

TASK 4. (7 points)

You are going to read two texts about commuting. For questions 4.1.–4.7., choose the answer that best matches the text and circle the appropriate letter (A, B, C or D).

Text 1

A STRANGER

I have always liked the process of commuting; every phase of the little journey is a pleasure to me. There is a regularity about it that is agreeable and comforting to a person of habit, and in addition, it serves as a sort of slipway along which I am gently but firmly launched into the waters of daily business routine.

Ours is a smallish country station and only nineteen or twenty people gather there to catch the eight-twelve. We are a group that rarely changes, and when occasionally a new face appears on the platform, it causes a certain disclamatory, protestant ripple, like a new bird in a cage of canaries. But normally, when I arrive in the morning with my usual four minutes to spare, there they all are, these solid, steadfast people, standing in their right places with their right umbrellas and hats and their newspapers under their arms, as unchanged and unchangeable through the years as the furniture in my living-room. I like that.

However, last Tuesday when I was striding on to the platform with The Times tucked under my arm, I immediately became aware that something was wrong. **1D** I could actually feel that curious little ripple of protest running along the ranks of my fellow commuters. I stopped and glanced around. The stranger was standing plumb in the middle of the platform, feet apart and arms folded, looking for all the world as though he owned the place. He was a biggish, thickset man. Very definitely, he was not one of us. **2B** He carried a cane instead of an umbrella, his shoes were brown instead of black, the grey hat was cocked at a ridiculous angle, and there seemed to be an excess of silk and polish about his person. **3C** I walked straight past him with my face to the sky, adding, I sincerely hope, a touch of real frost to an atmosphere that was already cool.

The train came in. And now, try if you can to imagine my horror when the new man actually followed me into my own compartment! Nobody had done this to me for fifteen years. My colleagues always respect my seniority. One of my special little pleasures is to have the place to myself for two or three stations. **4A** I lowered my newspaper and stole a glance at his face. I suppose he was about the same age as me, about sixty, but he had one of those unpleasantly handsome, brown, leathery countenances that you see nowadays in advertisements for men's shirts. Suddenly he glanced up and our eyes met.

'D'you mind the pipe?' he asked, holding it up in his fingers.

That was all he said. But the sound of his voice had a sudden and extraordinary effect upon me. In fact, I think I jumped. Then I sort of froze up and sat staring at him for at least a minute before I got a hold of myself and made an answer. That curiously crisp, familiar voice, clipping its words and spitting them out very hard and small like a little quick-firing gun shooting out raspberry seeds. Why did every word seem to strike upon some tiny tender spot far back in my memory? Good heavens, I thought. Pull yourself together. I began to wonder if I had met him before because I felt a peculiar kind of discomfort that I cannot quite describe – something to do with violence, perhaps even fear.

adapted from Roald Dahl, Galloping Foxley, OUP 2009

- 4.1. Look at the squares marked 1–4 in the text and decide where the following sentence fits best in the passage.

But here, if you please, was this fellow, this stranger, straddling the seat opposite, blowing his nose and rustling the *Daily Mail*.

- A. In the space marked **1**.
 - B. In the space marked **2**.
 - C. In the space marked **3**.
 - D. In the space marked **4**.
- 4.2. What is TRUE about the narrator?
- A. He prides himself on standing out in a crowd of commuters.
 - B. He is part of a community which is wary of strangers.
 - C. He is eager to meet strangers with an extravagant flair about them.
 - D. He feels restless when faced with mundane tasks.
- 4.3. The narrator perceived the stranger as somebody who
- A. made others uncomfortable with his arrogant comments.
 - B. blended into the crowd of commuters.
 - C. deserved the unwelcoming attitude of the fellow commuters.
 - D. fitted in despite his ridiculous attire.
- 4.4. In the last paragraph, we find out that
- A. the stranger's manner of speech triggered the narrator's anxiety.
 - B. the narrator knew where he had met the stranger before.
 - C. the narrator felt thrilled to meet the stranger.
 - D. the stranger's stutter irritated the narrator.

odp: DBCA

Text 2

LONDON COMMUTERS GET EASY READING

Commuters on the London Tube rarely talk. Much more often they simply bury their heads in *The Times* or *The Sun*. It's one of those English things. But these days, they have an alternative in the form of elegantly produced short story mini-books conveniently folded to make reading easier on the train. All they have to do is slip a handy pound coin into a snazzy book vending machine and there's a short story for the ride.

