Cambridge Assessment International Education

Cambridge IGCSE™

FIRST LANGUAGE ENGLISH **0500/22**

Paper 2 Directed Writing and Composition **October/November 2020**

INSERT **2 hours**

2042872565-I

INFORMATION

- This insert contains the reading texts.
- You may annotate this insert and use the blank spaces for planning. **Do not write your answers** on the insert.

DC (MM) 181568/1
© UCLES 2020

Read **both** texts, and then answer **Question 1** on the question paper.

Text A: Who are the real experts?

This passage explores the idea of expertise.

Last week, I needed to book lunch in a city that I didn't know well, and began searching for a suitable restaurant. Years ago, I'd have done that by turning to a restaurant guide or travel book. In the world I grew up in, it was normal to seek advice from the 'experts'. Nowadays, it wouldn't occur to me to do that. Instead, I typed what I needed into my phone, scrolled through long lists of online restaurant recommendations from people who said they'd eaten in them – and picked one. Risky, yes: estimates suggest 20 per cent of comments posted on review websites are fake, but there were enough voices for me to feel able to trust the wisdom of the cyber crowds. Lunch was nothing special.

This is a trivial example of a bigger change underway. Citizens of the cyber world no longer have faith in anything that real experts say. People have had enough of experts. We increasingly rely on crowd-sourced advice rather than properly qualified experts to choose our restaurants, holidays and health care. We take advice from our peer group, our online 'friends' – people like us, and people we like. In some senses, this is good news, but the problem of this new world is that people can fall prey to social fads or groupthink. If I only listen to opinions from 'a person like me', I'm less likely to accept new facts or arguments from anyone else.

We're also far too interested in what celebrities have to say. This is more serious. Celebrities are too often given a platform to air their views. Celebrities are better-looking and more entertaining than real experts with their solemn speeches and statistics, but just because someone's good at acting or sport, should we trust their opinions on child-rearing, diet or global warming?

Of course, celebrities say they're just getting 'the message' out to the public. Actually, they're helping to devalue real expertise and reduce intelligent public discussion. We're racing headlong towards some dumbed-down future. Let's face it, if you're listening to celebrities on global affairs, you're not really asking the hard questions, are you?

© UCLES 2020

Text B: Trust me, I'm an expert

This passage explores the relationship between trust and expertise.

Why do people trust some experts but reject others? Why do people seek medical experts for medical issues, but distrust economic experts for economic issues? What makes us decide to place trust in, and listen to, an expert when we need to solve a problem that's beyond our understanding?

Luckily, there's scientific research on the issue – if you trust that sort of thing.

Studies argue that to gain our trust an expert needs three characteristics: expertise, integrity and benevolence. In other words, knowing stuff isn't enough. For us to rate someone as a trustworthy expert they need to seem honest and good-hearted.

This can be problematic in a world where the idea persists that experts are remote geniuses full of their own importance, or ambitious entrepreneurs blinding us with science. But where does this idea come from? From my own experience with experts, and being one myself, I think that one reason we seem so untrustworthy and self-centred is because of how we speak.

To many people expertise is a foreign language. When experts talk, they often use complicated words and acronyms. Experts seem to want non-experts to rise to their level of sophistication, rather than approaching non-experts with appropriate language.

As an expert on memory, I'm sometimes guilty of this. I really like uncommon words, despite knowing they can scare people away. Even in my new book, *The Memory Illusion*, where I waffle on about the importance of explaining things in plain English, on the very first page I use the word 'parsimony'.

In my university lectures and books I consider using precise, elegant words part of the educational experience. However, using words and phrases that most people don't understand in everyday conversation and the media is just showing off. Experts should stop blaming the public for not listening to them and give themselves a stern talking to.

Experts need to demonstrate that they're good, honest people with the public's best interest at heart. That's easier for some; it's simple to see how medical experts help others, but much harder with climate scientists who we may only be able to properly thank when our cities aren't underwater in 50 years' time.

But maybe there's hope yet. A recent online poll found that 'in times like these', people trust academics and experts considerably more than their boss, family, or friends.

© UCLES 2020

BLANK PAGE

Permission to reproduce items where third-party owned material protected by copyright is included has been sought and cleared where possible. Every reasonable effort has been made by the publisher (UCLES) to trace copyright holders, but if any items requiring clearance have unwittingly been included, the publisher will be pleased to make amends at the earliest possible opportunity.

To avoid the issue of disclosure of answer-related information to candidates, all copyright acknowledgements are reproduced online in the Cambridge Assessment International Education Copyright Acknowledgements Booklet. This is produced for each series of examinations and is freely available to download at www.cambridgeinternational.org after the live examination series.

Cambridge Assessment International Education is part of the Cambridge Assessment Group. Cambridge Assessment is the brand name of the University of Cambridge Local Examinations Syndicate (UCLES), which itself is a department of the University of Cambridge.

© UCLES 2020