

**SPRINGBOARD EDUCATION**

**KỲ THI THỬ CHỌN HỌC SINH GIỎI QUỐC GIA  
TRUNG HỌC PHỔ THÔNG  
NĂM HỌC 2025 – 2026**

**ĐỀ LUYỆN TẬP SỐ 3**

Môn thi: **TIẾNG ANH**  
Thời gian: **180 phút** (không kể thời gian giao đề)  
Ngày thi thứ nhất: **.../.../202...**  
Đề thi gồm **17** trang

**SỐ PHÁCH**

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

**I. LISTENING (5.0 points)**

- 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 other instructions are included in the recording.

**Part 1. For questions 1–5, listen to part of a radio programme in which two people, Jim and Sue, are discussing physical exercise and decide whether the opinions are expressed by Jim (J), Sue (S), or both (B), where they agree. Write J, S, or B in the corresponding numbered boxes provided.**

- The current increase in the number of fitness centres must indicate an improvement in people's health.
- Many people believe whatever the media tell them about health issues.
- Many people fail to exercise regularly because they have too many other commitments.
- It's easier to maintain a fitness programme when you exercise with a group of friends.
- Group exercise sessions during working hours benefit employees.

**Your answers:**

1.	2.	3.	4.	5.
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**Part 2. For questions 6–10, listen to a talk about football athletes and complete each sentence with the correct ending A–J. Write the correct letter A–J in the corresponding numbered boxes provided.**

- Miroslav Klose
- Artiz Aduriz
- Luca Toni
- Dado Pršo
- Jamie Vardy

- quickly helped his team achieve a higher professional status.
- scored more than his predecessors combined in a football league.
- was loyal to one football club throughout his professional career.
- was responsible for a momentous defeat in an international league.
- had the most goals throughout the entire history of a country.
- was dismissed from his team for a long time before rejoining.
- did not fully dedicate himself to his sport in his early career.
- ensured that his team always went undefeated whenever he played.
- had an unexceptional streak when he began playing professionally.
- had the opportunity to participate in an international league early on.

**Your answers:**

6.	7.	8.	9.	10.
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**Part 3. For questions 11–15, listen to a lecture on unusual office buildings, and write the letter A, B, C, or D in the corresponding numbered boxes provided to indicate the correct answer to each of the following questions according to what you hear.**

11. According to the lecturer, designers of famous buildings often try to
  - A. maximise their buildings' practical utility.
  - B. ensure their buildings' timeless appeal.
  - C. confound their buildings' potential visitors.
  - D. reinvent their buildings' interior structure.
12. What does the lecturer say about innovatively designed office buildings?
  - A. They are usually financially unviable.
  - B. They will eventually establish themselves.
  - C. They will only appear in affluent areas.
  - D. They are not always highly regarded.
13. The lecturer mentions Lloyd's of London to illustrate the point that
  - A. architects should extensively gauge public reception.
  - B. notions of aesthetic beauty can evolve over time.
  - C. novel designs will likely receive strong criticism.
  - D. practicality should not compromise visual charm.
14. Which of the following is **NOT** true for both Lloyd's of London and the F&F building?
  - A. They are headquartered by enterprises.
  - B. They are rather cost-effective to build.
  - C. They break with architectural tradition.
  - D. They feature a strikingly grand exterior.
15. What does the lecturer imply about new designs through the questions she raises?
  - A. They are a passing trend at best.
  - B. They do not value functionality enough.
  - C. They can pose logistical obstacles.
  - D. They should not be widely embraced.

**Your answers:**

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

Despite its vastness, there is still a(n) (16) \_\_\_\_\_ lying in the ocean which we previously could hardly enter due to (17) \_\_\_\_\_. However, new technological inventions have enabled us to overcome this difficult challenge and witness the ever-growing wealth of (18) \_\_\_\_\_, including one whose body was recently discovered to be composed of (19) \_\_\_\_\_. Furthermore, we have managed to reveal the truth about the ocean floor: contrary to what we might mistakenly assume, it is a thriving world rather than a (20) \_\_\_\_\_.

However, the ocean is under threat. Human activity has affected it to such an extent that scientists found plastic in the stomach of a crustacean when surveying what was among the most (21) \_\_\_\_\_. What is more, there exist places that are not oxygenated enough. The fact that it is difficult to realise the true severity of these problems has fueled our perception of the ocean as (22) \_\_\_\_\_.

Therefore, it is high time that we grew aware of what the ocean offers. Not only can it help resolve (23) \_\_\_\_\_, but in fact, we owe our existence to the (24) \_\_\_\_\_ living in it. It is unfortunate that what we have done to safeguard this ecosystem is akin to a (25) \_\_\_\_\_.

