Cambridge IGCSE

Cambridge International Examinations
Cambridge International General Certificate of Secondary Education

FIRST LANGUAGE ENGLISH **0500/31**

Paper 3 Directed Writing and Composition **October/November 2018**

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.

Take-a-Break – Sleeping at Work

This article explains the ways in which some companies encourage their employees to take a break during their working day.

Last year, a technology company, web-it-now.com, keen to demonstrate commitment to their employees' long-term well-being, joined a host of national companies in supporting the Take-a-Break campaign. The website design business set up a nap room to help ease fatigue among its web developers who were working long hours, sometimes as many as seventy per week. It seemed the perfect, cost-effective solution for the growing company to keep its workers sharp and focused.

The plan backfired.

'It didn't take long to figure out that naps were counter-productive,' says Mo Garra, co-founder of the company. 'Management had put a fifteen-minute cap on power naps, but many employees accidentally overslept. Awaking groggy, a number then spent even more time refilling coffee mugs or splashing water on their faces in an attempt to snap back into work mode. The whole process could waste an hour and a half,' Mo explains. Six months in, the once-efficient team was reaching only 55 percent of its weekly goals, down thirty percentage points from before the experiment.

Studies by productivity experts claim to show that power naps and relaxation breaks can restore energy and focus during the workday, even during the dreaded mid-afternoon slump. Increasingly, employers, in an effort to keep their employees engaged and focused, offer nap rooms or encourage an afternoon break.

Industry experts, concerned with work–life balance and safety at work, praise such Take-a-Break programmes. But lurking behind the lounge chairs and mood lighting are pitfalls. Not everyone wakes up from a refreshing snooze able to bounce back. Not everyone returns promptly. Managers who've introduced these programmes find themselves tasked with a job more akin to that of a kindergarten teacher overseeing a room of toddlers – monitoring their team's midday sleep and relaxation habits.

'The difficulty,' explains Nathanial Scaer, a manager for a global company which recently introduced a one-person nap room, 'is striking the balance between encouraging weary workers to rest and allowing too much time for slacking.' His company has no formal rules about when employees can nap and for how long. However, he suggests napping only when absolutely necessary. 'Personally, I feel that encouraging daily naps is disruptive,' says Scaer, who worries that unnecessary snoozing will affect productivity.

'There are also those employees who take napping on the job too far. I've had instances where one person in particular spent a little too long in the nap room,' he remembers. 'His snoring gave him away.' Nevertheless, his company still encourages its staff to take an afternoon break from the computer screen. The office features a mini bowling alley, basketball hoops and even a low-lit 'serenity room' with a massage chair. 'Workers know better now than to abandon their workstations at the expense of deadlines, or linger too long in Relaxation-land,' says Scaer. 'Reminders of the company's "work-hard-play-hard" culture, and need for vigilance in meeting deadlines, have been key to the programme's success,' he adds. 'A gentle "Where've you been?" is usually all it takes to ensure offenders don't do it again.'

Lifestyle expert, Kim Gray, feels strongly that staff need a break away from their desks each afternoon. 'It's a way to stop everyone from burning out,' she argues.

But practising what you preach as a manager can prove difficult.

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'There are certain days when I feel as if I need to keep ploughing through work,' admits Gray, who often spends her own break in her office. 'It can be disruptive for new businesses especially if team members disappear into a room to doze. When a business is starting up, everyone needs to be involved. You need ideas and chats which include everyone.' She has sofas, a wide-screen television and a games console in one corner of her team's large open office. 'That way breaks stay shorter, as guilt will always kick in,' she smiles.

Fashion editor, Tamara Chi, goes further, proposing the guilt-free notion of 'efficient relaxation': she encourages employees to take a daily 'working break'. This entails grabbing a stack of beauty and baby magazines, finding a comfy chair and flipping through the pile. 'Although it's still technically work,' Chi concedes, 'our small team feels more relaxed. We come back to our desks with new ideas.'

Meanwhile, Mo Garra has just transformed his company's unproductive nap room into an 'innovation lounge' featuring reclining chairs, low lights and music. Employees can spend a few minutes relaxing and socialising as needed, but not snoozing. 'Changing the name, and theme of the room, led to employees achieving 85 percent of their weekly goals in just six weeks,' Mo beams.

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