

SPRINGBOARD EDUCATION

ĐỀ THI LUYỆN TẬP

KỲ THI THỬ HỌC SINH GIỎI QUỐC GIA

TRUNG HỌC PHỔ THÔNG

NĂM HỌC 2025 – 2026

Môn thi: **TIẾNG ANH**

Thời gian: **180** phút (không kể thời gian giao đề)

Ngày thi: **30/02/2025**

Đề thi gồm có **24** trang

- Thí sinh **KHÔNG** được sử dụng tài liệu, kể cả từ điển.
- Giám thị **KHÔNG** giải thích gì thêm.

I. LISTENING (5.0 points)

HƯỚNG DẪN PHẦN THI NGHE HIỂU

- The listening section is in **FOUR** parts. You will hear each part **TWICE**. At the beginning of each part, you will hear a sound.
- There will be a piece of music at the beginning and at the end of the listening section. You will have **TWO** minutes to check your answers at the end of the listening section.
- All the other instructions are included in the recording.

Part 1. For questions 1 – 5, listen to two friends, Kathy and Derek, talking about films based on 19th century novels, and decide whether the following are mentioned by only one of the speakers, or by both of them. In the corresponding numbered boxes provided,

write

K for Kathy;

D for Derek;

B for **Both**, where both of the speakers agree.

1. In the film Oliver Twist, it was hard to think of the actors as the characters they were playing
2. Film adaptations of the 1930s and 40s reflect their own time
3. Film adaptation made nowadays may reflect current attitudes
4. The actor sometimes does not match your idea of the character
5. The author's viewpoint should be evident in film adaptations

Your answers:

1.	2.	3.	4.	5.
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Part 2. For questions 6 – 10, listen to a news report on global environmental events and match each number (6 – 10) in Column A with one letter (A – J) in Column B to make a correct statement according to what is stated or implied by the speaker(s). Write your answers in the corresponding numbered boxes provided.

Column A	Column B
6. Global temperature trends	A. expected to diverge from multilateral climate agreements. B. approach a record-breaking threshold that may redefine what is considered “normal”.
7. The United States under Trump’s leadership	C. Has seen intensified military activity contributing to long-term ecological degradation. D. May rely increasingly on untested geoengineering solutions to meet mitigation goals.
8. Climate-conflict connection	E. Faces the dilemma of achieving energy transition while still subsidizing fossil fuel industries. F. poised to re-evaluate its commitment to emissions reduction following domestic political changes.
9. Climate policy developments	G. expected to roll out carbon surveillance systems with precision comparable to military satellite tracking.
10. Technological responses to emissions	H. under pressure to convert pledges into binding measures amid widespread climate finance gaps. I. launched a new generation of ocean buoys to monitor La Niña and El Niño events. J. May expect atmospheric gases tracked in real time from orbit.

Your answers:

6.	7.	8.	9.	10.
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Part 3. For questions 11–15, listen to Captain Walker, discussing air turbulence and write the answer A, B, C, or D in the numbered boxes provided to indicate the correct answer to each of the following questions according to what you hear.

- 11.** According to Captain Walker, what makes clear-air turbulence particularly difficult for pilots to manage?
- A. It is usually accompanied by strong tailwinds and hail.
 - B. It occurs in complete silence, making it hard to notice.
 - C. It is invisible and caused by abrupt shifts in wind shear.
 - D. It only occurs during descent and approach phases of flight.
- 12.** What role does the jet stream play in generating turbulence, as described in the video?
- A. It generates turbulence only at low altitudes due to surface friction.
 - B. It facilitates smoother flights by aligning with the plane's heading.
 - C. It creates shear zones that can lead to destabilizing movements.
 - D. It disperses thermals which prevent turbulence from forming.
- 13.** Why are cumulonimbus clouds particularly hazardous to aircraft?
- A. They are typically associated with high wind speeds near runways.
 - B. They contain vertical air movements and potential solid hazards.
 - C. They often contain hailing and low visibility zones.
 - D. They prevent onboard weather radar from functioning correctly.
- 14.** Which of the following best reflects how mechanical turbulence differs from the other types?
- A. It occurs exclusively due to pilot error during descent.
 - B. It arises from human-made disruptions at high altitudes.
 - C. It stems from air interacting with surface obstacles like terrain or buildings.
 - D. It is the only type unaffected by wind direction or speed.
- 15.** Based on the pilot's explanations, what is a common strategy for minimizing turbulence across all three types discussed?
- A. Engaging autopilot systems calibrated for airspeed variability
 - B. Relying on predictive radar to chart storm cells and turbulence zones
 - C. Adjusting altitude to find more stable air outside turbulent layers
 - D. Speeding up to minimize the duration of exposure to rough air

Your answers:

11.	12.	13.	14.	15.
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Part 4. For questions 16–25, listen to a talk about Airplane black boxes, and complete the following summary. Write NO MORE THAN FOUR WORDS AND/OR A NUMBER taken from the recording for each blank. Write your answers in the corresponding numbered boxes provided.