**Your answers:**

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

## II. READING (8.0 points)

### II.1. LANGUAGE IN USE (3.0 points)

**Part 1. For questions 26–35, read the text below and write the letter A, B, C, or D in the corresponding numbered boxes provided to indicate the answer that best fits each gap.**

After (26) \_\_\_\_\_ over the works of the Roman architect Vitruvius, the 15th-century polymath Leon Battista Alberti came up with the Renaissance concept of the Ideal City and soon, any Universal Man worth their (27) \_\_\_\_\_ was devising his own version. Many were (28) \_\_\_\_\_ utopias that would stay on the page or as models: maverick architect Filarete (29) \_\_\_\_\_ his pioneering, star-shaped prototype Sforzinda after his patron, while Da Vinci's imagined version was inevitably (30) \_\_\_\_\_, featuring an underground sewage system, fresh air vents and pedestrian areas.

A flurry of Ideal Cities, among (31) \_\_\_\_\_ was cosmopolitan Zamość in Poland (another World Heritage Site), (32) \_\_\_\_\_ up soon afterwards. Then there's Palmanova, which was built in 1593 at the northeastern edge of the Venetian Republic and as near to Sforzinda's scheme as imaginable, complete with star-shaped fortifications hidden from view by forest. (33) \_\_\_\_\_ it's UNESCO-protected today and the inspiration for myriad YouTube drone videos, Palmanova proved a hard (34) \_\_\_\_\_ when it was built. A hastily implemented strategy created by the Republic offered land at (35) \_\_\_\_\_ prices, often to prematurely pardoned criminals.

- |                          |                     |                     |                 |
|--------------------------|---------------------|---------------------|-----------------|
| 26. A. delving           | B. wading           | C. poring           | D. scrutinising |
| 27. A. time              | B. while            | C. salt             | D. money        |
| 28. A. immaterial        | B. ideational       | C. conjectural      | D. notional     |
| 29. A. named             | B. designated       | C. denominated      | D. titled       |
| 30. A. ahead of its time | B. once upon a time | C. up to the minute | D. in good time |
| 31. A. they              | B. which            | C. them             | D. whom         |
| 32. A. propped           | B. burgeoned        | C. emerged          | D. sprang       |
| 33. A. Provided that     | B. As much as       | C. Because          | D. Though       |
| 34. A. sell              | B. bargain          | C. currency         | D. cost         |
| 35. A. run-down          | B. pull-down        | C. watered-down     | D. knock-down   |

**Your answers:**

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

**Part 2. For questions 36–40, read the following passage and fill in each of the numbered spaces with the correct form of the words given in the box to make a meaningful passage. There are FOUR words that you do not need to use. Write your answers in the corresponding numbered boxes provided. An example (0) has been done for you.**

RELATE  
POPULAR

SURGE  
DANGER

MUCH  
ROUGH

PERCEIVE  
COMMUNICATE

FULFILL  
VITAL

There are now (0) \_\_\_\_\_ hundreds of language (36) \_\_\_\_\_ movements around the world; however, they lack real financial, political, and technical support from majority populations. Speakers of languages now facing (37) \_\_\_\_\_ almost never encounter outside interest in or knowledge about their languages, while persecution, mockery, and stigma are still common. (38) \_\_\_\_\_ as language policy or discussion is on the agenda at all, it relates to specific points of conflict in a few dominant languages, not the collapse of linguistic diversity itself.

For language revivers, a feeling of (39) \_\_\_\_\_ might be waiting round the bend of every single utterance. When almost no one else is doing it, matching a string of sounds to a concrete meaning can seem downright arbitrary. And yet it is only after ingesting masses of often seemingly arbitrary words that people can process or produce them at speed, and only then that they can start feeling the (40) \_\_\_\_\_ sense of what it is to live in a particular language. To try to communicate with what is no longer a tool of communication – to resurrect a whole worldview almost over the horizon – is a wonderful madness hardly anyone can understand.

**Your answers:**

0. <i>roughly</i>	36.	37.
38.	39.	40.

**Part 3. The passage below contains FIVE mistakes. For questions 41–45, UNDERLINE the mistakes, and WRITE THEIR CORRECT FORMS in the corresponding numbered boxes provided. An example (0) has been done for you.**

The truth are that nobody really knows how language first began. Did we all start talking at around the same time regardless of the manner with which our brains had begun to develop?

As there is a lack of clear evidence, people have come up with various theories about the origins of language. One recent theory is that human beings have evolved in such a way that we are programmed for language from the moment of birth. In other words, language came about as a result of an evolutionary change in our brains at some stage.

Language might as well be programmed into the brain but, despite this, people still need stimulus from others around them. From studies, we know that if children are isolated from human contact and have not learnt to construct sentences before they are ten, it is doubtful that they will ever do so. This research shows, if anything else, that language is a social activity, not something invented in isolation.

