

Test 3

PAPER 1 READING (1 hour 15 minutes)

Part 1

You are going to read three extracts which are all concerned in some way with making decisions. For questions 1–6, choose the answer (A, B, C or D) which you think fits best according to the text.

Mark your answers on the separate answer sheet.

Decision making in business: Gordon Bethune

Having decided that Continental Airlines was worth saving, the question for Gordon Bethune – brought in to rescue the struggling company in 1994 – was how to do it. He and consultant Greg Brenneman mapped out a turnaround strategy.

In retrospect their plan seems commonsensical and obvious, but at the time the opposite appeared closer to the truth, for two reasons. First, the company was in the midst of a crisis. (At one of its darkest moments, it was less than six weeks away from not having enough cash to meet the payroll.) And the second point is this: straightforward as the strategy might have been, no one had ever come up with, nor implemented, such a plan. (The airline had gone through 10 presidents in 10 years.)

‘The first step was to figure out exactly what we wanted to do,’ Bethune says. ‘We needed to develop a simple clear strategy, one that everyone could understand, and once it was in place, one that we weren’t going to deviate from.’

Easier said than done. When you are in the middle of an emergency – and trying to save an airline that is desperately short of cash certainly qualified as an emergency – there is a natural tendency to grasp at straws, to go after whatever will bring in money to keep you solvent for another week or two. Bethune understood the temptation and fought it off.

1 The writer believes that when Bethune and Brenneman produced their plan,

- A it seemed unlikely to achieve its objectives.
- B it was the best way to raise money quickly.
- C it was likely to cost too much to implement.
- D it seemed too similar to previous strategies.

2 What does the writer imply about Bethune?

- A He understood the importance of being flexible.
- B He had considerable experience of dealing with crises.
- C He faced opposition from within the company.
- D He took a long-term view of the situation.

Extract from a novel

Children's toys

Left to himself, Eustace fell into a day-dream. He thought of his toys and tried to decide which of them he should give to his sister Barbara; he had been told he must part with some of them, and indeed it would not make much difference if they were hers by right, since she already treated them as such. Whenever he went to take them from her she resisted with loud screams. Eustace realised that she wanted them but he did not think she ought to have them. She could not use them intelligently, and besides, they belonged to him. He might be too old to play with them but they brought back the past in a way that nothing else did. Certain moments in the past were like buried treasure to Eustace, living relics of a golden age which it was an ecstasy to contemplate. His toys put him in touch with these secret jewels of experience; they could not perform the miracle if they belonged to someone else. But on the single occasion when he had asserted his ownership and removed the toy rabbit from Barbara, who was sucking its ears, nearly everyone had been against him and there was a terrible scene.

- 3 In this extract the writer focuses on Eustace's
- A desire to improve his relationship with his sister.
 - B efforts to find a solution to a dilemma.
 - C wish to increase the number of his possessions.
 - D sense of being different from other people.
- 4 Eustace liked his toys because of
- A incidents associated with them.
 - B the people who had given them to him.
 - C what he could do with them.
 - D their rare and valuable nature.

Children's involvement in family decision making

In Britain, as children's rights to citizenship have strengthened over recent years, a strong presumption in favour of involving children in decisions on matters that directly affect them has developed in a number of areas of law, public policy and professional practice (for example, school councils). Yet surprisingly little is known about how far children's participation extends to their home lives and the routine business of everyday life. A recent study, based on group discussions and in-depth interviews with 117 children aged between eight and ten, examined how and to what extent the children were involved in shaping their own and their families' domestic lives.

Many of the findings were illuminating.

The ways in which families made decisions involved a subtle, complex and dynamic set of processes in which children could exert a decisive influence. Most families operated democratically but children accepted the ultimate authority of their parents, provided that they felt their parents acted 'fairly'. For children, 'fairness' had more to do with being treated equitably than simply having the decision made in their favour. Children could use claims to fairness as a moral lever in negotiations with parents. Family precedent, especially that set by older brothers and sisters, was an influential factor in 'good decision making' and was a more common point of reference than the experience of peers and other families.

- 5 In the first paragraph, the writer implies that
- A the involvement of children is damaging the quality of public decision making.
 - B greater understanding of domestic decision making involving children would be beneficial.
 - C children would make better decisions if they understood the decision-making process better.
 - D children are keen to become more involved in domestic decision making.
- 6 According to the second paragraph, children tended to accept decisions that
- A were similar to decisions made by other families.
 - B were made in a way that conformed with their sense of justice.
 - C were more favourable to them than to their brothers and sisters.
 - D were made by giving the child as much authority as their parents.