In November 2001, shortly after takeoff from JFK Airport, an airplane crashed into a Queens neighborhood, killing everyone on board and several people on the ground. Given the proximity to 9/11, many feared it was another act of **(16)** _____. However, the truth was discovered through the aircraft's black boxes.

Though commonly called black boxes, the devices are actually bright orange and consist of two components: the cockpit voice recorder and the flight data recorder. The concept originated after the **(17)** _____ experienced multiple crashes, prompting a need to better understand in-flight failures. Over time, technology advanced from foil to magnetic tape, and eventually to **(18)** _____, making today's devices more durable and precise.

The cockpit voice recorder stores the **(19)** _____, including all communication from the pilots' headsets. This, along with flight data, can be crucial in understanding crashes. In the case of Flight 587, the cockpit recording revealed the aircraft encountered **(20)** _____ from a larger plane ahead. But what followed made the situation worse.

Analysis of the flight data uncovered a pattern of **(21)** _____ by the copilot—forceful actions on the pedals controlling yaw. While planes are designed to maneuver through **(22)** _____, excessive use of the rudder can overstress the aircraft's structure. In this incident, it caused the vertical stabilizer to break off.

Black boxes are engineered to withstand extreme conditions and are typically installed in the tail section. They emit locator signals from underwater—up to **(23)** _____. —to aid recovery efforts. Still, as shown by the disappearance of Malaysia Airlines Flight MH370, some recorders are never found.

To address this, some propose transmitting flight data in real time to **(24)** _____, reducing reliance on physical recovery. Though **(25)** _____ concerns remain, such advancements may redefine the future of flight investigation.

Your answers:

16.	17.
18.	19.
20.	21.
22.	23.
24.	25.

II. LEXICO – GRAMMAR (2.0 points)

Part 1. For questions 26 – 35, read the passage below and decide which answer (A, B, C, or D) best fits each space. Write the letter A, B, C, or D in the numbered boxes provided.

Harboring feelings of resentment is more common than people probably care to admit — it's the weapon we silently **(1)** _____ against partners, friends, family, colleagues, and neighbors for wrongs, either real or perceived, that we can't seem to forgive.

Resentment is often described as festering or simmering, probably because it doesn't just come out of nowhere. According to psychologists, envy is wanting what someone else has, while jealousy is the fear of losing what you have **(2)** _____. These feelings, though fleeting, can accumulate over time into resentment, which is often a reaction to **(3)** _____ or being made to feel inadequate.

Hear a friend discuss their lavish lifestyle long enough and mild annoyance and envy might slowly **(4)** _____ resentment. Unlike envy and jealousy, which may push us to act, resentment tends to be something we **(5)** _____.

When people hold onto resentment, they often avoid speaking up, assuming the other person is to blame — “If they didn't behave this way, I wouldn't feel like this.” But staying silent out of fear they might get angry or **(6)** _____ the relationship only allows bitterness to grow.

Eventually, what began as discomfort turns into something deeper and more toxic. And once this state of affairs has lasted long enough, **(7)** _____ can take root.

While some people suppress resentment for the sake of peace, unspoken bitterness has been shown to harm well-being. That's why psychologists recommend naming the emotion and exploring ways to **(8)** _____ it.

Doing so doesn't mean forgetting what happened, but it may open a path toward reconciliation. After all, no relationship is free of conflict — it's whether we process resentment that determines if trust **(9)** _____ or begins to break down.

If left unresolved, resentment can distort how we interpret even small interactions, leading to increasing **(10)** _____ in everyday communication.

26. A. wield B. Lean C. Carry D. Throw
27. A. To someone else B. To another person C. To be taken D. To another
28. A. Being treated unfairly B. Treating unfairly
C. Treated unfairness D. Unfair to be treated
29. A. Shift over to B. Curdle into C. Melt down into D. Blur into
30. A. Get stuck in B. Are stuck for C. Stay in D. Keep at
31. A. withdraw from B. Let go of C. Lash out on D. Walk away from
32. A. Long-lasting bitterness B. Underlying suspicion
C. Emotional damage D. Persistent dissatisfaction
33. A. Release or reframe B. Act or fight
C. Revenge or relieve D. Admit and suppress
34. A. Restores B. Reaffirms C. Rebuilds D. Erodes
35. A. Friction B. Abrasion C. Attrition D. Erosion

Your answers:

26.	27.	28.	29.	30.
31.	32.	33.	34.	35.

