UBND TỈNH BẮC NINH
SỞ GIÁO DỤC VÀ ĐÀO TẠO

ĐỀ CHÍNH THỨC

(Đề thi có 12 trang)

ĐỀ THI LẬP ĐỘI TUYỂN
THAM DỰ KỲ THI CHỌN HỌC SINH GIỎI
CẤP QUỐC GIA THPT NĂM HỌC 2025-2026
Môn thi: Tiếng Anh
Thời gian làm bài: 180 phút *(không kể thời gian giao đề)*
Ngày thi: 12 tháng 9 năm 2025

HƯỚNG DẪN PHẦN THI NGHE HIỂU

- *Bài nghe gồm 4 phần, mỗi phần được nghe 2 lần, mỗi lần cách nhau 20 giây, mở đầu và kết thúc mỗi phần nghe có tín hiệu.*
- *Mở đầu và kết thúc bài nghe có tín hiệu nhạc. Thí sinh có 2 phút để hoàn chỉnh bài trước tín hiệu nhạc kết thúc bài nghe.*
- *Mọi hướng dẫn cho thí sinh (bằng tiếng Anh) đã có trong bài nghe.*

I. LISTENING (50 points)

Part 1. For question 1-5, you will hear Alex and Mandy talking about the experience of having an identical twin brother or sister and decide whether the opinions expressed by only one of the speakers, or whether the speakers agree. In the answer sheet, write:

M for ***Mandy***
A for ***Alex***
B for ***Both****, when they agree.*

1. The lack of reliability can be found in some studies on identical twins.
2. False beliefs people make towards twins feel annoying.
3. There's less resemblance between the speaker's twin and him/her than before.
4. The perceptions the speaker's parents held about being a twin are valued.
5. The relationship between the speaker and his/her twin is competitive.

Part 2. For questions 6-10, listen to a news report on tornadoes in the US and match each number (6-10) in Column A with one letter (A-J) in Column B to make correct information according to what is stated by the speaker(s). Write your answers in the answer sheet.

Column A	Column B
6. The central U.S 7. Rocky Mountains 8. Gulf of Mexico 9. Southeastern Brazil 10. Andes Mountains	A. Cold dry air currents form and then flow down to the plains.
	B. Tornadoes occur more frequently in Europe than in the central U.S. area.
	C. Its specific location is conducive to concentrated quantities of tornadoes in the US.
	D. Mountain air in the south is warmer than mountain air in the west.
	E. A large tropical river basin supplies more moisture than a warm gulf.
	F. Certain geographical features bear resemblance to those of a tornado hotbed in America.
	G. Tornado-prone regions always have officially defined boundaries set by officials.
	H. Movements of strong gusts are fueled by airflows coming from a higher altitude.
	I. A narrower mountain range causes fewer tornadoes compared to a wider one.
	J. Central plains are located west of the main tornado hotspot.

Part 3. For questions 11-15, listen to a recording about coffee and write the letter A, B, C or D in the answer sheet to indicate the correct answer to each of the following questions according to what you hear.

11. What event is suggested to have been influenced by coffee consumption?
    A. The rise of the Industrial Revolution and urbanization in Europe.
    B. The Enlightenment, which promoted new ideas and scientific progress.
    C. The growth of colonialism and the expansion of European empires.
    D. The start of the Renaissance, leading to artistic and cultural revival.
12. What did the Sufis of Yemen contribute to coffee's history?
    A. They were the first to brew coffee using ground beans.
    B. They roasted coffee berries, creating the beverage we drink today.
    C. They discovered the coffee Arabica plant in Ethiopia.
    D. They introduced coffee to the Ottoman Empire in the 15th century.
13. What is the reason behind companies offering coffee breaks to workers?
    A. They wanted to promote a healthier lifestyle among their employees.
    B. They hoped to foster employee bonding and workplace camaraderie.
    C. It was a move to increase worker productivity during working hours.
    D. It was an effort to improve the overall work-life balance of employees.
14. What is a potential severe effect of consuming caffeine rapidly in high amounts?
    A. Increased physical endurance and improved athletic performance temporarily.
    B. A possible toxic reaction leading to seizures with excessive caffeine intake.
    C. Enhanced focus and mental clarity lasting for hours after consumption.
    D. A sudden drop in blood pressure, leading to dizziness and fainting.
15. Why might coffee's effects on the body vary from person to person?
    A. Genetic differences lead to varying sensitivity to caffeine's impact.
    B. Different coffee beans and preparation methods cause distinct reactions.
    C. The body becomes immune to caffeine after prolonged regular use.
    D. Health conditions like heart disease alter caffeine's effects on the body.

