Cambridge IGCSE
FIRST LANGUAGE ENGLISH

Paper 2: Directed Writing and Composition **Set A**

Paper reference 0500/02

Insert

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.

The texts that follow are:

Text A: *Country living*

An original text written for this mock paper

Text B: *Second thoughts*

An original text written for this mock paper

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Read both texts and then answer **Question 1(a)** and **1(b)** on the question paper.

Text A: Country living

For years, the dream of swapping a crowded city for a quiet village stayed exactly that: a dream. Most people needed to live within reach of an office, a school and a busy high street. Now that more jobs can be done from a laptop, many families are asking whether they need to be in the city at all. For some, the answer is a cottage with a garden, a view of the hills and a night sky dark enough to show the stars.

“People are not just chasing cheaper space,” says Dr Lena Moreau, who studies how communities change. “They want time. In the city, hours vanish in traffic and on crowded trains. In the country, that time goes back to family, to neighbours and to being outdoors. I meet parents who tell me their children have become braver and more independent.”

“Our flat looked out on a car park,” says Sam Okoro, who moved with his partner and two children to a village of four hundred people last spring. “Now I start work after a walk across the fields, and the children know the name of every farmer’s dog. When our car broke down in the winter, three neighbours offered us lifts before I had even asked. In the city, I never learned the name of the man who lived next door. Here, people notice when you are missing from the shop.”

Rural life is not a permanent holiday, however. Newcomers who expect the village to fit around them soon find themselves on the outside. Those who help at the school fair, join the village choir or simply say yes to an invitation discover that a small community asks more of them, but gives more back. If the village hall needs painting or the footpath needs clearing, nobody waits for someone else to do it. In return, it can offer something cities rarely do: the feeling that you truly belong.

Text B: Second thoughts

The photographs make it look easy: a vegetable garden, muddy boots by the door, a wide, empty sky. What they leave out is the forty-minute drive to the nearest supermarket, the bus that runs twice a day, if it runs at all, and the internet connection that slows to a crawl whenever it rains. Work can be hard to find, and those who cannot do their jobs from home may face long journeys back to the city they hoped to escape. For many newcomers, the reality of country life arrives as a shock.

Villagers have their doubts too. When newcomers buy up houses, prices can rise beyond the reach of young local people, who may be forced to move away. Some cottages sit empty for most of the year as weekend retreats, their curtains drawn from Monday to Friday, and the village shop and school lose customers and pupils. Long-standing residents also tire of outsiders who complain about the smell of the farm, the church bells or the cockerel that crows at dawn, as if the countryside should have been made quieter for their arrival.

"I honestly thought I was moving to paradise," admits Nadia Brandt, who left her city flat two years ago. "I pictured long country walks, home-made bread and friendly chats over the garden wall. Instead, my first winter was dark by four o'clock, I spent a fortune on petrol and some days the only person I spoke to was the postman. I'd given up a job I loved and friends I'd known for twenty years, and for what? Mud, mostly. I won't pretend I haven't thought about going back. But I'm stubborn, and I hate admitting defeat. I've joined a walking group, I'm learning to drive on icy lanes, and slowly this place is starting to feel less like a mistake."

End of insert

Sources

Texts A and B are original texts written for this mock paper. They are not extracted or adapted from any published source.

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