Part 2

You are going to read an extract from a newspaper article about working from home. Six paragraphs have been removed from the extract. Choose from the paragraphs **A–G** the one which fits each gap (7–12). There is one extra paragraph which you do not need to use.

Mark your answers on the separate answer sheet.

Plugging in the home

Georgina McGuinness had taken a long career break from journalism and she felt out of touch with the changes brought about by technology. She recounts here how she was able to transform the family home into an efficient workplace.

Last year I turned 37 and realised that time was running out if I wanted to resurrect a career in journalism.

A quick glance at my curriculum vitae showed that I was shamefully stuck in the 1980s, when a piece of carbon wedged in between several sheets of paper in a typewriter was the state of the art. It seemed that only a madman would let me loose on a computer in his newsroom. And why did most of the jobs advertised ask for experience in desktop publishing – which I didn't have?

7

Clearly, there was a gaping hole in what was left of my career and I had to act quickly. Leaving home before the children did would be fraught with obstacles, or so I thought until I entered a competition in a local newspaper. Like a success story you read or hear about that only ever happens to other people, my family and I won a computer package.

8

I had everything I would need for working from home – and I could still manage to take the children to school. They were confident with computers from the start, already well versed in them from school. I was much more hesitant, convinced that all my work would disappear without trace if I pressed the wrong button. I could not have been more wrong.

9

I recently began freelancing for a magazine, contributing about two articles a month, and I have become

smug in the knowledge that I have the best of two worlds.

So how has the computer helped me? Since my schooldays I have always worked at a desk that can only be described as a chaotic mess.

10

Spreadsheets help keep a record of income and expenses and the Internet means I can research stories, ask for further information on the bulletin board in the journalism or publishing forums and even discuss the pros and cons of working from home with people from all over the world.

11

However, there is a growing band of people who have recently bought multi-media PCs, not just for the educational, leisure and entertainment facilities. In my street alone there appears to be a cottage industry evolving from the sheer convenience of not having to join the commuter struggle into the city each day. So what characterises modern-day home workers?

12

Taking this into account, I seem to fit in well. And who knows, one day I will be emailing a column to a newspaper in Melbourne or, better still, publishing my own magazine from home. It seems the sky, or should I say cyberspace, is the limit.

- A** Consequently, I was always losing scraps of paper containing vital bits of information. The computer has transformed me into an organised worker, particularly when it comes to office administration.
- B** If all this sounds too good to be true, there is a dark side to computing from home. You can be in isolation from physical human contact and also there are the distractions of putting urgent jobs about the house first.
- C** To get an idea of the speed and convenience with which someone based at home can send their work back to the office, this article will be sent in a matter of minutes via a modem straight into the editor's computer.
- D** I thought I had a better chance of hosting a seminar in nuclear physics than attempting to lay out a page on a computer. I was the family technophobe; even pocket calculators were a mystery to me and I still don't know how to use the timer on the DVD.
- E** A recent report was unable to give an exact profile. Home-office workers comprise both males and females, aged between 25 and 55. However, they are usually well educated and more likely to be working in sales, marketing or technology.
- F** Though far from being adroit, I did manage to learn the basic skills I needed – it was all so logical, easy and idiot-proof. And, like everything that you persevere with, you learn a little more each day.
- G** Supplied with a laptop computer to free my husband from his desk, and a personal computer for us all, we dived in at the deep end. The children forsook the television and I set up a mini-office in a corner of the kitchen with my computer linking me to the information superhighway.

Part 3

You are going to read a newspaper article. For questions 13–19, choose the answer (A, B, C or D) which you think fits best according to the text. Mark your answers on the separate answer sheet.

Solar Survivor

Charles Clover ventures inside Britain's most environmentally friendly home.

Southwell in Nottinghamshire is full of surprises. The first is Britain's least-known ancient cathedral, Southwell Minster, celebrated by writers of an environmental disposition for the pagan figures of 'green' men which medieval craftsmen carved into the decorations in its thirteenth-century chapter house. The second, appropriately enough, is Britain's greenest dwelling, the 'autonomous house', designed and built by Robert and Brenda Vale.