Part 4. For questions 16-25, listen to the recording about the rise of de-branding, and complete the summary by writing NO MORE THAN THREE WORDS in each gap. Write your answers in the answer sheet.

The recent wave of de-branding involves big brands' removing depth and detail in their logos. This does not exclude the (16) _____ of a famous mascot, Julius Pringle, giving it a strange new appearance.

Such a trend can be attributed to certain combined factors. First, in an attempt to withstand the pressure of (17) _____, companies now adapt logos to fit in a (18) _____, where two-dimensional graphics are favored. Second, along with a technological boom came rampant (19) _____, where elaborate visuals were the norm. Following this short period of (20) _____, companies choose to revert to the 2D look of old.

Third, many major brands whose playfulness (21) _____ in their branding infancy aimed to project a more professional image. Subsequently, their logos transformed from (22) _____, flashy to flat, childish to business. Finally, de-branding also reflects creative trends, similar to how minimalist branding, shown in logos (23) _____ by a major fashion brand in 2012, and then by many other followers, gained traction.

Nonetheless, many brands see the movement as a door to a (24) _____ by diversifying their offerings. Ultimately, once a trend is followed by (25) _____, the design template may change and a creative cycle enjoys a fresh start.

II. READING (100 points)

II.1. LANGUAGE IN USE (35 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 your answers in the answer sheet.

Teachers are suffering from more knotty psychological problems than at any point this century. In a report, it reveals the school workforce is being pushed to a (26) _____. Education Support, a charity that gives mental health help to education professionals (27) _____ of the UK Government, predicts school standards will fall and mental health problems in the classroom will multiply if the government does not (28) _____ to offer teachers more support. The charity's teacher wellbeing index indicates that stress levels among teachers have (29) _____ for the third consecutive year to the highest levels. "Overwork has been normalized", said the charity's chief executive, Sinéad Mc Brearty. "They are almost twice as anxious as the general population. That's a measure of how harsh our accountability systems are." The charity is ordering the government to make educational reform that will increase teachers' autonomy to reduce (30) _____ tension and anxiety. It also wants all school staff to have access to more support and funding to (31) _____ developing healthier workplaces and working practices. More than (32) _____ who have experienced health and emotional pressures have considered leaving the sector in the past two years. This year, teachers are also feeling (33) _____, two out of five are having difficulty concentrating, and around half are having difficulty sleeping. "Teachers shrug their shoulders and think: this is what a job in education requires. (34) _____. It is not healthy, not for teachers, not for their family and not for the children they teach. A (35) _____ experience indeed." said Mc Brearty.

26. A. trailing edge	B. knifepoint	C. breaking point	D. paradigm shift
27. A. under the aegis	B. on the agape	C. under the wing	D. within the ward
28. A. take the plunge	B. keep up the act	C. get the first base	D. gain the stand
29. A. hosed down	B. cranked out	C. bobbed up	D. ratcheted up
30. A. irreducible	B. inadvertent	C. imprudent	D. unproductive
31. A. give precedence to	B. make allowance for	C. take charge of	D. give place to
32. A. half of staff surveyed		B. half of staff to be surveyed	
C. half of surveyed staff		D. half of staff have been surveyed	
33. A. morbid	B. soppy	C. tearful	D. feeble
34. A. But it's not	B. Thereafter it doesn't	C. And it's not	D. Yet it doesn't
35. A. nose-curving	B. gut-wrenching	C. lung-busting	D. ear-splitting

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. There are FOUR words that you do not need to use. The first one, (0), has been done as an example. Write your answers in the answer sheet.

BORDER	*INFORM*	*HUMILIATE*	*FALSE*	*BORDER*
COMPLY	*DENOUNCE*	*RIDE*	*NEGOTIATE*	*AMPLITUDE*

Australia said it will fine internet platforms up to 5% of their global revenue for failing to prevent the spread of (***0. inform***) => ***misinformation*** online, joining a worldwide push to rein in (36) _____ tech giants but angering free speech advocates. The government said it would make tech platforms set codes of conduct governing how they stop dangerous (37) _____ spreading, to be approved by a regulator. The regulator would set its own standard if a platform failed to do so, then fine companies for (38) _____. The legislation, to be introduced in parliament on Thursday, targets false content that hurts election integrity or public health, calls for (39) _____ a group or injuring a person, or risks disrupting key infrastructure or emergency services. The bill is part of a wide-ranging regulatory crackdown by Australia, where leaders have complained that

foreign-domiciled tech platforms are (40) _____ the country's sovereignty, and comes ahead of a federal election due within a year. Already Facebook owner Meta has said it may block professional news content if it is forced to pay royalties, while X, formerly Twitter, has removed most content moderation since being bought by billionaire Elon Musk in 2022.

