



UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE INTERNATIONAL EXAMINATIONS  
International General Certificate of Secondary Education

**FIRST LANGUAGE ENGLISH**

**0500/01**

Paper 1 Reading Passage (Core)

**May/June 2008**

**1 hour 45 minutes**

Additional Materials: Answer Booklet/Paper

**READ THESE INSTRUCTIONS FIRST**

If you have been given an Answer Booklet, follow the instructions on the front cover of the Booklet.

Write your Centre number, candidate number and name on all the work you hand in.

Write in dark blue or black pen.

Do not use staples, paper clips, highlighters, glue or correction fluid.

Answer **all** questions.

Dictionaries are **not** permitted.

At the end of the examination, fasten all your work securely together.

The number of marks is given in brackets [ ] at the end of each question or part question.

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



**Read the following extract carefully, and then answer all the questions.**

*In this passage written in 1937, the writer, George Orwell, describes the experience of being wounded when he was a soldier.*

The whole experience of being hit by a bullet is very interesting and I think it is worth describing in detail.

It was five o'clock in the morning. This was always a dangerous time, because we had the dawn at our backs, and if you stuck your head above the top of the trench it was clearly outlined against the sky. I was talking to the sentries. Suddenly, I felt something – it is very hard to describe what I felt, though I remember it with the utmost vividness. 5

Roughly speaking it was like being at the centre of an explosion. There seemed to be a loud bang and a blinding flash of light all round me, and I felt a tremendous shock – no pain, only a violent shock, such as you get from an electric terminal; with it a sense of utter weakness, a feeling of being stricken and shrivelled up to nothing. The sand-bags in front of me receded into immense distance. I fancy you would feel much the same if you were struck by lightning. I knew immediately that I was hit, but because of the bang and flash I thought it was a rifle nearby that had gone off accidentally and shot me. All this happened in much less than a second. The next moment my knees crumpled up and I was falling, my head hitting the ground with a violent bang which, to my relief, did not hurt. I had a numb, dazed feeling, a consciousness of being very badly hurt, but no pain in the ordinary sense. 10 15

People gathered round. There was the usual fuss – 'Lift him up! Where's he hit? Get his shirt open!' Someone called for a knife to cut my shirt open. I knew that there was one in my pocket and tried to get it out, but discovered that my right arm was paralysed. Not being in pain, I felt a vague satisfaction. This ought to please my wife, I thought; she had always wanted me to be wounded to save me from being killed when the great battle came. 20

It was only now that it occurred to me to wonder where I was hit, and how badly; I could feel nothing, but I was aware that the bullet had struck me somewhere in the front of the body. When I tried to speak I found that I had no voice, only a faint squeak, but at the second attempt I managed to ask where I was hit. In the throat, they said. Someone had brought a bandage and one of the little bottles of alcohol they gave us for field-dressings. I heard a voice say that the bullet had gone clean through my neck. I felt the alcohol, which usually would sting fiercely, splash on to the wound with a pleasant coolness. 25

They laid me down again and fetched a stretcher. When I knew that the bullet had gone clean through my neck I took it for granted that I was done for. I had never heard of a man or an animal getting a bullet through the middle of the neck and surviving it. I wondered how long you last when your carotid artery is cut; not many minutes, presumably. Everything was very blurry. 30

There must have been about two minutes during which I assumed that I was killed. And that too was interesting – I mean it is interesting to know what your thoughts would be at such a time. My first thought was for my wife. My second was a violent resentment at having to leave this world which, when all is said and done, suits me so well. I had time to feel this very vividly. The stupid mischance infuriated me. The meaninglessness of it! To be bumped off, not even in battle, but in this stale corner of the trenches, thanks to a moment's carelessness! I thought, too, of the man who had shot me – wondered what he was like, whether he knew he had got me, and so forth. I could not feel any resentment against him. 35 40

- 1 (a) The writer describes the experience of being hit by a bullet as “very interesting” (line 1). What is unusual about his choice of words here? [2]
- (b) Explain, **using your own words as far as possible**, why five o’clock in the morning was a dangerous time to be in the trench. [2]
- (c) Re-read the lines “Roughly speaking...in the ordinary sense” (lines 7-16). Choose **three** words or phrases from this paragraph which the writer uses to describe the effect of being shot. Explain how **each** of these words and phrases helps you to understand this effect. [6]
- (d) Explain what is meant by the words “Not being in pain, I felt a vague satisfaction.” (lines 19-20). [2]
- (e) Explain, **using your own words**, why the writer thought that his wife would be pleased that he had been wounded (lines 20-21). [2]
- (f) Why was the writer at first unable to speak? (lines 23-24). [1]
- (g) Why does the writer say, “The meaninglessness of it!”? (line 37). [2]
- (h) Explain, using your own words, what the writer means by:
- (i) “receded into immense distance” (lines 10-11). [2]
- (ii) “The stupid mischance infuriated me” (lines 36-37). [2]
- (iii) “I could not feel any resentment against him” (lines 39-40). [2]
- (i) Re-read paragraphs 4-6 (“People gathered round...very blurry”) and then write a summary of what happened to the writer after he was shot and what his thoughts were at this time. Write a paragraph of about 50-70 words. [7]

[Total: 30]

- 2 Imagine you are a newspaper reporter who is writing an article about George Orwell’s war experiences. You visit him at home where he is recovering from his wound, and interview the writer (George) and his wife. Write your article.

In your article you should include:

- George’s thoughts and feelings about his experience
- his wife’s reaction to what happened
- their hopes for the future

You may invent your own headline for the article and a name for George’s wife. **Do not** write in columns.

You should base your ideas on what you have read in the passage, but do not copy from it.

You should write between 1 and 1 ½ sides, allowing for the size of your handwriting.

**Up to 10 marks are available for the content of your answer, and up to 10 marks for the quality of your writing.**

[Total: 20]

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