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FIRST LANGUAGE ENGLISH **0500/23**

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.

This document has **4** pages. Any blank pages are indicated.

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

Text A

The following is an article about peer mentoring, where older students agree to help younger or struggling students in their school life.

Peer mentoring, the partnering of a more experienced college or school student with a younger student, offers a different way to learn. There are no teachers chastising, just friendly faces offering the benefit of their experience.

Students mentoring other students is gaining popularity. Often, it's during a time of transition in the mentee's school life. Some schools run two strands of the scheme: one for more able students and another for those experiencing personal issues. Attendance is voluntary; pupils are encouraged to share experiences and work on specific areas or school subjects where the mentee lacks confidence or is struggling. Although proper evidence about the impact on academic performance or behaviour is sparse, one teacher told us, 'It definitely builds their confidence and that's a good start.'

A student, Rahul, used to be a mentee and is now a mentor. 'With a mentor, children are more willing to have a second try than in a classroom full of children,' he says. 'As a mentor, I have to see the whole person, not just a list of things they're finding hard at school.'

Prospective mentors undergo a careful selection and training process and are given some freedom to take on responsibilities, within strict boundaries. Responding flexibly every day can be taxing for mentors navigating their own academic journeys.

But the successful ones have discovered that the benefits go both ways. As well as being useful for university applications, students say these schemes help to build their skills in areas outside of the curriculum.

Mentoring is not new and various other models exist. Some older students benefit from the support of adult mentors in careers which interest them or from successful, professional people from similar backgrounds as them. These schemes have seen tangible results, with mentees often making successful university applications they would otherwise not have aspired to or finding a career path they didn't even know about before.

Many young people want to be student mentors. Mentors have a high status in schools and often wear red hoodies instead of the standard uniform so that they're easily identifiable to younger students.

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Text B

The following is part of an application form for a position as a student mentor in a school.

Time management, homework and prioritising schoolwork are often difficult for mentees, so who better than an older student to show them how it's done? That's where you come in. You'll be given a badge to wear at all times so that all younger students, not just your mentee, know who to look up to and where to turn whenever they need help.

Often, it's not a trained counsellor or teacher they need in that moment – they need someone who will listen to their worries and try to help. You'll get your own dedicated mentoring room to meet with the mentee you've been allocated before and after school each day during term-time and you can even use it if your mentee needs your help during the holidays. Because they recognise the vital role you play as a mentor, your teachers will be sympathetic if your mentoring role occasionally takes you out of lessons or means your homework is a little late. They know that student mentors can be invaluable in supporting their teaching of younger students.

We offer you a wonderful training package over a fun weekend before you begin mentoring, which will focus on how to get to know your mentee and what difficulties they might face at home or school. You don't need to be a high achiever to be a good mentor, but the skills you learn will impress employers and universities. Your mentee might have a very different home life from you, with limited time or space for homework. Or, they may have family responsibilities you've never had, but your positive mindset and optimistic approach to overcoming their challenges can work wonders!

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