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IELTS BY KAMAL

IELTS Reading Practice Test #1

READING PASSAGE 1

You should spend about 20 minutes on Questions 1-14, which are based on Reading Passage 1 below.

THE CREATIVITY MYTH

A It is a myth that creative people are born with their talents: gifts from God or nature. Creative genius is, in fact, latent within many of us, without our realising. But how far do we need to travel to find the path to creativity? For many people, a long way. In our everyday lives, we have to perform many acts out of habit to survive, like opening the door, shaving, getting dressed, walking to work, and so on. If this were not the case, we would, in all probability, become mentally unhinged. So strongly ingrained are our habits, though this varies from person to person, that sometimes when a conscious effort is made to be creative, automatic response takes over. We may try, for example, to walk to work following a different route, but end up on our usual path. By then it is too late to go back and change our minds. Another day, perhaps. The same applies to all other areas of our lives. When we are solving problems, for example, we may seek different answers, but, often as not, find ourselves walking along the same well-trodden paths.

B So, for many people, their actions and behaviour are set in immovable blocks, their minds clogged with the cholesterol of habitual actions, preventing them from operating freely, and thereby stifling creation. Unfortunately, mankind's very struggle for survival has become a tyranny – the obsessive desire to give order to the world is a case in point. Witness people's attitude to time, social customs and the panoply of rules and regulations by which the human mind is now circumscribed.

C The groundwork for keeping creative ability in check begins at school. School, later university and then work, teach us to regulate our lives, imposing a continuous process of restrictions which is increasing exponentially with the advancement of technology. Is it surprising then that creative ability appears to be so rare? It is trapped in the prison that we have erected. Yet, even here in this hostile environment, the foundations for creativity are being laid; because setting off on the creative path is also partly about using rules and regulations. Such limitations are needed so that once they are learnt, they can be broken.

D The truly creative mind is often seen as totally free and unfettered. But a better image is of a mind, which can be free when it wants, and one that recognises that rules and regulations are parameters, or barriers, to be raised and dropped again at will. An example of how the human mind can be trained to be creative might help here. People's minds are just like tense muscles that need to be freed up and the potential unlocked. One strategy is to erect artificial barriers or hurdles in solving a problem. As a form of stimulation, the participants in the task can be forbidden to use particular solutions or to follow certain lines of thought to solve a problem. In this way, they are obliged to explore unfamiliar territory, which may lead to some startling discoveries. Unfortunately, the difficulty in this exercise, and with creation itself, is convincing people that creation is possible, shrouded as it is in so much myth and legend. There is also an element of fear involved, however subliminal, as deviating from the safety of one's thought patterns is very much akin to madness. But, open Pandora's box and a whole new world unfold before your very eyes.

E Lifting barriers into place also plays a major part in helping the mind to control ideas rather than letting them collide at random. Parameters act as containers for ideas and thus help the mind to fix on them. When the mind is thinking laterally and two ideas from different areas of the brain come or are brought together, they form a new idea, just like atoms floating around and then forming a molecule. Once the idea has been formed, it needs to be contained or it will fly away, so fleeting is its passage. The mind needs to hold it in place for a time so that it can recognise it or call on it again. And then the parameters can act as channels along which the ideas can flow, developing and expanding. When the mind has brought the idea to fruition by thinking it through to its conclusion, the parameters can be brought down and the idea allowed to float off and come in contact with other ideas.

Questions 1-5

LIVEWORKSHEETS

Which paragraph contains the following information? Write the correct letter, **A-E**.

NB You may use any letter more than once.

1. The way parameters in the mind help people to be creative: _____

2. The need to learn rules to break them: _____

3. How habits restrict us and limit creativity: _____

4. How to train the mind to be creative: _____

5. How the mind is trapped by the desire for order: _____

Questions 6-10

Choose the correct letter, **A, B, C or D**.

6. According to the writer, creative people
A. are usually born with their talents | B. are born with their talents | C. are not born with their talents | D. are geniuses

7. According to the writer, creativity is
A. a gift from God or nature | B. an automatic response | C. difficult for many people to achieve | D. a well-trodden path

8. According to the writer
A. human race's fight to live is a tyranny | B. brain is blocked with cholesterol | C. circumscribed by talents | D. survival stifles creative ability

9. Advancing technology
A. holds creativity in check | B. improves creativity | C. enhances creativity | D. is a tyranny

10. According to the author, creativity
A. is common | B. is increasingly common | C. is becoming rarer and rarer | D. is a rare commodity

Questions 11-14

Write **YES, NO,** or **NOT GIVEN**.

11. Rules and regulations are examples of parameters: _____

12. The truly creative mind is associated with free speech: _____

13. One problem with creativity is that people think it is impossible: _____

14. The act of creation is linked to madness: _____

READING PASSAGE 2

You should spend about 20 minutes on Questions 15-27, which are based on Reading Passage 2 below.

LOCKED DOORS OPEN ACCESS

A The word, 'security', has both positive and negative connotations. Most of us would say that we crave security for all its positive virtues, both physical and psychological – its evocation of the safety of home, of undying love, or freedom from need. More negatively, the word nowadays conjures up images of that huge industry which has developed to protect individuals and property from invasion by 'outsiders', ostensibly malicious and intent on theft or wilful damage.

