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FIRST LANGUAGE ENGLISH **0500/22**

Paper 2 Directed Writing and Composition **October/November 2022**

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. Any blank pages are indicated.

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

Text A: Writing wars: pens or keyboards?

This text is an article that explores the changing ways in which we write.

This past week you may well have scribbled down a quick shopping list or stuck a note on your desk. But when did you last draft a long text by hand, or write a 'proper' letter, using a pen and paper?

No one can say precisely how much handwriting has declined, but surveys give some indication of the extent of the damage. According to one study by a printing company, one in three respondents hadn't written anything by hand in the previous six months! True or not, one thing is certain: faster technology means that handwriting is disappearing in the workplace.

In the United States, schools already make allowances for this. Given that email and texting have replaced conventional 'snail mail', and that students take notes on their laptops, 'cursive' writing – in which the pen is not raised between each character – has been dropped from the common school curriculum. Since 2013, American children have been required to learn how to use a keyboard and are allowed to stick with the easier non-cursive handwriting style. They no longer need to worry about the up-and-down strokes involved in 'grown-up' cursive handwriting.

Unsurprisingly, this reform prompted controversy. Everyone needs to be able to write without computers, to read birthday cards from grandparents and decipher comments by teachers on assignments. Indeed, France has taken the opposite course from the USA. In the early 2000s, schools started teaching cursive writing as soon as pupils entered primary school (aged six). Meanwhile in China, millions every week watch 'Character Hero', a TV spelling challenge, where young contestants must write by hand. 'The ability to write characters is part of Chinese tradition and culture,' explains one bespectacled calligraphy teacher in the audience.

Since writing was first invented, the tools and media used have changed many times. Why worry whether something is handwritten or typed?

Experts argue that handwriting is a better workout for your brain. 'Handwriting's a more complex task than typing. It requires various skills – feeling the pen and paper, moving the writing implement, and directing movement by thought,' explains Professor Edouard Diaz. 'Paper creates a visual, tactile record of your work and its creative stage – draft ideas crossed out or corrected, scribbles in the margin and later additions – and handwriting has always been seen as expressing our personality.'

Despite omnipresent technology, Diaz believes handwriting will persist. 'Touchscreens are taking us back to handwriting,' he argues. 'From school examinations to labels for jam jars, handwriting's an important part of everyday life.'

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Text B: Putting pen to paper: the schools nurturing a love of writing by hand

This text is an article about the value of handwritten communication.

At a primary school in Wales, students are writing letters to residents of a local care home. The initiative sees young children and their elderly 'pen friends' exchange updates about their lives, helping to build relationships between generations while also giving the children an understanding of the value of writing letters by hand – an activity that's becoming less and less common.

The project was started by the care home as a way to create community links, whilst the school stresses 'the importance of taking time to write letters with pen and paper, making good handwriting meaningful and real for the children'.

Teacher Lisa Johnston says she's seen her students develop a real sense of empathy and understanding of elderly people. 'The pen friend scheme has made writing a more enjoyable and exciting task. They love sharing their news. There's something about a handwritten letter that gives you a positive buzz – knowing that person has actually sat down and written it just for you, and only you. Letter writing is a big part of what we do at school. All of our writing is for a purpose. Knowing that someone out there is going to be reading it, there's always the real sense of pride.'

That sense of pride in writing created by hand can be instilled in children from a young age. In Abacus nursery, Sydney, children are given a letter of the alphabet each week to form in creative ways, using finger-painting, sand or clay.

The school has created something called the pen licence. It allows younger children to move from using a pencil to a pen once they've reached a certain standard. 'There's a lot of excitement about reaching that pen licence stage,' says headteacher Warren Handy.

He adds that developing students' writing in this way matters for their life after school: 'It's important we create citizens of the future with the life skills that can make them successful.'

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