Cambridge Assessment International Education

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FIRST LANGUAGE ENGLISH **0500/23**

Paper 2 Directed Writing and Composition **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 **both** texts and then answer **Question 1** on the question paper.

Text A

The following text is an article written by a professional photographer.

‘Why do you take pictures?’

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These are the images that tell your story.

Text B

The following text is an article about how photography has changed.

I wonder how famous photographers of the past would have handled the digital revolution unleashed in recent years? We are obsessed with ourselves, and with how others see us, and with how we view others. We do not take pictures for ourselves (if we did, we would not share them on social media) but to appeal to complete strangers in the vacuum of the internet. We don't even take photos of ourselves, but of what we aspire to be. If a photo doesn't do that – well, a click of a button erases it. Our online presence takes precedence over being present in our own lives.

Every one of us, even those like me who criticise such things, has a storehouse of images. On a recent trip to the mountains, I struggled not to take too many photos of the beautiful snowy surroundings. How about trying to record those beautiful memories with your mind's eye rather than snap one photo after another and lose that special moment? Maybe remember your child's smile, brimming with enthusiasm on their first attempt on the slope, or how their rosy, cold cheeks felt against yours, rather than trying to capture the 'perfect' moment? So successful has the camera's role become that photographs, rather than the world, have become the standard for what's beautiful. Instead of just recording reality, photographs have become the norm for the way things appear to us.

I asked a famous photojournalist, 'Are there times when you simply witness the moment without taking a picture?' He gave me this thought-provoking answer: 'There are personal moments that are magical, and I keep them for me. But images can tell important stories to the public too.'

I have often taken a moment to think before pushing the button and I sometimes hear myself saying: 'Don't spoil the moment, don't take a photo.'

Unfortunately, needing to have reality confirmed and experience enhanced by photographs is a kind of consumerism to which we're all now addicted.

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