Cambridge International Examinations
Cambridge International General Certificate of Secondary Education

FIRST LANGUAGE ENGLISH **0500/22**

Paper 2 Reading Passages (Extended) **October/November 2014**

READING BOOKLET INSERT

2 hours

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READ THESE INSTRUCTIONS FIRST

This Reading Booklet Insert contains the reading passages 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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Part 1

Read **Passage A** carefully, and then answer **Questions 1** and **2** on the Question Paper.

Passage A

In this passage, the writer describes her early experiences as a teacher.

My first year of teaching

I'd been in my first secondary teaching post for a year. I was happy because my relationship with the students seemed good. They were well-mannered and did what I asked them, obediently and with occasional enthusiasm.

From the start, something about the school ethos had seemed wrong. Perhaps it was best summed up by a colleague who advised me: 'Keep your head down. Never volunteer for anything – and forget the homework. It only creates more marking!'

Well, I didn't keep my head down. At the very rare staff meetings, I made chirpy suggestions for making the school more lively, and encountered plenty of scowls. When I asked about drama productions I was met with a shocked response. 'We tried one once and it was a flop. The kids wouldn't rehearse and when we turned the lights on, the electricity blew up.' So I wrote and produced an end-of-term entertainment, a run-away success with the parents, which gave me a real buzz. I can't say that many teachers bothered to attend.

I also allowed the senior students to produce a school magazine with a gaudy front page that screamed 'Action!' at its sleepy readers. It made fun of certain individuals and there was an uproarious photo of the deputy head looking like a Roman senator in front of her geography class. School rules were denounced as 'tyrannical', and the magazine attacked the ugly uniform. The magazine sold out like a flash of lightning; this was immediately followed by a ferocious thunderstorm.

I was hauled up before the furious deputy head, who had not bought a copy but had confiscated one from a group of giggling students. Quite apart from the 'libellous and revolting picture', the school had 'never done anything like this before and it must stop immediately'. There was no second edition.

While I was happy that the editorial team had worked hard, I can't say that the school itself had a work ethos. When I first set homework, the outcome was a few hastily scrawled lines, the result of five minutes spent without thought or effort. There was a general distaste for reading and writing, although students loved talk and drama. This clearly was the norm, and it was evident from the exam results, which were the poorest in the area. In the summer, I was thrilled to see that my first set of results were even better than I had expected, which made me popular with the delighted parents, though not with my colleagues.

I started to get good work out of my students, and this was proudly displayed on my classroom walls. These were clean and colourful, unlike those of the rest of the school, not that anyone apart from students came near my classroom. The headteacher was notable by his absence. And as for my head of department…

Because he left me to my own devices, I had to seek him out. I found him secreted away in the cosy little nest that was his room. It was a sort of enlarged stockroom at the end of a maze of tortuous passages. I never saw him teaching, but I imagined students struggling to fit into the narrow rows of shabby desks. Everything was brown, a faded sepia, the colour of biscuit. My head of department, dressed in beige, sat camouflaged in a corner and looked at me mournfully.

'Ah,' he said. 'Miss, ah…I hope you are finding us to your liking.'

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Too many of my colleagues were like him. Some had been there all their teaching careers and had lost their energy. Most kept order, but only by setting texts to be copied out, to no educational advantage. The occasional shout directed students' attention back to their tasks, and some teachers read newspapers as lessons dragged on. Others had lost control, and there was the usual rowdiness and rudeness, messy classrooms and disorderly behaviour in the corridors, because there were no staff there to control the traffic. Although this was depressing, I had one colleague who had proved a loyal friend and who shared some of my more outrageous ideas. We had many giggles after the others had hurried home at the end of the day.

At the end of my first year, there was much muttering in the staffroom, and on the last day of term the old headteacher was no more to be seen. Instead, there stood, at the front of the room, glaring at us all, a replacement figure in an expensive suit, who clearly meant business.

Part 2

Read **Passage B** carefully, and re-read **Passage A**. Then answer **Question 3**, which is based on both passages. Answer on the Question Paper.

Passage B

In this article, an adult student explains the importance of improving his education.

Attending Evening Classes

Working during the day and going to school in the evening is becoming more and more popular in Vietnam these days. People have to work to support themselves and their family; however, in order to work efficiently and earn enough money to meet their own and their families' ever-increasing needs, they have to 'renovate' their previous knowledge and skills to meet the demanding requirements of the labour market. I do the same, and am looking forward to receiving my degree in English. From my experience in the in-service training section of the University of Social Sciences and Humanities, I have become aware of some advantages and disadvantages of attending evening classes.

There is no doubt that evening classes provide me with opportunities to improve my English. This international language is essential at my workplace, where I have to communicate with other people, either orally or in written English.

I can also work during the day. It is impossible for me to quit my job to pursue further study because I am the bread-winner for my ever-growing and demanding family. However, I do know that it is dangerous to stay academically unchanged for a decade or so. I have to refresh my knowledge to cope with all the demands of work, or I may be fired at some time in the future. Attending evening classes also keeps me young and lively. The atmosphere of a school and its requirements force me to forget anything unpleasant that may happen at work. I have loved such an atmosphere all my life.

Although I appreciate some features of evening classes, not all of them are positive. I often feel tired after a long day's work. Consequently, I find it hard to study enthusiastically in the evening. If a teacher is experienced enough to inspire something in me and fix my attention on the lessons, I am able to learn. If this is not the case, I have to struggle with the subject, and only when I am lucky enough can I manage to pass it. Usually, I cannot avoid having to re-sit an examination.

Attending evening classes means I have to go along the crowded streets of Ho Chi Minh City during the rush hour. I am always in a hurry, for fear of being late for class. If the weather is favourable, it is possible to travel to school after work; but during the rainy season, skipping at least a few classes is unavoidable. As a result, I cannot be sure whether I will reach the required standard for a particular course and claim to have a sound knowledge of the English language.

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Last but not least, attending evening classes means I usually come back home rather late and miss having dinner together with my family. This upsets me. I need a B.A. in English but I love and need my family very much, too. I regret neglecting my responsibilities at home because I am both a full-time worker and a part-time student.

Yet despite these disadvantages, I keep on studying what I consider to be crucial for my present job and future career. I enjoy the advantages of attending evening classes, and I am ready to accept the disadvantages, applying the English saying: 'Take the rough with the smooth'.

Copyright Acknowledgements:

Question 3 The Advantages & Disadvantages of attending Evening classes; http://language123.blogspot.co.uk/2009/03/advantages-disadvantages-attending.html; 08 March 2012.

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