Cambridge International Examinations
Cambridge International General Certificate of Secondary Education

FIRST LANGUAGE ENGLISH **0500/23**

Paper 2 Reading Passages (Extended) **October/November 2017**

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.

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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: The Price of Fame

Mia hated being ordinary and dreamed of being a pop star. She reached the live final of TV show, 'The Talent'. This is her diary entry for the day after the final.

I am mortified. Yesterday was the worst day of my life. The final was to be broadcast to millions across the whole country. Just three contestants were left: the so-called 'Glamorous Granny' who sang those classic tunes that nobody cares about, the irritatingly chirpy boy band, and me. I hated the way they all laughed and chatted to the lowly technicians and I was sick of their smiling faces on every magazine cover. They were no-hopers compared to me; I would win because I was the most talented. All the newspapers admitted that I had the best voice and I was feeling confident. The other contestants were so annoying that I couldn't help getting snappy at them. I suppose I did criticise their song choices and I laughed at that girl's emerald sequinned dress – but it looked ridiculous on her. And the technicians were so boring that it's no wonder I ignored all their pointless instructions.

The two presenters of the show kept saying, 'Be nice on the way up; you never know who you'll meet on the way down.' But why listen to them? I couldn't help being late for rehearsals and the reporters who constantly hung around the contestants were irritating. Why would I bother talking to them? I don't know why they published that silly piece about me the night before the final. 'Diva Mia: the awful truth about a monster in the making.' What was that all about?

An hour before the final, I preened in front of the mirror as the stylist, Boone, sprinkled glitter over my shoulders. Iridescent shimmers caught the light as he fluttered about before declaring that my eyes were sparkling jewels. I admired my luminous form practising a few elegant dance moves, as Boone muttered something about my 'sheer ambition'. I would dazzle on stage tonight, a true star. Like a comet blazing a trail, nothing could stop me now.

As my turn on stage drew closer, I tried to ignore the murmurs of the backstage staff about my 'constant complaining' – and the way everyone seemed to be reading that silly front page article about me. I knew I could be the winner and if the other contestants were complaining about me, then it was out of bitterness and envy – just because I had shouted at the hairdresser for being late, and pushed that little boy out of my way because he insisted on an autograph. It was an accident and even his mother had to agree with me. I'm not perfect. I loved my life as a singer and I wanted fame so much, I could almost taste it. If someone has a talent then it's a crime to waste it. Anyway, these people were in the past and now was my time to shine. Ignoring the scowls on the faces of the backstage workers, I gave a brave smile to the presenters and waited for the signal to go on stage.

I stepped into a cauldron of noise. Hissing and booing, thousands of jeering voices filled the theatre. I struggled to catch my breath as my suddenly fragile voice was drowned by the audience's derision. I blinked away my scalding tears and tried again to sing the first notes. Even the band had stepped away from me, and I stood alone against the waves of anger from the audience. They hated me!

Throwing down my microphone, I fled the stage into the comforting gloom of the theatre wings. Fake smiles on their faces, the presenters insisted on a comment with their cameraman looming menacingly, ready to record every moment of my collapse. My tears would be plastered all over the newspapers tomorrow morning. I would be shamed in front of the whole country. I pushed everyone away and ran down the maze of corridors, searching for the exit.

Finally, I pushed hard against a door and found myself standing in a gloomy alley behind the theatre. I'd been a puppet for the media. Was this the price of fame?

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Part 2

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

Passage B: Why I'm Leaving the Band

An unsuccessful performer talks about the difficulty of becoming a musician, forcing him to leave the band he's worked in for years.

I've been a performer for over fifteen years now and, like most musicians, I once dreamed of being top of the charts and playing to people all over the world.

When we started out, we had a good local following: people seemed to like us and we were getting pretty good at writing songs. We practised all the time and every spare moment was devoted to getting better. We even recorded a CD and could have sent it off to a few record companies. I guess we just didn't have the contacts. I do know that you need a record deal if you are going to get anywhere in the business. Promoting a band costs money, and we didn't have any rich investors.

We tried to promote the band a bit. We printed out some flyers and gave them to people at our gigs, although I don't really like all that marketing business. It's all about image these days, isn't it? Bands are just another product to be sold. I still think it's about the music though. If you haven't got great songs, then you won't get that deal.

I wanted to play some free concerts: the other people in the band said we needed to make money to cover expenses. Someone suggested we give out free tickets or even T-shirts with our logo on, but I think that would have taken time to organise and cost a fortune. I liked it when some of our friends came to concerts, however, I'm really shy so I never got round to talking to people who were there. Someone asked if they could start a fan club, which was weird – I don't know if they ever did. Probably not.

We did get one of our songs played on local radio; I thought that might be our big break, but they didn't play it again. I guess the DJ didn't like it much. I know other local bands were played a lot and their songs ended up being played nationally and on music channels on TV.

I think we suffered too because we didn't have a video for any of our songs. If we had made one somehow, then we could have put it on social media or maybe even made a website. I've heard that some bands were discovered because someone filmed their concert and put it on the internet. I didn't want to do it because somebody might have stolen our songs and pretended they were theirs. I did join some musicians' forums but the feedback was quite negative so I stopped posting. We got lots of criticism for not having an 'image' – I still think it should be about the songs. Who cares if we are scruffy and don't look like models? My mum said I looked great.

I sent an email out to lots of record companies with no response at all. I suppose they have hundreds of emails every day, but it would have been nice to get a reply. I wish we'd had the money to do something really creative. Do you know, one band hired a truck and played outside the record company office? I guess that helped them stand out from the crowd.

I know A&R (Artists and Repertoire) people have to be cautious these days because there are so many bands out there and they won't sign you unless they think you will make them money. I read an article saying that bands should show record companies how serious they are about the business – even saying you should get an accountant.

Anyway, it's probably for the best. Record companies sometimes exploit bands and they end up working really hard and never making a decent living. I think the contracts can be really complicated and I'm not a lawyer.

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Looking back, I can see that what we needed was technical support to make high quality recordings, and someone with the knowledge and contacts to get our name and music known. It's such a shame that never happened.

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