

READING COMPREHENSION

Time allotted: 60 mins

No. of items: 40

Directions: In this section of the test, you will read FOUR different passages, each followed by 10 questions about it. For questions 1-40, you are to choose the best answer A, B, C or D, to each question. Then, on your answer sheet, find the number of the question and fill in the space that corresponds to the letter of the answer you have chosen. Answer all questions following a passage on the basis of what is stated or implied in that passage. You have 60 minutes to answer all the questions, including the time to transfer your answers to the answer sheet.

PASSAGE 1 – QUESTIONS 1-10

The European Dream

In the aftermath of the Second World War 1945, some political leaders in Western Europe believed that the only way to avoid war and conflict in the future was to unite the countries of Europe in an economic and political union. So, in 1952 six countries France, Germany, Italy, Belgium, the Netherlands and Luxembourg formed *what* was to evolve into the European Union (EU). Since then a further 21 countries have joined the organisation, bringing the total population of the EU to over 500 million. To become a member, a country must meet the Copenhagen criteria, defined at the 1993 meeting of the European Council in Copenhagen.

The EU has developed a single market through a standardised system of laws that apply in all member states. The monetary union was established in 1999 and came into full force in 2002. It is currently composed of 19 member states that use the euro as their legal tender. EU policies aim to ensure the free movement of people, goods, services, and capital, enact legislation in justice and home affairs, and maintain common policies on trade, agriculture, fisheries, and regional development.

The EU is not a federation like the United States. The member states of the EU remain independent sovereign nations but they pool their sovereignty in certain areas of policy. Pooling sovereignty means, in practice, that the member states delegate some of their decision-making powers to shared institutions they have created, so that decisions about specific matters of joint interest can be made democratically at European level.

The three main decision-making institutions are:

- the European Commission, consisting of 27 commissioners, one chosen by each member state. The role of the Commission is to propose new legislation, but it cannot pass laws by itself.

- the Council of the EU, consisting of one government minister from each country. The Council is the EU's main decision-making body. It votes on legislation proposed by the Commission.
- the European Parliament, based in Brussels and Strasbourg, and consisting of 785 MEPs directly elected by the citizens of the EU. Elections are held every five years. Like the Council the Parliament votes on and passes laws proposed by the Commission.

The British have a very uneasy relationship with the EU. British Europhiles claim that the EU continues to bring tangible economic and political benefits to the UK, and that it has delivered peace and stability to Europe for over half a century. Eurosceptics, however, who are probably in majority in the UK, are concerned about the direction the EU is taking. They believe that it is fundamentally undemocratic and unaccountable, and maintain that the real aim of the EU is to create an enormous federal state in which individual member states will exercise little control over their own affairs.

1. In which decade was the organisation that was to become the EU formed?

- A. 1990s
- B. 2000s
- C. 1950s
- D. 1940s

2. The original members of the EU included:

- A. Britain, France, Germany
- B. Germany, Italy, Luxembourg
- C. France, Belgium and New Zealand
- D. Italy, Britain and the United States

3. How many member states are there in the EU now?

- A. 21
- B. 27
- C. 26
- D. 6

4. is one of the two cities the European Parliament meets.

- A. Brussels
- B. Luxembourg
- C. Copenhagen

- D. Stratford
5. What did the founders of the EU hope that it would achieve?
- A. giving European countries a priority in world affair
 - B. reducing the likelihood of hostility and war
 - C. bringing to Europe sustainable prosperity
 - D. making important decisions in world affair
6. What does “*what*” in paragraph 5 refer to?
- A. the six countries
 - B. the only way
 - C. a system of laws
 - D. an organisation
7. What do Eurosceptics fear?
- A. that the direction the EU is taking is misleading.
 - B. that the individual member states will abuse their power over the world affairs.
 - C. that the EU continues to bring tangible economic and political benefits to the UK.
 - D. that the EU is fundamentally democratic and unaccountable.
8. Which of the followings is NOT the benefit of the EU?
- A. Becoming over-bureaucratic and undemocratic
 - B. Free movement of people, goods, services, and capital
 - C. Single market and currency
 - D. Peace and stability
9. We can infer from the passage that the British
- A. provide economic aid to the poorer regions of Europe.
 - B. have a tight relationship with the EU.
 - C. are always unfavourable of EU.
 - D. do not want the EU to leave more decisions to national governments.
10. Which of these statements about the EU is NOT correct?
- A. The European Commission has commissioners coming from all states.
 - B. Members of European Parliament are elected.
 - C. Most British people are concerned about the direction the EU is taking.

D. The member states of the EU are dependent on one another.

PASSAGE 2 – QUESTIONS 11-20

WillyWonka is the father of nano-food. The great chocolate-factory owner, you'll remember, invented a chewing gum that was a full three-course dinner. "It will be the end of all kitchens and cooking" he told the children on his tour – and produced a prototype sample of Wonka's Magic Chewing Gum. One strip of this would deliver tomato soup, roast beef with roast potatoes and blueberry pie and ice cream – in the right order.

