UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE INTERNATIONAL EXAMINATIONS
International General Certificate of Secondary Education

FIRST LANGUAGE ENGLISH **0500/23**

Paper 2 Reading Passages (Extended) **October/November 2010**

2 hours

Additional Materials: Answer Booklet/Paper

3559230415

READ THESE INSTRUCTIONS FIRST

If you have been given an Answer Booklet, follow the instructions on the front cover of the Booklet.
Write your Centre number, candidate number and name on all the work you hand in.
Write in dark blue or black pen.
Do not use staples, paper clips, highlighters, glue or correction fluid.

Answer **all** questions.
Dictionaries are **not** permitted.

At the end of the examination, fasten all your work securely together.
The number of marks is given in brackets [ ] at the end of each question or part question.

This document consists of **5** printed pages and **3** blank pages.

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Part 1

Read **Passage A** carefully, and then answer **Questions 1** and **2**.

Passage A

The Duvall family were relatively new to the village of Malsam. They had feared a long period of suspicion, but even gimlet-eyed old women, who normally took months to unbend and acknowledge newcomers, warmed to the blond-haired children and their gentle parents.

The weather in these parts was less hospitable. The wind never settled and, as the Duvalls gathered by the fire each night, their little home wheezed and moaned like an out of tune accordion. Even though the floors were spotless, and Katya, the mother, insisted on cleanliness in this new home of theirs, draughts still made skittering noises. The children, Gabriel and Luca, did schoolwork upstairs, but more often played noisily with good friends they had made. Henri, their father, was becoming well-known for his finely crafted furniture, and life was good here.

One night, when the grumbling of their home was low, Henri and Katya were about to settle to sleep, when they both heard unfamiliar sounds; tiny scratchings and patterings started and stopped. 'It's probably a couple of little field mice looking for a warm place for the winter,' Henri said, and Katya smiled as she fondly remembered the pictures of the family of mice in the story book she used to read to the children when they were very young.

Lifting the flour sack next morning, Henri was surprised to see a trail like a white path across the dark flagstones of the kitchen. Looking closely, he spotted a gnawed hole, the size of a small coin, in the bottom of the sack. Katya made her own discoveries: chewed biscuit boxes, or sometimes the biscuits themselves, looked ragged around the edges and she threw them away in disgust. Even their store of candles had tiny teeth marks that ran up and down each one, looking for all the world as if a small creature had been eating a cob of maize but had fallen asleep during its meal.

That night in bed they couldn't sleep. Their ears strained to hear any movement and, as soon as the oil lamp was dimmed, the room became alive with chattering, scuttling and squeaking. The couple lay on their raft of safety as the sea of movement and noise swelled around them. The squeaking became shrill and angry. There were interminable gnawing sounds that to the couple seemed as loud as men sawing through hard wood. Objects, buttons or spools of thread rolled around them, threatening to drown the couple's sanity, until Henri could stand it no longer and his hand reached for the matches on the bedside table. As he did so, a warm body squirmed over his hand, and he felt the scratch of claws and the trail of a bald tail. He stifled a groan of disgust, but when the oil lamp illuminated the bedroom, both he and his wife cried out as a swell of writhing, glistening, grey rodents with long, dirty, gristly tails took less than a minute to retreat under the floor boards, behind the skirting and into the thatch.

The light stayed on until the sanctuary of morning. During that sleepless night, the couple agreed that this problem needed to be tackled, soon. They decided that Henri would have to travel to the nearest city in order to buy sufficient poison. The children must not be told; *no one* must ever find out that their home harboured vermin. These were still superstitious times in a village whose oldest inhabitant could remember the plague, carried by vermin, which had wiped out three quarters of their population. If word got out, the parents knew that their family would be hounded from their happy home, without belongings, without a place to go, without mercy.

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Eventually Henri returned, his knapsack full of certain death, but his pockets bulging with sweet things to silence the children and to get them out of the way. Tonight, Henri would save his family. He wasted no time in setting to work the minute the children were tucked up in bed that night. Granules of black powder were placed in every strategic position: in cupboards, under skirting, in the rafters, the cellar and even at the back of the stove. By the third night the results finally showed: silence. The couple slept for the first time in an exhausting week.

