Cambridge International Examinations
Cambridge International General Certificate of Secondary Education

FIRST LANGUAGE ENGLISH **0500/23**

Paper 2 Reading Passages (Extended) **October/November 2015**

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 the 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: The District Officer

Argin is the newly-appointed District Officer. He is in charge of organising local people forced to move out of the area they have always lived in. The area is due to be flooded as a result of a huge new hydro-electric dam being built upstream.

Argin never actually asked for the task of overseeing the abandonment and resettlement programme. The offer came, quite simply, out of the blue. He received a telephone call one morning.

'A tricky job… not easy… not easy, at all,' cooed the Governor hypnotically from the comfortable surroundings of his air-conditioned office in the capital. 'We have reports from over twenty archeological expeditions … you must liaise with these people.' The Governor had an infuriating habit of speaking in such a slow manner that thin wisps of words seemed to drop out of his sentences and float away. 'It's a job that will require a great deal of tact,' he continued, meandering mesmerisingly. 'We need someone quick … discreet … kind of opportunity that can help establish a man's name. What do you say?'

* * *

Through the open door of his office, Argin could see a delegation of goats making its way up the path from the gate. There was nothing unusual about so many visitors at this early hour of the morning; the veranda was already so packed with so many creatures it resembled a vet's waiting room. There were also mothers with babies on their hips, mournful children staring blankly at him, old men banging staffs on the newly-washed tiles. It was endless. Each and every one of them had some kind of question they expected him to answer.

Argin dealt patiently with all demands. He showed people the plans, the little model of the valley as it would be with the villages submerged. He tried to reassure them about the new settlement. They wouldn't be living among strangers but would have the same neighbours as they had now – unless they insisted otherwise, which they occasionally did. He took notes, made calculations, assured them their herds would be tallied again, their furniture transported. He promised them all compensation would be paid. Though he was sincere in trying to allay their fears, Argin was aware his task was impossible. He had neither the time nor money to fulfil all the promises he'd given.

For the moment, they believed him when he said that he'd do his best.

There was no end to the inventiveness people used to appeal for his help. A number of strategies became familiar. Elderly women pressed parcels of biscuits and bundles of sticky pastry onto him. Wealthy merchants dropped thick wallets on the table, shrewdly scrutinising the size of his office and state of his uniform. The less wealthy dispensed with tact, demanding bluntly how much he wanted in order to spare their land. When he explained this was impossible, they would repeat the demand more loudly, convinced he had hearing problems. It was when you got down to the peasants and farmers that livestock began to arrive, often herded straight into his office, where they invariably set about chewing up the seat covers and scattering pungent little pellets everywhere. Argin could have accumulated a large herd by now if he had cared to. It was turning into a marathon test of his moral strength.

On the other hand, there were people who didn't seem to grasp the gravity of the situation. They sat for hours scratching their heads as he explained, over and over, what was about to happen to their world. There really was a dam, he assured them, even though they couldn't see it because it was so far downstream. And once it was finished, the river would begin to rise. Yes, that same river out there. The one they'd known all their lives. Everyone had to leave or they'd get very wet.

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Argin wondered if perhaps it was simply too much to grasp. Hordes of archeologists descended from all corners of the globe, adding to his responsibilities. Land was divided up between teams on a first-come-first-served basis. Relics of the ancient world were dismantled and pored over in a plethora of languages. Rulers were held up to granite thighs, bones gathered into hasty heaps, skulls, femora and hands still bearing rings sprouted from the earth. It was like watching time being unpacked from the ground and then flying away.

Over there was the river where it had always been. The idea that the water would rise up to cover everything seemed silly when you stood and gazed at its placid surface. Argin heaved a heavy sigh. All of this was to vanish beneath a blanket of watery forgetfulness.

Part 2

Read **Passage B** carefully, and then answer **Question 3** on the Question Paper.

Passage B: What happened to the dinosaurs?

There are many theories about dinosaurs and what happened to them. This article suggests what may have brought about their extinction.

Something happened 65 million years ago, at the end of the Cretaceous period, to cause the extinction of dinosaurs, whose name means 'terrible lizards', although they are really a type of bird. Everyone has their own favourite theory as to how this happened. In 1950, physicists Luis and Walter Alvarez, suggested the idea of a huge comet or asteroid, 10 kilometres wide, travelling at 30 kilometres per second, hitting the earth near present-day Mexico. As well as creating a huge crater, it caused darkness for many months, owing to the huge amounts of dust and steam thrown into the atmosphere.

It must have been something catastrophic to wipe out a species that had existed for 150 million years, as well as about 70% of all other species on the earth. Such events would have caused a heat wave and have led to forest fires. The subsequent absence of heat and light from the sun would have led to a deep freeze or ice age. Other theories, however, suggest that the process of extinction would have happened very rapidly, over a period of hours rather than years.

However long it took, the dinosaurs would have had no chance. Only smaller plants and animals, insects and birds, could have survived such an enormous environmental catastrophe which may have led to tidal waves and severe storms. Some creatures had already begun to adapt to earlier environmental changes caused by volcanic eruptions. Those that survived grew larger, increased their populations and took over the territories that had previously been dominated by dinosaurs. It is certainly true that mammals prospered once dinosaurs became extinct. It is said that these small mammals ate the dinosaurs' eggs, which the dinosaurs were unable to prevent.

There are many other theories about the extinction of dinosaurs, and the number keeps on growing. They mainly concern temperature and climate – too hot, too cold, too wet, too dry – and nutrition: they over-ate; plants became poisonous; water became poisonous. A particularly popular theory is that they depended on tropical plants for their diet and that these plants had died out when the temperature got too cold for them. Both increases and decreases in oxygen and carbon dioxide have also been blamed. Some scientists believe that volcanic activity alone accounts for the demise of the dinosaur, as the poisonous gases and molten lava emitted by volcanoes would have made the air impossible to breathe and the land barren.

Another theory focuses on changes in sea levels, such as when the Interior Seaway, which once divided North America in half, drained away, forming new landmasses, like the Colorado Plateau. Both affected the dinosaurs' ability to adapt and survive. A large worldwide flood carries weight as a theory because it explains many other geological features, and why dinosaur fossils are often found under

flood sediment in large numbers and close together, suggesting whole herds were overwhelmed by something which happened suddenly and was inescapable.

A lot has been said about the size of dinosaur brains, allegedly very tiny, and the supposition that they were too stupid to survive new challenges. Another theory is that when the new land bridges were formed, they travelled into territory where they had no immunity and died from new diseases, a bit like what happens to the Martians in H. G. Wells' science fiction novel, *The War of the Worlds*.

Whatever it was, it continues to be a puzzle that fascinates scientists and children alike.

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