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25

ENGLISHWITHOUTBORDERS

HIPPO THE CONTEST

NATIONAL FINAL ROUND READING TEST

CEFR LEVEL C1
HIPPO CATEGORY HIPPO 5-S4

CANDIDATE NUMBER _____

DATE OF BIRTH _____

INSTRUCTIONS FOR CANDIDATES:

Do NOT turn over the page until instructed.

Answer all the questions.

Use only black or blue PEN.

Dictionaries are not allowed.

Remember to transfer your answers onto the answer sheet.

TIME ALLOWED:

Reading 45 minutes

Reading Task 1

Read the article and circle the best option to complete the text – a, b, c, or d. An example has been done for you.

Teen CEO Runs Empire from Beach

You might have heard of young people starting online businesses. Or perhaps you've seen social media influencers working from a 0) ___ location. But have you ever heard of a teenage 1) ___ who runs a million-dollar company while traveling the world, managing everything from tropical beaches and mountain cafes?

Well, seventeen-year-old Maya Chen has become 'the youngest person to build a truly 2) ___ business' while living a nomadic lifestyle across four continents. The investors in Silicon Valley have taken notice of her success, with her digital education platform generating substantial 3) ___ in its first year, outperforming many established companies in the same sector. Her achievement is particularly 4) ___ considering she manages her entire operation using just a laptop and smartphone.

Business Insider magazine reported that Chen's venture began because of her own 5) ___ with traditional education, which she finds quite demotivating. Her online courses incorporate interactive elements and personalised learning paths that adapt to each student's progress. They have since attracted over 50,000 students worldwide, with particularly strong growth in 6) ___ markets where access to quality education remains limited.

Over the past year, the business 7) ___ has been fascinated by updates from Chen's company, which reported 'unprecedented growth while operating entirely through remote teams'. The company employs thirty experienced professionals who 8) ___ across multiple time zones, from software developers in Eastern Europe to content creators in South America. Chen explained that this structure allows her to recruit talent 9) ___ their geographical location, while keeping operational costs significantly lower than traditional educational companies.

'Our approach focused on remote working has proved to be the most efficient model we could 10) ___,' Chen stated. 'The flexibility and global reach made it an ideal framework for our educational mission.' Fully digital operations, which remove traditional 11) ___ to business, have become a powerful source of opportunity for young people. Chen mentioned that only a small 12) ___ of professionals successfully maintain this lifestyle, but the number is growing steadily as more young people reject conventional career paths in favour of location-independent businesses.

- Example: (a) remote b) radical c) relative d) rational
1. a) counterpart b) acquaintance c) amateur d) entrepreneur
 2. a) prosperous b) payable c) overdrawn d) unaffordable
 3. a) debt b) expenses c) revenue d) outgoings
 4. a) inadequate b) reputable c) dramatic d) remarkable
 5. a) dismissal b) caution c) disapproval d) frustration
 6. a) emerging b) exclusive c) apparent d) sustainable
 7. a) nation b) support c) community d) service
 8. a) collaborate b) facilitate c) generate d) commute
 9. a) according to b) regardless of c) in respect of d) in demand
 10. a) adopt b) absorb c) adjust d) attain
 11. a) channels b) barriers c) routes d) pathways
 12. a) fraction b) angle c) tier d) length

(12 marks)

Reading Task 2

Read the text and answer the questions below. Circle the correct option, a, b, c, or d. An example has been done for you.

Glossary:

longevity (noun) - long life; the fact of lasting a long time

The Secret of Blue Zones

Para.1

Across the world, certain regions boast an unusually high number of centenarians - people who live to 100 or beyond. These areas, termed Blue Zones, have attracted scientific interest due to their remarkably high life expectancy and low rates of chronic disease. However, it needs to be mentioned that the concept has been criticised by some researchers who argue that the data supporting these ideas is not robust enough. Unlike in many modern societies where ageing is associated with illness and being physically weak, inhabitants of Blue Zones often remain active well into their 90s and beyond. Researchers have identified lifestyle patterns that seem to contribute to their long life. These regions include Okinawa in Japan, Sardinia in Italy, Icaria in Greece, and a few others. Each of these places has its own cultural traditions and habits that appear to foster long and healthy lives.

Para.2

One defining characteristic of Blue Zones is their diet. Rather than following trendy health fads, locals maintain traditional eating habits, consuming mostly plant-based foods. Meals are rich in legumes (for example peas or beans), whole grains, and vegetables, while red meat is rarely eaten. Many people drink herbal teas or a small quantity of locally produced wine, which some studies suggest may offer health benefits. Crucially, they don't eat too much and exercise self-restraint, often stopping when they are about 80% full. This mindful eating approach, adopted by many generations of the Blue Zones residents, is believed to aid digestion and prevent unnecessary weight gain, factors that contribute to overall health and long life. GAP) ___ many Blue Zone diets include fermented foods, which promote gut health, and foods rich in antioxidants that help protect against disease.

