Cambridge Assessment International Education

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FIRST LANGUAGE ENGLISH **0500/22**

Paper 2 Directed Writing and Composition **October/November 2023**

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: The benefits of listening to podcasts

The writer of this blog entry works as a sales representative for a clothing company.

Podcasts have been around for years, but I have only recently discovered what a great use of time they are. Most of my work colleagues always seemed to have their earphones in, but what were they listening to? I had heard of podcasts. I knew they were a kind of audio programme you could subscribe to and listen to, for example on your smartphone, whenever you like. I had not realised how much I would enjoy them, especially when faced with administrative tasks in the office. I whizz through those boring tasks now.

Podcasts come in a variety of lengths, so it's easy to listen to an episode even if I only have half an hour between meetings or video calls with clients. If you don't finish listening in one sitting, they're always at your disposal on your phone, computer, or tablet to pick back up later. The best podcasts sound like you are listening to a real conversation. They can really help to relieve stress and give you something interesting to talk about at break.

Outside of work, I use podcasts to help me focus while running, cooking, and even cleaning (I get more done that way). Friends joke that I am in my 'own little podcast world' most of the time. Topics that I enjoy most include health, fashion and exercise – I find them incredibly motivational. I subscribe to about 150 podcasts, and to fit them all in have started to 'podfast' (listening to podcasts on double, sometimes triple speed, which I'm noticing boosts my energy levels).

Many studies on the benefits of podcasts show that they help us to become better listeners and have a greater appreciation for simply listening. Podcasts stimulate mental imagery more intensely than anything we watch or read.

There is nothing to lose by making podcasts a part of your regular lifestyle. Whether you want to learn a new skill for work, keep up with the news or need to be inspired, there is a podcast for you! I don't listen to music as much any more as there's so much out there to learn about. Podcasts offer a vast range of topics and for the most part they're free.

There truly is something for everyone.

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Text B: I listen to 35 hours of podcasts every week. Is that bad?

A few weeks ago, I caught the bus back from work, and before I even sat down, started rummaging in my backpack for my earphones.

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While these studies don't specifically look at the difference between music and spoken content, could saturating our minds with information in audio form be just as problematic as spending every waking hour consuming any other kind of media?

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