Cambridge IGCSE

Cambridge International Examinations
Cambridge International General Certificate of Secondary Education

FIRST LANGUAGE ENGLISH **0500/13**

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** the 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.

This document consists of **4** printed pages.

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Part 1

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

Passage A: Train Journey in a Snowstorm

In this extract a steam train is travelling to London through a snowstorm which is making the journey very difficult.

The snow continued falling thicker than ever. They were still ascending when the conductor believed he could see the glint of the red light of another train in the distance and told Fred the driver. But it quickly disappeared. Fred, who had seen nothing, felt his heart pounding. He was troubled by this hallucination of his assistant and Fred felt he was losing confidence in him. He pulled the handle and whistled long and despairingly through the storm. He was astonished to find that he had whistled at the right moment, for the train was arriving at a small country station which he had thought was five kilometres away at least.

During the three minutes' stoppage Fred called the stationmaster, wishing to convey his anxiety about the snow, which continued getting deeper and deeper. He would never be able to reach London; the best thing would be to put on another engine when he reached the depot at Oxford, where locomotives were always ready. He explained this to the frowning stationmaster, who shook his head as he listened.

'I have no orders to do that and I do not want to take the responsibility for such a decision,' said the stationmaster.

All he offered to do was to give six wooden shovels to clear the line in case of need. Fred was very upset, but took the shovels, which he placed in a corner of the driver's cab.

Once underway, they advanced at a good speed. Nevertheless, the train was struggling in the immense white whirlwind. In this uncertain light nothing could be distinguished; it increased the anxiety of the two men who, with eyes watering, did their utmost to pierce the distance. Jack sounded the whistle almost continuously – a shriek that penetrated through the depths of this wilderness of snow.

Daylight began to appear, but very dimly; and it seemed as if the snow fell more densely, confused and cold, overwhelming the earth. It felt as if they were being borne along in a dream. The vast flat fields and the rich pastures were enclosed in green hedges. The apple orchards looked like a white sea, a pale expanse in which everything became white. Fred stood bravely, his hand on the wheel, his face lacerated by the gusts of wind and snow, suffering terribly from cold.

When the train stopped at Oxford station, Mr Beeching, the stationmaster, approached the engine to warn Jack that a considerable amount of snow had been falling in the area.

'I believe it is still possible to pass,' he added, 'but it will be with great difficulty.'

Fred flew into a rage, and exclaimed:

'I told them about this! Why couldn't they put on a second locomotive? We shall be in such a dangerous situation now! It isn't safe with only one engine!'

'Anyway, you have been warned,' said Mr Beeching. 'I've done my job!'

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In the meantime the passengers were astonished at this lengthy stoppage, amid the complete silence enveloping the station, without a shout from any of the staff, or the banging of a door. A few windows were lowered, and heads appeared: two men, one young and the other old, chatted from one carriage to the other, with their bodies half out of the windows. *35*

'Come on! Get going!' concluded the stationmaster. 'It's no use annoying the passengers.'

He gave the signal himself. The train began to move and Fred sounded the whistle which seemed like a long wail of complaint. *40*

Part 2

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

Passage B: Travelling on the Trans-Siberian Railway

In this blog, the writer describes the experience of travelling by train on the Trans-Siberian Railway.

Ignore the Internet forums that tell you how hard it is to buy train tickets if you don't speak Russian. Admittedly, it is a bit daunting when you're face to face at the ticket office, but here's a secret to break the ice: try a handwritten note using the Russian alphabet and the ticket-seller might crack a smile. It will look like children's writing. It works every time.

Buying tickets at the window will save a lot of money. Savings are greater if you choose the open carriage in which most locals travel. These tickets can be 25% cheaper. The open carriage offers none of the privacy of your own compartment, but how else are you going to witness the local customs?

Train tickets may be one issue, but visas are another. Assuming Moscow as the start, depending what your final destination is, and what route you decide on, you will need a visa for Russia, Mongolia or China, or all three. If you have the time and patience, there's no reason you can't obtain the visas on your own. However, obtaining a Russian visa is not straightforward. It might be worthwhile having an agent do this for you, freeing you up to learn the Russian alphabet. Allow time as this is important.

Don't forget that timetables are based on Moscow time, especially when crossing up to eight time zones. Be prepared to alter your plans in case your preferred train is sold out. If you're travelling in peak season you need to be very flexible as you probably won't get the tickets you want. In fact, on some of the more popular trains you might have to use an agent as they pre-buy seats in bulk. We travelled in October with no problems.

Finally, don't rush the trip. Remember, travel isn't about the destination but the experience of getting there.

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