



OLIMPIADA NAȚIONALĂ DE LIMBA ENGLEZĂ - ETAPA LOCALĂ

7 februarie – 2026

CLASA a XII-a SECȚIUNEA B

Toate subiectele sunt obligatorii. Se acordă 10 puncte din oficiu. Timpul de lucru este 180 de minute.

SECTION A – USE OF ENGLISH

(40 points)

I. Read the following text and do the tasks that follow. Write the answers on your answer sheet. (10 points)

This unlikely story begins on a sea that was a blue dream, as colorful as blue-silk stockings, and beneath a sky as blue as the irises of children's eyes. From the western half of the sky the sun was shying little golden disks at the sea – if you gazed intently enough you could see them skip from wave tip to wave tip until they joined a broad collar of golden coin that was collecting half a mile out and would eventually be a dazzling sunset. About half-way between the Florida shore and the golden collar a white steam-yacht, very young and graceful, was riding at anchor and under a blue-and-white awning a yellow-haired girl reclined in a wicker settee reading *The Revolt of the Angels* by Anatole France. She was about nineteen, slender and supple, with a spoiled alluring mouth and quick gray eyes full of radiant curiosity. Her feet, stockingless, and adorned rather than clad in blue satin slippers which swung nonchalantly from her toes, were perched on the arm of the settee adjoining the one she occupied. And as she read, she intermittently regaled herself by a faint application to her tongue of a half-lemon that she held in her hand.

The second half-lemon was well-nigh pulpless and the golden collar had grown astonishing in width, when suddenly the drowsy silence which enveloped the yacht was broken by the sound of heavy footsteps and an elderly man, topped with orderly gray hair and clad in a white-flannel suit appeared at the head of the companionway. There he paused for a moment until his eyes became accustomed to the sun, and then seeing the girl under the awning he uttered a long even grunt of disapproval. If he had intended to obtain a rise of any sort, he was doomed to disappointment. The girl calmly turned over two pages, turned back one, raised the lemon mechanically to tasting distance, and then, very faintly but quite unmistakably yawned.

A. Choose the right synonym for the following words: (3x1p=3p)

- | | | | | |
|------------|------------|------------|----------------|-----------|
| 1. awning | a) ceiling | b) canopy | c) terrace | d) berth |
| 2. adorned | a) austere | b) painted | c) embellished | d) modest |
| 3. regaled | a) feasted | b) amused | c) spurned | d) bored |

B. Rephrase the following sentences so as to preserve the meaning. (3x1p=3p)

- The sea and sky are described as intensely blue and dreamlike. **SO**
The story is set on a sea and beneath a sky _____ almost unreal.
- There he paused for a moment until his eyes became accustomed to the sun. **ONLY**
_____ his eyes become accustomed to the sun.
- The girl did not react to the man's obvious disapproval. **WHATSOEVER**
Despite the man's clear expression of annoyance, the girl _____.

C. Choose from the 8 words given below the 4 words that fit in the following summary of the text. (4x1p=4p)

lays detached mounting nicely lies subtle aloof sharply

The passage presents a richly detailed seaside scene marked by calm, colour and (1) _____ tension. Against an intensely blue sea and sky, the sun casts shimmering reflections that gradually gather into a promise of a brilliant sunset. An elegant steam yacht (2) _____ at anchor, where a nineteen-year-old girl reclines beneath an awning, absorbed in her book and indulging lazily in a lemon. Her appearance and behaviour suggest both privilege and carefree self-absorption. The tranquillity is interrupted by the arrival of an elderly man, whose silent disapproval contrasts (3) _____ with the girl's studied indifference. Unmoved by his presence, she continues reading and responds only with a faint yawn, reinforcing her (4) _____ and self-assured attitude.

II. Think about one word which can be used appropriately in all three sentences. Write only the missing word on your answer sheet. (5 x 2p = 10p)

- It is necessary to wash clothes made from _____ fibres at a low temperature.
- Negotiations between the rival factions have reached a very _____ stage, with neither side willing to give an inch.
- Although it is made from various root vegetables, the dish has a very _____ taste.