**Your answers:**

0. <i>is</i>	41.	42.	43.	44.	45.
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## II.2. READING COMPREHENSION (5.0 points)

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

Suppose that you wanted to read *The Seventh Regiment Rhode Island Volunteers in the Civil War 1862–1865*, a book out of (46) \_\_\_\_\_ more than a century ago. Where would you go? You could try the Library of Congress in Washington, D.C. Perhaps the New York Public Library carries a tattered copy. Or are the last few editions tucked (47) \_\_\_\_\_ in some dusty unlit room at Oxford University's distinguished Bodleian Library? (48) \_\_\_\_\_ the location of the book, geographical proximity, or lack (49) \_\_\_\_\_, would be a stultifying hindrance to your quest. However, if the likes of Amazon.com, Google Inc., Yahoo, Microsoft and other high-tech giants get their own (50) \_\_\_\_\_, you might only need a computer with a connection to the Web.

The idea is a profound one that has not been attempted in over 2,000 years: to collect all the books in the world under one digital (51) \_\_\_\_\_. The ancient Library of Alexandria attempted to copy every book (52) \_\_\_\_\_ written, and by some estimates, in 300 B.C., the scribes of Alexandria had successfully copied 75 percent of the world's tomes by (53) \_\_\_\_\_. Problems abound, but not technological ones – advanced digital scanners now allow operators to scan one page for about 10 cents. Instead, they are (54) \_\_\_\_\_. Copyrights and the controversial issue of intellectual property pose the greatest obstacle to what would (55) \_\_\_\_\_ be a noble quest.

**Your answers:**

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

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

### LIFE THROUGH A LENS

*Angela Woods explores the role of the camera in life today*

Nowadays most of us own a camera of some kind and we're generally quite tolerant whenever anyone starts snapping. Their use is no longer reserved for holidays and children's birthdays; the modern photographer has more grandiose ambitions. The desire to capture special moments for posterity persists, but the brief has been extended. Every moment seems special and, as a result, amateur snappers are busier than the professionals. Whether we're taking pictures of a hotel sink for a travellers' website or beating the paparazzi to a blurry shot of a minor celebrity in the street, we're snapping rather than looking.

Oddly, although we take more pictures than we ever have, we spend less time actually looking at them. Some people blame digital photography for this. But is our disconnection from these images really because they're stored on computer, rather than in albums? We could print them out if we wanted to, or force bored family and friends to sit through computer slide shows. Surely our disengagement is not so much due to a shift in medium as to the fact that the images lack significance. In the past, our favourite photos went beyond surface likeness and captured the essence of a person or place. A picture could reveal something about a person even he or she wasn't aware of. Photos don't seem to do this anymore.

As well as bearing witness, photography once raised consciousness. When I was growing up, photographs often seemed more powerful and persuasive than words. The ones I've amassed on my hard drive in the last few years seem vacuous by comparison. My holiday snaps may be neatly composed following readily available expert advice, but they feel blank. The Florida sunsets seem like photographic



clichés. The images of African landscapes speak blandly of a predictable taste for going off the beaten track in search of the ultimate photographic experience.

And what of the other side of the coin: being photographed ourselves? As a child and teenager, if it had been acceptable, I would have lashed out when someone pointed a camera at me. The resulting pictures would have been more authentic than those where I tried to cover up my horror of being photographed. I would strive to look deep, instead of angry, and gaze into the middle distance. Refusing to meet the camera's gaze was an attempt to retain control over how I was portrayed. Having since read the great Roland Barthes' book, *Camera Lucida*, I understand better what I was up to. Barthes shared my desire to look intelligent in photos and he hoped his expression would convey 'an amused awareness of the photographic process'. Whether we succeeded, the underlying urge was surely to prevent the camera gaining possession of our identities.

When I first started in journalism, the writer's photo at the head of an article was invariably tiny. Things have changed however. Newspapers and magazines are now full of unattractive people looking wryly amused to find themselves pictured alongside politicians and celebrities. Journalists tend to look terrible in pictures, but editors believe this makes them more appealingly real than airbrushed celebrities. They are marketed as normal people who readers are meant to identify with, though they are usually far from normal. Some interpret this trend as a sign that journalists are more valued now, but the reality is that we have become low-grade operatives rather than creatives. Words are now used to illustrate the pictures rather than the other way round.

Magazines and newspapers with more and bigger photos in them appear to suit young people's enthusiasm for photography. Once upon a time, being seen with a camera was uncool. Now, you aren't really dressed without one. Most of my younger friends have hundreds of photos on their phones. The interesting thing is that they all seem attracted to subjects that would once have been deemed unworthy of being photographed. Avoiding clichés seems to be the impulse, though whether this is being achieved must be in question if they are all doing the same thing.

