UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE INTERNATIONAL EXAMINATIONS
International General Certificate of Secondary Education

FIRST LANGUAGE ENGLISH **0500/32**

Paper 3 Directed Writing and Composition **October/November 2013**

READING BOOKLET INSERT

2 hours

READ THESE INSTRUCTIONS FIRST

This Reading Booklet Insert contains the reading passage for use with **Section 1**, **Question 1** on the Question Paper.

You may annotate this Insert and use the blank spaces for planning. This Insert is **not** assessed by the Examiner.

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Read the following article carefully, and then answer Question 1 on the Question Paper.

Why I'm teaching happiness

Helping to produce happy young adults when they leave school at 18 is my highest priority as Headteacher. I have been saying this for the last ten years, but only in the past year have I begun to realise this isn't just an unachievable aspiration, but one can in fact learn happiness in class. Hence my decision to teach happiness and positive psychology in timetabled lessons at my school.

I believe that our education in schools is fundamentally ill-balanced. Of course exams matter greatly – they are the passport to an individual's higher education and career. A school which fails to allow every child to achieve the best grades of which he or she is capable is failing to do its job properly. However, education is far more than this, which is why judging a school on exam results alone is wrong. Results tables say nothing about the quality of the teaching, about the wider life of the school, or whether it is turning out resentful and ill-balanced young adults, or whether it is helping to produce young men and women who are happy and who know themselves and what they want to do in life.

As a teacher, I have seen far too many tortured and unhappy pupils who have achieved top results beyond their secondary education. If they can achieve these grades while leading balanced lives, taking part in a wide variety of activities which will develop different aspects of their character, and if they blossom as human beings, then all is well and good. However, this isn't always the case with high achievers. People who are driven, or pushed, see their lives flash by and most fail to realise they are missing the point in life. Is it more important to be highly successful, or to have sound relationships with friends, colleagues and parents, and indeed to become a loving parent whose children are valued and treasured?

Hence the need to teach happiness in school, when individuals are still having their characters formed. It is much harder to acquire good habits later in life.

What will these lessons involve? These will not be lessons like History or Physics, where acquiring knowledge is all important. This is about emotional learning and emotional intelligence, and is far more thought-provoking than a traditional subject. Pupils will learn about how to form healthy and sustaining relationships. They will gain understanding about the goals they should want to set in life, which should be realistic and appropriate for their own talents and interests. Negative emotions, which are an inevitable part of life, will be explored: pupils will be able to learn more about what it is that causes them pain or unhappiness, how they might be able to avoid or minimise these emotions, and how to deal with them when they do occur. So, the whole point is that pupils learn more about themselves, which will be information that they will be able to use for the rest of their lives.

Are these types of lessons relevant? Ask any parent. Would they sooner see their children happy and fulfilled, even at the cost of achieving slightly less, or stressed out and vexed in the pursuit of ever-higher goals which always seem to be beyond their reach? Happiness, I believe, lies in knowing one's own limitations, accepting oneself for what one is, and being proud of what one achieves, at whatever level that might be.

Once at university, the purpose of these happiness lessons becomes crystal clear, as students have to manage without the presence of caring parents, teachers and familiar friends. Loneliness, depression and rejection can strike, and young people find it difficult to cope if schools send them off ill-prepared to deal with real life. Schools also fall short in preparing their leavers to manage money, accommodation and being able to look after themselves. I believe all schools should rise to the challenge of producing young men and women who will be able to contribute to society all the better for being more confident about themselves and their place in the world.

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