Cambridge International Examinations
Cambridge International General Certificate of Secondary Education

FIRST LANGUAGE ENGLISH **0500/32**

Paper 3 Directed Writing and Composition **October/November 2015**

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. The Insert is **not** assessed by the Examiner.

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Read the newspaper article carefully, and then answer **Section 1, Question 1** on the Question Paper.

New Urban Craze on the Rise

You feel on top of the world. It's freezing cold and the wind whips you, but the view is so peaceful that it makes you feel calm. You are separated from the world below and it's a wonderful moment, a complete escape from daily life.

People who go in for urban exploring, who get to the top of very tall buildings however high they are, are committing an illegal act, but that doesn't stop them. On the contrary, the 'sport' is growing, thanks to the internet. Breath-taking pictures taken from the top of skyscrapers and posted on-line go viral and give other people the idea of trying urban exploring too. Security guards and CCTV cameras are not a deterrent.

It is mostly young men in their late twenties, in ordinary professional jobs or doing post-graduate studies, who are attracted to this pursuit. They like to be anonymous, and their activities are always nocturnal. Like Superman, they seem conventional during the day and no one would guess what they get up to, literally, when the working day is over and they take off their suits and put on their climbing costumes. They believe they can achieve more as a collective, so individuals join small groups and then small groups come together as 'crews', attending meetings and communicating on-line, and get more publicity that way.

Urban exploring, or 'Urbex', has thousands of participants in cities across the world. 'It's growing and growing fast', says a student who is doing a PhD on urban exploring. He predicts that it will soon become a mainstream extreme sport, mainly because of the publicity generated by the beautiful photographs that are being taken and published. The explorers keep their names secret but they enjoy sharing what they do. They claim that it does no harm to the buildings and no one else is put at risk but themselves.

Owners of urban property take a very different view, however. One spokesperson said that by accessing construction sites and tall buildings, the urban explorers are costing huge sums for security and insurance; the owners are afraid they will be held responsible and will be liable for paying out compensation if someone falls from one of their buildings. They think it's irresponsible to publicise and glamourise such a dangerous activity across the world, perhaps drawing in those who are too young to understand the skills needed and the risks involved. They accuse the climbers of having a political agenda: of wanting to make a statement about the right to roam the city and not respect private property.

The explorers, however, are motivated by the need to find challenge in a world which they think has become obsessed with safety and in which there are few remaining wildernesses. They claim that there are no longer any opportunities to do anything which is not limited and regulated by laws to the extent of rendering it tame and with no thrills attached. Conquering something only just constructed is the nearest they feel they can get to exercising freedom and discovering uncharted territory. This is the urban equivalent of becoming a mountaineer, but is even more exciting because the experience is genuinely a new one; since the building didn't exist before, no one else can say they've already been there and done that.

It isn't always plain sailing, or soaring. There are inevitably accidents and plans that go wrong. It is especially dangerous to use equipment, such as lifts, in buildings still under construction, and floors and roofs that look solid can be deceptive. Getting stuck can mean being without food and water for a whole weekend until the builders come back. Then there's the matter of getting caught and possibly arrested, and the harassment caused to security guards who have to chase them if they know they are on the premises.

There is also a big security issue; is it acceptable that infiltrators with cameras can bypass locked doors and surveillance systems to climb to vantage points over a teeming city, especially one about to host an international event such as the Olympics? What if they are not just doing it for fun but have

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terrorist intentions? The Urbex teams say that they are performing a public service by drawing attention to which buildings have lax security so that something can be done about the flaws. If this is the case, that's surely something we can all thank them for.

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