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 **20** 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 question 1-5, listen to a discussion on the perception of beauty, and decide whether each of the following statements is True (T), False (F) or Not Given (NG) according to what you hear. Write T, F, or NG in the corresponding numbered boxes provided.***

1. Symmetry in crafts might have been preferred by early humans to improve their function.
2. The persistence of some beauty principles spanned across various cultures.
3. Pattern recognition might have helped humans detect predators.
4. Alzheimer's patients lose their ability to judge beauty shortly after memory deterioration
5. Child-made paintings were generally preferred over those by animals.

Your answers:

1.	2.	3.	4.	5.

Part 2. ***Write NO MORE THAN FOUR WORDS taken from the recording talking about civilization growth for each answer in the spaces provided.***

1. What is the main purpose of the Russian astronomer's testing scale?

   _____

2. What number is used to describe the amount of solar energy not received by the Earth?

_____

3. What is the biggest class of objects under human's control, according to John Barrow?

_____

4. How much larger is the universe compared to the human body?

_____

5. What are the power sources a well developed civilization should be able to harness?

_____

Part 3. ***For questions 11–15, listen to an interview with a sports writer about football referees 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. Martin says that referees become concerned if

A. they are no longer chosen for the important matches

B. they cease to cause strong reactions

C. they feel that other referees do not regard them highly

D. they attract a lot of attention from strangers

12. Martin says that referees think they gain the respect of players by

A. resorting to strict discipline when it is necessary

B. adopting different approaches with different players

C. showing that they do not care what players think of them

D. treating players with a certain amount of tolerance

13. According to Martin, it would be wrong to believe that referees

A. are not passionately interested in football

B. do not feel that they are performing a duty

C. are largely motivated by their own vanity

D. are poorly paid for their efforts

14. What does Martin say about the system for assessing referees?

A. It causes some referees to be indecisive

B. It requires referees not to be sensitive people

C. It enables poor referees to be identified quickly

D. It leads to inconsistencies in referees' decisions

15. Martin says that a referee should deal with the bad behaviour of players by

A. informing them that they cannot influence his decisions

B. admitting to them when he has made a mistake under pressure

C. deciding rapidly what a player's real intention was

D. treating the worst offences with the greatest severity

Your answers:

11.	12.	13.	14.	15.

Part 4. ***For questions 16–25, listen to part of a talk about the Earth' core, 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.***

The Earth is layered like an onion, and life is confined to its outermost layer — the crust — where creatures such as **(16)_____**dig shallow burrows. Some of the deepest belong to Nile crocodiles. Human activity is also evident here, with underground cities like Elengubu in Turkey, an **(17)_____**from 370 BC capable of housing 20,000 people.

Mining ventures have reached depths of four kilometres, with worms discovered two kilometres down, but life ends before three. The Kola Superdeep Borehole in Russia, dubbed the **(18)_____** , is the deepest hole ever drilled, infamous for eerie legends.

At 30 to 50 kilometres, the journey enters the mantle — a region of slowly flowing rock. These **(19)_____**beneath Earth's surface cause earthquakes. Past attempts to drill into it failed, though new efforts are **(20)_____** Deeper still, pressure distorts matter: crystals change colour and rock becomes **(21)_____**.

At 2,900 kilometres lies the **(22)_____**, surrounded by mysterious blobs. It consists of molten iron and nickel — a **(23)_____**, a dynamic **(24)_____** with movements that generate the magnetic field that protects Earth.

Finally, the inner core is reached — a **(25)_____** formed under immense heat and pressure. Though imagination once placed prehistoric life here, reality makes such a descent impossible.

II. LEXICO – GRAMMAR (2.0 points)

Part 1. ***For questions 26–35, write the letter A, B, C, or D in the numbered boxes provided to indicate the correct answer to each of the following questions.***

The other day, over coffee, my friend Angela confided her concerns about becoming very nostalgic for her past. She'd never struck me as a **(26)** _____ person, so I was naturally concerned. I decided to mention a fascinating video I'd watched online about the subject.