A colleague of mine recently showed me how he'd photographed a rather unpalatable plate of meatballs, rather than the grand old architecture of a restaurant. This was followed by his snaps of a holiday in Yosemite National Park in the USA. Not bothering with the spectacular mountain scenery, he had photographed signs about not feeding the wild bears. As he showed them to me, I felt I had seen them before somewhere.

I often wonder what the everpresent lens is doing to my children and their generation. Kids' TV programmes encourage children to send in photos of their parents in undignified positions or displaying a dubious sense of style. Reality programmes dominate TV schedules and online photo-sharing is now integral to much of social life. Adults might see through such things with a smug sense of detachment, but we don't know what the long-term effects on younger minds might be. Doesn't constant snapping reduce spontaneity? The world gets worn out by being photographed and its inhabitants, like me, do as well. Will my kids end up deeply jaded too, or because they are growing up behind and in front of the camera, will they have a natural immunity to it? It remains to be seen.

***For questions 56–63, decide whether the following statements reflect the claims of the writer. In the corresponding numbered boxes provided, write Y if the statement reflects the claims of the writer, N if the statement contradicts the claims of the writer, and NG if it is impossible to say what the writer thinks about this.***

- 56. The number of things that people want to take a photograph of is increasing.
- 57. People spend less time looking at photos than in the past since they can be stored digitally.
- 58. As a photographer, the writer does not come up with original ideas for her pictures.

59. During her childhood, the writer would try to protect herself whenever she was photographed.  
60. Readers of newspapers can often relate to the images of journalists that are featured in them.  
61. The writer believes that nowadays everyone must possess a camera to appear fashionable.  
62. From the writer's perspective, the images her colleague took were boring and unoriginal.  
63. The rise of low-quality photographs will have a negative impact on adults.

**Your answers:**

56.	57.	58.	59.	60.	61.	62.	63.
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**For questions 64–68, read the following sentences and fill in each blank with NO MORE THAN TWO WORDS taken from the passage. Write your answers in the corresponding numbered boxes provided.**

64. Long ago, photographs would transcend \_\_\_\_\_ and throw light on hidden qualities.  
65. For the writer, apart from \_\_\_\_\_, photographs also used to be thought-provoking and evocative.  
66. Newspapers' tendency to print photos of journalists has reduced journalists to the status of \_\_\_\_\_.  
67. The writer observes, with skepticism, a recent trend of people \_\_\_\_\_ when they take pictures.  
68. The writer expresses her fear that \_\_\_\_\_ will make photographs no longer seem natural.

**Your answers:**

64.	65.	66.
67.	68.	

**Part 3. You are going to read an extract from an article. Seven paragraphs have been removed from the extract. For questions 69–75, read the extract 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 correct letter A–H in the corresponding numbered boxes provided.**

### THE SECRETS OF STEPHEN DAVID JONES

*With his brilliant mind and impeccable credentials, it's little wonder that wealthy clients trusted him with their fortunes. Then they started to get suspicious*

Ewan McKay is a quiet, trusting man with a lifelong passion for golf. Growing up in the 1950s in Angus, a windswept county on Scotland's east coast, he found the sport a perfect outlet: a shared activity that reduced the pressures of socialising. Later, as an adult, golfing allowed him to rub shoulders with wealthy farmers who became useful contacts for his expanding business, selling Scottish seed potatoes to English farms. Once he sold that business, McKay had enough money to follow his dreams and create a course of his own.

69

When McKay spoke to Jones, the lawyer suggested that he put his money into a trust on the Caribbean island of Nevis. Jones's law firm would act as the trustee and McKay's children would be registered as the beneficiaries. This, Jones explained, was the smartest way of arranging his tax affairs.

70

In January 2006, Jones's law firm, Jirehouse, registered the Scotia Trust Foundation in Nevis. Since Jirehouse was its sole trustee, only Jones and his colleagues had direct access to information about the assets it held for McKay's family. Jirehouse created three further Scotia entities in Nevis. And, as Jirehouse

was a director, secretary, partner or trustee in all four of the Scotia entities, Jones could sign paperwork on Scotia's behalf without consulting McKay.

71

Jones was affable and loquacious, and McKay started to think of him as a friend. He invited Jones to shooting parties at his home and at another local estate, Fettercairn, and Jones and his wife attended the wedding of McKay's daughter. Jones often told McKay about various property deals he was involved with – an ocean-front development in Nevis, a swanky hotel in Iceland – and soon, Jones started to take his own private shooting parties to Fettercairn.

72

In 2010, McKay repurchased the plot of land in St Andrews. His plan was to finally start building the private members' club and golf course. The Feddinch Club would target high net worth foreigners, and membership would be by invitation only. The price for joining as one of the club's founder members was £250,000. Michael Bowes-Lyon, a first cousin once removed of Queen Elizabeth II, agreed to become the club's honorary president, and a glossy brochure advertised its proximity to an airstrip for private jets.