Part 3. The passage below contains five mistakes. For questions 41-45, find the mistakes and write the correction in the answer sheet. The first one has been done as an example.

LINE	
1	Many separate fires smoldered in the humus of the forest floor. ***Smoking*** => ***Smokes*** sometimes
2	obscured the sun, which was often visible only at midday. On September 30, flames came within
3	three miles of the town of Green Bay, consuming 1,200 cords of wood stores at a charcoal kiln.
4	The settlements in the area were becoming increasingly isolated from both the outside world
5	and one another as railroad and telegraph lines burned. The fires seemed to wax and wane,
6	depending on the wind and chance. On September 30 the Marinette and Peshtigo Eagle reported
7	hopelessly that "the fires have nearly died out now in this vicinity."
8	But the paper was wrong, and the fires were growing. By October 4, the smoke was so thick on
9	Green Bay that ships had to use their foghorns and navigate by compass. On October 7, the paper,
10	reduced to look for any scrap of good news, noted that at least the smoke had greatly reduced the
11	mosquito population and that "a certain establishment down on the bay shore that has been
12	obnoxious to the respectful citizens" had burned.
13	The paper's editor, cut out by the burning of the telegraph line, could not know it, but a large,
14	deep low-pressure area was moving in from the west. The winds circling it would turn the
15	smoldering forest of northeastern Wisconsin into hell on earth.

II.2. READING COMPREHENSION (50 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 answer sheet.

The lands around the Mediterranean are richly endowed with natural resources where local products, rather than the studied art of chefs, (46) _____ the basis of the marvelously colorful and flavorsome cuisine.

For the greater part of the year Mediterranean food markets are a technicolor world (47) _____ succulent fruits are brilliantly hued, the vegetables shining with freshness and color, the herbs more aromatic and the spices spicier. The sea too, depending on the time of year, is a variable treasure house of unfamiliar species – most of them delicious, some rubbery and disappointing, many destined to add (48) _____ to the colorful fish soups of the region.

If the element of seasonality is the first (49) _____ characteristic of the cuisine of the region, then undoubtedly the second is the ingenuity shown in making the (50) _____ of more meagre resources in other areas. Poor grazing land may militate (51) _____ the rearing of prime beef cattle but the flair of various countries in producing original ragouts and exquisitely spiced minced meat dishes is an inspiration. Sheep (52) _____ on poor pasture, so lamb is a favorite ingredient in many dishes of the region. (53) _____ ever-recurring ingredients, indispensable to the flavor, savor and aroma of Mediterranean dishes are green and black olives, with olive oil for cooking; garlic and onions; rough local wines and sheep and goat's milk and cheeses.

Notwithstanding the interchange of trade and inevitable crisscrossing of ideas, each Mediterranean country has retained a (54) _____ recognizable national cuisine, even if this is often extended with 'borrowed' dishes which have (55) _____ the frontier and been adopted at some time during occupations in the region's turbulent past.

Part 2. ***For questions 56-69, read the following passage and do the tasks that follow.***

Examining the Placebo Effect

The fact that taking a fake drug can powerfully improve some people's health - the so-called placebo effect - was long considered an embarrassment to the serious practice of pharmacology, but now things have changed.

Several years ago. Merck, a global pharmaceutical company, was falling behind its rivals in sales. To make matters worse, patents on five blockbuster drugs were about to expire, which would allow cheaper generic products to flood the market. In interviews with the press, Edward Scolnick, Merck's Research Director presented his plan to restore the firm to pre-eminence. Key to his strategy was expanding the company's reach into the antidepressant market, where Merck had trailed behind, while competitors like Pfizer and GlaxoSmithKline had created some of the best-selling drugs in the world. "To remain dominant in the future." he told one media company, "we need to dominate the central nervous system."

His plan hinged on the success of an experimental anti-depressant codenamed MK-869. Still, in clinical trials, it was a new kind of medication that exploited brain chemistry in innovative ways to promote feelings of well-being. The drug tested extremely well early on, with minimal side effects. Behind the scenes, however, MK-869 was starting to unravel. True, many test subjects treated with the medication felt their hopelessness and anxiety lift. But so did nearly the same number who took a placebo, a look-alike pill made of milk sugar or another inert substance given to groups of volunteers in subsequent clinical trials to gauge the effectiveness of the real drug by comparison. Ultimately, Merck's venture into the antidepressant market failed. In the jargon of the industry, the trials crossed the "futility boundary".