Apparently, doctors used to have the misguided **(27)** _____that nostalgia was a mental illness. However, in the last couple of decades psychologists have **(28)** _____ doubt on this. They've realised that it's actually a **(29)** _____ effective form of self-treatment in times of anxiety or isolation.

In the video, a psychologist described how people derive **(30)** _____from reliving pleasant past experiences. This is because the process releases positive chemicals in the brain that help build motivation for the future. He even cited a study in which participants who were encouraged to recall fond memories showed an increase in optimism and resilience. The effects, he said, were not only emotional but even **(31)** _____ — some subjects experienced measurable improvements in physical well-being, such as reduced heart rate and better sleep patterns.

So, equipped with my newfound facts, I launched into the conversation hoping to make Angela feel less miserable. She started nodding enthusiastically, saying this explanation really **(32)** _____ the nail on the head. Her working environment had become quite stressful, mainly due to some issues with the company's finances, and it was really beginning to take **(33)** _____on her mood and energy levels. Over time, this had started to affect her ability to maintain a healthy **(34)** _____ on the bigger picture of her life.

She even admitted that lately she'd become more withdrawn, tending to **(35)** _____ herself from friends and colleagues — something completely out of character for her. Anyway, she promised to watch the video herself, and I hope it benefits her, too.

26.	A. bland	B. sentimental	C. pathetic	D. longing
27.	A. belief	B. conclusion	C. deduction	D. intuition
28.	A. cast	B. dropped	C. thrown	D. shed
29.	A. realistically	B. conclusively	C. remarkably	D. unanimously
30.	A. relief	B. comfort	C. caution	D. freedom
31.	A. scientific	B. observable	C. physiological	D. responsive
32.	A. tappled	B. struck	C. chopped	D. hit

33.	A. its	B. some	C. a	D. all
34.	A. standards	B. sight	C. perspective	D. outlook
35.	A. distance	B. separate	C. keep	D. push

Your answers:

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

Part 2. ***For questions 36–40, write the correct form of each bracketed word in the numbered space provided in the column on the right to complete the passage. The first one has been done as an example.***

36. The regional companies rely on customer service rather than on marketing _____ products. (**NEW**)

37. In private he bitterly _____ Brown for seeking to stymie his program.(**UP**)

38. The judge dismissed the claim as legally _____, lacking any substantial basis in precedent or statute.(**TENABLE**)

39. The documentary was praised for its _____ treatment of a controversial historical figure. (**JUDGE**)

40. Chinese have a number of _____and territories, most of which were acquired through military conquest, much as they generally do not consider themselves an imperial or colonial power. (**WEALTH)**

36. _____

37. _____

38. _____

39. _____

40. _____

Part 3. ***The passage below contains 05 grammatical mistakes. For questions 41–45, UNDERLINE the mistakes and WRITE YOUR CORRECTIONS in the numbered space provided in the column on the right. The first one has been done as an example.***

Less than two hours after his bruising four-set victory over Flavio Cobolli, which sent him through for a men's record 14th semi-final at the tournament of his dreams, Novak Djokovic's mind had already cast forward to the monumental challenge ahead. "Sinner and Alcaraz, we know they're the domineering force

Your answers:

E.g. *Error → Correction*

41. _____

right now in tennis," said Djokovic. "If I want to at least go a step further, I have to beat the No 1 in the world and eventually play Alcaraz in the final."

This was, of course, a slight faux pas from the 24-time grand slam champion, and it was also revealing. While the winner of Djokovic's upcoming semi-final duel with Jannik Sinner will probably face Carlos Alcaraz, the second-time defending champion who just won at Roland Garros for a second year in a row does have another match to win first. Alcaraz will take on Taylor Fritz, the fifth seed, in the preceding semi-final. Although Alcaraz will enter Centre Court as the clear favourite, the outcome is far from certainty.

42. _____

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.***

The creators of the ITA and the modern purveyors of primary-school phonics miss the most obvious **(46)_____** about young children: they are already fluent speakers and listeners, with a natural and unrivalled **(47)_____** of the vocabulary and grammar of their native language. Any teacher of a **(48)_____**language will tell you that it is precisely this, the learning of thousands of words and the complex grammatical rules to **(49)_____** them together, which requires all the learner's time and effort, not the language's **(50)_____** .

