CAMBRIDGE
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FIRST LANGUAGE ENGLISH **0500/12**

Paper 1 Reading **May/June 2026**

INSERT **2 hours**

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INFORMATION

- 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.

This document has **8** pages. Any blank pages are indicated.

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Read **Text A**, and then answer **Questions 1(a)–(e)** on the question paper.

Text A: *Rhinos*

Five species of Asian and African rhinoceros (rhinos) exist in the world. Three of the five are critically endangered.

Most people understand that hunting is cruel and threatens rhinos with extinction. But why the terrific fuss about rhinos? Of course, no species should go extinct because of humans, and rhinos draw tourists in their native countries, but according to a recent study in Kruger Park, South Africa, rhinos may also be a keystone species.

In any ecosystem, a keystone species is considered one of the most vital parts. Without its keystone species, the ecosystem would look very different. While some ecosystems might still be able to adapt to environmental changes if keystone species disappeared, others wouldn't, signalling their end. Or, other invasive species might take over, shifting the ecosystem in a new direction.

Surprisingly, before this study no one had looked closely at rhinos' roles in shaping the ecosystem, focusing instead on more obvious 'eco-engineers' like elephants. Using aerial-survey records of the area, the researchers identified how rhino distributions had increased in recent years thanks to conservation efforts. They pinpointed the places rhinos now inhabit.

Previous studies of rhinos had concentrated more on the species itself; the emphasis this time was on how they impacted the landscape. The different plant species found across sections of the park were recorded and the data analysed. Based on their findings, the researchers think that rhinos may play a role in promoting the diversity of edible plants for smaller animals by grazing on certain grass species, allowing other grasses to grow.

Rhinos have only repopulated the park for a relatively short amount of time, so future studies are needed to confirm their role there; studying other locations will help establish whether or not rhinos have the same influence wherever they go. Scientists debate, though, whether any animal really deserves the title 'keystone'. Some argue the label oversimplifies one species' role in complex food webs and habitats. Others recognise that calling a particular plant or animal in an ecosystem a keystone species helps the public understand just how important one species can be to the survival of many others.

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Read **Text B**, and then answer **Question 1(f)** on the question paper.

Text B: ***Finding the right name for our rhino***

This article from a wildlife magazine is written by a judge of a competition to name a baby rhino. The article explains what this judge is looking for in the winning entry.

Naming a rhino goes beyond attributing a mere label. The name must convey a presence as imposing as the ancient armour they seem to wear, yet reflect the endearing qualities of these gentle giants.

'At the moment we're calling him Tiny,' admits keeper Shane Kerry, introducing me to the new calf. 'It's sort of stuck for now, but obviously won't work when he's over four and a half metres long as a fully-grown adult male.' The breeding facility has invited entries to a competition to suggest a suitable name for their very special new addition: one he can grow into.

The competition will be judged by rhino experts and conservationists from around the globe – all looking for a name that can raise awareness, symbolise a story or struggle and remind us of our responsibilities. Understanding the challenges rhinos face in the wild, we're better equipped to choose names that honour these incredible creatures and project the legacy of this iconic species. Tiny's new name and fame will last decades into the future, outliving any fashionable celebrity we could otherwise name him after.

Entries so far include names from myths and legends: Titan, King and Hero. To me they seem a bit uninventive, lacking originality – surely we can do better for the little guy? There are 'sweet' suggestions: Muffin, Biscuit and Cupcake – could anyone really consider naming a rhino after bakery products? And Fuzzy, Cotton and Cuddles – also wrong! Amusing names might raise a smile for some visitors, but the judges are unlikely to share your sense of humour.

Whether our own little rhino will develop impressive strength like 'Hercules' or the leadership skills of a 'Chief', his name should still represent the dignified calmness of his whole species. When we turn to nature for inspiration, we find a plethora of beautiful names that reflect the physical attributes of rhinos and also their intrinsic connection to the landscape that they have trodden for millennia, celebrating their indomitable presence in the wild: 'Boulder' – solid and unmovable, like a rhino itself; 'Thunder' – a sound as powerful as a rhino's charge.

Naming a rhino is a unique opportunity to reflect on the characteristics, history and very essence of this magnificent beast, but don't overcomplicate it. A name that's easy to pronounce, a simple name, often has the strongest impact and the keepers will thank you when they call it each morning!

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Read **Text C**, and then answer **Questions 2(a)–(d)** and **Question 3** on the question paper.

Text C: *Saving Baby Rhinos*

In this text, Mina is spending another summer helping Izelle, who runs a sanctuary for baby rhinos near where Mina lives.

There's a film crew here today, shooting a documentary about species vital to our planet's health.

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