MK-869 has not been the only much-awaited medical breakthrough to be undone in recent years by the placebo effect. And it's not only trials of new drugs that are crossing the futility boundary. Some products that have been on the market for decades are faltering in more recent follow-up tests. It's not that the old medications are getting weaker, drug developers say. It's as if the placebo effect is somehow getting stronger. The fact that an increasing number of medications are unable to beat sugar pills has thrown the industry into crisis. The stakes could hardly be higher. To win FDA approval, a new medication must beat placebo in at least two authenticated tests. In today's economy, the fate of a well-established company can hang on the outcome of a handful of tests.

Why are fake pills suddenly overwhelming promising new drugs and established medicines alike? The reasons are only just beginning to be understood. A network of independent researchers is doggedly uncovering the inner workings and potential applications of the placebo effect A psychiatrist. William Potter, who knew that some patients really do seem to get healthier for reasons that have more to do with a doctor's empathy than with the contents of a pill, was baffled by the fact that drugs he had been prescribing for years seemed to be struggling to prove their effectiveness Thinking that a crucial factor may have been overlooked, Potter combed through his company's database of published and unpublished trials - including those that had been kept secret because of high placebo response. His team aggregated the findings from decades of antidepressant trials, looking for patterns and trying to see what was changing over time. What they found challenged some of the industry's basic assumptions about its drug-vetting process. Assumption number one was that if a trial were managed correctly, a medication would perform as well or badly in a Phoenix hospital as in a Bangalore clinic. Potter discovered, however, that geographic location alone could determine the outcome. By the late 1990s, for example, the anti-anxiety drug Diazepam was still beating placebo in France and Belgium. But when the drug was tested in the U.S, it was likely to fail. Conversely, a similar drug, Prozac, performed better in America than it did in western Europe and South Africa. It was an unsettling prospect FDA approval could hinge on where the company chose to conduct a trial. Mistaken assumption number two was that the standard tests used to gauge volunteers' improvement in trials yielded consistent results. Potter and his colleagues discovered that ratings by trial observers varied significantly from one testing site to

another. It was like finding out that the judges in a tight race each had a different idea about the placement of the finish line.

After some coercion by Potter and others, the National Institute of Health (NIH) focused on the issue in 2000, hosting a three-day conference in Washington, and this conference launched a new wave of placebo research in academic laboratories in the U.S. and Italy that would make significant progress toward solving the mystery of what was happening in clinical trials.

In one study last year. Harvard Medical School researcher Ted Kaptchuk devised a clever strategy for testing his volunteers' response to varying levels of therapeutic ritual. The study focused on a common but painful medical condition that costs more than $40 billion a year worldwide to treat. First, the volunteers were placed randomly in one of three groups. One group was simply put on a waiting list; researchers know that some patients get better just because they sign up for a trial. Another group received placebo treatment from a clinician who declined to engage in small talk. Volunteers in the third group got the same fake treatment from a clinician who asked them questions about symptoms, outlined the causes of the illness, and displayed optimism about their condition.

Not surprisingly, the health of those in the third group improved most. In fact, just by participating in the trial, volunteers in this high-interaction group got as much relief as did people taking the two leading prescription drugs for the condition. And the benefits of their "bogus" treatment persisted for weeks afterwards, contrary to the belief - widespread in the pharmaceutical industry- that the placebo response is short-lived.

Studies like this open the door to hybrid treatment strategies that exploit the placebo effect to make real drugs safer and more effective. As Potter says, "To really do the best for your patients, you want the best placebo response plus the best drug response", adapted from Wired Magazine.

For question 56-61, decide whether each of the following statement is TRUE (T), FALSE (F), or NOT GIVEN (NG) and write your answer in the answer sheet.

56. Merck's experience with MK-869 was unique.
57. These days, a small number of unsuccessful test results can ruin a well-established drug company.
58. William Potter's research included trial results from a range of drug companies.
59. Some medical conditions are more easily treated by a placebo than others.
60. The FDA preferred drugs to be tested in different countries.
61. The effects of a placebo can last longer than previously thought

For questions 62 - 69, read the summary and fill in each space with NO MORE THAN THREE WORDS taken from the passage. Write your answer in the answer sheet.

As a result of concerns about increasing competition with its rivals and the impending expiration of (62) _____ on best-selling products, the pharmaceutical company Merck decided to increase its activity in the (63) _____. The development of the drug MK-869 was seen as the way forward. Initially, MK-869 had some success with (64) _____, but later trials revealed a different picture. Although key symptoms, such as (65) _____, could be treated with the drug, a sugar pill was proving equally effective. In the end, the tests indicated that it was pointless continuing with the development of the drug.