Therefore teaching reading should begin with **(51)_____** the children already know. Show a child a picture of a woman, or a hat, and they will tell you what it is **(52)_____** by a picture, they will also tell you that the plural of woman is women, without being **(53)_____** of the fact that the "o" sounds in woman and women have different **(54)_____** values. Did that stop you pronouncing the word correctly? Of course it didn't. There is no **(55)_____** to teach you, or indeed children, phonetics.

Dave Hughes

Cheltenham, Gloucestershire

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

Germ war is nothing new, but the threat is changing

Biological warfare dates back at least as far as the 14th century BC, far before anyone knew that germs caused disease, when the Hittites sent diseased rams to their enemies to infect them with the dangerous bacterial infection tularemia. Every major combatant in World War II had a biological weapons research program — including the US — and Japan even deliberately unleashed germs in China.

Fear over the use of biological weapons eventually led to the ratification of the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC) in 1975, banning the use and development of bioweapons globally. But even more than

the treaty, biowarfare has been held back by the fact that biological weapons have been difficult to develop, deploy, and — should they be used — control. But that may be changing.

New gene editing tools like CRISPR have brought down the cost and difficulty of tinkering with DNA. But the same kind of tools also can make it easier for malignant actors to create designer diseases for use in warfare or terrorism.

AI is already revolutionizing the field of synthetic biology: The 2024 Nobel Prize in chemistry was awarded to researchers who used AI to predict and design new proteins. This is likely to have positive effects, like dramatically accelerating drug development.

But, says Matt McKnight, head of biosecurity at the synthetic biology company Ginkgo Bioworks, past periods of rapid scientific advancement, from chemicals in the early 1900s (poison gas), to physics in the 1930s (nuclear weapons), to computer science in the later 20th century (cyber offensives), suggest that the new confluence of AI and gene editing is almost certain to be put to violent ends.

“My assumption is that bioweapons will be used by a bad actor in this century because that would be the baseline expectation given all of human actions throughout history,” McKnight said. “And I want to reduce the likelihood that that happens.”

A recent report from the Center for a New American Security (CNAS) suggested several worrying scenarios for how AI could be used to optimize pathogens for warfare. Entirely new viruses could be designed, or modifications could be made to existing viruses to make them more resistant to existing treatments.

Kevin Esvelt, a synthetic biology researcher and director of the Sculpting Evolution group at MIT, said one of his greatest concerns was that large language models could facilitate “not just the replication of an existing natural pathogen, but building something entirely new that doesn’t occur in nature.” This means that both our natural immunological defenses and existing vaccines would be entirely unprepared for it.

How bad could it be? Mustafa Suleyman, the CEO of Microsoft AI, has warned that the combination of AI and synthetic biology could allow the creation of a pathogen with the death rate of Ebola but the transmissibility of seasonal flu, causing “more than a billion deaths in a matter of months.”

This wouldn’t be a very practical weapon for anyone but a doomsday cult. But AI-enhanced engineering could also allow for viruses to be made more controllable by adapting them to only work in particular locations. More disturbingly, viruses could be tailored to attack particular populations. The CNAS report quotes Zhang Shibo, former president of China’s National Defense University and a one-time general in the Chinese military, who has speculated that new technology would allow for the development of diseases for “specific ethnic genetic attacks.”

Beyond these nightmare scenarios, AI may simply make it easier to produce existing dangerous viruses. In a 2023 experiment, a group of students at MIT used commercially available AI chatbots to generate suggestions for assembling several deadly viruses — including smallpox, which currently exists only in ultra-secure labs in the US and Russia — from their genetic material. The chatbots also suggested the supplies needed and listed several companies and labs that might print the genetic material without screening.

Concerns about scenarios like these have prompted some AI companies to incorporate new safeguards into their models — though the intense commercial and geopolitical competition to reach artificial general intelligence may erode those safeguards over time.

These advances don't mean just anyone can grow their own smallpox today. The technical obstacles to actually constructing a disease are still formidable, even if you have the instruction manual and a very patient AI to walk you through it. But it suggests the barriers to entry are coming down.

