UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE INTERNATIONAL EXAMINATIONS
International General Certificate of Secondary Education

FIRST LANGUAGE ENGLISH **0500/33**

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.

The cult of the celebrity

There are some celebrities who are so famous that, even in remote parts of the world, they will be recognised. However, it would seem that most countries have their own celebrities, many of whom are so desperate to cling to fame that they appear on trivial or even degrading celebrity shows. Bookshops are full of celebrity memoirs. The concept of celebrity has such a strong hold on us, the public, that it would take nothing less than a revolution to end our addiction to celebrity and everything linked to it.

Of course, you don't necessarily have to achieve anything heroic to become a celebrity these days. In the early sixties, Sir Edmund Hillary and Sir Roger Bannister were famous because they did something spectacular; human endeavours such as theirs *were* truly spectacular. The Rolling Stones rock group came along, famous because they became symbols for teenagers rebelling against the society of that time. Nowadays, someone – who despite not having world-beating talent at anything, but who has the ability to cause a minor stir in the gossip pages – can become a sensation when they are promoted by the media as 'the next great thing'. Suddenly, a new 'celebrity' is born.

The new face of celebrity is one of fabricated role models, often created by the world of reality television, who cannot entertain and have no 'star quality'. An alternative for these 'shooting stars' is to become the girlfriend or boyfriend of someone well known for doing something productive – footballers, actors or singers are favourites – and suddenly they are half of a celebrity couple. Offers to appear on chat shows or write a fashion column pour in as their managers make the most of their fleeting fame. The media is responsible for encouraging young people to believe that they are destined for fame: not for them the dreary world of study or the boring life of work.

We welcome many of these stars into our living rooms via the television screen because they seem special. However, their bizarre appearance, their never-ending smile or their sarcastic comments can disguise damaged people. Later, perhaps, as photographs of celebrities behaving badly hit the front pages, 'tell all' stories of shame and blame revive public interest in these suddenly 'normal' people. However, the public is fickle. At any moment, manipulated by the media, it can turn against a so-called 'celebrity'.

Programmes in which celebrities are thrust into a hostile jungle, plunged into a vat of fish guts or forced to eat creepy crawlies invite us to enjoy revenge on those who dared to think that they were better than us. As innocent teenagers we worshipped these stars, the beautiful people whose posters adorned our bedroom walls. For us as adults working long hours and waiting to holiday for two weeks of sun in a place where we've heard some celebrity has one of five homes, that worship has turned to envy and cynicism.

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Question 1 © ADAPTED: Mark Booth; *What is Britain's obsession with celebrities about?*; The Independent; www.independent.co.uk; 8 July 2011.

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