Cambridge International Examinations
Cambridge International General Certificate of Secondary Education

FIRST LANGUAGE ENGLISH **0500/32**

Paper 3 Directed Writing and Composition **October/November 2017**

2 hours

READING BOOKLET INSERT

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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 Reading Booklet Insert and use the blank spaces for planning.
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Read the passage carefully, and then answer **Question 1** on the Question Paper.

The writer of this article describes the ongoing debate about graffiti and gives examples of the widely differing reactions to it in various parts of the world.

Graffiti: street art – or crime?

On the face of it, we all seem to be a little mixed-up when it comes to 'graffiti', as you call it if you work cleaning it up, or 'street art' as you say if you're wielding the spray can.

But the confusion now runs deeper. Recently, a court delivered its verdict – members of a graffiti crew were jailed after admitting criminal damage in 120 night-time attacks on stations and trains in London, Paris, Amsterdam and the Czech Republic.

By contrast, just down the road, a prestigious modern art gallery had been covered in giant murals by six urban artists with international reputations, from Bologna to Barcelona, in the first display of street art at a major museum.

The courtroom and the museum were so close that supporters of the men on trial popped down to the gallery to do a bit of retouching during one lunchtime adjournment. 'There is a huge irony in the juxtaposition of the two events,' said one of the artists.

The man to credit for bringing street art into established gallery spaces is Banksy. A few years ago he was sneaking his work into galleries. Now galleries sell his book in their gift shops. His works go for high prices worldwide. He, more than anyone else, has legitimised the genre and spawned a new generation of young imitators.

Next week, another famous gallery launches an exhibition based on the work of the convicted graffiti crew, asking whether the men are criminals or artists.

'It is a question which prompts different answers in different parts of the world,' says the museum's curator. 'There are countries that are more relaxed about it,' he says. 'In parts of Australia, people really hate graffiti and tags (a sort of graffiti signature) on vans and trains, but in Melbourne some van drivers compete with each other as to whose is more decorated.'

They have similarly split responses in other nations too. In Toronto, police have just hired a street artist to paint walls to help find a criminal. Elsewhere in Canada, a court has ruled that, after a police crackdown on graffiti artists, a 28-year-old man is only allowed to venture into town if he is accompanied by his mother. Street art, you see, is a highly polarising phenomenon. On one hand, there are those who insist that 'artists who paint on the street are merely expressing themselves, not hurting anyone' and should not be punished 'but appreciated and celebrated'. Then there are those who describe the activities of crews as 'self-indulgent campaigns to damage property on an industrial scale'.

How can this problem be resolved?

One street artist, Bob, concedes, 'You can't let people run wild. If there's a clash of rights obviously those of the owner of the wall take precedence.' He adds, 'There's room for debate, but jail sentences shouldn't be part of that. They should just have to do youth work, or clean up ugly tags.'

Some community leaders agree. They commission crew members to lead street art workshops as tutors for young and vulnerable people.

'Street art starts with kids doing ugly tags,' Bob says. 'When a kid starts learning to play music only the next-door neighbours hear, but with street art the whole neighbourhood sees him not being very good when he starts out.'

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The trouble is there's a whole lot of 'learning' going on. Some 85 per cent of graffiti is just tags, according to US sociologists who survey this kind of thing.

The money men will not help much, for all their attempts to cash in on street art. Big brands have incorporated graffiti into their marketing campaigns. A global paint firm has even developed a new line of spray paint aimed at street stencillers, with colours named after well-known graffiti artists.

Even the trial judge admitted, 'It would be wrong of me not to acknowledge that some examples of your handiwork show considerable artistic talent,' but concluded, 'the trouble is that it has been sprayed all over other people's property without their consent and that is simply vandalism.' The bill for the graffiti crew's spree must have run into millions.

If art is defined by the artist's intent then vandalism must be determined by the response of the owner of the thing vandalised. One community recently tried to find a compromise. It erected two, huge graffiti boards to allow artists to express themselves freely.

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