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FIRST LANGUAGE ENGLISH **0500/23**

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

This passage is an article about how language in the workplace is changing.

If you've ever tried to explain a meme, you know how big the cultural divide between generations can be. And while 'yelling' in capital letters and misunderstood emojis are harmless in an online family group chat, workplace communication is much more fraught.

Workplace harmony depends on successful communication. Language gaps between senior leadership and newer employees are usually bridged by a shared grasp of 'business speak', the jargon that applies in specific areas of work. But now, the first truly digital generation of young people is entering the workplace, often a virtual one, and workplace communication is undergoing a major shift.

Miscommunication is common. To younger workers, formal business communication seems cold and harsh, while younger people are 'too casual' for others. Traditionally, the responsibility has been on younger workers to assimilate into office culture, but things are changing.

Every generation has their own youth slang and pop-culture code that they use in social situations. Older generations tended to adapt their ways of speaking and writing to the more formal expectations of the workplace, but staff in their twenties are keeping things much more casual. They're starting to pull down the barriers between work and personal or social life, naturally creating a more relaxed workplace. These are people who consider both meeting on a laptop and in an actual office to be 'face-to-face' working, after all.

New workers who are digitally fluent now have far more influence over communication and culture. It goes beyond slang and internet-speak abbreviations. A generation used to informal, near-constant contact rejects accepted ways of doing things, spurning the prim email in favour of a quick message, emojis included. But that can be tough for older generations, who are used to defining the professional rules of communication.

Newer employees can be encouraged to maintain decorum and formality (and maybe go easy on the emojis in emails) or perhaps we should run training on emojis for older managers. Who knows how people will talk and write to their colleagues and bosses when today's school students get their first jobs?

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Text B

The following passage is taken from a letter from a reader written to a newspaper letters page.

My eldest grandson, a smart, courteous, recent graduate and something of a high-flyer, secured a good job straight out of university in one of the country's new, up-and-coming tech companies. We celebrated his tremendous success, and his parents, having struggled in their ordinary jobs to give him the best education, breathed a sigh of relief.

So far, so good. After a month though, I'm seriously worried that his expensive education has not equipped him to deal with working life. I'm older, I know, but the way he speaks about, and even to, his colleagues and his superiors is going to land him in trouble and he doesn't even seem to realise it. For example, in his induction course, a very senior staff member told the new recruits, 'I'm always open to new ideas', something I doubt she meant literally, but my hapless grandson promptly sent her an email outlining all his bright ideas for the company. I shuddered even more when he proudly showed me the email. It began, 'Hi Megan', ending with one of those incomprehensible symbols and a suggestion that they might 'do a face-to-face' to discuss his ideas.

Of course, I know offices aren't the stuffy, over-formal settings they were when I got my first job, and a good thing too. I never even referred to colleagues I'd worked with for years by their first names and that seems ridiculous now. We had silly business jargon then too but my grandson's over-familiar slang, abbreviated words and the constant messaging rather than a measured email can't be going down well, can it? How will he ever be taken seriously in his career if he doesn't learn to adapt to proper workplace behaviour in the way he communicates? Why would a young man who had the highest English grades not punctuate properly? He writes as if he's sitting in a café with his peers, not in a professional working environment.

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