The brains behind the pound-for-a-story venture were Alexander Waugh, the grandson of the novelist Evelyn Waugh, and Ned Guinness, an heir to the Irish Guinness brewing empire. The idea of handy travel literature can be traced back to the 19th century when Rudyard Kipling introduced reading sheets to the Indian Railways. The new vending machine just adds a modern twist to that old concept.(4.7)

Officially launched a few months ago, these sleek 5-foot-tall story dispensers have gone down rather well with commuters and London Underground officials alike. "We are always delighted to find an innovative idea for vending on the Underground," said Stephen Wilson of London Underground Marketing and Sales. "We hope the commuters will be equally keen on feeding their minds with good literature as their stomachs with candy bars. But it's too early to say how the machines are doing."

"The challenge now is to hitch up **the lowly image of the vending machine**. We want to push the vending machine into the mainstream, to make our stories a superior product, something classy you want to be seen with," said Guinness. (4.6)

London's South Kensington Underground Station has three vending machines offering passengers a selection of short stories as easy to buy as a candy bar. This week's menu for slaking one's literary thirst includes *Goodbye to Cats* by P.G. Wodehouse and *A Telephone Call* by Dorothy Parker. The series is edited by prominent writers like Beryl Bainbridge and Martin Amis. The machines change their selections once a week but Guinness says he's still testing the shelf life of a title and could change the selection every three days. The series is designed to be read within 45 minutes, which is an average daily commute, so to be taken into consideration the stories can't exceed the 10,000 word limit.(4.5)

adapted from www.abcnews.go.com

4.5. Which is TRUE about the mini-books sold from vending machines?

- A. Expected travel time is one of the factors taken into account when selecting the stories.
- B. The idea of selling books from vending machines was inspired by a group of editors.
- C. Stories sold from vending machines have proved more popular than candy bars.
- D. Each vending machine has a different choice of titles on offer.

4.6. When talking of 'the lowly image of the vending machine', the author is suggesting that the machines

- A. should have a more attractive design.
- B. will appeal mainly to better-off commuters.
- C. are not associated with high-quality goods.
- D. will offer stories for people with inferior tastes.

4.7. The author of the text wants to

- A. present the latest use of a popular machine.
- B. advocate the need for increased readership of books.
- C. outline reasons for the popularity of vending machines.
- D. discuss the main flaws of a product's marketing strategy.

odp: ACA

TASK 5. (4 points)

Read the article. Four fragments have been removed from the text. Complete each gap (5.1.–5.4.) with the fragment which fits best and put the appropriate letter (A–E) in the gap. There is one fragment which you do not need to use.

WHY BILINGUALS ARE SMARTER

Speaking two languages has obvious practical benefits in the globalized world. In recent years, scientists have begun to show that the advantages of bilingualism are more fundamental than being able to converse with a wider range of people. Being bilingual not only makes you smarter, but it can also have a profound effect on your brain. 5.1. __D__ Both of these are crucial as they make it easier to build up on a single idea and come to a conclusion after scrutinizing various arguments.

This view of bilingualism is remarkably different from the understanding of bilingualism through much of the 20th century. Researchers and educators long considered a second language to cause interference that hindered a child's academic and intellectual development. They were not wrong about the interference. 5.2. __A__ That's why bilinguals might often be slightly slower at retrieving words from the depths of memory. But this interference, researchers say, is indeed a blessing in disguise. Learning how to cope with it – having to toggle back and forth between different forms of description – comes with lasting benefits. It forces the brain to resolve internal conflict, giving the mind a workout.

The evidence from a number of studies suggests that the bilingual experience improves the brain's so-called executive function. 5.3. __B__ Another example is switching attention willfully from one thing to another and holding information in mind – like remembering a sequence of directions while driving. Executive functioning allows us to keep a goal in mind, take actions to achieve that goal, and to ignore other information that might distract us from that goal.

