Cambridge IGCSE

Cambridge Assessment International Education
Cambridge International General Certificate of Secondary Education

FIRST LANGUAGE ENGLISH **0500/21**

Paper 2 Reading Passages (Extended) **October/November 2019**

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 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 and **4** blank pages.

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Part 1

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

Passage A: Creative writing class

Stan has decided many years after leaving school that he would like to join an adult creative writing class. This is the first lesson.

Stan's pen was ready to write. 'A limerick,' the tutor had said, 'is a five-line poem. Lines one, two and five rhyme. Lines three and four are shorter and they rhyme.' Stan knew that the true definition was more technical, but was happy that this activity wasn't going to be too challenging.

He thought back to his arrival at class today. A group of 10, they'd sat in a circle with Sumitra, the tutor, who asked the students to introduce themselves and share their reasons for joining the class. The first person was Miss Roberts, who stated confidently, 'I intend to be a published writer!' before turning a beaming smile on others of lesser ambition. A thin, young man told the group his name was Robin before muttering a few words that Stan couldn't quite catch, but which Sumitra seemed to understand, as she nodded and smiled. Stan tried desperately to find the words that would accurately sum up his own reasons for being there. Sometimes memories of childhood were restricting and you needed to unfetter yourself.

He was momentarily transported back to his school English class.

A stern face presiding over the ranks of desks pulled young Stan to attention. Stan adjusted his position in the hope that the larger child in front of him would completely obliterate his own unworthy existence. Stan wore his English test results like an army cadet's besmirched tunic buttons, emblematic of deep failure and shame: today's results would surely underline the pressing need for his demotion to an even lesser division. The face at the front contorted itself into a triumphant smirk and its voice poured over him like hot coals.

With a struggle, older Stan dismissed that particular memory back to where it belonged.

His pen poised itself to write again. Sumitra had said to write a limerick using your name.

'There was an old man called Stanley
And everyone thought he was manly …'

This was straightforward. Stan giggled with rising confidence, causing Sumitra to look over and nod her encouragement and Miss Roberts to raise a quizzical eyebrow. Stan gleefully scribbled lines three and four.

'You can be Superman
Oh, yes you can …'

Oh no.

'Banly, canly, danly …' The pen shuddered to a halt and Stan felt horror clutch at his stomach as the last line completely eluded him. 'When we're ready, can we get back into our circle?' came Sumitra's cheery request.

'Go away!' Stan told the smirking face, as he dragged his chair back to the circle.

Sumitra was understanding. 'No one has to read their poem out unless they want to.' Robin immediately announced that he wouldn't be reading his out. Stan was so relieved not to have to expose his failure

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that he hardly heeded the readings of the others, apart from the work of Miss Roberts ('Myfanwy: remember my name'), read with such passion and gusto that it received excited applause from the other students. Sumitra, looking rather disquieted, said the whole class deserved congratulations, and invited them to email their finished work to her during the week.

At break-time, Stan found himself in the presence of Miss Roberts as he sipped at his water bottle. 'Hello, I don't know your name, but, as you know from my limerick, I'm Myfanwy,' she smiled.

'You never could write poetry, could you, Stanley?' sneered the smirking face.

Suddenly a teapot, from which Robin had been pouring tea, performed a rebellious leap and crash-landed next to Miss Roberts. All looked on horrified as tea pumped heavily out of its gaping-mouthed spout, some splashes landing on her arm. She shrieked while Stan did the only thing he could think of, and poured the remainder of his water bottle over her arm. Robin danced dejectedly around them, proffering paper towels and abject apologies, while Sumitra asked calmly if medical assistance was required.

Within minutes Miss Roberts announced that she was fine. She smiled weakly at Stan.

For the rest of the session, the class discussed the definition of poetry and whether free verse[1] could be called poetry. Stan thoroughly enjoyed it and joined in the debate vigorously, though he noticed the tutor giving encouragement to Robin, who looked rather bemused and demoralised. It was only as Stan stepped out through the door at the end of the class that he realised he knew the last line for his limerick:

'And nobly rescue Myfanwy.'

He would definitely email that to Sumitra. He slammed the door on the smirking face.

[1] *free verse*: This is a form of poetry that doesn't have to take a particular shape, rhythm, metre or rhyme.

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Part 2

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

Passage B: Writing for attention

The passage below is about what should be considered when writing an online article.

Recently, I learned the staggering fact that the vast majority of people, who stop to read a web page or blog, only actually read about 20 per cent of its text.

Studies have shown that people don't read internet articles: they scan them. One of our problems is that internet pages are so busy. Adverts, pop-ups and zany animations dance on and off our screens in a manner designed to distract even the most disciplined reader.

This led me to think about how some bloggers and other writers maximise how much their readers can digest of their internet text through scanning, and I have noticed a few things.

Firstly, there is the obvious point of legibility. Research shows that a reader's ability to retain information is often determined by a writer's choice of font. There are certain fonts that simply do not work on different backgrounds. And what about line height? A too tight and a too loose line height both frustrate easy reading. Experiment with this a bit when you write, and you'll see what I mean.

Many enthusiastic bloggers structure their content without realising how much of their writing will be lost. Probably the paragraph that will receive the most attention is the first one, and yet many online writers do not take advantage of this opportunity to outline the points which will be covered more fully in the following paragraphs. Subheadings and font size for subheadings are also significant. I once thought that a simple bold in the same font would be appropriate for all my subheadings. No. A variety of fonts for subheadings, visible a good distance from your computer screen, are your best friends.

Then you need also to look at what your subheadings say. Bearing in mind that your reader is only going to read a small proportion of your blog, and that small proportion is likely to include your subheadings, do they tell enough of your story by themselves? Subheadings also draw attention to sections of your blog: they allow people to see how your writing is divided up at a glance. What are the different aspects and points of the topic you're covering?

Maybe you think that long paragraphs are fine. You think that if your writing is good, the right people will immerse themselves in it and not want to resurface. This is wrong. Short paragraphs are the key to keeping reader attention. The online writer who employs one-sentence paragraphs for important points has learned this lesson.

There are also other considerations. At school, your English teacher probably taught you not to repeat ideas in your essays because it's a sign of poor organisation. Now, however, I can see that repeating ideas or saying them a different way may be very important to someone who is only taking in 20 per cent of what I have written online. When you're writing, you're doing so within a mental flow. You're making a logical argument and linking concepts in preceding sentences and paragraphs with those in the current one. But what happens to the reader who is scanning your text? If they haven't read the paragraph above word for word (or even at all), then they need a bit of help, especially with pronouns. You might feel that your writing becomes a bit stilted if you replace your pronouns with nouns and proper nouns, and I'm not saying you should remove all pronouns, but I do recommend that you go back after you've completed your piece and replace them where you should. And what about another of our old friends from school? Not using a topic sentence at the start of each paragraph is certainly overlooking a reading aid.

All that said, those bloggers who write in a focused manner, unafraid of letting their personalities shine through, have a type of authenticity that can be compelling to a reader.

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