

Read sections **A–D** of a magazine article about a man who owns the largest private collection of letters in the world. Then answer Question **9(a)–(j)**.

Dear Pedro...

One man's passion for handwritten letters

A

Pedro Corrêa do Lago owns 100 000 handwritten letters – the largest private collection of letters in the world. Not all of them are addressed to him, and some he has paid a substantial sum of money for. The letters are stored in several filing cabinets, which are so heavy that they have to be kept on the ground floor of his home in Rio. When he began his collection, it was the senders' signatures he was mainly interested in – at that time, collecting autographs was a popular hobby. Pedro says that these days most young people are much more interested in selfies. Even so, he has no plans to stop collecting letters. It is a passion that goes back about 50 years and began as a result of a fascination with a large red book called *Who's Who*, which his father had bought. This listed details of a wide range of celebrities, including their home addresses.

B

When he was 12 years old, Pedro wrote to JRR Tolkien, author of *The Lord of the Rings*, and François Truffaut, whose film *The Wild Child* he had just seen, asking for their autographs. Tolkien's secretary was quick to respond, explaining that the author received so many requests like this that he had decided to decline them all. From Truffaut, there was nothing. Two months passed, and during this time Pedro forgot about the letters and was moving on to other hobbies typical of 12-year-old boys. Then one day, when he came home from school, he was surprised to find a parcel with his name on it waiting for him in the hallway. He opened it, and discovered it contained a copy of the book that had inspired Truffaut's film. Inside the front cover, he found a message beginning 'Dear Pedro...' that the director had written to him.

C

'That message changed my life,' says Pedro. 'I was so excited, I wrote to many more famous people. I would rush home from school to see if people like the artists Miró, Picasso and Chagall, or the writer Iris Murdoch had sent me a letter.' And one by one they all did, apart from Picasso. After a few years, Pedro had received dozens of letters, and he has been expanding his collection steadily since that time. These days, he says the collection is less about his favourite authors and artists, and he is focusing more on a broader project about western culture. He is collecting letters from the four or five thousand people he feels have played the most important roles in the fields of history, music, literature, art, science and entertainment. He regularly goes to sales, and has an eye for a good deal. Even so, he has to work overtime in his day job as an art dealer to pay for some of his more expensive purchases.

D

When Pedro was 13, he spent four weeks' pocket money on a letter from the painter Édouard Manet. Even then he understood that this letter was worth much more, as letters by the painter are relatively rare. He also owns many letters by world leaders and royals, and one by psychologist Sigmund Freud to his mother on her birthday, enclosing \$6 to spend as she pleased. When Pedro reads the letters he owns, he says it's like visiting the people who wrote them. 'You're holding a little piece of their life.' However, there are still several people whose letters he has not managed to purchase, and he has no plans to stop trying. Some of his collection featured in a solo exhibition at the Morgan Library & Museum in New York in 2018, and in the same year his book *The Magic of Handwriting* was published.

For each question, write the correct letter A, B, C or D on the line.

Which section includes the following information?

- (a) a reason why someone was unwilling to reply to him [1]
- (b) an object that first inspired him to start writing letters [1]
- (c) a time when he realised he had bought a bargain [1]
- (d) an unexpected delivery [1]
- (e) one exception to a series of successes [1]
- (f) a time when his interests changed temporarily [1]
- (g) a reason for the location of his collection [1]
- (h) how he feels when looking through his collection [1]
- (i) an explanation of how his collection has changed [1]
- (j) the suggestion that what he collects is old-fashioned [1]
- [Total: 10]