Cambridge Assessment International Education

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FIRST LANGUAGE ENGLISH **0500/11**

Paper 1 Reading **October/November 2024**

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.

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

Text A: *Bees*

A bee colony is populated by a queen, about 200 male drones and thousands of underdeveloped female workers. The queen is the largest member of the colony due to the workers having fed her a special diet.

The queen is the mother of all the workers and also the male drones in the hive. She remains inside, attended by the workers who groom and feed her. The sole purpose of the drone is to mate with her so that the hive continues.

Bees have different characteristics that make them suited to pollinating certain plants. For example, the early bumblebee's small size and agility allow it to enter plants with drooping flowers. The larger garden bumblebee is better at pollinating the deep flowers because its longer tongue can reach deep inside them.

Plants can only grow because of pollination. Bees' transference of pollen between flowering plants enables a plant to reproduce and produce food. The cycle of a plant's life keeps turning in this way.

So thanks to these small creatures, we enjoy a range of foods from orchard fruits to coffee and vanilla. And if you are wearing cotton, that's because a cotton plant was pollinated. Maybe in your lessons at school you have come across bees too. This would be because many poets, artists, authors and scientists have found them a fascinating subject to study.

But bees are in trouble. Nowadays, many of us are aware of how human decisions impact on bee populations. A few organisations try to educate the public on how the pesticides we use on crops to make our food safer and more prolific are toxic to bees, damaging their mental capacities and ability to reproduce. Bee habitats, such as ponds, trees and flowers, are wiped out by our need to urbanise and build houses and by intensive farming methods. We really need to ask ourselves how much our thoughtlessness and selfishness might be costing us all.

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

Text B: *Beekeeping*

This text is advice given by a practising beekeeper to other people considering keeping bees.

Why be a beekeeper? Is it because you like honey? Want to help with local pollination? Aid the global honeybee crisis? Beekeeping is hard work and a considerable responsibility, so needs a lot of thought.

Actually, you may have no choice in the matter if beekeeping is forbidden in your area. My town requires hive registrations. You might just live somewhere where there are no restrictions on beekeeping, but that would be lucky.

Okay, so you are allowed to keep bees. It took me a while to receive a reply to my request for help from the online beekeeping organisation I contacted, presumably because the beekeepers were all out and about pursuing their hobby. In the end I discovered that there was a lot of advice out there, which I sifted through, finding some of it anecdotal and specific to certain circumstances rather than of use to me.

Naturally, I assumed that my spacesuit-like body and head protection would shield me from stings. Choosing clothing that is effective in keeping an angry swarm at bay is important, but bear in mind there is always the occasional unavoidable sting. Yes, it's happened to me even in a full beekeeping suit with gloves.

My bees fly up to eight kilometres when out foraging for nectar and pollen, and that's fine as I live in a rural area. Your urban neighbours may not be so happy about you keeping beehives in your back garden while they are out enjoying the sun.

And that brings me onto another matter. I have a field for my hives. They should be placed on a level site, receive sun during the day and be sheltered from strong winds, as well as being easily accessible for you and their stripy occupants.

In the beginning, I bought a heavy hive, intending to give my bees a robust and safe home. By harvest time, when the hives were full of honey, my aching back taught me I needed to purchase a lighter construction. Still now, I need a trusted friend (a fellow beekeeper) to help me shift those hives around.

The same friend and I have a reciprocal arrangement to look after our bees when either of us goes away. Bees can't be left for long periods. Hiring someone else to look after your bees can be costly and you need to be sure that person knows what they're doing.

I spent a lot of money getting started and I made a few expensive purchasing errors, from heavy hives to beekeeping accessories that I never actually used.

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

Text C: *The business venture*

Damian and Abdul were school friends. As adults, they have gone into business together.

Tuesday evening, driving the van home, Damian laughs in pleasure.

'Sold out in one morning. Brilliant work for our very first day at the market! I'll try some new ranges and we can take double to sell next week.'

Abdul does not share Damian's optimism. 'We don't want to go too quickly, and the van freezer isn't very big,' he cautions.

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A few months earlier, Damian and Abdul had been relaxing in Damian's field, near his beehives. It had been the first mild morning for many months and the two men were sipping Damian's home-made acacia honey and berry smoothies.

The delicate tracery of acacia leaves cast a dancing dappled shade over the beehives. A worker bee, one of the first to venture uncertainly out of the hive that morning, drew dizzy spirals in the air, as it orientated itself, sensing the nectar in the newly budding flowers. Damian could faintly hear the drones inside the hive humming in reverential attendance on their queen. He looked up. Any day now those acacia trees would burst into flower and cascades of clustered white blossom would turn the trees silver. Then this solitary worker would be accompanied by hundreds of other labourers, all intent on drinking their fill of nectar.

'I agree with that little bee,' announced Damian, smacking his lips in pleasure at the taste of honey and berries. 'We should venture out of our own hives and taste the sweet nectar of life. Get ahead of the crowd. Nice big shop in the middle of town.'

'All the online advice is that small businesses should start slowly. No risk-taking. Trying it out just once a week in the local market is best,' replied Abdul.

'There isn't another smoothie store in town, and no one who makes smoothies like I do!' Damian protested.

A few weeks later, Damian conceded defeat when Abdul showed him his painstaking work. 'My survey suggests that people in the town like smoothies, but they are not prepared to pay too high a price for them. We need to encourage them to try ours.'

Facts and figures didn't interest Damian. He wandered into the house to continue working on his smoothie ranges. All his creations were conventionally sweet: cherries, pineapples and strawberries blended with the bees' acacia honey, lumps of ice and different milks. He wanted to diversify.

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A worker bee swung through the kitchen window and settled momentarily by the honey jar. It started to carefully probe droplets of honey that had puddled on the work top, smiling to itself in self-congratulatory glee. 'What shall I turn my talents to next?' Damian asked the bee. The bee's segmented antennae rotated through a full 90 degrees, and then folded outwards, as if in a quizzical hand gesture. Its gossamer wings reclined, and a contemplative silence consumed the kitchen. 'You're no help!' reprimanded Damian playfully.

Damian returned to Abdul. 'How about a savoury range?' he suggested. 'I was thinking of pizza …'

Abdul didn't answer. He was looking thoughtful. 'We could put a few of those cherry ones on special offer to attract buyers. I've also been looking at the amount of packaging we plan to use and whether it is eco-friendly. And we need a portable freezer and a big van.'

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Damian smiles, remembering back to that conversation. He parks the van and observes the beehives. A huge swarm of bees flies over the top and up towards the acacia tree.

Abdul watches too. 'I guess we could have rivals if other people realise how successful our business is.'

'Then we should think bigger and get ahead. A shop that is open every day of the week. I could live there.'

'But then who would look after your bees?' asks Abdul, as the two men contemplate the crowds of tiny golden bodies intent on pursuing their own businesses in the white blossom.

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