



Cambridge O Level

ENGLISH LANGUAGE

1123/22

Paper 2 Reading

May/June 2020

INSERT

1 hour 45 minutes



INFORMATION

- This insert contains the reading passages.
- You may annotate this insert and use the blank spaces for planning. **Do not write your answers** on the insert.

This document has 4 pages. Blank pages are indicated.

Passage 1

Olives

- 1 Olive trees have been cultivated for thousands of years, and today are still one of the world's most extensively grown fruit crops. In traditional herbal medicine, products made from olives and olive leaves were often used in the treatment of inflammatory problems, including allergy-related inflammation. Different parts of the tree featured in ancient sporting events; for example, in the Olympic Games olive branches were used to crown the winning athletes and competitors smeared their bodies in olive oil to strengthen themselves both physically and mentally. The olive branch was seen in ancient times as a symbol of glory in warfare, used to crown victors in battles. Additionally, in ancient Rome, defeated generals used to hold an olive branch as a symbol of peace. The same peace symbol is used today by the United Nations; this modern global organisation strives to bring together its member countries in an enduring quest for a peaceful world and uses the olive branch as its logo. 5
- 2 The olive tree is mentioned in the Hebrew Bible: an olive branch was brought back to Noah by a dove to demonstrate that the flood was over. But this is not the only link between the olive tree and religion. The Mount of Olives is mentioned several times in the Christian New Testament, and the olive is praised as a precious fruit in the Quran. Olive oil was considered to have a ceremonial significance, reflected in the fact that it was used to anoint kings and priests in many ancient civilisations. 15
- 3 There was much wealth to be derived from olive cultivation; for example, more than 5000 years ago, olives grown in Crete may have been the source of the wealth of the mighty Minoan civilisation, which was renowned for its unique art and stunning architecture. Olives are mentioned in ancient Greek literature, as well as in some Greek myths – for instance, the goddess Athena won the patronage of an area of Greece by giving olives to the god Poseidon. This shows that olives featured in ancient writings. They also appear in the factual text written 2300 years ago by the father of botany, Theophrastus; he wrote a marvellous account of how olive trees should be tended. Olive wood was used in ancient building to tie together outer and inner walls, giving them lasting endurance as such strong wood did not decay because of the weather. 20
- 4 Modern research has found that oleocanthal, a chemical found in olive oil, inhibits inflammation in the same way that some drugs do, and acts as a natural painkiller. Like other fruits and vegetables, olives are rich in antioxidants, which may protect people from developing certain types of cancer. When it comes to antioxidant power, most of the positive evidence is linked to food and not vitamin supplements. The consumption of olives, because they are high in fibre, is also linked to a healthy digestive system and the avoidance of some digestive-related diseases such as gastritis. 25
- 5 Vitamin A is crucial for eye health while vitamin E protects the skin from the sun's ultraviolet rays, thus helping to prevent some skin diseases and premature ageing. Research shows that olives are rich in both vitamin A and vitamin E. Olives contain fat but, because it is heart-healthy monounsaturated fat which helps lower levels of the 'bad' cholesterol that increases risk of heart disease, olives are often described as a super-food. It must be borne in mind, however, that although the fat found in olives is healthy, it contains a lot of calories; eating too many calories, no matter their source, may lead to weight gain, and weight gain is something we all want to avoid. 35
- 6 Olive trees have even more uses. Olives have a long association with fine cooking; they make a particularly delicious addition to many meals and it is no coincidence that so many restaurants use the word 'olive' in their title. Many people also use olive oil to enhance their appearance by applying a few drops on vulnerable areas of the face and letting the oil work for fifteen minutes before rinsing off. Similar treatment for hair is popular. Because of the commercial importance of the fruit, and the slow growth and relatively small size of the tree, olive wood, which is used to make products such as kitchen utensils, fine furniture and decorative items, is relatively expensive. Nevertheless, it is much prized for its durability and the interesting patterns in its grain. 40

Passage 2

The Garage

- 1 One day my mother told me about an accident I nearly had in my early childhood. We had been shopping when I was only three years old, and when we came back she drove the car into the garage, telling me to stay in my seat in the back of the car while she took the shopping from the front seat. She did that and was just about to slam the door shut when she saw that I had got out of the car. I was standing beside her with my hand holding on to the inside edge of the door frame. ‘I very nearly squashed your fingers,’ she said. She held up the thumb and first finger of her right hand, narrowly parted. There was a short silence. I was thinking that perhaps I should apologise for being the kind of child who never did as she was told, persistently putting herself in the way of danger. 5
- 2 Although I have no memory of that event, I do remember the garage. I thought it a fascinating but slightly frightening place, with oil stains, thick and pungent, on the concrete floor which, if looked at one way, could transform into rainbows, shiny and fleeting. It had dark red doors and a window behind which a confused bird once became trapped, its wings flapping incessantly. My father wrestled with the catch, which had been painted shut, while the bird dived again and again into the glass, unable to comprehend that it would not yield. Finally, the catch gave way and the bird flew out, swooping once over the flowerbed, then away over the hedge. In my memory the garage was a cobwebby, dim place, filled with spades and other gardening tools, an axe hanging on a high nail. One summer we set up a childish museum in the garage, arranging our exhibits on the workbench. They included, among other mismatched and valueless things, some old postage stamps, several dead insects and some pieces of rock. 10 15 20
- 3 Our cat chose the garage as the place to give birth to her kittens. Awed and delighted, our family visited her and her new family to worship at the side of the cardboard box which was their temporary home. We watched the four squirming bodies as they burrowed into their mother’s grey-striped fur. My mother instructed my sister and me not to touch the kittens, not yet, and we nodded gravely. As soon as she had left the shrine and gone back to the kitchen, however, I told my sister to keep watch at the garage door. I reasoned with her that obviously there was no way I was going to leave those kittens untouched. No way at all. The sheer joy of plunging my hands into the box and lifting up all four kittens in a mewing, writhing mass and burying my face in their softness, their never-walked-on paws: how could I pass up this opportunity? 25 30
- 4 The cat looked at me with eyes that were alert but which also seemed to me to be full of forgiveness. She knew it wasn’t possible for me to follow my mother’s edict – there was no way I could. She purred when I gently touched the kittens, stretching out an ecstatic paw to touch me on the wrist. 35
- 5 That cat lived an astonishing twenty-one years. There are photographs in my parents’ house of me holding her when I was a self-conscious ten-year-old, with teeth too large and numerous crowding my mouth, and photographs of me as an adult with the cat on my lap. When I was living at the other side of the world, years after the birth of those kittens, my sister, who was by then a veterinary surgeon, phoned me to say that the cat who, a lifetime ago, gave birth to kittens in a cardboard box in our garage, had died of old age. She had been sick and could not survive another operation. My sister and I clutched the ends of our respective phones close to our ears, separated by mountains and countries and seas, reluctant to end the call because we both knew what would happen next. We would be transported back to that moment in childhood when we were separated by only the length of the garage, as she stood, an anxious sentinel, keeping watch, her head turning between me and the house, as I bent over the cardboard box and lifted the kittens out. 40 45

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