Cambridge Assessment International Education

Cambridge IGCSE™

FIRST LANGUAGE ENGLISH **0500/12**

Paper 1 Reading **October/November 2025**

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 **8** pages. Any blank pages are indicated.

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

Text A: *Time travel*

Science says time travel is entirely feasible, but probably not in the way you're thinking. In fact, you are travelling through time right now – hurtling into the future at the impressive velocity of one second per second. You constantly move through time at this speed, whether you're watching paint dry or wishing you had more hours to get to know a recent acquaintance.

But this isn't the kind of time travel that's captivated countless science fiction writers and filmmakers. In such genres, we are presented with characters who invent some wild vehicle to blast into the past or spin into the future. Once there, they grapple with what happens if you change the past or present based on information from the future. Their predicament is our moral dilemma too, as we consider the implications of such knowledge.

To date, no-one has ever demonstrated the kind of back-and-forth time travel seen in science fiction or proposed a method of sending a person through significant periods of time that wouldn't destroy them on the way. As physicist Stephen Hawking once pointed out, 'The best evidence we have that time travel is not possible, and never will be, is that we have not been invaded by hordes of tourists from the future.'

Some people are very interested in what we call 'déjà vu' moments. Déjà vu is when we receive the impression that we are re-living a scene or event from the past when actually we are only experiencing it for the first time. Could a form of personal time travel be an explanation? Journalist Sushmita Dutta asserts that 'Even the slightest incident of déjà vu is a supernatural experience.' Other people are dismissive of this, believing that such experiences have a neurological basis or are tapping into a distant childhood memory.

Certainly, there are ways in which we can mentally time travel. At will, we can remember the exhilaration of winning a competition or eating a particularly delicious meal. Then, just as rapidly, we can switch to picturing the future, imagining our next holiday or relaxing after a hard day's work. We anticipate upcoming seasons, planning our wardrobes and activities to adapt to expectations of the weather. If we were unable to time travel mentally, we would not take decisions in the present to create the future of our dreams.

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

Text B: *Working from home*

The following is a talk by someone, giving advice to other people who want to work from home.

Let me start by saying this. When you run a business, your priority is making money and not letting 'timewasters' squander your precious time. Timewasters are people who appropriate important minutes from our days: in my opinion because, when we work from home, they assume we're never busy, so they can casually drop by to say hello. They need to break that habit! I'll tell you what I do. I give them five minutes then I stand up and fold my arms. You try the same and watch how it subconsciously sends the message that you don't have time for idle chatter. When they understand my message, I immediately thank them for coming round. I also smilingly explain with something like, 'I'm always so busy during office hours.'

This is particularly challenging when the people concerned are your good friends and family, isn't it? You're actually pleased to see them and are tempted by the distraction of sharing a hot drink and some biscuits rather than toiling away at your tedious work. But time is money. Are you able to organise a catch-up for out-of-hours times? If so, do it quickly. The longer you leave it, the more difficult it becomes to explain.

Not everyone is a friend of course. You start to notice how some potential clients seek your professional advice – for free – when you work for yourself. Weirdly, this never happened when I worked in an office – people always understood that a fee had to be paid for my time and expertise. I used to think giving free advice at home would be appreciated and that it would benefit me long-term, but then I realised my time and energy were often hijacked for nothing. Clients didn't go away and recommend me to others. I merely lost their respect as a professional and they kept returning for more free assistance. Sounds a bit blunt, but you must get into the habit of establishing your rate of pay for such time from the outset. Or get wised up. Some people will take advantage of you, but maybe others are worth spending your time on. Learn to distinguish between the two.

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

Text C: ***The time traveller***

The blue and red streaks caused by extreme time movement ceased their insane dancing and Q found herself on firm footing. It was like being tossed from a white-knuckle thrill ride. She breathed in the new atmosphere. An earthy smell promptly smacked her nostrils, immeasurably different from the safely sanitised air of her own century. She swallowed back her shock at the new heady aroma and reminded herself that she had been warned about this. 'It will smell very different at first, but remember the mission and how much we need this.' The dark trees enveloped her like a suffocating blanket, but, Q reflected, they also afforded her concealment for the moment.

As the nausea subsided, Q reminded herself why she had been selected on this, the first ever mission of its type. She had not been the strongest in her team, but she had excelled in the 'focus' category (mustn't be distracted by anything outside the immediate mission) and in the ability to withstand the extreme discomfort that would inevitably accompany time travel from 3030 to 2030. During training, the simulators saw everyone but Q crumpled on the floor in varying stages of dizziness, exhaustion and panic. She alone had remained standing, wiping back a few tears but standing. 'We hope to improve the experience, but for now only Q can withstand the mission,' the Commander had told them.

Only one human could travel anyway. At this point, it was only considered safe to send one person at a time through a 1000–year movement. She had limited opportunity too. Q knew that in 30 minutes she would be sucked back into the vortex of blue and red lights and whisked back to her own time zone.

She hastily removed her polycarbonate armour suit and her helmet, then shook the clothing underneath so it fell into place as a twenty-first-century outfit. She would have to leave her travelling kit here and allow five minutes at the end of her mission to change back. This was inconvenient and risky, thought Q. She did her best to conceal the items under some dark foliage.

A sudden gush of panic flooded her mind, making her check her pocket. Relief radiated warmly as her eager hands folded round the small wads of paper. This was what people in this century called 'money', and she would need it.

Her watch commanded her to progress forward and, yes, she could see her destination. 'Marvel's tree seeds and compost' a golden sign read. Q walked towards it, looking neither left nor right at the inquisitive humans that were now appearing singly and in groups around her. No, she wouldn't be distracted by their strange voices and their incredibly small stature.

Stooping in the low doorway so as not to hit her head, Q entered the store. She kept looking forwards, as instructed, to where the storekeeper stood behind a long counter.

'I want 100 each of the following tree seed packets: maple, fir and eucalyptus. I want 25 kg of soil.' Her memorised words did not falter, and she remembered to intone them with painstaking slowness. The mouse-like storekeeper studied her timidly, small eyes wide and alert, and the tight clusters of people in the store stopped their conversations, their mouths dropping. Just like small, stunned animals, thought Q, but she'd been told to expect this. The storekeeper scurried off in pursuit of her request.

Q sighed at the heaviness of the sack of soil as she dragged it away. Fortunately, there was enough here for the experts back home to analyse and replicate. She arrived at the trees again, quickly put on her travelling suit and waited for the vortex.

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‘Well done, Q. You have accomplished your mission,’ were the next words she heard – from the Commander. ‘The world will have trees again, which we must care for and value this time round.’

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