Part 2. For questions 36 – 40, read the passage, then fill in each of the numbered spaces with the correct form of the words given in the box. Write your answers in the numbered boxes provided. There are **FOUR** words that you do not need to use. The first one, (0), has been done as an example.

optimism	want	deliberate	equation	bore
reflect	max	sole	tameless	massive

Since the (0) **mass** adoption of smartphones, most people have been walking around with the psychological (36)_____ of a shock button in their pocket: a device that can neutralise boredom in an instant, even if it's not all that good for us. We often reach for our phones for something to do during moments of quiet or (37)_____, or to distract us late at night when anxious thoughts creep in. This isn't *always* a bad thing – too much rumination is unhealthy – but it's worth reflecting on the fact that avoiding (38)_____ mind-wandering is easier than it's ever been, and that most people distract themselves in very similar, screen-based ways.

Smartphones have also increased the pressure to use our time productively, to (39)_____ every minute of our lives. If once a harried commuter might have been forced to stare out of the window or read a book on the train to work, now they may try to catch up on their emails to avoid feeling guilty and inefficient. To sit and do nothing is seen as a waste of time. But that ignores the fact that when we're doing nothing we're often thinking quite hard. What happens to all those difficult or (40)_____ half-thoughts that start to form in the milliseconds before we dig into our pockets and pull out our phones again?

Your answers:

36.	37.	38.	39.	40.
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Part 3. The passage below contains **FIVE** grammatical mistakes. For questions 41 – 45, **UNDERLINE** the mistakes and **WRITE THEIR CORRECT FORMS** in the numbered boxes provided in the column on the right. The first one has been done as an example.

Eternal life seems like the sweetest of sweet deals. You get to go everywhere, do everything, and collect stories you'll be telling at parties for millennium. But before you sign up for immortality, be forewarned: It isn't

Your answers:

E.g. Error → Correction

41. _____

all it's cracked up to be. Even in the comparatively sweet world of fiction there are plenty of souls embittered by immortality. In the words of Queen, *who wants to live forever?* Not these folks. And here's why.

42. _____

The things you have to go through to live forever make you wonder if they're worth the effort. Vampirism is the most obvious example: Sure, you get eternal life plus super-powers (superhuman strength, turning into a bat, the currently popular Sunlight Sparkle), but you have to drink all that darn blood. In the Guillermo del Toro film *Cronos*, people achieve immortality through a device invented by a medieval alchemist—but they develop a vampiric need of fresh blood. In the 1960 B-movie *The Leech Woman*, a woman keeps herself young through a secret African formulae of orchid pollen and pineal juice. She has to keep killing men for their pineal glands, which you can only do for so long before the cops get suspicious. Their version of immortality isn't a long, sumptuous meal, but a hamster wheel, which speed ever faster but impossible to jump off of.

43. _____

44. _____

45. _____

III. READING (5.0 points)

Part 1. For questions 46–55, read the passage and fill in each of the following numbered blanks with ONE suitable word. Write your answers in the corresponding numbered boxes provided.

Tyrannosaurs might (46)_____ images of serrated teeth, massive bodies and powerful tails, but their most recent ancestor yet discovered was a slender, fleet-footed beast of (47)_____ more modest size.

Experts say the new species – identified from two partial skeletons – helps fill a (48)_____ in the fossil record between the small, early ancestors of tyrannosaurs and the huge predators that evolved later. “They’re almost the (49)_____ ancestor of the family that we call tyrannosaurs,” said Dr Darla Zelenitsky, co-author of the study at the University of Calgary.

Writing in the journal *Nature*, Zelenitsky and colleagues report how they re-examined fossils (50)_____ in Mongolia in the early 1970s, and now held at the Institute of Paleontology of the Mongolian Academy of Sciences.

The team discovered the 86m-year-old skeletons did not belong to the tyrannosaur ancestor they had previously been (51)_____ with, an enigmatic creature called *Alectrosaurus olseni*.

Instead, they (52)_____ to a new species the researchers have called *Khankhuuluu Mongoliensis*, (53)_____ “Prince of Dragons of Mongolia”. The results revealed *Khankhuuluu*, or closely related species in Asia, migrated to North America where tyrannosaurs subsequently (54)_____. Some tyrannosaurs later moved back into Asia, where the large *Tarbosaurus* and smaller Pinocchio rexes emerged. Finally, some huge species of tyrannosaur migrated back to North America, giving (55)_____ to *T rex* and other enormous predators.

Your answers:

46.	47.	48.	49.	50.
51.	52.	53.	54.	55.

Part 2. Read the following passage and do the tasks that follow.

They are inaudible and unpronounceable. They do not exist in spoken English—they are at best a pause rather than a presence: no one (with apologies to those listening to this article in our audio edition) could describe the sound of “”. Yet their increasing absence is causing conniptions.

Open Sally Rooney’s new novel “Intermezzo” and, on the first page, a character says: “Hello, Peter.” Except, as this is a novel by Ms Rooney, she does not say: “Hello, Peter.” She says: Hello, Peter. With no inverted commas. Peter then asks, “May I come in?” Except, again, he does not. Instead he asks, May I come in?

