Cambridge Assessment International Education

Cambridge IGCSE™

FIRST LANGUAGE ENGLISH **0500/12**

Paper 1 Reading **October/November 2022**

INSERT **2 hours**

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.

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Read **Text A**, and then answer **Questions 1(a)–(e)** on the question paper.

Text A: Why dance?

There are few cultures on earth that don't possess an urge to dance. Our ancestors painted their cave walls with pictures of dancers. Even babies instinctively jig in time to music.

But how is it that such a simple physical act has the ability to lift the spirits?

You get a much bigger release of endorphins when you dance than during other forms of exercise. It also connects with the emotional centres in the brain. For many people, dancing prompts an emotional release. Often that's uncomplicated happiness. Others cry. It's cathartic – a letting go of pent-up emotions.

Experiments have proved the cognitive benefits of dancing. Researchers took a group of people into a laboratory where music was played for five minutes. Each had to choose from three options: to sit and listen quietly, to cycle on an exercise bike or to get up and dance. All were given cognitive tasks to perform before and after. Those who chose to dance displayed improved problem-solving skills afterwards. The mood levels of the dancers also went up.

Another big draw to dancing is the social element. The synchrony involved in dancing to a beat along with other people is a powerful way for humans to bond socially. You can walk into a dance class not knowing another soul, and quickly discover that dancing – at whatever level – is a wonderful way of breaking down inhibitions.

Dancing is not just for those of a certain age or ability. Situations where you might dance include anything from an impromptu jig at an overly quiet family wedding to a salsa-style exercise regime. Those who dance, even just for fun, enjoy better mental well-being than those who don't.

These factors compensate for the fact that dancing is not typically a high-paying profession. Dancers are professional people who adapt to long hours of perfecting their art. They perform warm-up and cool-down exercises after a rigorous workout, knowing that this is the only way to reduce the likelihood of an injury or the need to retire unnecessarily early.

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Read **Text B**, and then answer **Question 1(f)** on the question paper.

Text B: Advice to dance teachers

So, you're a dance teacher putting together your timetable for a new term. You teach students in beginners, intermediate and advanced classes. Your timetable looks logical:

6pm – Beginners

7pm – Intermediate

8pm – Advanced.

Sadly, this is one of those hidden reasons for student dissatisfaction. Why? Because this timetable turns your classes into performances. Here's what happens …

Your beginners are nervous. It's your job to make them feel safe in a friendly and caring class. About twenty minutes before the end of their class, when they are tired, hot in the face, sweaty and self-conscious, the intermediate students start to arrive. After getting changed, they hang around outside your studio, peering in at the beginners.

Don't underestimate how humiliating this is for beginners. They are nowhere near performance-ready, but the class suddenly has an audience of people that the beginners know are more experienced than them.

The same then happens to the intermediate students when the advanced ones arrive …

The remedy? Change the rank order of your classes.

Class sizes are important too. Large beginners' classes mean students feel over-looked. They should never feel that the teacher is too busy to help. It's important to use the more capable students to model a dance move they have mastered, but not at the expense of other students' self-confidence. Move rows of dancers forward one row at a time, so they all get the chance to be the dancers on the front line. Don't humiliate older children by drawing attention to a younger child's superior talent. It's better to try to keep children in similar age groups as much as possible. Oh, and do keep parents out of the studio – parental competitiveness does not help children to thrive while learning to dance.

What about marketing? Cluttered websites are confusing. It is worth paying for professional photography so that you don't give a poor impression or reinforce stereotypes. One mistake I see a lot of dance teachers make on their websites is using the old trick of saying 'we' about your company when there is only one of you. A prospective student will be thinking "Hmm… I like her, but what's this 'we' business? Does that mean if I turn up at her class, there might be another teacher taking the class instead? And what if I don't like them?" For a dance school trying to attract nervous students, 'I', 'me', 'my' work much, much better.

Read **Text C**, and then answer **Questions 2(a)–(d)** and **Question 3** on the question paper.

Text C: The dancer

This text is taken from a longer narrative. Veda is a young girl with aspirations to become a dancer.

I pause in the doorway and bite my lip. 'I got a letter saying I got through to the finals for the dance competition. If I win, I win a place at the dance college,' I finally say.

Grandma retreats into the kitchen. She has told me that she doesn't think it's her place to interfere with her son and daughter-in-law. Pa's eyes rove from Ma to me. He's caught in the middle.

Ma's diamond earrings flash at me like angry eyes. 'Veda, you need to study hard. If you don't do well in your exams this year ...'

For once my voice doesn't stick in my throat. 'I am studying hard. To be a dancer. I'm not planning to become an engineer. Or a doctor.' Or any profession that Ma finds respectable.

Ma launches into a lecture. 'Dancing is no career. You need to study something useful in college so that you can get a well-paid job.'

I sigh unnecessarily loudly. My dance teacher isn't rich but his house is larger than ours. Clearly he earns more than Ma at her bank job and Pa at his library.

Back when I was younger, I'd struggle to be better at school for Ma's sake. But numbers and letters soon grew too hard for me to hold and I grew far away from them, and Ma grew out of patience.

All my life Ma's dreamt I'll do well at science and mathematics so that I could end up being what she wanted to be: an engineer. All my life I've been waiting for her to appreciate my compulsion to do the one thing I excel at: dance.

I think back to my conversations with Grandma. 'Steps came to you early. Speech came late,' she'd say. She'd tell me how I used to heave myself by the restricting bars on my prison-like cot at eight months, my limbs urgently craving release. I could shape thoughts with my fingers, she said. While words stumbled in my throat, losing their way before reaching my lips, my hands spoke my first sentences like lotus buds blossoming. They would shape themselves effortlessly into the hand symbols of classical dancing.

Grandma always understood everything my hands said.

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My dance teacher sits cross-legged on the ground, tapping beats out on his hollow wooden block with a stick.

I leap and land on my sure feet, excitement mounting as his rhythm speeds, challenging me to repeat my routine faster. My heels strike the ground fast as fire-sparks. Streams of sweat trickle down my neck. My braided hair flies free into the air, then whips sharply around my waist. Nothing else fills me with such elation as chasing down soaring music, catching and pinning rhythms to the ground with my feet, proud as a hunter rejoicing in his skill.

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This brings me to the hardest pose of all. Balancing on my left leg, I extend my right upwards in a vertical split. Then I bend my right knee, bring my right foot near my ear. Locking my breath in my chest to control my trembling, I push myself to hold the pose for an entire eight-beat cycle. A familiar thrill shoots up my spine. I enjoy testing my stamina, my balance.

My dance teacher's stick clatters heavily to the floor. He claps spontaneously. 'Perform like that and you're sure to win.' I can see tears brimming like dew-drops in his eyes.

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Three days later, I arrive home. Grandma opens the door. I can hardly speak. 'The judges loved me! I have a place at the dance school. Grandma, I am so excited.'

Grandma hugs me. 'I am delighted, Veda. You need to tell Ma and Pa but don't worry: I have been talking to Pa, and I think you can persuade them, if you answer their questions sensibly and explain yourself.'

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