In the past, nonstate actors like ISIS or the Japanese cult Aum Shinrikyo, responsible for the 1995 sarin gas attack on the Tokyo subway, have tried to acquire biological weapons, but inevitably hit up against talent and supply limits. But advances in both AI and synthetic biology means actors with limited means will now have more tools at their disposal.

As a method of warfare, synthetic biology "just seems to favor offense," said Esvelt, who led the MIT experiment on the use of chatbots in virus design. "There's just a lot of ways you can attack, and it's much cheaper to build a virus than it is to develop and distribute a vaccine."

That's why defense needs to start catching up to offense. When it comes to the risk of this technology being misused, Ginkgo's McKnight argues, "You can't regulate your way out of it. You have to be better at it. You have to be as good as the adversaries at making countermeasures." His company is working to build one.

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. The Hittites' use of diseased rams demonstrates an early understanding of the microbial basis of illness.
57. The Biological Weapons Convention of 1975 was solely responsible for the decline in the use of bioweapons.
58. CRISPR and similar gene-editing tools have significantly decreased the complexity involved in bioengineering harmful pathogens.
59. According to Matt McKnight, scientific breakthroughs have a track record of being co-opted for destructive purposes.

60. Zhang Shibo has confirmed that China has developed bioweapons capable of targeting ethnic groups

61. Students at MIT were able to create live samples of deadly viruses using AI tools and off-the-shelf lab supplies.

62. Kevin Esvelt suggests that defense mechanisms in synthetic biology are currently outpacing offensive capabilities.

56.	57.	58.	59.	60.	61.	62.

For questions 63-68, 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.

Biological warfare has ancient roots, dating back to the use of infected animals by the Hittites to spread the **(63) _____**. Despite its evolution during the 20th century—when major powers, including Japan and the US, pursued bioweapons programs—concerns led to the **(64) _____** of the Biological Weapons Convention in 1975, aiming to curb such threats. However, modern scientific advancements may be reviving these dangers. Technologies like CRISPR have reduced the barriers to **(65) _____,** inadvertently enabling **(66) _____** to engineer pathogens for harmful purposes. At the same time, AI is transforming synthetic biology, as evidenced by the 2024 Nobel Prize in Chemistry. Yet, historical precedents—from poison gas to nuclear weapons to

(67) _____—indicate that scientific breakthroughs are often repurposed for destruction. Experts now warn that the fusion of AI and gene editing could similarly culminate in **(68)_____.**

63.	64.	65.	66.	67.	68.

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.***

When Lavania Oluban looks at photos from her childhood, the memories feel incomplete. “It’s hazy around the edges—I’m filling in missing pieces of the puzzle with a memory that’s not quite real,” she says.

69	

In 2023, people around the world took an estimated 5.3 billion photos, about 61,400 every second, according to photography data site Photutorial. Oluban alone has more than 140,000 pictures on her phone: selfies with Arlo, sunsets, butterflies, ice cream. They’re instantly accessible, searchable, and sharable.

70	

Autobiographical memory—our recollection of personal life events—is central to how we understand ourselves. "Memories are crucial for defining who we are," says Hutmacher. "They are a sort of reservoir that we refer to whenever we think about our lives."

71	

Photos can support this reconstructive storytelling. Researchers agree that images often help jog memory by surfacing details or emotions we might otherwise forget. "I take them partly to document, but also as a way of holding onto moments I know I'll want to revisit," says 20-year-old Alina Nguyen. "It's like a time capsule—sometimes I remember specific feelings or details I'd completely forgotten until I see an image…I think I've learned a lot about myself just by noticing patterns or changes in the photos over time."

72	

While offloading can reduce cognitive burden, studies suggest it may also weaken our ability to recall details unless we actively review the material later. As a result, when we turn to digital images to reconstruct an event, those files don't just support our memory—they become part of it.

73	

Still, more pictures don't necessarily mean stronger memories. A 2013 study by cognitive psychologist Linda Henkel found that photographing objects can actually impair memory, with participants appearing to "rely on the external device of the camera to 'remember' for them." However, when participants engaged with the objects they photographed, they remembered them better. "If you go to a concert and you spend 90 minutes filming, focusing on getting a good angle, then it reduces your enjoyment of the situation, as well as the memory you have of it," says Hutmacher. "On the other hand, if you record a snapshot because it's your favourite song, then it can improve memory later."