In recent years, many promising drugs, including the much-anticipated MK-869, have failed due to the growing strength of the placebo effect, which now challenges both new and long-established (66) _____. This trend threatens the pharmaceutical industry, as (67) _____ requires outperforming placebos in at least two trials. Psychiatrist William Potter investigated this issue, analyzing decades of antidepressant tests, and found that (68) _____and inconsistent observer ratings significantly influenced outcomes. These findings questioned (69) _____ in the industry about drug testing reliability and trial management.

Part 3. In the passage below, six paragraphs have been removed. For questions 70-75, read the passage and choose from paragraphs A-G the one which fits each gap. There is ONE extra paragraph which you do not need to use. Write your answers in the answer sheet.

A Clothing Revolution

If you're bored with your wardrobe and are looking for a new style, you might want to think about one of the latest trends in fashion, and that is digital clothing. Unlike all other fashion trends in the past, digital fashion is unique insofar as it does not actually exist. In this brave new world clothes are made from pixels rather than fabric and customers can be far more imaginative; in fact, the sky is the limit when it comes to designs in the digital arena.

Fashion designers have much more freedom with digital garments and can play around in more creative ways to make clothing more customizable and individual. All this has become possible because people have been prepared for digital fashion by a social-media-driven, modern society that is obsessed with photos and online images.

70.	F

The most obvious of these is its sustainability. Given that the fashion industry is responsible for around 10% of greenhouse-gas emissions, there is a clear case for the sustainability of digital fashion. It can reduce waste considerably, both in terms of making the physical product, but also by reducing the carbon footprint of the design process, something that people generally think about far less.

71.	E

Costs can be decreased further through the reduction in the time to transport the products to both bricks-and-mortar-stores and online shopping platforms. This will enable companies to become more agile, to respond to consumers' needs and potentially to create more collections that will start to address individual lifestyle needs instead of being based around the four seasons.

72.	

While some of the new trends have started to emerge, such as the rise in demand for leisurewear, it is still unclear how the digital fashion market will develop. However, what is obvious is that it allows for self-expression in a far more nuanced way. For example, a customer only needs to buy one digital T-shirt, but they could change the image or slogan on that one T-shirt for many different versions.

73.	

By putting the individual at the heart of digital fashion, there is also the opportunity for a less prescriptive approach to clothing for men and women. For many years the fashion industry has been criticized for using thin models and causing body-image issues among young people. Because digital fashion can be so unique, it challenges these ideas.

74.	~~D~~ G

In contrast, the process of having clothing fitted to a specific body shape in a customer's photo is much more involved. Currently, this work is done by people and it is still quite a time-consuming process. Typically, clients upload a photograph and then this image is digitally dressed by using 3D-modelling software. From start to finish this process can take up to a whole working day.

75.	C

Personalization and creating an individual look contribute to being a key part of the modern approach to identity, and we can do this by wearing original clothing in both the real and unreal worlds. The fact that people already do this with imaginary online characters means that it should come as no surprise that there is a growing desire to do the same with our online selves too.

Missing paragraphs:

A. This is likely to become more important in the near future as companies rush to meet consumers' needs. Already it is clear that fashion brands are adapting their collections to meet the demands of new lifestyles,

many of which are becoming more flexible in terms of working arrangements. For instance, with more and more employees working from home, fashion brands and industries will need to offer outfits to match, and create new types of clothing that allow for more comfort and ease of movement as opposed to stiff formal wear.

B. No one knows whether the cost of digital clothing will come down in a few years' time. At present, the market appears to be growing, but some designers have suggested that it is just a passing phase and its popularity could disappear in a flash. As such they are cautious about investing time or money in something that may be around for just a few years.

C. However, it is worth bearing in mind that this type of online image manipulation is not a new idea. People have always paid attention to their profile pictures on a variety of online platforms that they use in both their private and professional lives. In the same way that appearance can be influential in real life, our digital appearance plays an important role in how we are perceived by others, which means people pay attention to it. What is new, though, is the growing number of advantages of digital over physical fashion.

D. Despite this being a huge step in the right direction, it is unlikely that attitudes to fashion and gender will change overnight as the technology is not quite as advanced as people might think. While many brands have an online fitting room for customers to try out clothes before they buy them, the body shapes used by this kind of software are fairly generic and still based on traditional views of male and female bodies that rarely conform to reality.

E. By only producing a digital version of an item of clothing at first, the costs that are associated with making samples, having face-to-face meetings and other logistical concerns can be drastically reduced. The designers can work on each item of clothing using technology rather than having to produce countless physical items during the design process. Improvements in technology have meant that seeing a physical garment is not as essential as it used to be.