73

In early 2013, McKay decided to move closer to St Andrews to be nearer to the golf course. He found a bungalow with a wide view of the site and the sea beyond. On Jones's instructions, Scotia would be listed on the deeds for McKay's new home, just as it had been for his house in Angus. Shortly before the purchase went through, however, Jones told McKay there had been a change of plan.

74

Jirehouse's offices occupied two townhouses on John Street. The five-storey building had an olive green front door, a stone portico and black metal railings. The firm gave the impression of a private office that dealt with old money. Its meeting rooms were wood-panelled, its letters to clients printed on creamy Conqueror paper, and its business cards embossed with a curling coat of arms. Jones had previously worked at two magic circle firms, Freshfields and Slaughter and May, and Jirehouse's senior team included solicitors with similarly elite backgrounds. Towards his staff, Jones behaved with the generosity of a Victorian patron. "I was kind of in awe of the place," said one former employee, James (not his real name). "If you hadn't come into contact with that world before, it could be intimidating."

75

"At the time, I just perceived him to be very posh. And it's weird saying that ... because I'm not sure I'd think that any more. I'd think of him more as a blank now," said James. The absence of other details about his life before Jirehouse was striking. Where did he come from? Who was he, really? Last autumn, I contacted his brother, Tim, asking to talk. "Perhaps we should meet," Tim wrote back. "It's a long painful story ... the roots of my brother's downfall started many years ago."

**Missing paragraphs:**

- A. Instead of Scotia's name appearing on the property deeds, Jones and another Jirehouse colleague would be listed as the property's owners. McKay panicked when he heard this, but Jones reassured him. Jirehouse would be holding the house on trust for him and his family, he said, so it would still



technically belong to them. McKay continued to worry. He couldn't shake the feeling that it wasn't him who owned his new house – it was Jones.

- B. McKay did his due diligence on Jones, inviting him up to Dundee to meet lawyers he knew. "Every single one of them thought he was plausible, charming and obviously extremely well known in respect of tax," he told me. Jones seemed the epitome of an urbane, chivalrous Englishman. He read the Financial Times, sent his son to Eton and was rarely seen not wearing a waistcoat. He lived in a red Victorian mansion block in Little Venice, a prime area of west London. After meeting Jones, one of McKay's lawyer friends said, "You've got yourself a cracker here."
- C. McKay sensed that although Jones seemed to be from an affluent background, he enjoyed being around people who were richer than he was, as if pretending that their money was his own. Once, McKay received a bill from Fettercairn for a shoot that Jones had hosted. The estate manager said that Jones had charged the party to Scotia's account. When McKay confronted Jones about this, he said it was an error.
- D. Looking back now, after the truth about Jones's transgressions have come to light, it is hard not to search for clues. If his piety was sincere, the effort he put into cultivating his gentlemanly image suggested an underlying insecurity. In the Telegraph video, his voice sometimes slips from received pronunciation into something less plummy. Former Jirehouse staff I interviewed couldn't tell me anything about Jones's background except that he had worked at magic circle firms.
- E. From the outset, Jones was eager to assist. He suggested that Jirehouse become a partner in the Feddinch Club, and arranged for McKay to fly to New York and meet some investors and an architect. McKay had never worked on a project of this scale before, and was keen to secure financing, so he brought Jirehouse on board as a partner. "My dad's his own worst enemy," said McKay's son, Bruce. "If he meets somebody who appears successful, he'll take their advice."
- F. Jones assured McKay that the complexity of the Scotia network was a sign of its sophistication. "He kept saying, 'Don't worry, everything is going great,'" McKay recalled. After McKay bought a new home in Angus with an adjoining shooting estate, Jones suggested that one of the Scotia entities should be listed as the owner, explaining this would be more "tax efficient". Jones was often vague about the structures he set up on McKay's behalf, but McKay assumed that this vagueness was a way of insulating him from the prying eyes of tax inspectors.
- G. Many of Jirehouse's London staff lacked the blue-chip credentials one might expect from a boutique tax firm serving high net worth clients. "The majority of young people there wouldn't have been able to get a job elsewhere," said James, the former Jirehouse staff member. Jones took pride in the firm's cosmopolitanism, and Jirehouse advertised that its staff spoke Pashto, Russian, Serbo-Croat and Turkmen. Sarah speculated that there was another reason Jones liked to surround himself with people on work visas. "It meant that they probably didn't know what was going on, and if they did, their primary concern was protecting their work status."
- H. McKay bought a plot of land in St Andrews and secured planning permission for a golf course and private members' club. But two years later, he received an offer of £20m to buy the land. "It was the kind of sum you couldn't turn down," he recalled. He made a profit of £13m from the sale, and while he was golfing down in Kent, a friend suggested he ought to meet a solicitor called Stephen David Jones, who was a master at whittling down tax bills. "He said, 'What are you doing about tax?'" McKay told me. "And I said, I wasn't thinking about tax. I just pay it. And he said: 'I can introduce you to someone brilliant.'"

