Cambridge Assessment International Education

Cambridge IGCSE™

FIRST LANGUAGE ENGLISH **0500/21**

Paper 2 Directed Writing and Composition **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 **both** texts and then answer **Question 1** on the question paper.

Text A: My musical history

My mother's a talented pianist. She loves to play classical music. One of my earliest memories involves sitting by her piano while she played. It gave her joy and personal pride. I think she wanted the same for me. When I was just six years old, she enrolled me in piano lessons.

I hated them. I was nervous and hated the songs I was being forced to learn. I was a kid and wanted to do other things instead. Learning to read music and play scales didn't interest me. No amount of begging from my mother could get me to enjoy practising. 'One day, when you're older,' she'd plead, 'you'll cherish the ability to sit down and play.' Nevertheless, after a couple of expensive years of once-a-week misery, she finally allowed me to quit.

At 11 years old, I switched schools, got a new best friend, Kim, and got interested in music. This was a critical turning point. Kim loved the band Weave. Listening to them unlocked a whole new sonic world for me. I fell in love, completely and totally, with rock music.

Kim taught me to play a power chord on her acoustic guitar. If you know that, you can play, or at least convincingly fake, pretty much every rock song in the world. I was hooked. This was music – my kind of music.

I spent hours practising. More hours 'playing' along with my favourite songs in front of the mirror, pretending I was famous. I'd unlocked a talent within me that had sadly gone untapped when I was younger and battling that piano. I discovered I didn't need to read music – I could play my guitar 'by ear'.

Today, I work as a music therapist, helping clients use music to work through their issues, face challenging situations and improve their overall quality of life. My own kids are growing up surrounded by just about every instrument imaginable. They're encouraged to explore them, bang around, pretend and feel good. Maybe they'll be interested in learning how to play one, or maybe they won't. Either is absolutely fine by me.

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Text B

The following passage is a talk to parents given by a headteacher.

Music is invaluable to our children in many ways – not just the obvious benefits for brain development – and it will change your child's life now and for the future.

Music teaches perseverance and the value of hard work, demanding that we focus on details, paying attention to the sound of even a single note until we get it exactly right. Music requires precision. Music shows us that we can practise and prepare, but when performing in a concert (as in life) we must keep going no matter what mistakes happen. Music teaches children to manage failure. That failure can be small – in a practice room. Or, it can be really big – on stage in front of an audience of their peers and parents. What better education for our young future entrepreneurs?

Whether a budding scientist or professional hockey player, your child will have a more enriched and creative life if they have experience of performing music in their youth. Music will make your child's life happier, bringing depth and awareness. It will teach them to create connections and to be innovative and unique thinkers.

Modern children spend too much time alone on the internet. They no longer interact face-to-face or creatively invent things to do with their spare time. Our school's new music programme will provide that missing interaction: alongside twice-weekly instrument lessons on a designated instrument, every one of our children will join one of our new school orchestras.

We may all aim to enrich our family lives with travel, museums and galleries, but for anyone who wishes their children to experience sensations that are beyond the realm of their everyday existence, music is a journey into a world that can't be found anywhere else.

Our school music programme will start that journey. Our children will learn the fundamentals of classical music, its history and its practice, through a series of inspiring talks from the celebrated orchestral conductor (and former student of our school) Simon Chi. They will be exposed to, and learn to love, our rich musical heritage through their weekly public performances of opera and music from ballet, demonstrating their newly acquired skills to a wider audience. They may even take part in tours further afield to publicise our wonderful school. This experience will remain a part of the fabric of their lives and colour their experience of music for ever after.

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