Cambridge IGCSE

Cambridge International Examinations
Cambridge International General Certificate of Secondary Education

FIRST LANGUAGE ENGLISH **0500/11**

Paper 1 Reading Passages (Core) **October/November 2017**

READING BOOKLET INSERT

1 hour 45 minutes

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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 Reading Booklet Insert and use the blank spaces for planning.
This Reading Booklet Insert is **not** assessed by the Examiner.

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CAMBRIDGE International Examinations

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Part 1

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

Passage A: Stuck in the Snow

In the following passage the driver of a steam train, Jack, is trying to keep the train moving through a heavy snowstorm on the way to a large city.

With the fire made up, the pressure rose and just in time, for the train had entered a dip between two banks where it had to plough through a metre of snow. At first it advanced with an energetic effort, vibrating in every part. Then, for an instant, it faltered and seemed about to grind to a halt. What increased the weight it had to carry was the snow, which had accumulated in a heavy layer on the roofs of the carriages.

They continued moving, a dark line in the whiteness that spread out around them like a vast white blanket, while the snowflakes settled in a dense mass on the carriages. Once more, despite the weight, the train freed itself. At the top of an embankment, that made a great curve, the train could still be seen moving with some difficulty, looking like a strip of shadow lost in a field of sparkling whiteness.

Further on, the snow became a dense white sheet and Jack, the driver, who could sense the train was struggling, tried to ignore the effects of the cold and stood firmly at the controls. He felt the engine shuddering pathetically and the final halt came slowly and without a shock. It stayed there as if glued to the spot, exhausted, with all its wheels clogged with snow. It had ceased moving, the end had come; the deep snow held the engine powerless.

'That does it!' Jack muttered angrily to himself. He remained a few seconds longer, his hand on the wheel, opening every valve to see if the obstacle would give way. Then, hearing the train puffing and snorting in vain, he shut the accelerator with a furious curse. Steam hissed from the valves as the engine settled and ceased its straining efforts. For a moment there was silence.

The conductor leant out from a door at the rear of the train and, seeing Jack through the drifting snowflakes, shouted:

'What's up? Are we stuck?'

There was no reply; Jack was too angry to speak. He had never before been prevented from completing a journey by the weather.

Briskly the conductor sprang down into the snow, which reached to his knees. He made his way towards the driver's cab with great difficulty, getting at times half buried in the snow. By now the passengers had become alarmed at stopping in the middle of nowhere, in such a wintry wilderness. The windows went down; the people called out and questioned one another; a regular confusion ensued.

'Where are we?'
'Why have we stopped?'
'What's going on?'
'Has there been an accident?'

The conductor found it necessary to reassure everyone as he advanced towards the front of the train. As he passed, an expensively dressed woman whose red face was framed by the faces of her daughters, inquired with a commanding voice:

'Conductor, is there any danger?'

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'No, madam,' he replied. 'Only a little snow. We'll be moving soon.'

The window went up again as the two daughters laughed, very much amused by their mother's irritation.

Further on, towards the rear of the train, an elderly gentleman was now calling to the conductor, waving his umbrella to attract attention.

'Why weren't you prepared for a 'little bit of snow'?' the man shouted furiously. 'I am on the way to an important meeting. I shall complain to the transport manager if I am late!'

'Please don't worry, sir!' the conductor replied with a great show of confidence. 'I am sorry for any delay to your journey. We shall be moving in just a couple of minutes.'

Behind his back the conductor clenched his hands nervously.

Part 2

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

Passage B: Swiss Train Travel

In this travel article, written for a newspaper, the writer, Frank Barrett, describes his experience of Swiss train travel.

We were at the highest point of the Glacier Express's journey between St Moritz and Zermatt, making our descent towards Brig. In all directions the giant observation windows revealed amazing vistas: lush green valleys, steep cliffs and eye-catching views of mountain peaks dusted with snow. It was a sight to take the breath away. However, the train called the 'Glacier Express' rolls along at a speed of only 30 kph: it is actually promoted as 'the slowest express train in the world'. The speed isn't spectacular, the views certainly are and there is plenty of time to see them.

Later, in hot September sunshine, we took lunch in the Waldhaus Hotel's garden, entertained by a pianist playing popular local tunes. There were four buses an hour to the hotel. Remarkably, nobody checked our bus tickets – they assumed you were being honest. The bus was modern, clean, efficient and on time. Of all the things that impress about Swiss transport, astonishing punctuality is top of the list.

I travelled from London to Brig, near the Swiss / Italian border, in six days. The return journey to London via Luxembourg took a further four days. It would be hard to imagine a more perfect holiday. After an overnight stay in Cologne, we travelled down the Rhine to Basel, Zurich and the lovely town of Chur, where we spent four glorious days before the climactic Glacier Express ride.

Switzerland's train routes are amazingly comprehensive. They are particularly impressive when you consider the great engineering challenges posed by Switzerland's mountainous landscape. The Glacier Express route is famous for its extraordinary architecture, most remarkable being the 72 metre high Landwasser Viaduct, the Landwasser Tunnel and half a dozen other tunnels and countless bridges. This relatively short but hugely spectacular ride is a tourist favourite. I was delighted to share this unique experience and could have happily trundled up and down the Swiss train routes for days admiring the view.

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