Cambridge IGCSE

Cambridge International Examinations
Cambridge International General Certificate of Secondary Education

FIRST LANGUAGE ENGLISH **0500/32**

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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This document consists of **3** printed pages and **1** blank page.

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Read the passage carefully, and then answer **Question 1** on the Question Paper.

Why don't I appreciate what I have?

This article explores issues to do with appreciation.

Appreciation seems such a half-hearted emotion, a sort of weedy cousin to the chest-bursting emotions of love and anger. Appreciation never moved mountains. No one ever cried into their pillow listening to a song about appreciation. 'I appreciate you' would be a good greetings card to send if you really can't think of anything better to say.

Yet appreciation – gratitude for what you have, or what someone has done for you – is powerful and underrated; it can make you generally happier, lower your stress hormones, and strengthen your immune system. Appreciated workers give that bit more. Lack of gratitude, however, can make you feel locked in a never-ending cycle of dissatisfaction, constantly looking out for what you lack.

So why don't you appreciate what you have? You have never been taught how to – it is a specific skill. You probably think appreciating what you have is foolish, unambitious or tempting fate, or that you shouldn't look at what you've got, but what you could still have (Isn't that ambition?). You may be out of practice, ground down and grumpy. Or you may simply have accumulated too much stuff to appreciate what you have. Having tangible products in your life, that gadget, that trinket, actually just makes you want more, but the thrill of acquisition is short-lived. Ultimately, possessions make you less grateful than simple pleasures such as family gatherings or sitting next to someone you like and watching a film together.

The good news is that experiences have been shown to engender more gratitude than mere things, and experiences do not need to be expensive. A purchase can cause excitement, but that excitement soon wears off. We get used to the things around us in a process called habituation and don't appreciate them anymore. Experiences grow in the mind to become golden and precious.

Although there is some evidence, in studies with chimpanzees, that gratitude is hardwired in us as a reciprocal social tool (you scratch my back, I'll scratch yours), experts believe that we learn gratitude when we are young. If children are shown how to deal with difficulties by appreciating what they do have, they can become more resilient adults. You can't control what happens. You can only control how you look at a situation and deal with it. Unappreciative adults can learn too. It's simply a question of practice, of flexing a different mind muscle.

However, it doesn't work just by being told you should be grateful for what you have. That doesn't make you appreciative, it just makes you defensive. To be appreciative, you need to be reflective, to look at things differently. Therapists call this 'reframing', though it doesn't work for everyone.

In the last decade, there have been more books and studies on appreciation than ever before. The short version is: stop complaining so much, look around you, keep a gratitude diary. 'Don't look at what you haven't got,' they say. 'Refocus. Do this every day and you can retrain your brain to work differently. You can stop being a moaner and become an appreciator.'

You see some people trying to be appreciative. They photograph their dinner and post it on social media: 'I'm so lucky,' they bleat. This isn't the same as being appreciative. Others are just born ungrateful. They believe the world should live up to its obligations and provide them with the things they want. That's not a mindset that leads to an appreciation of family, friends and colleagues. My own mother argues that appreciation should be less about being grateful for what you have, or can get, and more about being grateful for being able to help others.

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The problem is all this being appreciative seems so passive, doesn't it? Being appreciative shouldn't equal becoming a doormat. Shouldn't we always strive for more, for better, for bigger?

Perhaps the point is that the more you appreciate, the more you see to appreciate and the more appreciative people are of you.

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