74	

Psychologists have long recognized that forgetting is an essential part of how memory works. But in a world saturated with digital images, what we choose to capture—and what we choose to revisit or erase—may be subtly reshaping that process, says Soares.

75	

"People are trying to curate their photos to do the type of remembering that they want to do," says Soares. "These photographed events might create hills, and there may be valleys where non-photographed stories or life events may be. It remains to be seen the extent to which that will be the case."

Missing Paragraphs:

A.	Memory, however, isn't like playing back a video. Neuroscientific research shows that this type of memory depends on interactions between the hippocampus, which helps consolidate new experiences, and the prefrontal cortex, which organizes them into coherent life narratives. These systems are especially sensitive to attention and emotional engagement—factors that may be disrupted when we're more focused on photographing a moment than experiencing it. "Our memory is not faithful," says Julia Soares, assistant professor of psychology at Mississippi State University. "It's tied up with who you are and your story making throughout your life. It's your autobiography."
B.	This shift raises new questions. If our memories are partly constructed through what we photograph—and what we choose to revisit—then our devices aren't just reflecting our past. They're shaping which moments we remember, how vividly, and supposedly how well we interpret our personal histories.
C.	"People record much more data about their lives than any previous generation," says Fabian Hutmacher, a psychologist at the University of Würzburg who studies how digital media shapes our memories. "It's natural to ask: does that change anything about the way we remember our lives?"
D.	Our photo habits are no longer just about preserving memories; they're part of how we construct them in the first place. For example, when we share photos on social media, evidence shows that we remember the experiences better. Conversely, in her 2023 study, Soares found that deleting photos meant that people remembered their experiences less vividly. Some participants had intentionally deleted photos they wanted to forget, like an ex or a bad night out.
E.	In an age where voice assistants log our reminders and calendars sync our schedules, many people have begun outsourcing not just their tasks but also their memories. Rather than recalling a friend's birthday or a grocery list, we depend on alerts and apps to remember for us. While this digital support system is convenient, some researchers warn it may dull our natural memory skills, subtly shifting how we encode and prioritize personal information over time.
F.	Oluban, 37, has only a handful of birthday photos from when she was young. But her seven-year-old-son, Arlo, has "easily 200," captured by different attendees on their smartphones. "Practically every single second of his life is documented," she says. "Arlo's almost got a virtual reality representation of an event because there are so many pictures and videos. I think for him, it's quite vivid."

G.	Even so, most people don't regularly revisit their photos. And without reviewing or organizing them, pictures can become overwhelming, making it harder to find the meaningful ones. "It can be a rose with a thorn," says Soares. "Photos provide these incredible memory cues. But if you never review them, you're not capitalizing on that benefit, and you may actually be losing something from the act of taking the photo."
H.	For Hutmacher, though, photos are more than just a cue for memories. He argues that in the digital age, photos are actually changing how we form memories in the first place. Remembering, he says, is no longer purely internal; it's an interaction between our minds and resources like photos, meaning it's built not only from what we store in our brains but also from what we offload onto devices like smartphones.

Part 4. ***For questions 76-85, read the passage 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.***

Addressing the Problem of Water Scarcity

Despite 70% of the world's surface being covered with water, less than 3% of that is actually drinkable and, based on factors ranging from agricultural practices to climate change and daily habits, water scarcity is fast becoming a serious problem in many countries around the globe. The problem of scarcity – in other words, having insufficient water – is categorised as being physical (happening in places where supply cannot meet demand) or economic (occurring in areas that have plenty of water but don't have good management systems). Broadly speaking, the causes of water scarcity are related to the rapid rise of the global population and the associated issues that this has brought, and the predictions in many parts of the world are that the population will continue to rise for several decades. This suggests that rather than lamenting the journey to this point, we would be better off focusing on solutions, especially given that the causes have been written about extensively and are very well understood, which is not the case for the solutions.