**Your answers:**

69.	70.	71.	72.	73.	74.	75.
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**Part 4. You are going to read a preface to a book. For questions 76–85, read the preface and write A, B, C or D in the corresponding numbered boxes provided on your answer sheet to indicate the correct answer which fits best according to what is stated or implied in the extract.**

#### PREFACE TO A BOOK ABOUT PHOTOGRAPHY AND THE ARTS

1. That there should be some significant relation between aesthetic modernism and new media seems true almost by definition. Modernism, after all, stakes its initial claim to fame on new modes and new methods, innovations so drastic they seem not just to change the old arts but to invent new and unrecognizable ones. But the sheer impossibility of remaining new has most definitely caught up with innovations like free verse and pictorial abstraction, which retain very little of their original challenge in a time when the new media include hypertext novels and online simulations.
2. As Lev Manovich has shown, however, the conceptual basis of the most current new media can only be strengthened by reference to the times in which the very concept of new media first arose. The checkered history of the electronic book, for example, ought certainly to include *The Readies* of Bob Brown, conceived in the late 1920s, a time even more gullibly fascinated by new means of transmission than our own. Brown's reading machine managed in some ways to make literature even more linear than did the conventional codex, and thus it remained light years away from hypertext, but the excitement and the doubts it inspired both seem almost uncannily familiar in the early twenty-first century. Many of the issues current in discussions of the new media predate the personal computer; some arise as early as the invention of mechanical recording in the nineteenth century.
3. Of course, that invention has inspired a tremendous amount of commentary, but astonishingly little of it concentrates on the fact of mechanical recording itself. "The photograph," as Patrick Maynard calls it, using quotation marks to designate a popular idealization, is imagined primarily as a picture, and its influence in histories of the arts thus remains limited to technical issues such as perspective and to philosophical debates about mimesis. Even the notion of mechanical reproducibility made so influential by Walter Benjamin has generally led to a concentration on the dissemination of images, not on the means by which they are originally produced. That a photograph is a method of mechanically rearranging, codifying, storing, and perhaps producing sense impressions now seems a great deal more significant in the presence of so many electronic methods of doing the same. Understanding of the photograph, that is to say, should not stop at the surface of the image itself, any more than understanding of the computer could stop with the monitor.
4. One of the preliminary claims of this book, then, is that the wholesale reorganization of human knowledge that we think of as arriving with the computer actually begins with mechanical recording. Perceptions that have not and could not have been experienced by any human observer have been relatively familiar since Eadweard Muybridge set up his line of cameras at Leland Stanford's farm. The interposition of "machine languages" between the mind and physical phenomena began when James Watt first invented a primitive gauge to measure pressure variations in his steam engine. Saying so, however, is not meant to diminish the emphasis currently placed on new media. On the contrary, the purpose of historical connections of this kind is to extend the discussion so that it has less to do with the particular powers and limitations of the computer and more to do with the whole issue of mechanical mediation in general, an issue we should understand at least a bit since it has been with us for so long.

5. Some of that understanding is encoded in the works of literary and artistic modernism, which can largely be defined, I think, by the influence of mechanical mediation on the old media. Of course, anything so complicated and various as an aesthetic movement must be the result of innumerable influences, some of them too obscure, some too near to be visible. But if modernism is to serve as a general term at all, if it is to remain serviceable in all the disciplines that use it while still defining its subject in historical and formal terms, then I think it must take very seriously the significant formal innovations provided by material history itself, especially those provided by the new media that followed the photograph. This does not mean, at least to me, that the nature of human experience changed at some point in time, influenced by speed, industrial organization, or the mechanization of the senses. I agree with skeptics who feel that something as fundamental as eyesight or hearing does not change decade by decade, much less year by year. On the contrary, mechanized sense impressions could hardly have presented the challenge they did if they had not conflicted so obviously with what had come to be accepted as unmediated experience. The revelations that arise from that conflict seem to me to provide much of what still lives in modern literature and art, on which a general theory of the aesthetics of modernity might still be constructed.
6. None of this would be very interesting, however, if it did not also help us understand particular works of art. There is not much point in providing historical background merely for its own sake or simply to confirm received opinion about familiar works. For me, in fact, this project began with particular works, some of them **utterly unread**, like *The Readies* of Bob Brown, some of them **securely canonized** but little read, like Dos Passos's *U.S.A.*, and some of them, most obviously including *The Great Gatsby*, almost **painfully familiar**. I cannot say the works **ultimately considered** here make up an exhaustive or inevitable list, but I do hope the mix of unknown and familiar works will at least pose a significant test for the ideas proposed here, which should, if they have any relevance at all, shed the sort of light that makes obscure works seem interesting and **common touchstones** a little different.
76. What is the main idea of the first paragraph?
- Aesthetic modernism is not as revolutionary as new media.
  - The allure of early modernist innovations has gradually palled.
  - New forms of media have led to the decline of modern art forms.
  - New media will meet its demise like aesthetic modernism did.
77. The writer mentions Bob Brown's idea of the reading machine in *The Readies* to make the point that
- new media might rip apart the fabric of society.
  - we care less about innovation than people used to.
  - current reactions to new media are anything but new.
  - his idea had great potential to become mainstream.
78. The writer regrets the fact that undue emphasis has been placed on
- the role of photographs in the world of art.
  - the process by which photographs are created.
  - the impact photography has on technological progress.
  - the ability of photographs to be quickly circulated.
79. What does the writer say about mechanical recording?
- It became an inspiration for new media.
  - It enhanced our perception capabilities.
  - It revolutionized the way we process information.
  - It contributed to humankind's development.
80. In the fifth paragraph, the writer makes the concession that
- mechanical mediation is not the sole driver of modernism.
  - the term 'modernism' may be unsuitable for interdisciplinary usage.