Soon everything returned to normal. Relief washed over the couple when neighbours called by or the children's friends came to play. However, all the anxiety of late had caused them not to notice just how quiet and secretive their children had recently become.

If the parents had looked into Gabriel and Luca's room they would have understood the reason. In a small box, lined with sheep wool and an old sock, lay a light grey mother mouse, bright eyes semi-closed, contented and at peace. She nuzzled her six 'babies' as they suckled and slept, their little mouths pink and puckered, so vulnerable and so adored. The mother's whiskers twitched with delight as her warm tail wrapped around her brood. Nothing would harm them, not with the children looking after this little family straight out of their favourite story book of old.

1 Imagine you are a reporter investigating the cause of an infestation of mice that has occurred throughout the village of Malsam.

Write your report for a national newspaper, using the headline: '*Horror Plague Overwhelms Village.*'

You should include the following:

- the effects of the infestation on the villagers;
- the attitudes of the villagers to the Duvall family;
- the comments of the Duvall parents and children.

Base the news report on what you have read in Passage A and be careful to use your own words.

Write between 1½ and 2 sides, allowing for the size of your handwriting.

Up to fifteen marks will be available for the content of your answer, and up to five marks for the quality of your writing.

[Total: 20]

2 Re-read the descriptions of:

(a) the mice in the parents' bedroom in paragraph 5;

(b) the mother mouse and her brood in the last paragraph.

Select words and phrases from these descriptions, and explain how the writer has created effects by using this language.

[Total: 10]

Part 2

Question 3 is based on both **Passage A** and **Passage B**.
Read **Passage B** carefully, and then re-read **Passage A**.

Passage B

When one thinks of rats, what comes to mind? The much quoted statistic that we are never further than a metre from one of these creatures, the Bubonic Plague that took the lives of one third of the population in medieval Europe, or simply the fact that many of us are frightened by their appearance?

Although rats receive a great deal of bad publicity, some people do not regard them as a menace. One such person is Olivier Leferver, who has been keeping rats as pets since he was 11. 'I have always been astounded by these creatures' intelligence. Show them how to perform a trick once and they memorise it almost immediately,' he says as one of his pets sits contentedly on his shoulder and another lies asleep in his lap. 'People often despise things they are ignorant of, but scientists have realised a rat's ability to problem solve, and many important scientific breakthroughs would not have occurred without the help of my friends here,' he says, stroking the rat on his shoulder.

'Did you know that rats have the ability to chew through wood, metal and even some types of concrete? They enjoy play and are affectionate with other rats. Domesticated ones form strong bonds with their owners; one even saved a man from being overwhelmed by smoke in a house fire by nipping his ear until he became conscious – you see, people don't know these things. Wild rats will even care for a sick member of their pack.'

Olivier is a fountain of knowledge. He is able to reel off facts such as rats can go longer than a camel without water and fall over 4 metres without being injured. 'In Western societies, a rat is associated with dishonesty and cunning,' he tells us, 'but in other cultures, particularly Asian, rats are viewed as having favourable characteristics like honesty, hard work, intelligence and good luck. They are not considered dirty or undesirable at all. They are in fact very clean creatures. They are even an important part of Eastern spirituality; the Year of the Rat is the first year of the Chinese zodiac.'

'So, what are your feelings about rats being used in scientific experiments?' I ask him. 'It's good that they have much to offer mankind,' he says. 'Their amazing memories, rapid learning ability, curiosity and friendliness make them ideal not only for research but for other services to humans, such as sniffing out landmines and bombs, as well as identifying tuberculosis. They can even be used in search and rescue missions. I read the other day that Canadian and British researchers have found a way to get rats to reason like human gamblers – something that they hope will help them develop drug treatments for addicted gamblers. Their ability to assess risks in decision making is very advanced.'

When it is time to leave, the fear factor has left me and I look differently at Olivier's friend perched jauntily on his shoulder.

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3 Summarise:

(a) the positive aspects of rats as described in **Passage B**;

(b) the negative aspects of mice as described in **Passage A**.

Use your own words as far as possible.

You should write about 1 side in total, allowing for the size of your handwriting.

Up to fifteen marks will be available for the content of your answer, and up to five marks for the quality of your writing.

[Total: 20]

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