Solutions for water scarcity should primarily be context-specific if they are to work, and must include experts, organisations and charities that can provide insight into the particular challenges. For example, there is no point in poorer nations engaging expert engineers from overseas to help with the infrastructure for water management systems if the resulting system is not affordable or able to withstand the climatic conditions of the region. Too often collaborations on projects like this turn into vanity projects for the foreign companies in much the same way as high-end commercial projects, such as the building of a luxury hotel or impressive bridge. Workable solutions will need to understand the influences of geology, the environment and the influences of local culture to be successful and will likely be a combination of

technology and a change in human behaviour. One immediate approach is to provide incentives for people to upgrade more old-fashioned machines to water-efficient ones, such as toilets and showers that use considerably less water. Another is to adjust the cost based on consumption by installing water meters in homes, something that has not been widely reported in the press. It appears that there is little incentive for governments to encourage uptake among households as any change would negatively affect voters on low incomes and families.

A better alternative to punishing such bad consumer behaviour is for governments to invest in educating their populations. For example, many are unaware of the amount of water used to produce the food we consume. The meat industry is a case in point in which vast quantities of water are required, yet the general public is largely ignorant of this. Education on water conservation methods should come from a commitment to ensuring people have the relevant scientific evidence presented to them, otherwise they will be unable to make informed decisions. There is already enough fake science floating around on the internet and it is important not to add to it.

An additional approach that is well worth thinking about is tackling the problem through multiple small lifestyle changes rather than national or international projects. After all, the situation affects millions of people, so anything that ordinary people can do without disrupting their lives too much would be a bonus. Research from behavioural science has shown that when people have to opt into a system, the likelihood of their doing so is reduced because of the increased effort involved. Rainwater collection for uses such as cleaning and washing clothes is an example of a small change. It is both low-cost and easily implementable since local councils could supply households with containers, allowing them to begin water conservation immediately.

We must also remember that better management of the environment plays a large part in maintaining the water supplies on the planet. There are certain ecosystems, such as forests, marshes and wetlands, that naturally process, collect and filter water, and preserve these natural systems is essential. Unfortunately, the practices of many commercial industries are at odds with conservation strategies for these ecosystems and so continue to be widespread. Making laws to protect these natural systems is another cost-effective way to change both attitudes and behaviour to water, and it's high time that governments stepped up and took control of the situation if we are to succeed in protecting our most precious resource.

76. **What is the author's main criticism of engaging foreign engineers in poorer nations' water projects?**

A. Their infrastructure plans tend to focus more on aesthetics than functionality.

B. Their involvement frequently disregards the socio-economic and climatic realities of the host country.

C. They introduce technologies that are too advanced for the local workforce.

D. They often fail to finish their projects due to funding cuts.

77. **The author mentions vanity projects such as hotels and bridges primarily to:**

A. show that high-end architecture attracts more attention than it deserves.

B. suggest that tourism initiatives often overshadow critical resource needs.

C. highlight how international aid can mask self-serving interests under the guise of development.

D. illustrate how infrastructure development often lacks community consultation.

78. **According to the passage, why is it difficult for governments to promote water metering in households?**

A. It risks alienating key voter demographics sensitive to rising living costs.

B. The media has actively discouraged such initiatives.

C. Most households are unaware of how meters work and resist change.

D. It would cause conflict with utility companies that profit from flat-rate billing.

79. **The statement that "the causes have been written about extensively and are very well understood" implies that:**

A. Public awareness campaigns have largely succeeded.

B. Further research into causes is redundant compared to actionable steps.

C. Policymakers are deliberately ignoring the solutions.

D. Media reports on water scarcity are overly repetitive.

80. **What does the author suggest is a major flaw in the general public's awareness regarding water use?**

A. They equate water usage solely with household consumption.

B. They believe desalination is a universally viable solution.

C. They assume agriculture consumes less water than it actually does.

D. They overestimate the impact of rainwater harvesting.

81. **The reference to "fake science" in the text serves to**

A. criticize pseudoscientific environmental theories circulating on social media.

B. question the legitimacy of water conservation efforts globally.

C. underscore the need for robust scientific education to guide behavioural change.

D. imply that governments often rely on unverified data.

82. **The author's attitude toward lifestyle-based conservation strategies can best be described as**

