Cambridge International Examinations
Cambridge International General Certificate of Secondary Education

FIRST LANGUAGE ENGLISH **0500/12**

Paper 1 Reading Passage (Core) **October/November 2014**

READING BOOKLET INSERT

1 hour 45 minutes

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READ THESE INSTRUCTIONS FIRST

This Reading Booklet Insert contains the reading passage for use with all questions 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 passage carefully and then answer all the questions on the Question Paper.

In the following passage, the narrator is walking through a forest on a remote island which is home to strange creatures.

Mysterious Follower

I walked eagerly, but with some misgivings, and soon found myself in a level place among scattered trees. The colourless clearness that comes at sunset was beginning to fade. The blue sky above grew swiftly darker, and only a few small stars pierced the gloom; the gaps between the trees, that had been hazy blue in the daylight, grew black and mysterious.

I pushed on. The colour vanished from the world, the tree-tops appeared in ghostly silhouette against the luminous blue of the sky, and all below that outline melted into one formless blackness. Presently, the trees grew thinner, and the shrubbery undergrowth more abundant. Then there was desolate space covered with white sand, and then another expanse of tangled bushes.

I was tormented by a faint rustling close by. I thought at first it was my imagination, for whenever I stopped, there was silence, apart from the breeze in the tree-tops. Then when I went on again, there was an echo to my footsteps.

I moved away from the bushes, keeping to the more open ground, and trying by sudden turns now and then to surprise this thing, if it existed, in the act of creeping up on me. I saw nothing; nevertheless, my sense of another presence grew steadily. I increased my pace, and after some time came to a slight ridge, crossed it, and looked back at it carefully from the other side. It stood out black and clear-cut against the evening sky. A shapeless lump heaved up briefly against the skyline and vanished again. And there was another unpleasant realisation: I had lost my way.

For a time I hurried on, hopelessly perplexed, pursued by that stealthy stalker. Whatever it was, the thing either lacked the courage to attack me, or it was waiting to find me at a disadvantage. I kept carefully to the open spaces. At times I would turn and listen, and then I half-persuaded myself that my pursuer had abandoned the chase, or it was merely a creature of my imagination. Then I heard the sound of the sea. I quickened my footsteps almost to a run, and immediately heard something stumble behind me.

I turned suddenly, and stared at the uncertain trees. One black shadow seemed to leap into another. I stood rigid, listening, and heard nothing but the throb of the blood in my ears. I thought that my nerves were on edge, that my imagination was tricking me, and so I turned resolutely towards the sound of the sea again.

In a minute or so the trees grew thinner, and I emerged upon a bare low headland running out into the sombre water. The night was calm and clear, and the reflection of the growing multitude of stars shivered in the steady swell of the sea. Some way out, the waves washing against a coral reef shone with their own pale light. The coast fell away from me to the east, and westward it was hidden by the headland.

A twig snapped behind me and there was a rustle. I turned and stood facing the sinister trees. I could see nothing – or else I could see too much. Every dark form in the dimness had its threatening quality, and I felt I was being watched. So I stood for perhaps a minute, and then, keeping my eyes on the trees, I turned westwards

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to cross the headland. As I moved, one of the lurking shadows moved to follow me.

My heart beat quickly. Presently the broad bay to the west became visible, and I halted again. The noiseless shadow halted a dozen metres from me. A little point of light shone away in the distance, and the grey curve of the sandy beach lay faint under the starlight. To get to the beach I should have to go through the trees where the shadows lurked, and down a bushy slope. I could see the thing rather more distinctly now. I turned towards it, but my throat was too dry to speak. I swallowed hard and finally croaked out:

‘Who’s there?’

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Copyright Acknowledgements:

Question 1 & 2 H G Wells; The Island of Doctor Moreau; Penguin Books Ltd; 1962.

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