Cambridge IGCSE

Cambridge Assessment International Education
Cambridge International General Certificate of Secondary Education

FIRST LANGUAGE ENGLISH **0500/33**

Paper 3 Directed Writing and Composition **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 **Section 1**, **Question 1** 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 **3** printed pages and **1** blank page.

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

These two letters were posted on a website which offers advice on problems in the workplace.

Passage A: Letter from Gerry asking for advice

Dear Remy,

People who know me say I've a great sense of humour – as well as being good-looking, charming, modest – but seriously, they do. Like anyone, I play to my strengths and, since I'm naturally funny, I joke around in the office, tease the office juniors, do prank calls, play practical jokes, and so on. With new staff, it helps break the ice and keeps the oldies on their toes and awake. Mostly my jokes aren't planned, they just happen, though sometimes they are deliberately targeted to make a point if someone is slacking or needs reminding to get in to work on time.

I read somewhere that over 90 per cent of business executives would rather hire someone with a good sense of humour and are more likely to promote them, believing they do a better job. Similarly, 75 per cent of workers said they'd be reluctant to leave a workplace that was fun, with good working relationships and high levels of trust. This proves that most normal people like a laugh. Humour can smooth over conflicts between colleagues and frankly makes work less boring.

When our latest group of new trainees joined us last week, I made a joke and, as usual, most people laughed. That was that – no complaints. But afterwards I was a little worried from comments I overheard that some people could have thought I really meant what I said. My sarcastic tone hopefully made the satirical intention of the joke clear, and shouldn't have caused any real offence. Unfortunately, the person concerned doesn't seem to have a sense of humour and has been moping around ever since. As a team, we're used to teasing each other when someone makes a mistake and laughing about it for weeks afterwards – it's one way to make sure people avoid errors. No one is ever worried by it though, or rarely; in fact I've only had one complaint before and that person left not long afterwards anyway.

I'm not an insensitive person. I realise some people just don't find things funny, so I am wondering if I should apologise or just carry on as normal. I don't want to create an issue where there really isn't one.

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Passage B: Letter in response

Dear Gerry,

Since you seem reasonable enough to realise you may need to apologise, I'm assuming the humour you're talking about doesn't involve any type of prejudice. If it had you'd probably have been sacked by now. All forms of prejudice in the workplace, for example those based on gender, race or physical appearance, are completely inappropriate and could lead you to face discrimination charges.

Unfortunately, the fact that most people laughed isn't necessarily evidence that your joke was a safe one. Sometimes we laugh because we're shocked, or weren't expecting someone to say what they did, or simply because others are laughing. If you're someone's boss they might be laughing with you out of nervousness, or with their career prospects in mind.

You say you're not insensitive – not all of your co-workers may agree. Even if they think of you as good fun and essentially a good person, the point is that even good people can contribute to hostile environments, making life miserable for someone else.

Suppose this one joke didn't actually offend anyone. Suppose I'm overreacting when I throw around words like 'alienate' and 'bullying'. It's still the case that senior staff are role models for juniors aspiring to succeed. They learn by watching. The boundaries for your new trainees are where you draw them. 'Just kidding', 'No offence' or 'Can't you take a joke?' are too often used as a defence for bad behaviour.

You'll tell me no doubt that laughter reduces stress by releasing endorphins, that humour can help you think and be more creative. But imagine for a moment if you're on the receiving end of a joke that upsets you – your reaction would be just the opposite.

Research does show how strategic, purposeful humour at work can help organisations brand themselves, attract employees, improve morale and reduce absenteeism. But while humour can be a great tool for improving productivity and relationships, inappropriate jokes and comments will undermine them. What you and your friends find funny could be insulting and offensive to others you know less well. Humour has little to do with practical jokes. Humour that excludes anyone or causes people to become distracted because they are feeling bad is inappropriate.

Perhaps that apology might be the first thing you need to consider …

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