A. dismissive of their overall impact.

B. supportive, particularly for their grassroots feasibility.

C. skeptical but hopeful.

D. cautious yet pragmatic.

83. **Why does the author mention behavioural science research on "opting into a system"?**

A. To show how governments manipulate public decisions.

B. To argue against compulsory government policies.

C. To explain resistance to national water-saving campaigns.

D. To highlight the importance of reducing friction in conservation efforts.

84. **The inclusion of ecosystems like wetlands and forests in the passage primarily emphasizes:**

A. the ecological role of natural systems in sustaining clean water supplies.

B. the biodiversity benefits of water-rich regions.

C. the untapped tourism potential of such areas.

D. the threat posed to rural economies when these regions are destroyed.

85. **Which of the following best encapsulates the author's central argument?**

A. Solutions to water scarcity must be multi-faceted, localised, and behaviourally informed.

B. Technological advancement alone cannot solve water scarcity without cultural reform.

C. Education and regulation are the only sustainable responses to global water shortages.

D. Water scarcity is less a supply issue and more a problem of public awareness.

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

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.***

Artificial Intelligence in Schools: Promise, Pitfalls, and a Dose of Skepticism

Leila Wheless, a North Carolina teacher since 1991, approached the integration of artificial intelligence (AI) into her middle school English and language arts classroom with what she called "an open heart." After reviewing her state's recommendations on generative AI in public education, she was hopeful—but the results left her discouraged.

In one assignment connected to the novel *Persepolis*, students were asked to research prophets. The responses revealed an alarming overreliance on AI. One student submitted that "the Christian prophet Moses got chocolate stains out of T-shirts." Wheless noted that students didn't even question this clearly incorrect information. "They simply do not have the background knowledge or indeed the intellectual stamina to question unlikely responses," she said.

After publishing a spring series on technology in classrooms, I reached out to educators about their experiences with AI. While many acknowledged it has limited uses—such as speeding up citation formatting or basic coding—they were deeply concerned about its broader effects on student thinking, independence, and academic honesty.

Sarah Martin, a high school English teacher in California, put it bluntly: "Cheating by copying from A.I. is rampant, particularly among my disaffected seniors who are just waiting until graduation." She elaborated in a follow-up phone call that it's becoming increasingly difficult to detect AI use, as students learn to edit AI outputs to make them sound more natural and personal. But the larger issue, in her view, isn't dishonesty—it's detachment.

"There's just no grit that's instilled in them," she said. "There's no sense of 'Yes, you're going to struggle, but you're going to feel good at the end of it.'" Over her seven years of teaching, Martin has seen a marked decline in student perseverance. Where once students would wrestle with a tough concept for days, now they're more likely to give up within minutes, turning to AI tools or friends for quick answers.

Martin doesn't blame laziness. Instead, she points to fear and insecurity. Many students assume they're not smart if they don't "get it" right away, and they dread the possibility of peer judgment. "These teenagers think: 'My friends are going to see I don't get it. They're going to think I'm stupid.'"

In response, many educators have adjusted their instruction. Some are reducing out-of-class assignments or choosing newer books that AI tools are less likely to summarize accurately. Others are changing how they test knowledge altogether.

Jerald Hughes, an associate professor of information systems at the University of Texas Rio Grande Valley, replaced standard quizzes with a timed in-class game—similar to *Space Invaders*—where students have just seconds to respond and must score perfectly to pass. He also customizes assessments. Instead of asking for a general disaster plan for an IT center, he presents students with specific scenarios, like: "You're the CEO of a small trucking firm in Port Isabel, Texas. Make a disaster plan for this company."

According to Hughes, AI chatbots still struggle to generate thoughtful responses to such specific prompts. He believes this approach not only makes cheating harder but prepares students for job interviews and real-world decision-making, where answers need to be both quick and informed.

Overall, educators seem realistic but cautious. They recognize that AI isn't going away and aren't banning it outright—but they remain unconvinced that it's an educational silver bullet. Only 6% of U.S. public school teachers believe AI tools bring more benefit than harm.