- C. what it really means to be human will never change.  
D. mechanically reproduced experiences can feel inauthentic.
81. The writer views the difference between mechanized and unmediated experiences as  
A. a necessary result of mechanical mediation. B. a stimulus for the growth of modernism.  
C. a tension deeply ingrained in human biology. D. an interference that will unlikely disappear.
82. It can be inferred from the writer's references to literary works in the sixth paragraph that  
A. those who are widely read might enjoy his selection.  
B. some works should have been given more prominence.  
C. renown does not directly translate to active readership.  
D. they are highly representative of modernism in literature.
83. Which **bold and underlined** phrase echoes "common touchstones" in the sixth paragraph?  
A. utterly unread B. securely canonized  
C. painfully familiar D. ultimately considered
84. Which theme recurs in this text?  
A. the need to prioritise function over form  
B. the need to establish a historical continuity  
C. the need to re-evaluate the merits of some inventions  
D. the need to be skeptical of an overhyped phenomenon
85. In this passage, the writer's aim is to  
A. defend a proposition. B. illustrate a point.  
C. compare arguments. D. describe developments.

**Your answers:**

76.	77.	78.	79.	80.
81.	82.	83.	84.	85.

**Part 5. For questions 86–95, read a magazine article and choose from the sections A–F. The sections may be chosen more than once. Write the correct letter A–F in the corresponding numbered boxes provided on your answer sheet.**

### UNDERSTANDING VAN DYCK

- A. Since the days of his own brilliant career, few have disputed the claim that the work of Anthony Van Dyck (1599–1641), the Dutch portrait painter, is a touchstone of artistic excellence. Yet despite his status as a prince of painters, he is difficult to enjoy. Successful recent shows of other well-known painters – Monet, de Hooch, Vermeer – all allowed an easy point of entry for the non-specialist. These artists' most striking features – immediate visual charm or glamour, appealing domestic subjects or intrigue – are things we can relate to.
- B. But Van Dyck is more awkward. There are two big stumbling blocks to enjoyment of his work. One is the absence of drama, both at the level of theme and technique. In his best works there is almost nothing going on; there is no story. The second problem concerns the psychology of his portraits. He paints aristocrats and paints them aristocratically. His studio served as an informal salon where his sitters could meet in an atmosphere of cultivated elegance. He presents them as they no doubt loved to see themselves self-possessed, virtuous and refined; hardly the aspects of character which are thought enticing today.



