Cambridge Assessment International Education

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FIRST LANGUAGE ENGLISH **0500/11**

Paper 1 Reading **May/June 2025**

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)–(e)** on the question paper.

Text A: *Treasure hunting*

Treasure chests, caches of banknotes and hoards of gold: are they really out there waiting to be discovered? Certainly, modern-day movies and classic adventure novels with fairytale endings inspire many enthusiasts to take off in search of buried treasure.

It makes sense that people might have buried their valuables. There were no banks centuries ago, and it was unsafe to leave money or gold lying around. Sometimes people moved on from an area, leaving behind caches of coins and other treasures which they planned to recover later. Some historians say treasure is concealed around the globe. This treasure comes in many forms: iron boxes filled with jewels, jars of silver coins, any type of container stashed with valuables or just a big hole hastily dug to hide loot from a robbery.

So, how do you start when searching for a cache or hoard? By reading: checking out books and old maps associated with the city or town that you're searching to find out about the potential treasure and where it might be buried. It is worth seeking out local residents to talk about what they know. Some naive hunters pay for 'information'; those wiser offer a percentage of the treasure.

Treasure hunters can spend years compiling information before setting out on their search. Others already have the knowledge and funds to launch a search within just weeks or months of acquiring a solid lead.

'If you persist, sooner or later you'll always find something, even if it's only a few coins of little value in a tin,' claims 55-year-old delivery driver, Alex Rohn, author of *All the secrets of successful treasure hunting*. 'But successful treasure hunters can become ridiculously wealthy, never having to work again.'

If your heart's set on treasure hunting, you may have picked the right time to embark upon this hobby. Today's advanced metal-detectors are potentially capable of finding any deep caches that might somehow have gone undetected by the teams of dedicated hunters searching in previous decades. But the sheer logistics involved in accessing those locations may be enough to dampen any enthusiasm. With greater rewards comes greater difficulty, as well as the need to have more sophisticated and costly equipment.

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

Text B: *Metal detecting*

This text is an online article written by a 'detectorist' – someone who enjoys 'metal detecting' as a hobby, using a special machine that beeps when it detects something metallic buried in the ground.

There are mixed reactions when I tell people that I'm a detectorist in my spare time. Some don't know what that is; some think it just confirms I'm boring. Others worry that I'm breaking the law. Just for the record, I'm not and never would.

Responsible detectorists only ever pursue their hobby legally. Searching with a metal detector is just not allowed in some places due to safety concerns for users or to protect valuable historic or cultural sites. Where it's allowed, permits and licenses are often required, and you always need the landowner's permission. The right authorities must be contacted to examine and value any find and strict rules govern what happens to any 'treasure' after that.

News this month is that last year saw record numbers of finds. Numerous congratulatory reports in newspapers detail the wonderful things found, back-stories of the lucky finders, and sometimes extraordinary sums of money their discoveries have fetched. This rise in finds is attributed to more people taking up the hobby, encouraged by a recent television programme 'Detectorists' that has wowed audiences worldwide. In the programme, two old friends regularly go detecting together, spending hours, weeks, years pacing up and down in mud, waiting for their detectors to beep.

Archaeologists (who study the past for a living and also dig up objects from the ground) haven't been so cheerful about the increase. You'd think archaeologists would be pleased that detectorists shared the same passion for locating tiny fragments of history – not just jewellery or coins, but pieces of ancient cooking pots and other day-to-day objects of bygone times. However, archaeologists complain about enthusiasts promoting metal detecting as a harmless leisure pursuit, arguing that by collecting objects, detectorists are divorcing those objects from their context and most of the information that makes them valuable to an archaeologist.

The majority of the metal-detecting community remains wary of archaeologists, suspecting (rightly) that archaeologists want greater restrictions. The problem, archaeologists maintain, is that since detecting is fundamentally acquisitive, competitive, and potentially lucrative, the temptation to bend the rules is strong.

Add that to concerns that digging in public spaces creates trip hazards and in some locations may damage rare and threatened flora, and it's easy to see why detectorists have something of an image problem.

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

Text C: *The beach*

The narrator and her sons, Charlie and Khai, are on one of their regular afternoon visits to their local beach.

On this dazzling afternoon, cycling along the sea's edge is exhilarating and our laughter sends seagulls scattering skywards. The new path we're following ends abruptly and we're stranded on the wrong side of a channel of water. I show the boys that, like life, if you approach it full on, you can most times power through on sheer determination. But today the channel's deeper than it looks. I've misjudged it massively. My bike comes to a graceless halt midway, balances briefly, then falls flat on its side, depositing me spectacularly in fifty centimetres of water.

We drag my bike out, giggling, and weave between the fragile dunes, emerging to find the tide low and the beach reinvented after yesterday's storm. There's been a great upheaval and something large is lying on the sand. I don't know yet that it is, or was, a ship – wrecked in 1895 on a treacherous sandbank in a gale. Its crew was rescued, but its cargo was lost.

From this distance it looks unreal, like some elaborate prop on a sweeping stage of sand. The children race towards its magic. Getting closer, I experience the same thrill. I know that these sands shift, playing an endless game of hide-and-seek. Even so, it's hard to believe this has been here, buried and invisible: a wooden vessel, rotting and exposed, its curved wooden spurs like the ribcage of some enormous extinct beast, picked clean of its flesh by the sea. The boys clamber on board like marauding cartoon pirates. This wreck is an astonishing sight.

When I say that this place is changeable, what I mean is that tides, currents and weather conspire to move the sand, and objects like this skeletal old ship emerge. At other times they can't be seen. We walk unaware over the remains of the past everyday: what's left of our ancestors' artefacts – the 'physical culture', as archaeologists call it. It's dizzying, that realisation.

I often find scrap metal and glass here – mostly rubbish, carelessly discarded, but one time the unusual colour of an object intrigued us. We tried pulling it out, carefully digging sand away with our hands, but it was stuck fast, part of some bigger, bulkier thing, and wouldn't budge. Charlie stopped digging and stood back to reassess. 'It's a car,' he said tracing the familiar curve of a door. The sea that day seemed so gentle, the tide ambling quietly up the beach, that it was difficult to imagine it powerful enough to pick up an entire abandoned car. But when the westerly winds howl in, this place has a different character. Countless times I've witnessed the shore hewn and hammered, scattered with whole trees and littered with concrete fence posts.

Until recently, cars were permitted on every part of this special shore. When restrictions were introduced, limiting the area accessible by vehicle and charging entry during summer months, there was indignation from disgruntled visitors. I suppose there will inevitably be some people who don't understand why conservation matters.

Treasure hunting along the shoreline is always exciting; today is spectacular. It's still not unusual to find the small egg cases of skate fish on this beach. Known locally as 'mermaids' purses', the ones I find are mostly desiccated, blackened and hardened by their time out of water. Sometimes, though, you can find one freshly cast, and quite different: soft in texture, olive brown and translucent. The chances are it's empty, its occupant already swum free. But it's just possible, especially after impressive storms, to find one unhatched. Charlie has spotted one and is pleasantly puzzled. I pick it up carefully, holding it to the light for observation. Today we're very lucky, gestation is complete – inside there's a tiny baby skate, a fragile promise for the future, almost ready to hatch.

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