The Vales use rainwater for washing and drinking, recycle their sewage into garden compost and heat their house with waste heat from electrical appliances and their own body heat, together with that of their three teenage children and their two cats, Edison and Faraday. You could easily miss the traditional-looking house, roofed with clay pantiles, on a verdant corner plot 300 metres from the Minster. It was designed to echo the burnt-orange brick of the town's nineteenth-century buildings and won approval from the planners even though it is in a conservation area.

Ring the solar-powered doorbell and there is total silence. The house is super-insulated, with kryptonfilled triple-glazed windows, which means that you do not hear a sound inside. Once inside and with your shoes off (at Robert's insistence), there is a monastic stillness. It is a sunny summer's day, the windows are closed and the conservatory is doing its normal job of warming the air before it ventilates the house. Vale apologises and moves through the house, opening ingenious ventilation shafts and windows. You need to create draughts because draught-proofing is everywhere: even Edison and Faraday have their own air-locked miniature door.

The Vales, who teach architecture at Nottingham University, were serious about the environment long before it hit the political agenda. They wrote a book on green architecture back in the 1970s, *The Autonomous House*. They began by designing a building which emitted no carbon dioxide. Then they got carried away and decided to do without mains water as well. They designed composting earth closets, lowered rainwater tanks into the cellar, and specified copper gutters to protect the drinking water, which they pass through two filters before use. Water from washing runs into the garden (the Vales don't have a dishwasher because they believe it is morally unacceptable to use strong

detergents). Most details have a similar statement in mind.

'We wanted people to see that it was possible to design a house which would be far less detrimental to the environment, without having to live in the dark,' says Robert. 'It would not be medieval.' The house's only medieval aspect is aesthetic: the hall, which includes the hearth and the staircase, rises the full height of the building.

The Vales pay no water bills. And last winter the house used only nine units of electricity a day costing about 70p – which is roughly what other four-bedroomed houses use on top of heating. Soon it will use even less, when £20,000 worth of solar water heating panels and generating equipment arrive and are erected in the garden. The house will draw electricity from the mains supply for cooking and running the appliances, but will generate a surplus of electricity. There will even be enough, one day, to charge an electric car. The only heating is a small wood-burning stove in the hall, which the Vales claim not to use except in the very coldest weather.

So is it warm in winter? One night in February when I happened to call on him, Robert was sitting reading. It was too warm to light the fire, he said. The room temperature on the first floor was 18°C, less than the generally expected temperature of living areas, but entirely comfortable, he claimed, because there are no draughts, no radiant heat loss, since everything you touch is at the same temperature. Perceived temperature depends on these factors. An Edwardian lady in the early years of the twentieth century was entirely comfortable at 12.5°C, he says, because of the insulation provided by her clothing. Those people who live in pre-1900 housing, he suggests, should simply go back to living as people did then. Somehow, it is difficult to think of this idea catching on.

The house's secret is that it is low-tech and there is little to go wrong. Almost everything was obtained from a builder's merchant and installed by local craftsmen. This made the house cheap to build – it cost the same price per square metre as low-cost housing for rent. Not surprisingly, the commercial building companies are determinedly resisting this idea.

- 13 According to the writer, the exterior of the Vales' house is
- A unique.
 - B unattractive.
 - C controversial.
 - D unremarkable.
- 14 Why did Robert Vale apologise to the writer on his arrival?
- A The ventilation system had failed.
 - B The temperature was uncomfortable.
 - C The conservatory was not functioning properly.
 - D The draughts were unwelcome.
- 15 What does the writer suggest about environmental issues in the fourth paragraph?
- A They have always been a difficult topic.
 - B They have become a subject of political debate.
 - C The Vales have changed their views in recent years.
 - D The Vales have begun to take a political interest in the subject.
- 16 What does the writer imply about the decision not to use mains water in the Vales' house?
- A It was impractical.
 - B It was later regretted.
 - C It was an extreme choice.
 - D It caused unexpected problems.
- 17 In Robert Vale's opinion, his home challenges the idea that houses designed with the environment in mind must be
- A draughty.
 - B primitive.
 - C small.
 - D ugly.
- 18 The planned changes to the house's electrical system will mean that
- A the house will produce more electricity than it uses.
 - B the Vales will not use electricity from the mains supply.
 - C the house will use more electricity than it does now.
 - D the Vales' electricity bills will remain at their current level.
- 19 According to Robert Vale, the house was comfortable in February because
- A no variations in temperature could be noticed.
 - B 18°C was acceptable for ordinary houses.
 - C it was not a particularly cold winter.
 - D he had got used to the temperature.

