

Olimpiada națională de limba engleză

8 februarie 2025

Etapa locală

CLASA a XI-a - SECȚIUNEA B

Toate subiectele sunt obligatorii. Nu se acordă puncte din oficiu. Timpul efectiv de lucru este de 3 ore.

SUBIECTUL A – USE OF ENGLISH (40 points)

I. Read the paragraph below and do the tasks that follow. (20 points)

Research by Andrew Oswald, Professor of Economics at Warwick University, shows that our reported levels of happiness are remarkably unaffected by our **affluence**. So, how much do we need to earn to feel comfortably off? And why are we knocking ourselves out with the longest working week in Europe if the money it makes us doesn't even cheer us up? Part of the problem is that most of this new affluence is increasingly weighted towards a very small proportion of the population – the already rich. While fat cats and dot com squillionaires are apparently multiplying, they form only a tiny elite. My own professional income puts me in the top 20% of wage earners in the country but the simple fact is that many people don't feel richer because they aren't. The top 20%, however, don't fit into that category. We know that we're living lives of **unprecedented** affluence. I have more money than my dad ever did, but nowhere near as much as my sister, and that's the problem. The generational benchmark no longer applies. Instead, according to Oswald, we look over our shoulder at our neighbours, friends and colleagues. How are we doing compared to them? New ways of working, living and thinking have created new economic models and **attitudes**. The way we spend our money reveals not just our lifestyles, but our natures, our values, our fears, and our national identity. No wonder we feel as if we've never got enough of it!

A. Answer the following questions, according to the text.

(4 x 2p = 8 points)

1. How does the research by Andrew Oswald challenge the idea that wealth directly leads to greater happiness?
2. Why do people continue to work long hours if the financial rewards don't significantly increase their happiness?
3. How has the concentration of wealth among a small group of people affected the perception of affluence for the majority?
4. According to Oswald, how has the shift from one benchmark to another influenced how people view their wealth?

B. Choose the right synonym for the words given below, according to their meaning in the text. (3 x 2p = 6 points)

- | | | | | |
|--------------------------|-------------|-----------------|------------|-----------------|
| 1. affluence: | a. strength | b. incentive | c. wealth | d. stamina |
| 2. unprecedented: | a. normal | b. unparalleled | c. common | d. boring |
| 3. attitudes: | a. outlook | b. solutions | c. burdens | d. developments |

C. Rephrase the following sentences so as to preserve the meaning.

(3 x 2p = 6 points)

1. Our reported levels of happiness are unaffected by our affluence. **NOT**
Our affluence of happiness.
2. We know that we're living lives of unprecedented affluence. **MORE**
We know that we been.
3. The way we spend our money reveals not just our lifestyles, but our national identity as well. **DOES**
Not only lifestyles, but our national identity as well.

II. Use the word given in brackets to form a word that fits in each gap

(10 points)

Stereotypes are simple, one-dimensional (1) ____ (**PORTRAY**) of people - usually based on sex, race, profession or age. Filmmakers relied (2) ____ (**HEAVY**) on stereotypes in the past because they were a quick and easy way to create a movie character's (3) ____ (**PERSON**): for example, blonde women were dumb, foreigners were villains, Mexicans were lazy, and blacks were great (4) ____ (**ATHLETIC**). Teenagers tended to be thrown into two categories, popular kids or geeks. The film industry today has become more (5) ____ (**SENSE**) to issues of culture and gender than it was in the old days of Hollywood. Many movies, however, still (6) ____ (**COURAGE**) common concepts about groups of people. The way Native Americans are shown in westerns is a good example of how negative stereotyping can distort the history and (7) ____ (**UNDERSTAND**) of another culture. Such oversimplified and (8) ____ (**ACCURATE**) characterizations can influence how we relate to one another. Because children have a (9) ____ (**LIMIT**) experience of the world, they're particularly vulnerable to being influenced by media stereotypes, even in (10) ____ (**ANIMATE**) movies. The kindly grandfather in Pinocchio, the wicked stepmother in Cinderella, even the heroic male lion in the Lion King are all stereotypes known and understood by children.