Para.3

Social structure also plays a vital role in longevity. In Blue Zone communities multiple generations often live under the same roof, providing emotional and practical support to one another. Elders are not isolated but valued as sources of wisdom and experience. This GAP) ___ sharply with ageing trends in many Western societies, where older individuals frequently live alone. Research suggests that these strong social ties contribute to lower stress levels and enhanced mental well-being. Moreover, these communities tend to have a strong sense of belonging, with frequent social interactions and shared communal responsibilities that keep individuals engaged and purposeful. Many people participate in religious or spiritual practices, which provide a deep sense of connection and peace.

Para.4

Another key factor is activity. Unlike in urban environments where people rely on cars and only exercise at the gym, residents of Blue Zones tend to seamlessly integrate physical activity into their everyday routines. They walk regularly, work in gardens, and engage in low-intensity exercise, reducing the risk of heart disease, diabetes, and other lifestyle-related conditions. The GAP) ____ of a sedentary (with little physical exercise) lifestyle seems to be a decisive advantage. In contrast to the exercise trends in industrialised nations, which often involve structured workouts, Blue Zone residents remain physically active through farming, walking to visit neighbours, or performing household tasks. This regular, moderate activity helps maintain muscle strength, balance, and overall health well into old age.

Para.5

Studies suggest that individuals who have a clear reason to get up in the morning tend to live longer. In Japan, this concept is referred to as *ikigai*, while in Costa Rica's Nicoya Peninsula, locals describe it as *plan de vida*. Having a reason to keep going, GAP) ____ it be family, faith, or community service, appears to have a measurable effect on health outcomes. People with strong personal motivations tend to cope better with stress and maintain a greater sense of optimism, which can contribute to both mental and physical well-being. Goal-oriented individuals are also more likely to maintain social connections and stay mentally active, further reducing the risk of depression and cognitive decline.

Para.6

Although genetics certainly influence longevity, research indicates that it's not the dominant factor. Studies comparing genetically similar individuals who have migrated from Blue Zones to modern cities show that they tend to adopt the health risks of their new environment. This suggests that longevity is not simply inherited but largely dependent on habitual choices. Environmental factors such as diet, daily habits, and social interactions seem to have a far greater influence on overall health than genetics alone. The combination of healthy lifestyle choices and a strong sense of purpose enables Blue Zone residents to enjoy a long and fulfilling life. GAP) ____ genetics may set a foundation, it is ultimately the daily choices and cultural traditions that shape long-term health outcomes.

Example: This text is about

- a) the secret to long life.
- b) a secret part of the world.
- c) a very remote location.
- d) a trend known as Blue Zone.

13. What is a key difference between Blue Zones and many modern societies?

- a) Blue Zone communities are wealthier than most urban populations.
- b) Old people in Blue Zones tend to live in care homes.
- c) In Blue Zones, ageing is not associated with physical decline.
- d) People in Blue Zones live longer due to advanced medical care.

14. In paragraph 1, the underlined word 'foster' means the same as

- a) lead to
- b) look after
- c) put off
- d) take after

15. In paragraph 2, the best option to complete the gap is

- a) Additionally
- b) Therefore
- c) Despite this
- d) Regardless

16. Why do Blue Zone residents eat moderate amounts of food?

- a) Because of religious beliefs that prohibit overeating.
- b) Due to food shortages that make portion control necessary.
- c) As part of a traditional practice that prevents overconsumption.
- d) Because their metabolism slows down as they age.

17. In paragraph 3, the best option to complete the gap is

- a) interferes
- b) compares
- c) contrasts
- d) struggles

18. What role does social structure play in Blue Zone communities?

- a) It reduces government spending on elderly care.
- b) It ensures that people remain financially stable in old age.
- c) It fosters strong relationships that contribute to better well-being.
- d) It isolates older adults from the younger population.

19. The main factor that supports the mental health of Blue Zone residents is

- a) their ability to retire early and reduce work-related stress.
- b) their strong sense of belonging within a community.
- c) the consumption of herbal teas with calming properties.
- d) the absence of significant financial concerns.

20. In paragraph 4, the best option to complete the gap is

- a) popularity
- b) absence
- c) increase
- d) introduction

21. What type of exercise do Blue Zone residents typically engage in?

- a) High-intensity workouts as well as walking.
- b) A wide variety of sports they enjoy.
- c) Natural daily movement.
- d) Muscle strengthening exercises.

