Cambridge International Examinations
Cambridge International General Certificate of Secondary Education

FIRST LANGUAGE ENGLISH **0500/31**

Paper 3 Directed Writing and Composition **October/November 2014**

READING BOOKLET INSERT

2 hours

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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 conversation below carefully, and then answer Section 1, Question 1 on the Question Paper.

Do we need art?

Art teacher: You're very good at art. I think you should choose art as an exam course next year.

Student: But what is art good for? People are always saying that the government shouldn't waste money on supporting the Arts. My parents definitely wouldn't consider it to be a secure career choice. They want me to study science and maths at university and do something practical later, something good for the economy.

Art teacher: No one ever asked what the work of great artists like Michelangelo and Leonardo da Vinci was good for! Educated people believe that art makes us think, as well as giving us pleasure. You could also argue that it helps us to understand the world around us.

Student: What is art anyway? Where do we draw the line between art and non-art, and between good and bad art? Can a video, a wall of graffiti, or an advertisement count as art? What about a bucket of paint thrown at a canvas then? There are paintings made by very young children, and even animals, that fetch amazing prices. Are sharks in tanks and piles of bricks art? If the artist produces something to make a political statement, to further a religious cause or to make money, can it be considered art?

Art teacher: Opinions change over time. At different times in the past, people have despised pictures that tell a story, family portraits, and bowls of fruit and veg, for example. No permanent judgements can ever be made; what you like reflects where and when you live.

Student: Yes, and that means that artists have often suffered. I wouldn't want to be like Van Gogh, penniless and persecuted in my lifetime, and revered after my death – when it's too late. In any case, who should decide what is or isn't 'good' art: other artists, critics, or the general public?

Art teacher: New ideas are always seen as shocking and incomprehensible at first – like Picasso's deformed faces – and later they are accepted, first by critics and then by visitors to art galleries. After that, they're deemed valuable because they're unique.

Student: But they should be valuable because they are beautiful, not just because of their novelty – and of course you can't define beauty, can you? Yet only rare works of art are considered worth collecting, forging or stealing. In a starving world, I don't believe it is morally acceptable for what in the end are only decorations to change hands for millions of dollars. What's more, since private collectors often don't let anyone else look at their collections, there is even less reason for art to exist.

Art teacher: Actually, making art is even more worthwhile than going to see it. Schools include art in the curriculum for this reason, not because they believe they are turning schoolchildren into future Rembrandts. We make art because there is something inside us that needs to get out. The writer, musician and artist all have a desire to express what they feel and to create something permanent. Doing it for yourself teaches you to look at things in a different, more imaginative way.

Student: Well, you've given me a lot to think about. I'll certainly bear this conversation in mind when I choose my subjects for next year. I must admit I do really enjoy art classes.

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