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FIRST LANGUAGE ENGLISH **0500/23**

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

INSERT **2 hours**

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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.

This document has **4** pages. Blank pages are indicated.

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

Text A: Why you shouldn't work at full capacity

This passage explores the problems associated with working too hard.

Have you ever felt like you couldn't take time off work because nobody could do your job while you're away? Do you drop your personal plans to work late nights and weekends, and feel guilty simply leaving the office on time?

If any of the above sounds familiar, then you may be one of the growing number of so-called 'work martyrs' who are drastically changing company culture and leading to a rise in cases of stress and burnout.

Biri Patel is the first person to admit he's been suffering from mild burnout by sacrificing all of his free time for his career.

The 25-year-old data scientist says his problems began two years ago when, keen to impress at his new job, he set the bar too high. 'I was working 12 hours a day at 200 per cent.'

At first, the positive recognition he received was addictive, but the recent university graduate soon realised that taking on such huge amounts of work was unsustainable.

'Over time, your company expects you to work at that initial level because that's what you've done before, and you expect yourself to be at that level because that's what you've been putting in,' he says. 'But working that hard all the time just isn't feasible.'

Patel found himself becoming less productive and less efficient the more hours he put in. He says it took an emotional toll too, 'because you expect yourself to be at a higher level and achieving more.'

Patel is not alone in this predicament. According to a new study, 81 per cent of salaried employees work outside of their standard work hours, with 29 per cent doing it three or more days per week. Another study found that under 30s, in particular, are much more likely to become work martyrs than their older peers.

Experts caution that more time in the office doesn't equate to a better worker, and that bosses need to set clear goals to prevent much bigger problems on the horizon. They warn that the repercussions of a stressed-out workforce will become more pronounced as younger workers move into management roles and expect the same level of performance from their subordinates.

Studies link overworking with numerous stress-related health problems, including depression and impaired sleep. Working hard can result in a sense of accomplishment but also unhealthy levels of anxiety. In an office culture where technology is everywhere, boundaries are unclear with many feeling chained to their devices, and home becoming an extension of the office. There's little guidance in the workplace about what's appropriate with technology, so it gives us this feeling that we need to be reachable at all times, that we should always be available to work, or risk someone else taking advantage of our absence. This fuels a kind of hyper-intense desire to prove ourselves.

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Text B: Keep on working into old age for the good of your health

This passage explores the benefits of working in old age.

Older people should consider working until their 70s and 80s for the good of their health, pronounced leading expert Professor Alison Zhang in her recent report. Skilled employees should not have to stop work, she argues, simply because others think they're old.

Professor Zhang told those approaching 70 that they are better off staying in work. She said that she enjoyed working hard and had no plans to stop and retire. She urged others to follow her example. 'Older people can continue with the work they've always loved, or train for new careers doing something they enjoy.'

Her report suggests that people who remain in paid employment into older age improve their chances of staying healthier for longer.

Professor Zhang writes: 'People are living longer than ever. Staying in work can make sure they stay physically and mentally active for longer. The health benefits of this should not be underestimated.'

The report explains that while many older people enjoy the benefits of retirement, for many others retirement brings feelings of social isolation and stress linked to money worries. After a lifetime spent working, it seems that many retired people just don't know what to do each day without a job.

Research suggests that social isolation increases the risk of dementia, while more active lifestyles have been shown to protect against a host of diseases and the advance of frailty.

Dancing and swimming clubs, singing programmes run by choirs and helping children with reading in schools are suggested as hobbies which could prevent isolation and reduce stress.

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