The more troubling trend may be among policymakers and administrators who have placed outsized faith in AI. In July, education journalist Dana Goldstein reported that the Los Angeles Unified School District

agreed to pay up to $6 million to a startup called AllHere to build "Ed," a chatbot that would help students access academic and mental health resources, inform parents about attendance, and provide test scores.

Alberto Carvalho, the district's superintendent, promoted the project enthusiastically. He appeared at Arizona State University's Global Silicon Valley summit on a panel titled "Bright Spots: K–12 Leaders' Guide to Embracing a Generative A.I. World," championing the technology as the future of education.

But only two months later, the project began to unravel. AllHere's CEO left her position, most of the staff were furloughed, and the company cited financial trouble. Even more concerning, a whistle-blower reportedly warned the district that the Ed chatbot may have violated student data privacy laws.

Carvalho's confidence in AI as a transformational solution highlights a contrast with the skepticism shown by classroom educators. While teachers are busy adapting, problem-solving, and keeping students engaged without over-relying on AI, some district leaders seem ready to leap before looking.

Perhaps, in the rush to embrace innovation, it's not just students who need to sharpen their critical thinking skills.

You will read a passage in which five people are mentioned, each expressing views or experiences related to artificial intelligence (AI) in education.
For questions 1–10, choose from the list (A–E) the person who expresses each idea. You may use each letter more than once.

People:

Leila Wheless	A
Sarah Martin	B
Jerald Hughes	C
Dana Goldstein	D
Alberto Carvalho	E

Which of the people mentioned *Your answers:*

• Was disheartened by students' inability to recognize obviously inaccurate information generated by A.I. 86. _____

• Noted that students today give up more easily when faced with academic difficulty. 87. _____

- Said that personalizing assignments can help prevent students from successfully using A.I. to complete them. 88. _____
- Believes A.I. still struggles to provide complex, context-specific answers. 89. _____
- Reported on the failure of an A.I. project that had previously been promoted by a school district. 90. _____
- Argued that students' reliance on A.I. could hinder the development of perseverance. 91. _____
- Publicly endorsed an ambitious A.I.-based educational platform before it ran into trouble. 92. _____
- Publicly endorsed an ambitious A.I.-based educational platform before it ran into trouble. 93. _____
- Replaced conventional tests with fast-paced activities to assess understanding in real-time. 94. _____
- Highlighted students' fear of looking unintelligent in front of their peers as a reason for their A.I. dependence. 95. _____

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.***

It's common wisdom not to inquire about a woman's age or comment on people's weight (although, that's becoming less of a thing these days, thanks to Ozempic). But it's hard to say that, as a society, we've adopted any sort of coherent etiquette around discussing plastic surgery. The topic has long prompted a free-for-all of speculation and ridicule.

From Michael Jackson's reported rhinoplasties to *The Hills* star Heidi Montag's infamous trip to the plastic surgeon in 2010, celebrities "messing up" their faces and bodies has made for some of the most talked-about tabloid headlines. Meanwhile, makeover shows from the early 2000s, like *The Swan*, *Extreme Makeover*, and *Addicted to Beauty*, framed plastic surgery and the people who receive it as a spectacle worthy of its own genre of entertainment.

Today, plastic surgery has become much more normalized and attainable, and the way we talk about something common has shifted. Once viewed as an option only for chronically vain and insecure people, interventions like injectables, nose jobs, and veneers have now become status symbols and luxury experiences that many people aspire to have. A 2023 RealSelf Culture Report found that nearly a quarter of Americans received some sort of cosmetic work or procedure.

"It used to be that you worked hard, and, as a reward, you get a handbag," says Amy Odell, writer of the Back Row newsletter and author of the upcoming biography *Gwyneth*. "People would go into a Louis Vuitton to buy a bag, and it's a mark of their accomplishment. Now it feels like we're getting to a place where you're buying a face."

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

The rise of virtual reality and immersive digital experiences is challenging the value of the physical world. Do you believe digital experiences can ever replace real-world interactions?

(You may write overleaf if you need more space.)

- GOOD LUCK, AND DO NOT CRY -