B Increasingly, because they are situated in urban areas of escalating crime, those buildings which used to allow free access to employees and other users (buildings such as offices, schools, colleges, or hospitals) now do not. Entry areas which in another age were called 'Reception' are

LIVEWORKSHEETS

now manned by security staff. Receptionists, whose task it was to receive visitors and to make them welcome before passing them on to the person they had come to see, have been replaced by those whose task it is to bar entry to the unauthorized, the unwanted or the plain unappealing.

C Inside, these buildings are divided into 'secure zones' which often have all the trappings of combination locks and burglar alarms. These devices bar entry to the uninitiated, hinder circulation and create parameters of time and space for user access. Within the spaces created by these zones, individual rooms are themselves under lock and key, which is a particular problem when it means that working space becomes compartmentalized.

D To combat the consequent difficulty of access to people at a physical level, we have now developed technological access. Computers sit on every desk and are linked to one another, and in many cases to an external universe of other computers so that messages can be passed to and fro. Here too, security plays a part, since we must not be allowed access to messages destined for others. And so the password was invented. Now correspondence between individuals goes from desk to desk and cannot be accessed by colleagues. Library catalogues can be searched from one's desk.

E Papers can be delivered to, and received from, other people at the press of a button. And yet it seems that, just as work is isolating individuals more and more, organizations are recognizing the advantages of 'team-work'; perhaps to encourage employees to talk to one another again. Yet, how can groups work in teams if the possibilities for communication are reduced? How can they work together if e-mail provides a convenient electronic shield behind which the blurring of public and private can be exploited by the less scrupulous? If voice-mail walls up messages behind a password? If I can't leave a message on my colleague's desk because his office is locked?

F Team-work conceals the fact that another kind of security, 'job security', is almost always not on offer. Just as organizations now recognize three kinds of physical resources: those they buy, those they lease long-term, and those they rent short-term – so it is with their human resources. Some employees have permanent contracts, some have short-term contracts, and some are regarded simply as casual labour.

G Telecommunication systems offer us the direct line, which means that individuals can be contacted without the caller having to talk to anyone else. Voice-mail and the answer-phone mean that individuals can communicate without ever actually talking to one another. If we are unfortunate enough to contact organizations with sophisticated touch-tone systems, we can buy things and pay for them without ever speaking to a human being.

H To combat this closing in on ourselves we have the Internet, which opens out communication channels more widely than anyone could want or need. An individual's electronic presence on the Internet is known as a 'Home Page' – suggesting the safety and security of an electronic hearth. An elaborate system of 3-dimensional graphics distinguishes this very 2-dimensional the medium of 'web sites'. The nomenclature itself creates the illusion of a geographical entity, that the person sitting before the computer is travelling, when in fact the 'site' is coming to him. 'Addresses' of one kind or another move to the individual, rather than the individual moving between them, now that location is no longer geographical.

I An example of this is the mobile phone. I am now not available either at home or at work, but wherever I take my mobile phone. Yet, even now, we cannot escape the security of wanting to 'locate' the person at the other end. It is no coincidence that almost everyone we see answering or initiating a mobile phone-call in public begins by saying where he or she is.

Questions 15-18

Choose the correct letter, **A, B, C or D**.

15. According to the author, one thing we long for is:
A. safety of the home | B. security | C. open access | D. positive virtues

16. Access to many buildings:
A. is unauthorized | B. is becoming more difficult | C. is a cause of crime | D. used to be called 'Reception'

17. Buildings used to permit access to any users:
A. but now they do not | B. and still do now | C. especially offices | D. especially in urban areas

18. Secure zones:
A. do not allow user access | B. compartmentalize the user | C. are often like traps | D. are not accessible to everybody

Questions 19-24

Complete the summary below using words from the box.

LIVEWORKSHEETS

Reducing	Off	Computer
Other people	Isolating	Teamwork
Decrease in	Similar	Solved
No different from	Overcame	Physical
Protected	Combat	Developed
Cut-off		

The problem of physical access to buildings has now been **(19)** _____ by technology. Messages are **(20)** _____ with passwords not allowing **(21)** _____ to read someone else's messages. But, while individuals are becoming increasingly **(22)** _____ socially by the way they do their job, at the same time more value is being put on **(23)** _____. However, e-mail and voice-mail have led to a **(24)** _____ opportunities for person-to-person communication.

Questions 25-27

Complete the sentences below. Use **NO MORE THAN THREE WORDS** for each answer.

25. The writer does not like _____.

26. An individual's Home Page indicates their _____ on the Internet.

27. Devices like mobile phones mean that location is _____.

READING PASSAGE 3

You should spend about 20 minutes on Questions 28-40, which are based on Reading Passage 3 below.

A LEAP INTO HISTORY

A Between the Inishowen peninsula, north-west of Derry, and the Glens of Antrim, in the east beyond the Sperrin Mountains, are found some of Western Europe's most captivating and alluring landscape.