The inverted comma is falling out of fashion. Ms Rooney discarded it for her last three bestselling books. This year’s Booker Prize winner, “Orbital”, didn’t use them either. Our number-crunching reveals a dramatic decline: in the 1970s, 94% of Booker-nominated novels used them, compared with just 72% in the past decade. They are sighted less and slighted more: novelists have called them “weird” and an “obstruction”. In certain sorts of fiction the inverted comma is, says Robert Douglas-Fairhurst, a professor of English at the University of Oxford, “gradually being removed”.

Quite why is not clear. Most blame James Joyce, a glum Irish writer. Joyce called the inverted commas “perverted commas” and dropped them for his 1922 novel “Ulysses”. Inverted commas started to be seen as a colonial, even patriarchal, imposition on a piece of text. Instead, to

indicate speech, a writer like Joyce adopted the indentation and em-dash of the French (evidently the more artistically appealing imperialist). To this day the commas' absence is associated with edginess and Irishness.

Language changes. Open an old book and it will be littered with an antique ink-splatter of marks—the ¶, the §—that are mostly meaningless to modern eyes. What is surprising is the emotion all this engenders. Oxford commas invite outrage; semicolons invoke scorn; one 2003 grammar book suggested that a misplaced apostrophe should trigger emotions “similar to the stages of bereavement”. Naturally it was a bestseller.

Partly this is pure snobbery: punctuation is not merely a semantic marker but a social one. Largely inaudible and completely invisible in everyday speech, its correct usage can be acquired only through years of (often expensive) education. Punctuation thus marks not just texts but people. Those who know, or think they know, whether a full stop should go inside or outside inverted commas join an elite intellectual aristocracy. Though it is best not to brag about it: the line between stupidity and pretension is fine. “Do not use semicolons,” warned Kurt Vonnegut. “All they do is show you’ve been to college.”

But partly people also get cross because punctuation is genuinely helpful. Writers often forget that reading is hard, says Adam Mars-Jones, a novelist. If a piece of writing has not had “every single screw tightened”—every word well-chosen, every piece of punctuation in place—the reader can struggle. Inverted commas help as they envelop a quotation in a crisp clasp of reassuring accuracy, or add obvious snark.

Their absence, by contrast, casts a post-modern pall of uncertainty over the words. Were these really the words spoken, you wonder? That is partly the point. If a novel is “written in the first person”, Ms Rooney has said, “isn’t it all a quotation?” She does not “see any need for them”. Or as one should perhaps now write, does not see any need for them.

For questions 56-62, decide whether the following statements are True (T), False (F) or Not Given (NG). Write your answers in the corresponding numbered boxes provided.

56. Some writers see the abandonment of inverted commas as a form of resistance to traditional literary norms

57. James Joyce criticized punctuation in general as being too rigid.

58. The visual impact of older books is more striking due to the abundance of now-obsolete symbols.

59. Oxford commas are rarely used in contemporary literary fiction.

60. Punctuation is sometimes used as a subtle indicator of a person's educational background.

61. Adam Mars-Jones believes that omitting punctuation improves the reading experience.

56.	57.	58.	59.	60.	61.
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*For questions 62-69 read the following summary and fill in each blank with **NO MORE THAN THREE WORDS** taken from the passage. Write your answers in the corresponding numbered boxes provided.*

The decline of inverted commas in literary fiction reflects more than a stylistic trend—it taps into deeper cultural and ideological undercurrents. Once dismissed by James Joyce as a **(62)** _____ imposition on language, quotation marks have come to symbolize constraint for some writers. This trend, however, ironically draws on **(63)** _____ European punctuation traditions like the French em-dash, signalling artistic rebellion and cultural identity, and even evoking a sense of **(64)** _____.

Yet not everyone is convinced- punctuations offer emotional cues and stimuli, just like how a semicolon might bring forth feelings of **(65)** _____. Thus, traditionalists often view such shifts as unnecessary affectation. To them, punctuation is not just a **(66)** _____, helping to anchor meaning precisely, but its mastery, meanwhile, also remains associated with an **(67)** _____ - those fluent in silent grammatical codes. But this fluency can easily veer into **(68)** _____, especially when wielded to exclude rather than clarify. Still, defenders of traditional punctuation argue that marks like quotation marks offer **(69)** _____, helping readers navigate dialogue and tone without confusion

62.	63.
64.	65.
66.	67.
68.	69.

Part 3. In the passage below, seven paragraphs have been removed. For questions 69-75, read the passage and choose from paragraphs A-H the one which fits each gap. There is ONE extra paragraph which you do not need to use. Write the letters A-H in the corresponding numbered boxes provided.