22. In paragraph 5, the best option to complete the gap is

- a) even though
- b) whether
- c) at least
- d) in any event

23. What best represents the concept referred to as *ikigai* and *plan de vida*?

- a) Never giving up.
- b) Having a sense of purpose.
- c) Always being helpful.
- d) Enjoying social activities.

24. What is the reason modern cities are mentioned in paragraph 6?

- a) To show that people from Blue Zones rarely move to cities.
- b) To encourage reader to think about the benefits of cities.
- c) To explain how some of the research involved cities.
- d) To highlight that life in cities leads to shorter life span.

25. In paragraph 6, the best option to complete the gap is

- a) Hence
- b) Unlike
- c) If
- d) While

26. What conclusion does the article suggest about the relationship between genetics and lifestyle in longevity?

- a) Genetics plays the primary role in determining lifespan.
- b) Lifestyle choices have a greater impact.
- c) Some people live long despite lifestyle choices.
- d) Studies suggest different answers.

(14 marks)

Reading Task 3

Part A. Read the four texts and answer the questions below by indicating which text each question relates to: A, B, C, or D.

An example has been done for you.

Glossary:

immersive (adj) - that seems to surround the player or viewer so they feel totally involved in the experience

Text A Digital Art Megafest

The world's largest digital art festival transformed abandoned warehouses into immersive digital experiences this year, attracting over 100,000 visitors. Artists from 45 countries presented works using cutting-edge technology, including artificial intelligence, virtual reality, and interactive installations. Furthermore, the festival featured works that responded to visitors' movements, creating unique experiences for each person.

The key project presented as part of the festival was 'Dreams in your Head', where visitors' brain waves were captured through headsets and transformed into real-time digital artworks projected onto massive walls. This installation challenged traditional notions of artistic creation, removing the distinction between artist and viewer. Despite the technical complexity, the organisers showed their commitment to making digital art accessible to everyone, by not charging admission fees to students and seniors.

The festival also addressed environmental concerns by powering all installations with renewable energy, and implementing an innovative system to capture and reuse the heat generated by the computer systems. This technological solution has become an example to follow for sustainable digital art exhibitions worldwide.

Text B Urban Canvas Festival

When over 200 street artists arrived at Manchester's industrial district for the first time, nobody expected the transformation that would follow. The artists created astonishing murals (large paintings) on a number of buildings across the district. The Urban Canvas Festival, which has now run for several years, began the process of urban GAP 1) _____, turning neglected buildings into celebrated landmarks.

This year's theme, 'Voices of the City', required artists to spend two weeks collaborating with local communities before beginning their works. Each mural tells a story of the neighbourhood's history, with some works reaching heights of up to 40 metres. The festival's unique approach requires artists to use natural paints that actually help to improve the quality of the air, GAP 2) _____ creating both beautiful and functional public art.

What sets this festival apart is its permanence – unlike traditional street art events, these wall paintings become permanent features of the city landscape, with local councils committing to their preservation for at least five years. The festival has inspired similar initiatives in 12 other cities worldwide, leading to the creation of an international network of urban art festivals.

Text C Symphony of Light

The Symphony of Light festival lit up London's South Bank this year, letting visitors experience a unique combination of music and colourful lights they could interact with. Visitors walking through the two-kilometre installation triggered different musical notes and light patterns through a network of sensors, effectively becoming composers of their own symphony.

A special team of sound engineers and musicians created new technology just for the festival. This technology made invisible zones of sound, so different pieces of music could play at the same time without mixing together or becoming too noisy.

The reaction of traditional art critics to the festival was quite sceptical to start with, GAP) _____ its success in attracting over 50,000 visitors in just two weeks proved its artistic value. The organisers have already received invitations to recreate the experience in Paris, Tokyo, and New York, with each city proposing unique modifications to reflect their cultural heritage.

Text D Living Gallery

The controversial Living Gallery project featured 100 performance artists who became living art installations for a continuous period of 24 hours. Each artist occupied a different room in the former hospital building, creating evolving performances that explored a range of themes, including patience, resilience and human connection.

Visitors could enter rooms at any time, becoming part of the performance through their presence and reactions. Some performances involved direct interaction, while others required silent observation. The project sparked intense debate about the boundaries between art and reality, GAP 1) _____ the physical and mental demands placed on the artists.