2. When the commanding officer entered the room, the young cadets all _____ to attention. They were moving steadily through the seemingly impenetrable jungle when suddenly a large animal _____ at them from out of the undergrowth. With the arrival of the ebullient young actor, the party really _____ to life.
3. You can stay with us if you like, we've got a _____ room in our house. It's very difficult to get _____ parts for machines as old as this, so it's hard to get them repaired if they break down. I like my job but the hours are long so it doesn't allow me much _____ time.
4. Ann is always gossiping about other people – I wish she'd _____ her own business. _____ your head when you go through this doorway, it's rather low for someone tall. Colin earns an absolute fortune in his job - _____ you, he has to work extremely hard for it.
5. Don't cheat – you've just put a card down and it's my _____ now. I'm exhausted because it's been very busy at work and I've been on the _____ all day. Daniel had a _____ at fixing the washing machine but he couldn't make it work properly.

III. Some of the lines in the text below are correct, and some have a word which should not be there. On your answer sheet write the number of the line and the extra-word, or a tick for each correct line.

(10 points)

- | | | |
|-----------|--------------|--|
| 0 | the | Beliefs which go back deep into the time lie behind many of our present-day |
| 00 | ✓ | attitudes to birds. People have often regarded birds as having close |
| 1 | | affinities with mankind because, like the humans, birds go on two legs, sing |
| 2 | | show off and construct homes. Dances from many different cultures are |
| 3 | | copied from the courting displays of birds. Some birds were thought to warn |
| 4 | | of disaster or foretell a good fortune, according to the circumstances |
| 5 | | in which they were sighted. In the parts of Scotland, it is still lucky |
| 6 | | to hear of the cuckoo while you are out walking, but not before you have |
| 7 | | eaten a breakfast. The Welsh used to believe that you would flourish |
| 8 | | if you were standing on a grass or green leaves when the bird sang, but if |
| 9 | | you were on barren ground you would not live up to hear its call another |
| 10 | | year. Many children still believe that it's unlucky to see a single crow. |

IV. Translate into English:

(10 points)

În fiecare dimineață, bătrânul ceasornicar își deschidea atelierul cu aceeași mișcare lentă și deliberată, ca și cum ar fi trezit o ființă adormită de mult timp. Ușa scârțâia subtil, iar lumina dimineții se strecura printre rafturile pline de ceasuri, fiecare oprit la ore diferite. Pentru el, fiecare mecanism ascundea o poveste, iar tăcerea lor nu semnifica dispariție, ci o răbdare aproape ritualică.

Orașul se transforma cu rapiditate în jurul atelierului modest. Clădirile moderne înlocuiau treptat piețele pline de voci și miros de fructe proaspete care odinioară animaseră cartierul. Oamenii păreau să fi pierdut răbdarea de a repara obiectele vechi, preferând înlocuirea lor. Totuși, ceasornicarul continua să creadă că timpul merită respectat, nu grăbit.

Într-o zi, o fetiță a pășit timid în atelier, ținând în palmă un ceas de mână defect. Povestea că fusese al bunicului ei și că nu mai funcționa de mult timp. Bătrânul a analizat obiectul cu o atenție aproape medicală, ca pe un pacient rănit, promițând că va depune toate eforturile pentru a-l repara. Pe măsură ce desfăcea mecanismul, a observat urmele de uzură, dar și o rezistență tăcută a roților, ca și cum acestea ar fi refuzat să cedeze.

SECTION B – INTEGRATED SKILLS

(50 points)

I. You are going to read an extract from a magazine article. Five paragraphs have been removed from the article. Choose the most suitable paragraphs from the list A-F for each gap (1-5) of the article. There is one extra paragraph which you do not need to use. Write your answers on your answer sheet.

