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FIRST LANGUAGE ENGLISH **0500/22**

Paper 2 Directed Writing and Composition **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.

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Read **both** texts, and then answer **Question 1** on the question paper.

Text A

The following text is an article about the use of technology for learning.

In recent years, teachers of young children in some countries have been putting a new emphasis on printed books, quiet reading time and handwriting practice and devoting less time to tablets, independent online research and keyboard skills.

The return to more traditional ways of learning is a response to experts questioning whether a hyper-digitalised approach to education, including the introduction of devices for preschoolers, is really working.

According to a range of experts, young children need more printed books and opportunities to play and learn offline.

Some countries are proposing to reverse the trend towards using devices in schools, even to end all digital learning for children under six. One highly respected research institute agrees that 'digital tools impair rather than enhance student learning'. Their experts believe the focus should return to acquiring knowledge primarily from printed textbooks and teacher expertise, rather than freely available digital sources that have not been vetted for accuracy.

The rapid adoption of digital learning tools has also drawn concern from one international education agency which issued an urgent call for 'appropriate use of technology in education'. Many teachers agree: 'Very young children arrive at school already addicted to screens which parents have come to rely on, believing that they're helping introduce their kids to the modern world. This affects children's reading though, turning them into shallow readers – skim readers who don't know the pleasure of a picture book or of a story book featuring different textures they can touch. It's a vital stage in their development; you can't just miss it out.' While young children can quickly learn the intuitive, seductive process of pressing the right keys to move through screens, their appetite for the more laborious process of learning to read is diminishing. The result is the limitation or even the reduction of reading levels in the young.

Yet some countries are launching programmes to give a government-funded laptop to every student in the hope of making their populations more technologically competitive. Others, however, are funding the purchase of books and creating school libraries as a priority.

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Text B

The following text is from an article about trends in education.

Humans can count, read, communicate and reason. These advanced abilities are often attributed to the human brain as a piece of hardware. However, the brain itself has scarcely changed over time. Instead, much of our thinking is the result of thousands of years of evolving knowledge and skills, passed down through children's education.

Although more children have access to education than in the past, and they have the latest technology at home these days, some people believe that innovations in education have stagnated. Schools remain fossils from a world before the internet and let children down. Schools were built before the vast library of human knowledge, with all its flaws, became instantly accessible at our fingertips. Of course, technology is expensive and needs updating constantly, but a good education has always been the key to individual success, as most parents know, and all materials used in schools incur costs, not just computers.

These ideas have brought about a radical rethink of education for the twenty-first century. Children can, and should, learn from the best educators, wherever they are in the world, accessing lessons and lectures online. In the classroom, even very young children are encouraged to work together online, learning to solve problems rather than messing around with sand or paint. Teachers become facilitators, helping students to find information using the internet or AI and go wherever their curiosity takes them. Obviously, not everything they find on the internet is helpful, but that's also the real world they're growing up in and learning to navigate. A generation ago, my teacher warned me about the importance of mental mathematics, because I wouldn't be carrying a calculator in my pocket. He didn't foresee the smartphones in all our pockets now.

Education is the software that our brains run and, faced with ever more daunting challenges, we can't afford to settle for an outdated version.

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