Ingvar Kamprad was born in 1926 in Älmhult, and grew up with his younger sister Kerstin, mother Berta and father Feodor. Ingvar spent his early years with his family at his mother Berta's farm home, Majtorp. You had to be thrifty and inventive to make ends meet. And Berta was. A kind, resourceful woman who, according to Ingvar, was loved by everybody. And Ingvar's maternal grandfather, Carl Bernhard Nilsson, was just as kind. He also had the perfect playground for a young boy – a hardware store.

70

Ingvar was a particularly energetic 17 year old when he registered IKEA. The company was named after himself, the farm he lived on and the parish he came from: Ingvar Kamprad Elmtaryd Agunnaryd. In fact Elmtaryd farm was where a lot of the operation took place. When Ingvar moved to Gothenburg to start business high school, his parents Berta and Feodor had to step in.

71

Why was this? Ingvar himself has said that it was during these lessons at business high school in Gothenburg that he decided his future lay in distribution. If you wanted to be a successful businessman, you had to figure out the simplest, most cost-effective means of distribution from the factory to the customer. Between lessons, Ingvar could be found in the school library, where he would read export and import ads in the trade papers. Surely he too could import goods from abroad? So he wrote some letters in broken English to different manufacturers, and started importing.

72

But what is it he's selling? As a young boy he sold matches and fish he had caught in Lake Möckeln. Later it was Christmas cards, seeds, pens, wallets, nylon stockings and costume jewellery. He even tried importing shoes and lighters from Switzerland. By now he has concluded that the most cost-effective distribution is to be found in pens – directly from the factory to the customer. His customers are newsagents, watchmakers, pen shops, book stores and rural stores. He communicates with his customers in small brochures, sales letters and price lists, often written

in an open, honest tone. He also pays personal visits, finding it easy to make contacts with his cheery, open manner.

73

Pens and watches seem to be his most successful products during the 1940s. Even so, he is relatively naive and does some bad deals. On one occasion he meets a businessman in Gothenburg who is selling a basic, yet good quality, ballpoint pen for just 2.50 kronor (EUR 0.25) – an excellent purchase price! Ingvar in turn intends to sell them to his customers for 3.95 kronor (EUR 0.39) – also a brilliant price when similar pens cost as much as 15 kronor (EUR 1.50). But on delivery it turns out that the purchase price has gone up to 4 kronor (EUR 0.40), which means a loss of 5 öre (EUR 0.005) on each one he sells.

74

But as we know, nothing in life is free. Reading Ingvar Kamprad's business correspondence from the 1940s reveals how much effort was needed to ensure the right quality of the pens he purchased. He also felt that the bureaucracy around import licences was problematic, if not impossible. Looking for a solution of his own, Ingvar started working together with a supplier to produce his own pen. After selling just 300, however, he could barely call that a success.

75

Towards the end of the 1940s, IKEA started selling furniture, and it very quickly became the main business. Always thinking of challenges as opportunities brought about all kinds of innovations in purchasing, finances and distribution. The foundation for this was already in Ingvar Kamprad back in the days when he worked on a small scale with pens and pipes at home – but the power and opportunities in the gap between customer and manufacturer really materialised in the 1950s.

Missing Paragraphs:

- A.** Customer care was something Ingvar had learnt early on, back when he would keep a customer register on his typewriter on the farm. Country folk are still his customers. People whose everyday lives he is familiar with. People who have grown up with little money, where every penny counts.

B.	The next five years, starting in summer 1943, were very busy for Ingvar. After high school in Gothenburg he worked for a short spell as an office clerk, and then did his military service in Växjö, southern Sweden. Meanwhile, his business started growing. In order to carry on running a business during military service, he talked his way into evening leave, which meant he could work from a rented office in town. This is where he spent his evenings, nights and weekends. Working day and night continued when he later did his officer training at Karlberg in Stockholm.
C.	At the end of the 1940s, Ingvar discovered that his main rival – Gunnar’s Factories in Alvesta – had started selling furniture, successfully. By this point, Ingvar realised that his future did not lie in selling pens. But perhaps furniture could be worth focusing on...? For those who have never been to Småland and seen Lake Möckeln surrounded by thick forest, it was a place with many small furniture factories. In fact most of Småland was full of skilled carpenters making furniture. So the move from imported pens from Paris to wooden furniture from Småland was not really such a big leap. The opportunity was right there – right in front of Ingvar’s eyes, in the forests of his childhood.
D.	The CB Nilssons store was a paradise that smelt of herring and leather, and sold everything from nails and sweets to dynamite. And behind the counter was the world’s best playmate – granddad. Ingvar could spend entire days here playing with him. He sometimes had to run an errand or two, but there were rarely any demands on him, he could just play and use his imagination. Ingvar’s granddad was great at playing, and he loved his little grandchild Ingvar.
E.	The trading company IKEA was registered on the 28th of July, 1943. But it was a far cry from the furniture company we know today. In his early years as an entrepreneur, Ingvar Kamprad imported pens, watches and nylon stockings, learning the ropes of purchasing step by step. But after some problems with import licences he started looking for new opportunities, and decided to focus on furniture. A business model gradually took shape when he realised that there was a major, interesting opportunity between the customer and manufacturer