(10 points)

Consider the following scenario. Researchers from an Australian biotech company want to enlist a family with a rare genetic mutation for a study into genetic illness. They strongly believe that they can identify one of the genes involved in the disease in this family, and if they do, the company stands to make a large amount of money. The

researchers aim to persuade the family to take part in the study by offering each member \$10,000. All they would have to do is give some saliva samples. (1) _____

Such standards are rigorously enforced. But there is another way of looking at it. Pharmaceuticals and biotech companies carry out trials because they hope eventually to make substantial profits from the results. The researchers also benefit financially and through the advancement of their careers. Meanwhile, the participants in a trial barely benefit at all. Indeed, they could be said to be exploited in the interests of industry and biomedicine. (2) _____

Now compare the trial mentioned above with a real example in which a patient is invited to take part in a study into a genetic predisposition to glaucoma, a disease of the eye which can cause a person to gradually lose their sight. If she agrees, the patient will have access to a new genetic test for glaucoma that is not available outside the study. The cost of this test is a few hundred dollars. (3) _____

The issue becomes most acute when applied to high-risk research. Ethics committees argue that in these cases money may make people go against their "better judgement" and take risks they would not ordinarily take. However, not paying volunteers who take part in high-risk research makes an even greater mockery of the system. (4) _____

In many cases such as this, the financial reward is the only thing that makes it worthwhile for a volunteer to take the risk. But why should that bother ethics committees? We make such decisions every day. Do we always make them against our better judgement? (5) _____

Similarly, an unemployed man sees an advertisement for a construction worker's job. At the interview, the employer tells him the job involves working on high scaffolding and that the risk of dying is between 1 in 2000 and 1 in 5000 higher per year than working at ground level. In compensation for this he will receive an extra \$ 10,000 a year. He takes the job. Could you say that either situation resulted in unsound judgements? In both cases they are effectively being paid for taking on a greater risk. There appears nothing objectionable in their decisions, yet participants in medical trials are not even allowed to make the choice.

- A For example, a researcher wishes to recruit healthy, unemployed men at a local labour exchange for a study into the effects of new anti-hypertensive medications. The volunteers would have to wear a device to measure pressure in the heart. This can cause life-threatening complications, although the risk of death is 1 in 2000 and is clearly stated on the consent form, yet all the researcher can offer the volunteers is a mere \$100 for their trouble.
- B In many countries today such a scenario is inconceivable. Researchers are not allowed to offer significant sums of money to participants in a medical trial, even for low-risk experiments. Offering money is considered "undue inducement" that could interfere with a volunteer's judgement on whether to take part, and turn the relationship between scientist and subject into a commercial, unethical one.
- C Benefits in kind like this are permissible, and many volunteers receive them. They are not considered undue inducements, yet money is. This is paternalistic and nonsensical. It would be far more respectful to volunteers if researchers could offer them the choice.
- D One such ethics committee in Australia nearly rejected a proposal to pay a particular group of people the equivalent of just 10 US dollars for completing an anonymous questionnaire about their behaviour for a study on the spread of hepatitis C.
- E Consider a couple with two young children who are contemplating buying a new car. They find one for \$30,000 but if they spend an extra \$ 10,000, they could get one with significantly better safety features such as air bags and an anti-lock braking system. The safer car has been shown to reduce the risk of death by 1 in 2000 a year. But the couple decide to buy the cheaper car and spend the extra \$10,000 on a family holiday instead.
- F If this is the case, surely it is only fair that they share in the rewards? Publicly funded research is perhaps more complicated, as participants may be acting in the public interest. But my main argument applies equally to commercial and non-commercial trials: researchers should be allowed to pay volunteers, and to pay them well, even for high-risk research.

II. Writing

(40 points)

Considering the ideas you came across in the text above, write a proposal to the National Research Ethics Committee, in which you:

- evaluate the arguments for and against paying volunteers significant amounts of money
- consider whether current restrictions are justified
- make recommendations about how ethical guidelines should be applied in the future

Write your PROPOSAL in 280-300 words.