The key difference between monolinguals and bilinguals is a heightened ability to monitor the environment. 5.4. __E__ In a study comparing German-Italian bilinguals with Italian monolinguals, it was found that the bilingual subjects not only performed better, but they also did so with less activity in the parts of the brain involved in monitoring, indicating that they were more efficient at it.

abridged from www.nytimes.com

A. There is ample evidence that in a bilingual's brain both language systems are constantly active even when only one language is being used. The joint activity may lead to situations in which one system obstructs the other.

B. This is a command system that directs the attention processes that we use for planning, problem solving and performing various other mentally demanding tasks. These processes include, for instance, ignoring distractions when we want to stay focused.

C. Such tasks enable the brain to exercise cognitive muscles. Whereas people normally make extra efforts to keep the mind sharp by solving crossword puzzles, bilingual brains are constantly exercised by using another language.

D. By knowing two languages, the regions of the brain that govern general attention and cognitive control are more stimulated, compared with someone who is monolingual. Cognitive flexibility results in good inductive and deductive reasoning skills.

E. The latter have to switch languages quite often – you may talk to your father in one language and to your mother in the other. It requires keeping track of changes around you in the same way that we observe our surroundings when driving.

TASK 6. (4 points)

Read the text. For questions 6.1.–6.4., choose the appropriate paragraph and write the corresponding letter (A–E) in the table. One paragraph does not match any of the questions.

In which paragraph does the author		Answer
6.1.	outline the developmental nature of diversity?	
6.2.	make a link between the diversity of a country's population and the system of its leadership?	
6.3.	anticipate an extreme preventive measure taken by the authorities?	
6.4.	mention a cross-cultural dissonance resulting from different backgrounds?	

THE CULTURE OF BEING RUDE

A. When I first moved to New England from Michigan, I said 'hi' to everyone. Eventually though, I started to notice that such cordialities were not always returned. Sometimes I got a stare. It was a kind of squirrel-faced wondering about whether I wasn't from 'around here' or was just slow. This made me think that cultures differ in all sorts of ways – their greetings, coming-of-age rituals, numbers of husbands or wives or their beliefs. People celebrate these differences but also wage wars about them. Usually such variety is attributed to the vagaries of history and chance. Some things, like differences in religious expression, simply seem beyond the realm of explanation. **(6.4)**

B. Recently a group of biologists has offered a theory that might explain why our cultures vary so considerably. In a series of high-profile papers they argue that one particular factor, disease, ultimately determines much of how we behave. Their theory is simple. Where diseases are common, individuals are mean to strangers. Strangers may carry new diseases and so one would do best to avoid them. When people avoid strangers – those outside the tribe – communication among tribes breaks down. That breakdown allows people, through time, to become more different. **(6.1)**

C. Scientists go even further. Where people are more xenophobic and cultures more differentiated from one another, wars are more probable. Democratic governments are less likely because the tribe or group comes first. The nation and individuals in other tribes within the nation come second. Hostility between groups inevitably leads to abuse of power, negligence and poverty. And the single factor that triggered this cascade in the first place is disease. **(6.2)**

D. Could the prevalence of disease really impact people's actions so completely and consistently? When swine flu H1N1 emerged in 2009 some people started shaking hands less and wearing masks – all because of the risk of getting infected. In such situations, suddenly it seems that we have less control of who we are and how we act than we might like to think. We are like small boats, pushed and pulled by the tides of disease.

E. Researchers have yet to find conclusive evidence on this issue. In the meantime, we can go on imagining that we are making independent decisions. But when the flu comes back this fall, watch your neighbors. If the researchers are right, hands once extended freely will search for pockets as people become more wary of strangers. We may well observe the exacerbation of actions at an international level as governments consider shutting their borders to protect their citizens. While it is very hard to predict the evolution of a virus, the changes in our own behavior may be more foreseeable. (6.3)

adapted from www.smithsonianmag.com

odp: BCEA