F. As a result, digital clothing remains quite expensive, but this will change as the technology improves, and the video game sector can shed some light on customer engagement with digital fashion. For years, video game enthusiasts have been changing the appearance of their avatars through outfits and weapons, and are clearly happy to pay for this service, which has meant that the costs of avatar clothing to fall as demand has increased.

G. They could also start asking for a garment to be copied using different material as a way of developing a unique personal wardrobe. Many designers are already way ahead of consumers in this regard and are experimenting with new materials or new ways of using existing materials. Some current suggestions include clothing that is made entirely from small lights or metal, or even from plants and flowers. The possibilities for creativity are endless and customers could end up with the clothes that they have always dreamed of owning yet could never find.

Part 4. For questions 76-85, read the following passage and choose the answer A, B, C or D which fits best according to the passage. Write your answers in the answer sheet.

THE HISTORY OF SOAP

The history of soap is long but ambiguous, beginning by some estimates as far back as 2800 BC in ancient Babylon. Archaeological findings suggest that various ingredients including fats, oils, and greases were involved in the making of early soaps. **Specific evidence was discovered during the excavation of ancient Babylon (modern-day Iraq), when ancient soapy matter was found in clay containers bearing inscriptions that indicated the contents were made by boiling fats with ashes – a method of soap making.** Archaeological evidence from other ancient civilizations, like Egypt and Phoenicia, suggests that many cultures were using soaps to clean raw textiles before dyeing them. Early soaps were not commonly used for bathing, and different cultures used the products in different capacities – among other uses, soap was ***administered*** as a wound medicament and applied as a hair dye. There is no definitive evidence proving

exactly where soap originated; it seems to have been discovered independently by several civilizations – Arabs, Celts, and Romans were all early users of soap-like substances.

One popular legend ascribes the discovery of the cleansing properties of soap to a fortunate coincidence: long ago, people washing their clothes in a river near a site for sacrificial offerings noticed that when they washed their laundry in that specific area, their clothes became particularly clean. They realized that the combination of ash and animal fat produced by the burnt offerings created an effective laundering aid. Although this legend presents an interesting account of the origin of soap, there is no way to verify the ***authenticity*** of the story. As a result, it is considered by some to be a myth.

The first written documentation of soap appears in the writings of Gaius Plinius Secundus, a Roman writer and philosopher who had traveled throughout Western Europe, visiting several other cultures. He wrote about a substance made from a mixture of ash and animal fat – a simple soap that the Celts used as a hair product.

The craft of soap making had spread throughout Europe and reached England by the eleventh century, but in spite of its prevalence, soap was rarely used for bathing and personal hygiene. In fact, the devastating plagues of the Middle Ages – including the Black Death of the fourteenth century – are attributed to a lack of basic cleanliness.

Over time, cultures experimented with soap-making recipes and eventually discovered that the animal fat they used could be replaced by vegetable oils. Virtually any vegetable oil could be used to make soap – palm, coconut, and almond oil were some of the more popular choices. **[A]** In particular, soap made from olive oil came to be regarded as a superior product. **[B]** During the sixteenth century, one kind of olive-oil soap – castile soap, believed to be named for the region in Spain where it originated – was widely exported throughout Europe, becoming famous for its quality. **[C]** Even today, "castile soap" is a term used to refer to soaps that are made primarily of olive oil. **[D]**

As soap became an increasingly popular trading commodity, British authorities recognized that control of the soap industry would give them significant economic influence. In the seventeenth century, the king of England enforced restrictions on the location of soap-making companies, demanding that they be based in London. Regulations and taxation made soap an expensive luxury that was not accessible to most people. It was not until the removal of the soap tax in the middle of the nineteenth century that it became possible for commoners to purchase this popular item.

Although soap making was a firmly established craft in Europe, early colonists in North America practiced soap making almost exclusively as a household chore, and there were few professional soap makers in the colonies. For some time, personal hygiene was considered a low priority, as the colonists were occupied with other ***concerns***. Ideas about hygiene began to change during the Civil War, when improvements in hospital hygiene introduced Americans to the benefits of personal cleanliness. This resulted in a change in the way society viewed sanitation issues, leading to the installation of indoor bathrooms and sinks and introducing a demand for soap. The revolution in Americans' attitudes toward hygiene was complete when twentieth-century soap makers began employing expensive, large-scale advertising strategies to increase their sales and expand their industry.