III. Translate the following text into English.

(10 points)

Într-o seară, de bine de rău, am scris o poezie și m-am dus la ea să i-o citesc. A ascultat, dar pe urmă a pufnit-o râsul. Râdea în hohote fără nicio jenă și nicio rușine. De acord, poezia era proastă, dar nu asta era important, ci faptul că scrisesem totuși. Am aruncat-o furios la coș și am ieșit de la ea înjurând. „Bine, zic, dar de ce trebuia să i-o citești ei?” „De unde să bănuiesc cum va reacționa? Orice om de bun simț mi-ar fi spus că poezia e bună și că trebuie să continui, pe ideea că pe urmă, scriind altele mai bune, singur mi-aș fi dat seama că aceea pe care i-o citisem era tâmpită.”

SUBIECTUL B – INTEGRATED SKILLS (60 points) Read the text below and do the tasks that follow.**Me and my brain**

We all know that significant changes occur in our bodies during adolescence, but have you ever stopped to wonder what's actually going on inside our brains during this time?

To paint a clearer picture, we should first familiarise ourselves with the different parts of the brain. Did you know, for instance, that our brains are made up of around 100 billion nerve cells called neurons? And stemming from these neurons are several branch-like structures for sending and receiving electrical signals? Every time we do or think anything, a signal is transmitted. The signal travels down a long structure called the axon and, at the end, it passes across tiny gaps called synapses to the dendrites of another neuron, which receive the signal. In this way, messages are sent across our neural network.

Our brain structure changes dramatically as we grow up. Newborn babies have almost all their neurons but few connections between them, which is why they can't do very much. After a few months however, the number of connections explodes, which in turn helps tiny tots master a whole range of new skills such as walking and talking. Despite earlier myths that most brain development is completed in the first few years, we now know that our brains continue to develop throughout our lives and perhaps the most dramatic time of change and development is during puberty.

During this period of reorganisation, the brain witnesses a sudden increase in neurons not dissimilar to a plant growing uncontrollably in spring. Just as we prune a plant to make it stronger and healthier, we prune our brains. The connections that are used become stronger, whereas those which aren't used wither and die. So, the more frequently an action or thought is activated, the stronger the connections become between the neurons, which in turn strengthens the part of the brain being used. This explains why the more you do something, the better you become at it, reinforcing the old adage 'practice makes perfect'. In fact, it would seem that the teenage brain provides optimum conditions for perfecting skills such as playing a musical instrument, speaking another language or learning a complex computer game. It could therefore be argued that teenagers determine the development of their own grey matter through the activities and experiences they engage in.

It may also be unsurprising to many to learn that the last part of the adolescent brain to develop is the frontal cortex, responsible for self-control, problem solving and decision making. Consequently, long before teens become adept at rational, abstract thinking and logical decision making, they rely on the emotional centre of the brain to make choices and think. So perhaps unpredictable, volatile, risk-taking teenage behaviour, often put down to hormones, may actually have more to do with what's going on inside our brain.

I. For each question decide which answer (A, B, C or D) fits best according to the text. (5 x 2p = 10 points)**1. What do we learn about the structure of the brain?**

- A. All neurons are activated when we think.
- B. The structure of a brain cell is compared to a tree.
- C. The structure of a brain cell changes when a message is sent.
- D. Neurons come into contact with one another to allow a message to travel around the brain.

2. What does the second paragraph tell us?

- A. Brain development is an ongoing process.
- B. Babies are born with the capacity to do anything.
- C. A reduction in connections between neurons helps babies learn how to speak.
- D. It is no longer believed that most changes in the brain occur before adulthood.

3. What does the text tell us about brain reorganisation?

- A. It normally occurs in the spring.
- B. When we engage in an activity we strengthen connections in the brain.
- C. As the number of neurons increases, the brain gets stronger.
- D. People who play a musical instrument have stronger brain connections than those who play sport.

4. What does the writer imply in paragraph three?

- A. All teens should play a musical instrument.
- B. It is just as difficult to speak another language as it is to play computer games.
- C. If we don't practise an activity in our teenage years, we won't be able to do it as an adult.
- D. Teens can influence their own brain development

5. During adolescence ...

- A. all parts of the brain develop simultaneously.
- B. we make emotional decisions because of our hormones.
- C. we gradually improve our ability to think in abstract terms.
- D. we are unable to carry out problem-solving tasks.

II. Starting from the text above, write an ARTICLE on the idea that teenagers tend to see life in a completely different way compared to adults, due to their lack of experience, and a less development, both physical and psychological. (220-250 words) (50 points)