Far-fetched? The processed-food giant Kraft and a group of research laboratories are busy working towards "programmable food". One product they are working on is a colourless, tasteless drink that you, the consumer, will design after you've bought it. You'll decide what colour and flavour you'd like the drink to be, and what nutrients it will have in it, once you get home. You'll zap the product with a correctly-tuned microwave transmitter – presumably Kraft will send you that, too. This will activate nano-capsules – each one about 2,000 times smaller than the width of a hair – containing the necessary chemicals for your choice of drink: green-hued, black currant flavoured with a touch of caffeine and omega-3, say. They will dissolve while all the other possible ingredients will pass unused through your body, in their nano-capsules.

The end of cooking? Probably not. But nano-food and nano-food packaging are on their way because the food industry has spotted the chance for huge profits: according to analysts, the business will soon be worth \$20 billion annually. You'll first meet nanotechnology in food packaging. Most people have heard about the "smart" food packaging that will warn when oxygen has got inside, or if food is going off – research on that is complete and the product are arriving. Samsung has fridges on the market in Asia and America that use nano-silver to kill bacteria. Also available in American supermarkets is cooking oil that, in theory, can be kept fresh for ever – thanks to nano-engineered molecules which lock onto contaminants. These could also simplify the process of cleaning drinking water – potentially hugely important for the developing world. In Australia, you can buy bread that contains undetectable nano-capsules of mega-3, *a valuable nutrient* found naturally in oily fish like salmon.

But Dr David Bennett, a veteran biochemist now working on a European Commission project on the ethics of "nanobiotechnology", believes the public will almost certainly reject nano-food because of the perceived perils. "Very little risk assessment has been done on this area, even on some products already entering the market". What's to be afraid of, from a technology that offers so much – healthier food, fewer, better-targeted chemicals, less waste,

“smart” packaging, and even the promise of a technological solution to the problem of the one billion people who don’t get enough to eat? “Matter has different behaviour at nano-scales”, says Dr KeesEijkel from the Dutch Twente University. “That means different hazards are associated with it. We don’t know what these are”. For example, some metals will kill bacteria at nano-scale – hence the interest in using them in food packaging – but what will happen if they get off the packaging and into us? Could they be a threat to our health? No one seems to know.

11. What does Willy Wonka’s magical chewing gum have in common with types of nano-food in development?
 - A. They allow consumers to adjust tastes and flavours.
 - B. They’re both manufactured in a factory.
 - C. They’re both nutritious.
 - D. They’re food condensed into chewable tablets

12. Which elements of “programmable food” would consumers be able to determine by zapping it?
 - A. Taste, nutritional value and colour
 - B. Expiry date, taste and flavour
 - C. Order of tastes, nutritional value and colour
 - D. Colour, flavour and food preservation

13. Unlike ordinary packaging, “smart” packaging
 - A. can monitor the condition of the food it contains
 - B. can indicate when food becomes perished.
 - C. prevents any oxygen from reaching the food.
 - D. can kill bacteria.

14. Technology developed to keep cooking oil fresh could help the world’s poorest people by
 - A. adding water to it to make it abundant.
 - B. enabling them to purify water more easily.
 - C. alerting them when water supplies become contaminated.
 - D. only using water to purify the contaminated oil

15. In the opinion of the scientist David Bennett, how will the public react to nano-food?
 - A. They’ll give it a cautious welcome.
 - B. They are so happy because they can save money.

- C. They'll want to decide whether the potential benefits outweigh the dangers.
D. They'll be too concerned about the dangers to welcome it.
16. What is the possible heading of paragraph 2?
- A. Healthier and more exciting food
B. Create your own flavours
C. Products available now
D. Magic chewing gum
17. How would the magic chewing gum taste right after chewing?
- A. An exciting mix of taste
B. Sweet as ice cream
C. Tomato flavoured
D. Blackcurrant-flavoured
18. "*A valuable nutrient*" in paragraph 3 refers to
- A. Salmon
B. Omega-3
C. Bread
D. Cooking oil
19. The two savoury dishes mentioned in paragraph 1 are:
- A. Tomato soup and roast beef
B. Blueberry pie and ice cream
C. Roast potatoes and blueberry pie
D. Chocolate and chewing gum
20. Which group of words has the same meaning?
- A. Hazard, risk, peril and far-fetched
B. Peril, risk, prototype and threat
C. Risk, threat, allergy and peril
D. Peril, hazard, risk and threat

PASSAGE 3 – QUESTIONS 21-30

Basic to any understanding of Canada in the 20 years after the Second World War is the country's impressive population growth. For every three Canadians in 1945, there were over **five** in 1966. In September 1966 Canada's population passed the 20 million mark.