F.	Getting it wrong and learning from your mistakes is a crucial part of the IKEA corporate culture today. But at the time, Ingvar was in tears on the way home from Gothenburg with several hundred pens he would have to sell at a loss. The deal had been done at the lower price – but it turned out that the handshake had meant nothing. Even so, overall Ingvar’s pen business was a great success. So great, indeed, that it laid the foundation for his future business dealings
G.	Ingvar himself claimed not to be that good a student at high school, but when he attended the lectures on Taylorism, he was struck by something that came to be crucial. He noted that the main efforts in commercial operations focused on efficient production, but very little effort, if any at all, focused on distribution. It was as if the streamlining at the factory suddenly vanished once a product had been produced. The process was slow and inefficient, and the distribution was outdated.

Part 4. For questions 76-85, read a passage on the Decameron and write A, B, C or D in the corresponding numbered boxes provided to indicate the correct answer which fits best according to what is stated or implied in the text.

An Amazon-branded palm scanner greeted me at my last doctor’s office visit a few weeks ago. I’m not sure what I’d call the experience. Unnerving? Orwellian?

Amazon One is a relatively new service from Amazon that lets businesses verify your identity after you wave your hand over a sensor. The technology first rolled out in the short-lived Amazon Go convenience stores in 2020 and is now a way to pay for groceries at Whole Foods. It’s also used for payment and age verification at a few sports and entertainment venues, including at Coors Field in Denver. **[I]** And as of March, you can also scan your palm with Amazon One to check in at NYU Langone Health locations, which is where I encountered it. So far, you won’t be forced to scan your palm to get a beer at a Rockies game or see an NYU doctor, but it’s an option.

In addition to its experiments in public venues, Amazon One is marketing its scanners as an alternative to the fobs and codes that let employees into their office buildings. Amazon is also working with hotel companies and manufacturers that make security doors and safety deposit boxes to incorporate its palm scanner.

Biometric scanning refers to the process of capturing your unique physical characteristics in order to confirm your identity. Whether it’s your palm, your fingerprint, your eyeball, or your face,

the concept can feel creepy or invasive to some. Biometric scanning can happen without your consent, as was the case with Clearview AI, the company that built a massive facial recognition database from billions of publicly available photos online. There's also a permanence to the collection of biometric data. **[II]**

Millions of people volunteer their faces or fingerprints, nevertheless, as a quick and convenient way to verify their identities and make life a little easier. With Apple's Face ID or Google's Face Unlock, you can keep the contents of your phone from prying eyes but avoid typing out an annoying passcode every time you want to check your texts. With Clear, you can skip the line at airport security. And with Amazon One, you can save a couple minutes of waiting at the doctor's office by scanning your palm instead of talking to a human.

Nevertheless, something seems fundamentally threatening about a future in which big tech companies use biometrics to serve as the gatekeepers of our digital identities.

What's especially disconcerting to me about Amazon One is that your biometric data is just another source of data that the company has about you. The tech giant, after all, is a massive enterprise whose businesses span from its eponymous marketplace to a health care company to a multibillion-dollar advertising network. **[III]** It's not always clear how engaging with one Amazon-owned entity affects your experience with others.

AWS, the Amazon division that operates Amazon One, specifies in a supplemental privacy notice that it will not share your palm data — effectively, the image of your hand — with third parties, although it also collects other data, including your phone number and your PIN, when you sign up. AWS, meanwhile, is clear in its broader privacy policy that it can share data about you with third parties, including advertisers. Then there is Amazon.com, which is governed by its own separate privacy policies. **[IV]**

When I asked Amazon about all this, spokesperson Alison Milligan said that your Amazon One profile is separate from your Amazon.com profile, and that Amazon One profile data is not used for marketing or shared with advertisers. "Amazon One palm data is not accessible to Amazon business units outside of Amazon One," Milligan said.

Meanwhile, NYU Langone Health spokesperson Arielle Sklar told me, "We do not share personal information with Amazon One, and Amazon One does not store any protected health information."

Still, privacy watchdogs caution that when it comes to massive tech companies, it's best to proceed with caution — the capabilities are enormous, and privacy policies can change. "Amazon likely can infer unbelievably sensitive health care data about people, partly because they have so

many different programs and so many different services,” said Calli Schroeder, senior counsel at the Electronic Privacy Information Center, or EPIC. “All of this stuff gets tied together and can be incredibly revealing.”

Amazon calls its biometric offering a “palm-based identity service.” You might call it the Everything Scanner.