- C. To those of us whose education is more literary than visual, looking at pictures in terms of narrative comes easily. Even if we don't go into a gallery bristling with information about the myths, symbols and morals of past times, we find it easy enough to get interested when they are explained to us. Similarly, we have been taught to enjoy the texture of paint applied to the grainy surface of canvas. Impressionism has taught us to attend to the gorgeous broken surface of pictures. Van Dyck offers us little delectation of this kind – his treatment of the picture is smooth, his handling of the brush discreet.
- D. There is, however, a less familiar feature of painting at which Van Dyck excels: composition. Consider the double portrait of himself and his friend John Digby, the Earl of Bristol. Studying it with composition in mind, we might be struck by the contrast between the broad, straight-on volume of Digby and the more slender, oblique presentation of the artist. The painter's dark cloak contrasts with his pale skin; the Earl's darker-toned complexion is set off by his lighter garments. Analysis in this vein shows us that the picture is an intricate array of volumes, masses, contours and planes. The viewer's sense of the cohesion and balance of the picture also rests in part upon the psychological intimacy of the two men. Van Dyck's paintings are wonderfully poised. This achievement, the integration of form and content, is a keynote of the art of painting. Van Dyck has produced a fine presentation of something deep and engaging: the relationship between two men.
- E. Consider also the issue of idealisation. In Van Dyck's portrait of the Balbi children, three boys, magnificently dressed, stand on a portico. The youngest holds a small bird, probably a family emblem. The eldest is already suave and courtier-like; the middle son is martial and forthright and looks with admiration at his older brother. The boys are ideals of aristocratic virtue. Critics argue that such images serve to present the holders of high office (the parents of these paragons, and the boys in later life) as actually possessing the degree of virtue, sincerity, composure and sensitivity with which they are credited in the painting, so deflecting from a more unsettling account of their power – a power that was arbitrary, maintained by force and unaccountable. But idealisation has its place. It functions by selecting an attractive quality and exaggerating it. We know the world is not like that, but we engage for a while in a vision of a world and of human nature 'more beautiful and sweet than ours'. Modern enjoyment of Van Dyck requires cultivation of our instincts for grace and dignity – instincts which tend not to be encouraged in contemporary culture. One of the cruellest kinds of aesthetic tyranny is the insistence that we must be of our time and only of our time.
- F. We are often encouraged to feel that, if we are interested in art, we ought to be interested in all art. But searching out a temperamental affinity with the ambitions of a particular painter puts this hope in question. Compliant, well-behaved creatures that most of us are in the art gallery, we tend to cajole ourselves into the right sort of response. We should be confident enough to accept that there will be works of great merit to which we will be unable to respond.

***In which section are the following mentioned?***

- a departure from perceived norms
- art as a fleeting escape from reality
- a tendency to flatter individuals' self-image
- the view that art should only reflect modern sensibility
- an attempt to conform to general consensus
- arranging elements to build underlying harmony

***Your answers:***

86.
87.
88.
89.
90.
91.



- choice of subject hindering deep appreciation
- good repute being unrelated to public appeal
- a prerequisite to a full understanding of Van Dyck's art
- a lack of impact to the modern eye

92.

93.

94.

95.

### III. WRITING (5.0 POINTS)

**Part 1. Read the following texts and summarise in your own words as far as possible the key points of both texts. Your summary should be between 120 and 150 words.**

#### Text 1

When writing a novel a writer should create living people; people not characters. A *character* is a caricature. If a writer can make people live there may be no great characters in his book, but it is possible that his book will remain as a whole; as an entity; as a novel. If the people the writer is making talk of old masters; of music; of modern painting; of letters; or of science then they should talk of those subjects in the novel. If they do not talk of those subjects and the writer makes them talk of them he is a faker, and if he talks about them himself to show how much he knows then he is showing off. No matter how good a phrase or a simile he may have if he puts it in where it is not absolutely necessary and irreplaceable he is spoiling his work for egotism. For a writer to put his own intellectual musings, which he might sell for a low price as essays, into the mouths of artificially constructed characters which are more remunerative when issued as people in a novel is good economics, perhaps, but does not make literature. People in a novel, not skilfully constructed characters, must be projected from the writer's assimilated experience, from his knowledge, from his head, from his heart and from all there is of him. If he ever has luck as well as seriousness and gets them out entire they will have more than one dimension and they will last a long time.

#### Text 2

If only for the sake of brevity and conciseness in a short story, the choice of the correct words in every phrase is of primary importance. Editors and their public are after the story and they want that story in as few words as possible, consistent with its being convincing. Those words, therefore, had better be the right ones. In this connexion it is good practice to write a description of a man or a woman and then see how much you can 'boil it down'. When you have arrived at one or two words which convey the full description, you will know that you have succeeded.

Let me urge the beginner not to use too many adjectives, and never to have a string of them following so closely in a context as to seem to be constituting a list. In poetry, adjectives are viewed with suspicion. The same may be said to apply to the short story. Never use adjectives unnecessarily. When a man is 'bad', do not tell us that he is a 'bad man'; tell us that he is a man and show him being bad. Do not use the obvious adjective. Do not write 'blue' in front of 'skies'. Most of us have learnt by this time that the sky is not lavender. Avoid those adjectives which are commonly used in juxtaposition to certain nouns. 'Fearful temper', 'terrible tragedy', 'immaculate evening dress', etc. These adjectives, when allied to these nouns, have come to mean nothing. Instead choose an adjective with real meaning. Instead of 'fearful' use 'unhealthy' or 'insane' or 'uncontrolled'. They mean so much more than 'fearful', since 'fearful temper' is a cliché.

Part 2. Write an essay of at least 300 words on the following topic:

***In just twenty years, every book we read, every painting we view, and every song we listen to will be produced by Artificial Intelligence (AI).***

***To what extent do you agree or disagree with this prediction?***

Give reasons for your answer and include any relevant examples from your own knowledge or experience.

Springboard  
English

**You may write overleaf if you need more space.**

*Great appreciation to authors of published works of which adaptations have been made in this test paper!*

**– THE END –**