Medical professionals GAP 2) _____ the performers throughout the event using wearable devices that tracked vital signs and stress levels. While some critics questioned the ethical implications, supporters argued that it represented a crucial evolution in performance art. The event was documented through a sophisticated 360-degree video system, operated by a dedicated team.

| Which text... | Text |
|---|-------|
| Example: describes an event with artists from many countries? | A |
| 27. mentions initial doubts about the artistic value? | _____ |
| 28. says that the event was recorded in its entirety? | _____ |
| 29. describes an event which uses environmentally friendly materials? | _____ |
| 30. describes art that will be maintained in the long term? | _____ |
| 31. mentions technology developed specifically for the event? | _____ |
| 32. raised questions about participant wellbeing? | _____ |
| 33. describes an event which provides free entry to certain groups? | _____ |
| 34. says that the event combined art with improving a run-down area? | _____ |

Part B. Now answer the following questions. Circle the correct option, a, b, c, or d.

35. In Text A, the underlined word 'cutting edge' means the same as

- a) sharpest
- b) latest
- c) various
- d) important

36. In Text B, the best option to complete the first gap is

- a) revival
- b) revision
- c) rebellion
- d) regulation

37. In Text B, the best option to complete the second gap is

- a) thus
- b) despite
- c) whereas
- d) although

38. In Text C, the best option to complete the gap is

- a) if
- b) so
- c) and
- d) but

39. In Text D, the best option to complete the first gap is

- a) partially
- b) reasonably
- c) naturally
- d) particularly

40. In Text D, the best option to complete the second gap is

- a) advised
- b) monitored
- c) healed
- d) reassured

(14 marks)

END OF READING ASSESSMENT



END OF READING ASSESSMENT

REMEMBER TO TRANSFER YOUR ANSWERS
ONTO THE ANSWER SHEET!

13th HIPPO

national finals

HIPPO 5-S4 Writing Test V1

Time allowed: 45 minutes



Candidate Number

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1. Can television have positive developmental benefits on children? (Write about 140 words.)

2. Put the verbs in brackets into the correct form (positive, interrogative, negative, active or passive) to complete the sentences.

- 1) I found it hard to follow what the teacher _____ (say), and eventually I lost concentration.
- 2) I was not very keen on ordering a soufflé as I _____ (try) it before.
- 3) No sooner _____ (they/start) their walk than it began to rain.
- 4) I wish I _____ (study) more so I wouldn't be stuck in this dead-end job.
- 5) You _____ (mistake) if you believe we've discovered nothing of value.
- 6) Of course, any income _____ (forego) by the husband is eventually received by his wife.
- 7) Despite the circulation of the memo, the company's stock price _____ (soar) in recent days.
- 8) Once the stipulated five-year period _____ (expire), the obvious question to ask was just what these farmers actually decided.
- 9) I _____ (really/enjoy) my work experience and wanted to take it further.
- 10) The storm is reported _____ (kill) five people.

3. Write the correct word to complete the sentences, for example, c h i c k e n.

- 11) I was _ r _ _ c _ _ _ e _ steroids because I was diagnosed with psoriasis.
- 12) The speech we have just heard was a long series of _ x _ _ _ _ and alibis.
- 13) The sales _ h _ _ _ shows a distinct decline in the past few months.
- 14) The tablets didn't help, and he su _ p _ _ t _ _ that the doctor had given him an incorrect diagnosis.

13th HIPPO

national finals

HIPPO 5-S4 Writing Test V1

Time allowed: 45 minutes



Candidate Number

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- 15) He took one look at the w _ _ t _ _ d plant and gave me an immediate diagnosis: 'It needs more water', he said.
- 16) Her father, a wealthy _ ew _ _ _ er, has a number of high-end stores all over the country.
- 17) No fewer than five hundred _ e _ ega _ _ _ attended the conference.
- 18) Reputable charities spend the lion's _ _ _ r _ of donations on aid and a tiny fraction on administration.
- 19) Ares and Aphrodite were the ancient Greek d _ _ _ _ _ s of war and love.
- 20) She looked a bit d _ j _ _ t _ d when they told her she didn't get the job.

4. Decide if the sentences are correct or incorrect. Write C for the correct ones and correct the incorrect ones.

- 21) A guide told us that the annual rise in the height of the River Negro, a tributary of the Amazon, had reached 30 metres.

- 22) It's amazing that no one else had applied for the job.

- 23) According to the survey, as little as ten percent of us are happy with our jobs.

- 24) If it weren't for his slackened approach to work, he wouldn't have lost the job in the first place.

- 25) Were I to tell you that your charming smile melts the glaciers, would you give me your half of the pizza?

- 26) One reason for this may have laid in the unwillingness of managers to accept the demands of the union.

- 27) Mustard is often thought to be the ideal compliment to beef.

- 28) Did your hometown change much over the past year?

- 29) Vikings are said to have been the first European settlers in the North America.

- 30) We have had to endure a boring and lacklustre 45-minute speech.