76. What is the author’s initial emotional reaction to encountering the Amazon One scanner?

- A. Indifferent curiosity
- B. Enthusiastic acceptance
- C. Mild discomfort
- D. Technological fascination

77. Which of the following best captures the author’s tone throughout the article?

- A. Critical but resigned
- B. Alarmist and panicked
- C. Optimistic and persuasive
- D. Detached and technical

78. According to the text, how is Amazon expanding the use of its palm-scanning technology?

- A. By integrating it into Amazon.com’s retail checkout process
- B. By developing facial recognition software alongside palm scanning
- C. By marketing it to businesses in hospitality and security sectors
- D. By offering discounts to users who opt into biometric verification

79. What point is made about biometric data that distinguishes it from other personal data types?

- A. It is encrypted and therefore inherently more secure
- B. It can be changed easily if compromised
- C. It requires active user consent in every context
- D. It is permanent and difficult to alter once compromised

80. The reference to Clearview AI serves what purpose in the article?

- A. To showcase the benefits of advanced surveillance

- B. To provide historical context for Amazon's innovations
- C. To exemplify how biometric data can be exploited
- D. To illustrate the difference between fingerprint and palm scans

81. Which of the following best describes the author's view of convenience-based biometric services like Apple's Face ID and Clear?

- A. They should be banned due to ethical concerns
- B. They are useful but not widely trusted
- C. They represent a dangerous precedent
- D. They are tempting trade-offs despite privacy issues

82. Why does the author remain skeptical about Amazon's privacy assurances?

- A. Because AWS is known to sell biometric data to third parties
- B. Because different branches of Amazon operate under varied policies
- C. Because NYU Langone openly shares health data with Amazon
- D. Because the author experienced a data breach using Amazon One

83. What is implied about biometric data in relation to other types of data Amazon collects?

- A. It is the least sensitive of all data types
- B. It's more reliable and easier to monetize
- C. It completes a broader picture of user identity
- D. It's used exclusively for internal verification

84. What is suggested by the phrase "the Everything Scanner"?

- A. The device may eventually be capable of replacing all forms of ID
- B. The scanner is the most advanced of its kind on the market
- C. The nickname reflects Amazon's marketing slogan
- D. The scanner lacks the ability to distinguish between users

85. Among the space I, II, III, IV, where does the sentence "*Once a company has the details of your face, you don't have much control over how that data is used. After all, you can't easily go out and get a new face.*" best fit?

- A. [I]

- B. [II]
- C. [III]
- D. [IV]

Part 5. The passage below consists of seven paragraphs (A-E). For questions 86-95, read the passage and do the tasks that follow. Write your answers in the corresponding numbered boxes provided.

East of Eden - reviews

A. I'm finding it really hard to portray how intensely I loved this book and how deeply it resonated with me. John Steinbeck's *East of Eden* is honestly so clever. I usually don't write the synopsis of books in my reviews, because I tend to skip over them when reading reviews myself and there are so many online, none of which prepared me for the actual scope of this novel. All that I knew was that it was a family saga following multiple generations, and perhaps that's best. I was left to enjoy what unfolds without implicit biases. But the plot is so integral to my feelings about the book, since it explores and expands on a biblical story that I myself always pondered. It made me feel validated that the characters in the book also puzzled over it, and I don't think I can ever think of the biblical story without thinking of this novel.

B. This book has been criticized for being too verbose, meandering, inconsistently paced, and heavy handed in its parallel with the story of Cain and Abel. Yes, it is verbose and meandering, but that's Steinbeck. It gives a full picture of the Salinas valley. It gives you insights and perspectives you might not otherwise have. If anything, Steinbeck's constant forays into unrelated sidebars give the reader a break in pace, a rest that makes the more important parts of the books feel as though they flow more smoothly. As for the parallel with Cain and Abel, it is heavy-handed. That being said, the heavy-handedness didn't bother me. Going in to the novel with the expectation of it being a retelling of Cain and Abel (at least for some of the narrative) is enough to make the obvious references to Cain and Abel seem natural. If Steinbeck had given the impression that he was trying to hide the parallel, it would have been insulting. But Steinbeck isn't trying to hide it--he makes it clear that the story of Cain and Abel are an integral part of his story.

C. I loved the opening of this which was a nostalgic description of the Salinas Valley in California. It was incredibly vivid but it was tinged with a hint of melancholy as the narrator discusses his childhood several times, recalling his memories. He mentions 'childhood names for grasses and secret flowers' without revealing what they were and, for some reason, this caught my attention.

It felt secretive and personal but it was also introducing me to a place I have never visited. It was a beautiful, engaging opening. I also was really intrigued by the plot and the themes that Steinbeck was exploring as he, like many other authors before and after him, dramatizes the perpetual conflict between good and evil in society. Sometimes, I lost focus of the plot but it was, for the most part, interesting and engaging.

I think my main gripe with *East of Eden* is that it's way too long. This book did not need to be over 700 pages long and towards the 500-page mark, I was beginning to get bored. I had to power through the last 200 pages because if I had put it down, this book would have remained unfinished.