Most of this **surging** growth came from natural increase. The depression of the 1930's and the war had held back marriages, and the catching-up process began after 1945. The Canadian baby boom continued through the decade of the 1950's, producing a population increase of nearly fifteen percent in the five years from 1951 to 1956. This rate of increase had been exceeded only once before in Canada's history, in the decade before 1911, when the prairies were being settled. Undoubtedly, the good economic conditions of the 1950's supported a growth in the population, but the expansion also derived from a **trend** toward earlier marriages and an increase in the average size of families. The year with the most population growth was during the peak of the Post-World War II baby boom in 1956–1957, when the population grew by over 529,000, in a single twelve-month period. In 1957 the Canadian birth rate stood at 28 per thousand, one of the highest in the world.

After the **peak** year of 1957, the birth rate in Canada began to decline. It continued falling until in 1966 it stood at the lowest level in 25 years. Partly this decline reflected the low level of births during the depression and the war, but it was also caused by changes in Canadian society. Young people were staying at school longer; more women were working; young married couples were buying automobiles or houses before starting families; rising living standards were cutting down the size of families. It appeared that Canada was once more falling in step with the trend toward smaller families that had occurred all through the Western world since the time of the Industrial Revolution.

Although the growth in Canada's population had slowed down by 1966 (the increase in the first half of the 1960's was only nine percent), another large population wave was coming over the horizon. It would be composed of the children of the children who were born during the period of the high birth rate prior to 1957.

21. *What does the passage mainly discuss?*

- A. Educational changes in Canadian society
- B. Canada during the Second World War
- C. Population trends in postwar Canada
- D. Standards of living in Canada

22. *According to the passage, when did Canada's baby boom begin?*

- A. In the decade after 1911
- B. After 1945
- C. During the depression of the 1930's
- D. In 1966

23. *The word "five" in the first paragraph refers to*

- A. Canadians
- B. years
- C. decades

D. marriages

24. The word **“surging”** in the first paragraph is closest in meaning to

- A. new
- B. extra
- C. accelerating
- D. surprising

25. The author suggests that in Canada during the 1950's

- A. the urban population decreased rapidly
- B. fewer people married
- C. economic conditions were poor
- D. the birth rate was very high

26. The word **“trend”** in the first paragraph is closest in meaning to

- A. tendency
- B. aim
- C. growth
- D. directive

27. The word **“peak”** in the second paragraph is closest in meaning to

- A. pointed
- B. dismal
- C. mountain
- D. maximum

28. When was the birth rate in Canada at its lowest postwar level?

- A. 1966
- B. 1957
- C. 1956
- D. 1951

29. The author mentions all of the following as causes of declines in population growth after 1957 EXCEPT

- A. people being better educated
- B. people getting married earlier
- C. better standards of living
- D. couples buying houses

30. It can be inferred from the passage that before the Industrial Revolution

- A. families were larger
- B. population statistics were unreliable
- C. the population grew steadily

D. economic conditions were bad

PASSAGE 4 – QUESTIONS 31-40

The Panama Canal

1. As early as the 16th century, King Charles I of Spain, seeking a speedier passage between the Atlantic and the Pacific ordered his Panamanian governor to survey the Panamanian Isthmus for a canal. The governor's report: it cannot be done. Well, maybe not in 1534. But both the Americans and the French had other ideas by the latter half of the 19th century.
2. The French made the first attempt at digging a trench from the Atlantic Ocean to the Pacific in 1878, when a committee of the Geographical Society of Paris signed a treaty with Colombia (of which Panama was then a province) to build a canal from Limon Bay to Panama City.
3. In retrospect, the French effort probably was doomed from the start because Ferdinand de Lesseps, builder of the Suez Canal in 1869, insisted on a sea-level canal requiring a massive 7720-metre long tunnel through the mountains at Culebra. The builders also had no idea how to cope with the torrential rain and frequent horrific outbreaks of malaria and yellow fever. Ten years later, after at least 20 000 deaths from disease, the French gave up.
4. Theodore Roosevelt, who assumed the American presidency in 1901, was keen to see an American-built canal through the isthmus. When Colombia refused to sell the rights to dig the canal, Roosevelt threw U.S power behind a Panamanian uprising and supported Panama's 1903 declaration of independence.
5. Roosevelt instigated a treaty with Panama that gave the United States the right to build the canal and created a 10-mile wide Canal Zone under American control surrounding the waterway. Construction of a lock canal, taking the canal rather than through-the geographical barriers, commenced in 1904.
6. The Americans took no chances. The army dispatched surgeon Col. William Gorgas to Panama to tackle malaria and yellow fever. Gorgas was fresh from Havana where he had helped eradicate yellow fever, following discoveries by his colleague Maj. Walter Reed and others that the disease was carried by a mosquito. Malaria also had recently been discovered to be transmitted by mosquito bites.
7. Once Gorgas's efforts had quickly eradicated yellow fever and reduced the incidence of malaria, *two principal obstacles* to the canal had been removed. The third obstacle was the terrain.