B The Roe Valley Park, some 15 miles east of Derry is a prime example. The Park, like so many Celtic places, is steeped in history and legend. As the Roe trickles down through heather bogs in the Sperrin Mountains to the South, it is a river by the time it cuts through what was once called the 'garden of the soul' – in Celtic 'Gortenanima'.

C The castle of O'Cahan once stood here and a number of houses which made up the town of Limavady. The town takes its name from the legend of a dog leaping into the river Roe carrying a message, or perhaps chasing a stag. This is a wonderful place, where the water traces its way through rock and woodland; at times, lingering in brooding pools of dark cool water under the shade of summer trees, and, at others, forming weirs and leads for water mills now long gone.

D The Roe, like all rivers, is witness to history and change. To Mullagh Hill, on the west bank of the River Roe just outside the present-day town of Limavady, St Columba came in 575 AD for the Convention of Drumceatt. The world is probably unaware that it knows something of Limavady; but the town is, in fact, renowned for Jane Ross's song Danny Boy, written to a tune once played by a tramp in the street. Limavady town itself and many of the surrounding villages have Celtic roots but no one knows for sure just how old the original settlement of Limavady is.

E Some 30 miles along the coast road from Limavady, one comes upon the forlorn, but the imposing ruin of Dunluce Castle, which stands on a soft basalt outcrop, in defiance of the turbulent Atlantic lashing it on all sides. The jagged-toothed ruins sit proudly on their rock top commanding the coastline to east and west. The only connection to the mainland is by a narrow bridge. Until the kitchen court fell into the sea in 1639 killing several servants, the castle was fully inhabited. In the next hundred years so, the structure gradually fell into its present dramatic state of disrepair, stripped of its roofs by wind and weather, and robbed by a man of its carved stonework. Ruined and forlorn its aspect may be yet, in the haunting Celtic twilight of the long summer evenings, it is redolent of another age, another dream.

F A mile or so to the east of the castle lies Port na Spanish, where the Neapolitan Galleas, Girona, from the Spanish Armada went down one dark October night in 1588 on its way to Scotland. Of the1500-odd men on board, nine survived.

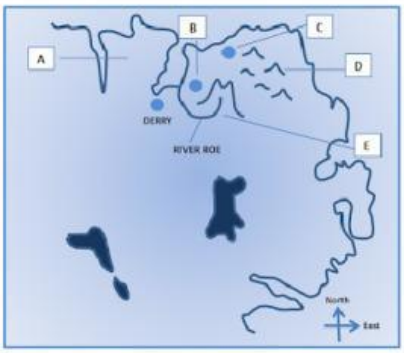
LIVEWORKSHEETS

G Even further to the east is the Giant's Causeway stunning coastline with strangely symmetrical columns of dark basalt – a beautiful geological wonder. Someone once said of the Causeway that it was worth seeing, but not worth going to see. That was in the days of horses and carriages when travelling was difficult. But it is certainly well worth a visit. The last lingering moments of the twilight hours are the best time to savour the full power of the coastline's magic; the time when the place comes into its own. The tourists are gone and if you are very lucky you will be alone. A fine circular walk will take you down to the Grand Causeway, past amphitheatres of stone columns and formations. It is not frightening, but there is a power in the place – tangible, yet inexplicable. The blackness of some nights conjures up feelings of eeriness and unease. The visitor realizes his place in the scheme of the magnificent spectacle. Once experienced, it is impossible to forget the grandeur of the landscape.

H Beyond the Causeway, connecting the mainland with an outcrop of rock jutting out of the turbulent Atlantic, is the Carrick-a-Rede Rope Bridge. When first constructed, the bridge was a simple rope handrail with widely spaced slats which was used mainly by salmon fishermen needing to travel from the island to the mainland. In time, the single handrail was replaced with a more sturdy caged bridge however, it is still not a crossing for the faint-hearted. The Bridge swings above a chasm of rushing, foaming water that seems to drag the unwary down, and away. Many visitors who make the walk one way are unable to return resulting in them being taken off the island by boat.

Questions 28-32

Match each place with its location on the map (**A-E**).



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28. The Sperrin Mountains: _____

29. Dunluce Castle: _____

30. Inishowen: _____

31. The Glens of Antrim: .....

Questions 33-38

Write **YES, NO,** or **NOT GIVEN**.

33. After 1639 the castle of Dunluce was not completely uninhabited: _____

34. Dunluce Castle evokes another period of history: _____

35. There were more than 1500 men on the Girona: _____

36. The Giant's Causeway is worth going to visit: _____

37. Twilight is the best time to visit the Giant's Causeway: _____

38. The sturdy cage increased the number of visitors: _____

Questions 39-40

Choose the correct letter, **A, B, C or D**.

39. The writer feels that the Giant's Causeway is: **(A) Unsettling (B) Relaxing (C) Boring (D) Exciting**

LIVEWORKSHEETS

40. A good title for the passage would be: **(A) Roe Valley (B) Giant's Causeway (C) East to West (D) A leap into history**

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IELTS Reading Practice - TRUE/ FALSE/ NOT GIVEN

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