



UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE INTERNATIONAL EXAMINATIONS
International General Certificate of Secondary Education

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FIRST LANGUAGE ENGLISH

0500/13

Paper 1 Reading Passage (Core)

October/November 2012

READING BOOKLET INSERT

1 hour 45 minutes

READ THESE INSTRUCTIONS FIRST

This Insert contains the reading passage for use with all questions of the Question Paper.

This document consists of **3** printed pages and **1** blank page.



Read the following passage carefully and then answer all the questions on the Questions page.

The author, Jill Starley-Grainger, visits Chhattisgarh, a lesser-known area of India for visitors.

A Lesser-Known Part of India

A throaty growl, followed by a snort, then the purring of an engine; as you look around nervously for tigers, wild boar or even an errant four-wheel drive, a flock of Bastar Hill Myna birds, high in a treetop, burst out in human-sounding giggles and chatter. It's the state bird of Chhattisgarh and is one of the world's best mimics. It can imitate almost anything; even people.

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This talent once made it a prized cage-bird, but thankfully it is now illegal to keep them. See them in their natural habitat in the Myna Park in Jagdalpur – you'll recognise them by their glossy black coats, rose and orange beaks, bright yellow feet and distinctive swirly gold neck markings. To catch them at their most talkative, visit between 10am and 12 noon, or 3pm and 4pm.

10

The steep hills, wide river and unexplored forests of Kanger Valley National Park provide the ideal habitat for a huge variety of animals. The Big Five here are jaguar, leopard, sloth bear, wolf and crocodile, but equally exciting to spot on a safari drive or game walk are the rare dainty mouse deer, the unnerving flying snake and a unique species of wild buffalo.

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The park which is inhabited by many local people is full of spectacular waterfalls and caves, so a visit here makes a perfect introduction to Chhattisgarh itself. Bisected by the Kanger River, the eastern half of the park is wilder, hillier and has fewer people, so it's the best place for wildlife-spotting. At 200 kilometres square in area, you'll need to allow plenty of time if you want to see even a fraction of it.

20

The hills of Chhattisgarh are pock-marked with hundreds of caves, many filled with stunning, shiny, bizarre formations that make it seem as if you're entering a strange, secret world. Some of the most impressive are in Kanger Valley National Park but you'll need to be fairly fit if you want to explore them as they all involve steep ascents or descents; make sure to bring sturdy, non-slip shoes.

25

Other caves worth visiting include the Kutumsar Cave, where an unusual species of albino blind fish lives. The stunning setting and unusual stalagmites and stalactites found in the Kailash Gufa cavern make it truly astounding.

In a land of lush, hilly forests with dozens of rivers running through it, it's no surprise Chhattisgarh has some of India's most remarkable waterfalls. One of the most famous is the horseshoe-shaped Chitrakot Falls near Jagdalpur, which looks similar to Niagara. Unlike its Canadian cousin, it lacks the hordes of tourists jostling for the best picture.

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Chitrakot Falls may have all the drama, but if it's a more relaxing experience you're after, head for nearby Tiratgarh Waterfall. Its 100 metre drop is tiered over several levels: walk under it to cool off on a steamy day, or climb to the rock at the top for a bird's-eye view down to a small temple. Take a picnic basket for a tête-à-tête among the nearby ruins of a 1,000-year-old Hindu civilisation, with the sound of the waterfalls crashing in the background.

35

Not far from Raipur lie the remains of one of India's most important ancient cities. Archaeologists found the ruins of old Sirpur in the 1950s. Soon after, another significant discovery was made there: Laxman, a brick temple dating back 1,600 years. The oldest of its kind, Laxman marks a change in temple architecture because, until then, temples had been built of stone or wood. The temple also houses the statue of a 6th-century female Buddhist monk, who was said to have been converted from a life of crime to piety by Buddha himself.

Exploring the ruined town, with the foundations of houses, temples and other structures evident, provides a glimpse into Chhattisgarh's history. Recently, another level, thought to date back 2,000 years, has been found beneath the original. So far, little is known about the city, and archaeologists can only imagine what happened to its inhabitants.

One of the architectural jewels of India, the Danteshwari Temple, is hugely important to the people of the region and plays an important part in the Dassera festival. Built in the South Indian Hindu style, it has four distinct parts including an 800-year-old inner sanctum and two significant stone sections still standing.

Given the high status of women in much of Chhattisgarh, it's not surprising to find that the goddess worshipped here symbolises women's creative power. Villagers come from all over the state to pay homage to her. Two rivers, Shankini and Dhankini, meet at the temple, making it a dramatic setting.

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