76. Which of the sentences below best expresses the essential information in the highlighted sentence in the passage?

A. Archaeological excavations have uncovered clay containers that contain recipes for soap.

B. Carvings on clay containers holding a soap-like material show that Babylonians made a kind of soap.

C. In ancient times, soap was made by combining animal fats with ashes and heating the mixture in clay containers.

D. Excavations in Babylon uncovered bathtubs that were once used for bathing with soap.

77. The word **administered** in the passage is closest in meaning to _____.

A. given B. tested C. labeled D. saved

78. The word **authenticity** in the passage is closest in meaning to _____.
A. science B. circumstance C. legend D. truth

79. Why does the author mention the legend in paragraph 2?
A. To present evidence about the origin of soap
B. To explain the origin of the word "soap"
C. To emphasize the idea that soap was spiritually significant
D. To support the idea that the origin of soap is uncertain

80. What can be inferred from paragraph 4 about epidemics in the Middle Ages?
A. They generally affected populations of lower- and middle-class people more than communities of upper-class people.
B. Their disastrous consequences would have been lessened if people had practiced better hygiene.
C. They changed the way people thought about municipal sanitation and personal cleanliness.
D. They were spread through contact with contaminated sources of water, especially public baths.

81. What can be inferred from paragraph 5 about Castile?
A. Its merchants had access to plenty of olive oil. B. It was located near a coastline.
C. Its citizens were concerned about hygiene. D. It had a shortage of animals.

82. According to paragraph 6, soap in England was not initially available to the masses because _____.
A. soap was not allowed to be sold in London
B. they were prohibited by law from buying soap
C. it was produced mainly in rural townships
D. restrictions and duties made it difficult for many people to purchase

83. What can be inferred from paragraph 7 about colonists' attitudes toward soap before the Civil War?
A. They did not consider it an effective cleanser.
B. They disliked it because it was difficult to make.
C. They preferred to use it for washing laundry.
D. They did not care about its cleansing properties.

84. The word **concerns** in the passage is closest in meaning to _____.
A. principles B. affairs C. opinions D. accomplishments

85. Where in the passage would the following sentence best fit?
Soaps made with oils such as these were gentler on the skin than soaps made with animal fats, so vegetable-oil soaps quickly became desirable products.
A. [A] B. [B] C. [C] D. [D]

Part 5. For questions 86-95, choose from the sections of the article (A-F). The sections may be chosen more than once. When more than one answer is required, these may be given in any order. Write your answers in the answer sheet.

JOHN MCCARTHY - COMPUTER PIONEER

A. John McCarthy was often described as the father of 'artificial intelligence' (AI), a branch of computer science founded on the notion that human intelligence can be simulated by machines. McCarthy, who coined the term in 1956, defined it as 'the science and engineering of making intelligent machines' and created the Lisp computer language to help researchers in the AI field. He maintained that there were aspects of the human mind that could be described precisely enough to be replicated: 'The speeds and memory capacities of present computers may be insufficient to simulate many of the higher functions of the human brain; he wrote in 1955, 'but the major obstacle is not lack of machine capacity but our inability to write programs taking full advantage of what we have.'

B. McCarthy went on to create AI laboratories at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, and later at Stanford University where he became the laboratory's director in 1965. During the 1960s he developed the

concept of computer time-sharing, which allows several people to use a single, central, computer at the same time. If this approach were adopted, he claimed in 1961, 'computing may someday be organized as a public utility'. The concept of time-sharing made possible the development of so-called 'cloud computing' (the delivery of computing as a service rather than a product). Meanwhile, his Lisp programming language, which he invented in 1958, underpinned the development of voice recognition technology.

C. McCarthy's laboratory at Stanford developed systems that mimic human skills - such as vision, hearing and the movement of limbs as well as early versions of a self-driving car. He also worked on an early chess-playing program, but came to believe that computer chess was a distraction, observing in 1997 that it had developed 'much as genetics might have if the geneticists had concentrated their efforts starting in 1910 on breeding racing Drosophila. We would have some science, but mainly we would have very fast fruit flies.'

D. The concept of AI inspired numerous books and sci-fi films, notably Stanley Kubrick's dystopian 2001: A Space Odyssey (1968). In the real world, however, the technology made slow progress, and McCarthy later admitted that there was some way to go before it would be possible to develop computer programs as intelligent as humans. Meanwhile he applied himself to addressing theoretical issues about the nature of human and robotic decision-making and the ethics of creating artificial beings. He also wrote a sci-fi story, The Robot and the Baby, to 'illustrate my opinions about what household robots should be like'. The robot in the story decides to simulate love for a human baby.

