Cambridge Assessment International Education

Cambridge IGCSE™

FIRST LANGUAGE ENGLISH **0500/23**

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

INSERT **2 hours**

5360878886-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.

This document has **4** pages. Any blank pages are indicated.

DC (LK) 315056/1
© UCLES 2023

[Turn over

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

Text A: What does ambition mean to you?

You've probably heard the word 'ambition' often throughout your life, perhaps from relatives telling you to aim high and work harder to get there, or maybe from a coach or well-meaning friend who thinks you should 'just go for it', however ridiculous or unlikely 'it' is.

You probably do have some dreams and ambitions of your own. Large or small, they are important to you because you're taught that you need them to guide you on your journey to success. This message has surrounded you for as long as you can remember, so you probably have an idea what 'being ambitious' means. However, ask around and you'll discover that not everyone has the same definition.

Old-fashioned dictionaries might define ambition as 'a desire for some type of achievement or distinction, and the willingness to strive for its attainment'. More modern explanations might explain it as 'trying hard to take on a goal of some kind – a goal that's usually far too hard to accomplish, so the ambitious person ends up only half-way there.' Sounds way more familiar, right?

Your ambitions shape your life, affecting your decisions and your sense of who you are. Maybe you're naturally prone to have big dreams and ideas that must be achieved at all costs – world champion, best-selling author or famous actor? Or perhaps you really weren't born with ambition, but it seems like it is the key to success that everyone implies you should have. Nothing bad can come from having an ambition or two, can it?

We look up to ambitious people – entrepreneurs, sports stars and celebrities. You grow up believing that you should be just as ambitious and successful and do everything to achieve that. To get 'better', you absolutely must get 'bigger' – so that not only you but everyone else in your work, sport or activity will know that you have ambition.

But is there a difference between something being an ambition and something being an expectation? Doesn't achieving what is expected of you really depend on whether you were ready for the challenge to start with, rather than how much you dream about it?

We've all been raised by media to believe that we can do everything we put our minds to – become scientists, artists, and pop stars – that the world is ours. Well, how many people can really say they succeeded? Not that many, probably. Redirecting ambition towards what is genuinely important to you means you will be way more satisfied with your everyday life.

© UCLES 2023

Text B: Ambition – a positive in business?

Ambition is a positive quality – ask any successful entrepreneur. If you're more naturally driven to set goals and accomplish them, you'll be more likely to succeed than someone who isn't, yes?

Actually, no: this isn't always the case. In fact, in some cases, extreme ambition may cause more harm than good.

The first major side effect of excessive ambition is the tendency to focus too stubbornly on one particular vision or end goal. For example, if you set out to make your fortune by the time you're 30, everything that doesn't immediately appear to get you closer to that goal may seem useless to you and you miss out on the enjoyment of the 'journey'.

Experts suggest that relationships are more important than ambition when determining a person's ability to succeed. Being ambitious often makes you inherently more selfish, driving you to pursue individual goals at the possible expense of your family, friends and community.

Excessive ambition also hinders your ability to adapt to new circumstances (vital if you want to be successful). If a competitor emerges to threaten your business, you may need to change direction and readjust your goals. If you have too much ambition, you'll find this hard.

Being overly ambitious can also make you too keen to progress too quickly. You're better off keeping your ambition in check and aiming for slower, steadier growth.

Few people are successful when trying to build their first business. This is natural and partly due to lack of experience. Unfortunately, for the most ambitious entrepreneurs, a failure is seen as devastating, something they had never thought about and impossible to recover from. However, for people with more realistic ambitions, failure is just a temporary setback, part of the learning experience.

According to recent studies, ambitious people do tend to be more materialistically successful than their non-ambitious counterparts, progressing further in their careers and making more money. However, they were only slightly happier and not always healthier.

© UCLES 2023

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 Cambridge Assessment. Cambridge Assessment is the brand name of the University of Cambridge Local Examinations Syndicate (UCLES), which is a department of the University of Cambridge.

© UCLES 2023