Part 4

You are going to read an article about books. For questions 20–34, choose from the publishers (A–E). The publishers may be chosen more than once.

Mark your answers on the separate answer sheet.

Which publisher(s)

say that some books succeed whether they are reviewed or not?

20

21

mentions reviewers taking the opportunity to display their own expertise?

22

describes how good reviews can contribute to the commercial failure of a book?

23

says that writers and publishers do not react to negative reviews in the same way?

24

feels that certain books are frequently overlooked by reviewers?

25

talks about the sales of some books being stimulated by mixed reviews?

26

suggest that the length of a review may be more important to publishers than what it actually says?

27

28

refer to the influence of reviews written by well-known people?

29

30

says the effect of reviews on sales does not have a regular pattern?

31

mention reviews being a crucial form of promotion?

32

33

believes there has been an improvement in the standard of book reviews?

34

DO REVIEWS SELL BOOKS?

We asked five leading British publishers about the effect of the reviews of a book on its commercial success. Here is what they said.

Publisher A

Reviews are absolutely key for publishers – the first part of the newspaper we turn to. The Book Marketing Council found some years ago that when questioned on why they had bought a particular book, more people cited reviews than any other prompting influence (advertisements, word of mouth, bookshop display, etc.).

Authors' responses to reviews are slightly different from publishers'. Both are devastated by no reviews, but publishers are usually more equable about the bad reviews, judging that column inches are what matter and that a combination of denunciation and ecstatic praise can actually create sales as readers decide to judge for themselves.

Publishers probably get the most pleasure from a review which precisely echoes their own response to a book – they are often the first 'reader'.

Publisher B

While publishers and the press fairly obviously have a common interest in the nature of book review pages, one also needs to remember that their requirements substantially differ: a newspaper or magazine needs to provide its readers with appropriately entertaining material; a publishing house wants to see books, preferably its own, reviewed, preferably favourably.

Without any question, book reviewing is 'better' – more diverse, less elitist – than 40 years ago, when I began reading review pages. That said, there is still a long-grumbled-about tendency to neglect the book medium read by a majority – namely paperbacks. The weekly roundups aren't really adequate even if conscientiously done. And even original paperbacks only rarely receive serious coverage.

But publishers shouldn't complain too much. Reviews are an economical way of getting a book and an author known. There is no question that a lively account of a new book by a trusted name can generate sales – even more if there are several of them.

Publisher C

Reviews are the oxygen of literary publishing; without them, we would be cut off from an essential life-source. Because the books we publish are generally not by 'brand-name' authors, whose books sell with or without reviews, and because we seldom advertise, we depend on the space given to our books by literary editors.

When the reviews are favourable, of course, they are worth infinitely more than any advertisement. The reader knows that the good review is not influenced by the publisher's marketing budget: it is the voice of reason, and there is no doubt that it helps to sell books. Publishers themselves often claim that they look for size rather than content in reviews.

The actual effect of reviews on sales is the inscrutable heart of the whole business. Good reviews can launch a book and a career and occasionally lift sales into the stratosphere: but never entirely on their own. There has to be some fusion with other elements – a word-of-mouth network of recommendation, a robust response from the book trade, clever marketing.

Publisher D

The relationship in Britain between publishing and reviewing? I wish I knew! In the United States it's simple: the *New York Times* can make or break a book with a single review. Here, though, the people in the bookshops often don't appear to take much notice of them.

It sometimes takes 20 years of consistently outstanding reviews for people to start reading a good writer's work. Yet some of the most dimly received books, or books not yet reviewed, are the biggest sellers of all. So it's all very unpredictable, though non-fiction is less so.

Mind you, non-fiction does allow reviewers to indulge themselves by telling us what they know about the subject of the book under review rather than about the book itself.

Publisher E

Of course, all publishers and all writers dream of long, uniformly laudatory reviews. But do they sell books? I once published a biography. The reviews were everything I could have craved. The book was a flop – because everyone thought that, by reading the lengthy reviews, they need not buy the book.

Does the name of the reviewer make a difference? Thirty years ago, if certain reviewers praised a book, the public seemed to take note and obey their recommendations. These days, it is as much the choice of an unexpected reviewer, or the sheer power or wit or originality of the review, which urges the prospective buyer into the bookshop.