D. There are many metrics by which the greatness of a literary work can be measured, but perhaps nothing is more indicative than the breadth of the wider human story that it aspires to wrangle into its tale. By this standard, *East of Eden* has certainly bitten off quite a mouthful of our homosapial chew.

A work of art might be impressive in the context of its creation, but if its meaning is lost on future generations so is its right to declare greatness. In other words, a truly great work will be as relevant one hundred years later as it was on the day it was made. *East of Eden* overwhelmingly meets this measure.

For example, Steinbeck describes how the American people—having forgotten the horrors of previous wars—looked to enter the First World War with somewhat excited trepidation. It was only after telegrams began arriving with the names of dead soldiers that reality bit down and the hunger for such foreign adventure began to wane. The relevance doesn't stop there. Our wonder and fear at unfamiliar technological development, the pain of absent fathers, questions of progress in opposition to tradition, conflict between eastern and western societies, and of course the “one story” of good versus evil—these are matters that remain pressing today, and look to stay relevant for a long time to come

E. Steinbeck understood how history plays out and repeats itself, or, in other words, he understood stories, and people, what they say and do, and the gulfs in between. He also loved language - which are all ingredients that, I reckon, a great novelist make. Alongside an exceptional ability to describe the terror and beauty of American landscapes and seasons, Steinbeck took human behaviours, all the motives and unspoken things that linger below the surface of our consciousness, and raised them into plain sight.

Steinbeck intended *East of Eden* to be his defining opus. In *East of Eden*, then, Steinbeck presented us with a particular set of people, a time and place with which he was intimately familiar, while simultaneously inventing new worlds and characters with whom they interact. But the centrifugal concept on which this novel pivots is Steinbeck's significant reinterpretation of a biblical Hebrew term, "Timshel", which he translated to "thou mayest" rather than the traditional "thou shalt", thus changing the onus entirely. This, Steinbeck wanted to show us, means that we, like his characters, must choose to overcome our fates, rather than muddling through a perpetual present, forever making the same mistakes.

Which speaker

Your answers:

- | | |
|--|-----------|
| appreciates the novel's ability to make timeless observations about the human condition? | 86. _____ |
| felt a personal connection to the biblical narrative explored in the novel? | 87. _____ |
| considers the book's descriptive detours as contributing positively to its rhythm and realism? | 88. _____ |
| felt that their initial expectations were surpassed due to limited prior knowledge? | 89. _____ |
| was particularly drawn to the nostalgic evocation of place in the opening of the novel? | 90. _____ |
| believes that the novel's continued relevance is key to its literary greatness? | 91. _____ |
| admired the way the author externalized unspoken human motivations? | 92. _____ |
| criticizes the novel for its excessive length despite generally enjoying it? | 93. _____ |
| notes that the novel's central message hinges on a reinterpretation of a specific Hebrew word? | 94. _____ |
| argues that the obvious biblical parallels felt appropriate rather than overdone? | 95. _____ |

Springboard
English

IV. WRITING (6.0 points)

Part 1. Read the following extract and use your own words to summarise it. Your summary should be between 100 and 120 words.

In the early days of robotics, robots were often working in isolation from the human workforce. This was mainly because the robots were of significant size and were only made to perform a significant task, such as welding on an automotive production line. However, one of the key trends that we have observed is the advent of robots working safely together with humans. This shift has meant that businesses have been able to improve productivity, while reducing physical strain on employees and improving overall site safety by using robots to carry out tasks that could pose risk to human health.

Thanks to the advances made in sensor technologies, cameras and AI, modern AMRs are able to understand their surroundings and work in harmony with human counterparts.

One of the major benefits of AMRs today is that they are incredibly flexible in their capabilities. Traditional industrial robots required space, complex programming and dedicated workspaces. However, AMRs are relatively easy to deploy and depending on the use case, can be programmed by non-technical experts. This broadens the appeal of the technology from large enterprises to SME sized businesses that may not have traditionally had resources to invest in large scale automation systems. These advances are democratizing automation and allow businesses of all sizes to reap the benefits of robotics.

But what of the traditional industrial robots? Here we are seeing advances as well. Automotive, electronics and food processing are increasingly adopting robots to assist with repetitive tasks such as welding, assembly and packaging. In healthcare robots are used to assist surgeons with complex procedures, enhancing precision and reducing the risk of errors.

We can expect to see even more sophisticated forms of human-robot collaboration in the coming years as more businesses have access to the technology and start to see the benefits these technologies can bring to the business.

Part 2. Write an essay of about 350 words on the following topic.

Some people believe that artificial intelligence should be allowed to evolve freely, while others argue that strict regulations are necessary to prevent misuse.

Discuss both views and give your own opinion.

Springboard
English

- GOOD LUCK, AND DO NOT CRY -