people with whom you are meeting don't need to know what delayed you, and the ambiguity is better than deceit. Similarly, when you want to be unavailable, you can simply say, 'I can't talk about this now, but would be glad to get back to you later.' Leaving it vague is not the same thing as telling a lie.

In some situations, we ought to be truthful, though often aren't. For example, when someone asks for your evaluation of a presentation made at work or college, it's easy to say, 'It was great, I liked it.' But that may be missing an opportunity to give helpful, constructive feedback if the presentation wasn't good. You can praise the parts that were genuinely praiseworthy, but also point out what might be improved for the next presentation.

We may try to convince ourselves that some types of lies are acceptable because they are minor. This includes making an elaborate excuse for why you haven't completed a task or inventing some fictitious prior appointment when you just don't want to attend an event but don't want to offend. We may be especially susceptible to this kind of deceit if we can convince ourselves that it's common practice, that nobody meets deadlines or wants to waste their time at boring events. We may rationalise our behaviour as compensation for a perceived injustice against us. 'I deserve better because I work harder than others for the same salary.' These are deceits which have no other object than to gain something that we know we can only get by lying.

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Text B

The following passage is an article about children's development.

Do we teach children to lie?

How many of us tell our kids (or students) that everything is fine when, in fact, everything is totally wrong, so as not to worry them? Are you always honest about how you feel about things? Do you praise children's efforts at school when you really think they're terrible?

We don't just lie to protect our kids from hard truths, either. We actually coach them to lie, such as when we ask them to express delight at underwhelming gifts or how tasty a meal was. These are what scientists call 'prosocial lies' – falsehoods told for someone else's benefit.

We develop the ability to lie very early. By age five, almost all children can (and will) lie to avoid punishment and a minority will sporadically tell prosocial lies. From ages 7 to 11, they begin to reliably lie to protect other people or to make others feel better and they'll start to consider these lies to be necessary and good. Current research suggests that children are motivated by feelings of empathy and compassion. Sometimes, lying can reveal the good in people.

It's a feeling of empathy that drives children to tell such lies. In fact, they are trying to resolve a conflict between honesty and kindness, and they start coming down on the side of kindness. This involves moral and emotional reasoning and, far from reflecting laziness, seems to entail a great deal more sophistication than truth-telling.

A lot of scientific research has gone into the impact of lying. The conclusion of all this research? Not all lies are the same, a fact we seem to recognise deep in our minds and bodies. We may indeed teach children to lie, both implicitly with our behaviour and explicitly with our words; but some of those lies help to bind our families and friends together and to create feelings of trust. Other kinds of lies destroy those bonds.

This all might seem overly complex, more so than the simple prescription to not tell a lie. The trouble with do-not-lie prohibitions is that we can all plainly see that lying is everywhere.

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