E. McCarthy taught himself mathematics as a teenager by studying textbooks at the California Institute of Technology. When he arrived at the institute to study the subject aged 16, he was assigned to a graduate course. In 1948 a symposium at Caltech on 'Cerebral Mechanisms in Behavior', that included papers on automata and the brain and intelligence, sparked his interest in developing machines that can think like people. McCarthy received a doctorate in Mathematics from Princeton University in 1951 and was immediately appointed to a Chair in the subject. It was at Princeton that he proposed the programming language Lisp as a way to process more sophisticated mathematical concepts than Fortran, which had been the dominant programming medium until then. McCarthy joined the Stanford faculty in 1962, remaining there until his official retirement in 2000.

F. During the 1970s he presented a paper on buying and selling by computer. He also invited a local computer hobby group, the Homebrew Computer Club, to meet at the Stanford laboratory. Its members included Steve Jobs and Steven Wozniak, who would go on to found Apple. However, his own interest in developing timesharing systems led him to underestimate the potential of personal computers. When the first PCs emerged in the 1970s he dismissed them as 'toys'. McCarthy continued to work as an emeritus professor at Stanford after his official retirement, and at the time of his death was working on a new computer language called Elephant. Despite his disappointment with AI, McCarthy remained confident of the power of mathematics: 'He who refuses to do arithmetic is doomed to talk nonsense; he wrote in 1995.

In which section are the following mentioned?

86. the speed at which McCarthy made progress in his career
87. an opinion McCarthy had which proved to be mistaken
88. McCarthy's belief that one of his ideas could have a widespread function
89. McCarthy's attention to the moral aspects of an area of research
90. what inspired McCarthy to go into a certain area of research
91. McCarthy's view of what was the cause of a certain problem
92. McCarthy's attempt to introduce a rival to something commonly used
93. McCarthy's continuing belief in the importance of a certain field
94. a common belief about McCarthy
95. McCarthy's criticism of an area of research he had been involved in

IV. WRITING (50 points)

Part 1. Read the following extract and use your own words to summarize it. Your summary should be between 120 and 150 words long. Write your answer in the answer sheet.

The human mind can glimpse a rapidly changing scene and immediately disregard the 98 per cent that is irrelevant, instantaneously focusing on the woodchuck at the side of a winding forest road or the single suspicious face in a tumultuous crowd. The most advanced computer systems on Earth can't approach that kind of ability, and neuroscientists still don't know quite how we do it.

Nonetheless, as information theorists, neuroscientists, and computer experts pool their talents, they are finding ways to get some lifelike intelligence from robots. One method renounces the linear, logical structure of conventional electronic circuits in favor of the messy, ad hoc arrangement of a real brain's neurons. These 'neural networks' do not have to be programmed. They can 'teach' themselves by a system of feedback signals that reinforce electrical pathways that produced correct responses and, conversely, wipe out connections that produced errors. Eventually the net wires itself into a system that can pronounce certain words or distinguish certain shapes.

In other areas researchers are struggling to fashion a more natural relationship between people and robots in the expectation that some day machines will take on some tasks now done by humans in, say, nursing homes. This is particularly important in Japan, where the percentage of elderly citizens is rapidly increasing. So experiments at the Science University of Tokyo have created a 'face robot' - a life-size, soft plastic model of a female head with a video camera imbedded in the left eye - as a prototype. The researchers' goal is to create robots that people feel comfortable around. They are concentrating on the face because they believe facial expressions are the most important way to transfer emotional messages. Thus the Japanese robot is designed to detect emotions in the person it is 'looking at' by sensing changes in the spatial arrangement of the person's eyes, nose, eyebrows, and mouth. It compares those configurations with a database of standard facial expressions and guesses the emotion. The robot then uses an ensemble of tiny pressure pads to adjust its plastic face into an appropriate emotional response.

Other labs are taking a different approach, one that doesn't try to mimic human intelligence or emotions. Just as computer design has moved away from one central mainframe in favor of myriad individual workstations - and single processors have been replaced by arrays of smaller units that break a big problem into parts that are solved simultaneously - many experts are now investigating whether swarms of semi-smart robots can generate a collective intelligence that is greater than the sum of its parts. That's what beehives and ant colonies do, and several teams are betting that legions of mini-critters working together like an ant colony could be sent to explore the climate of planets or to inspect pipes in dangerous industrial situations.

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

Young people tend to reconnect with their cultural heritage through entertainment programs. However, this is not a good way for cultural preservation.

To what extent do you agree or disagree with this statement? Provide specific reasons and examples to support your answer.

===== HẾT =====

Thí sinh không được sử dụng tài liệu. Cán bộ coi thi không giải thích gì thêm.

Họ và tên thí sinh: ..... *Số báo danh:* .....