



UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE INTERNATIONAL EXAMINATIONS  
General Certificate of Education Ordinary Level

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**ENGLISH LANGUAGE**

**1115/02, 1120/02  
1123/02**

Paper 2 Comprehension

**May/June 2008**

INSERT

**1 hour 30 minutes**

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**READ THESE INSTRUCTIONS FIRST**

This insert contains the passage for comprehension.

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## Dolphins

- 1 Dolphins are very much in vogue these days. Along with rainbows, they have become a symbol of a new age of love, peace and harmony. Although, like human beings, they are mammals, they have adapted surprisingly well to an environment completely different from our own. There is no doubt that people love these aquatic creatures, considering them to be both intelligent and beautiful. 5
- 2 This fascination with dolphins is not a novelty; they have delighted people for centuries and they occupy a special place in folklore around the world. For example, the ancient Mediterranean cultures believed that the dolphin represented the vital power of the sea, and early Greek mythology describes many encounters between their gods and dolphins. Dolphins graced many forms of art in ancient societies. Killing a dolphin was punished by the death penalty. Around the world, many cultures believed that any intentional harm done to a dolphin could cause ill-fortune or mortal sickness. 10
- 3 Dolphins are able to make sounds in the form of little clicks, through which they communicate with each other. Many dolphins are able to leap high out of the water, sometimes to indicate the presence of fish to their companions, and sometimes simply out of exuberance. As well as making clicking sounds, they make other sounds which damage the balance of their prey, making it easier to capture. They are also able to work out where their prey is by listening to the echoes of the sounds which their prey makes. This special ability is called echolocation, and it enables dolphins to explore their environment over a wider distance than eyesight allows, and to find their prey in a dark, watery world where sight is often of little use. 15 20
- 4 Modern, efficient methods have been introduced that allow fishermen to bring in record catches. However, these methods make no distinction between fish and dolphins, so that the latter then often become the victims of these environmentally destructive fishing methods. In some parts of the world, fishermen have noticed that particularly large tuna fish swim underneath dolphins. Realising, therefore, that financially rewarding catches of tuna fish await those willing to take advantage of the tuna-dolphin bond, the fishermen deliberately net these dolphins in order to catch the tuna swimming below them. 25
- 5 Modern fishing nets, unlike those in even the recent past, are made of very strong materials which dolphins can neither detect nor break and, in some places, local fishermen use these nets with the specific intention of catching dolphins for food. It is difficult not to have some sympathy for these fishermen. In many fishing communities, fish stocks – on which people have always depended – are dwindling. The sea provides their best food, but local people are unable to compete with the huge fishing vessels which have recently been sent into their waters by large international companies. As a result, they have to turn to whatever food sources remain, simply in order to survive, and the only available food is often dolphins. 30 35
- 6 It is not only sea dolphins that are under threat; river dolphins are also in danger of extinction because of human behaviour. They frequently become entangled in fishing nets used by local people whose overriding concern is feeding their families. Other dolphins are accidentally caught on large fishing hooks strung in lines along river beds. It is perfectly understandable that people respond to the need to provide food for their families by fishing in local rivers, but their fishing equipment is a major hazard for dolphins. Pesticides, which are used to boost crop production in agricultural areas, pollute the nearby rivers, and the dolphins living there stand no chance against these powerful poisons. When rivers flow through areas where there are a lot of factories, these beautiful creatures can be poisoned by factory waste, which is often dumped in rivers; this waste may be hidden, but it is still present and highly dangerous. 40 45

- 7 In many parts of the world, dams are constructed either to provide water to irrigate crops or to produce hydro-electric power. However, the benefits brought about by these dams are offset by the damage done to dolphins, which are prevented from swimming upstream to breed, as are the small, migratory fish on which they feed. Thus an important food source for dolphins is seriously depleted. In some countries, the construction of dams has led to the extinction of many species of river dolphin. Dams restrict the flow of fresh water in nearby rivers, and the lack of fresh water deprives dolphins of oxygen. In addition, dams separate dolphins into small, isolated groups that cannot interbreed. The threat to river dolphins means that government organisations need to consider holding workshops to deliberate on what can be done to save river dolphins. 50 55
- 8 In some countries, the meat of river dolphins is considered to have medicinal properties, and consequently they are killed in large uncontrolled numbers. But, as with sea dolphins, the majority of deaths are caused inadvertently. Many river dolphins have been found with appalling injuries after collisions with boats and, as the volume of boat traffic in many parts of the world is likely to grow, the probability of such encounters is bound to increase. The noise caused by boats interferes with the dolphins' hearing, reducing their ability to locate food. Furthermore, there is plenty of evidence to suggest that the turbulence caused by dense river traffic reduces the ability of these sensitive creatures to navigate their territory. 60
- 9 However, there are signs of changing attitudes towards the plight of river dolphins. In China, they have been officially recognised as a protected species, along with the giant panda and other critically threatened creatures. The Chinese government has taken extensive and surprising measures to educate local people through films, posters and even postage stamps. All of this has been greeted with interest by local people. More importantly, associations have been set up, run by local volunteers, to educate fishermen in fishing methods designed to stop the harm which is often done to river dolphins, however unintentionally. These associations are often delighted at how quickly ordinary people understand the importance of urgent action to conserve river dolphins. One association has raised public awareness by persuading a nearby factory to use the river dolphin as its trademark, and other companies have rushed to follow their example, with a dolphin hotel, a dolphin department store, dolphin shoes... the public imagination has been caught! Not surprisingly, the river dolphin is becoming a household name and its survival problems are well known. 65 70 75
- 10 In one part of China, a nature reserve has been built to protect river dolphins. Funded by government money and public donations, this reserve provides a protected breeding area for river dolphins, which, it is hoped, will result in an increase in the dolphin population. Local support for this project is considerable, since it is likely to provide new jobs and has a great potential as a tourist attraction. A hospital has also been constructed where injured dolphins are treated until they are well enough to be returned to the river. 80
- 11 We should be heartened by such conservation stories. Nevertheless, through our arrogance and ignorance we have already managed to cause tremendous harm to our environment. Dolphins are in the unfortunate position of acting as living indicators of the effects of this damage. They are symbolic not only of love, peace and harmony, but of what we have done, and are still doing, to our planet. 85

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