READING PASSAGE

You should spend about 20 minutes on **Questions 1–13**, which are based on the reading passage below.

The life of a pomegranate



A Steeped in history and romance and almost in a class by itself, the pomegranate, Punica granatum L, belongs to the family Punicaceae, which includes only one genus and two species, the other one, little-known, being P. protopunica Balf, peculiar to the island of Socotra.

B An attractive shrub or small tree, to 20 or 30 ft (6 or 10 m) high, the pomegranate is much-branched, more or less spiny and extremely long-lived, some specimens at Versailles known to have survived two centuries. It has a strong tendency to sucker from the base. The leaves are evergreen, opposite or in whorls of 5 or 6, short-stemmed, 3/8 to 4 in (1–10 cm) long, leathery. Showy flowers grow on the branch tips singly or as many as 5 in a cluster. They are 1 1/4 in (3 cm) wide and characterized by the thick, tubular, red calyx, having 5 to 8 fleshy, pointed sepals. Nearly round, but crowned at the base by the prominent calyx, the fruit, 2 1/2 to 5 in (6.25–12.5 cm) wide, has a tough, leathery skin or rind, basically yellow, more or less overlaid with light or deep pink or rich red.

C The interior is separated by membranous walls and white spongy tissue (rag) into compartments packed with transparent sacs filled with tart, flavorful, fleshy, juicy, red, pink or whitish pulp (technically the aril). In each sac, there is one white or red, angular, soft or hard seed. The seeds represent about 52% of the weight of the whole fruit.

D The pomegranate tree is native from Iran to the Himalayas in northern India, and has been cultivated since ancient times throughout the Mediterranean region of Asia, Africa and Europe. The fruit was used in many ways as it is today and was featured in Egyptian mythology and art, praised in ancient document and it was carried by desert caravans for the sake of its thirst-quenching juice. It traveled to central and southern India from Iran about the first century A.D. and was reported growing in Indonesia in 1416. It has been widely cultivated throughout India and drier parts of southeast Asia, Malaya, the East Indies and tropical Africa. The most important growing regions are Egypt, China, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Iran, Iraq, India, Burma and Saudi Arabia.

E It is rather commonly planted and has become naturalized in Bermuda, where it was first recorded in 1621, but only occasionally seen in the Bahamas, West Indies and warm areas of South and Central America. Many people grow it at cool altitudes in the interior of Honduras. In Mexico it is frequently planted.

F The tree was introduced in California by Spanish settlers in 1769. It is grown for its fruit mostly in the dry zones of that state and Arizona. In California, commercial pomegranate cultivation is concentrated in Tulare, Fresno and Kern counties, with small plantings in Imperial and Riverside counties. There were 2,000 acres (810 ha) of fruit-bearing trees in these areas in the 1920s. Production declined from lack of demand in the 1930s, but new plantings were made when demand increased in the 1960s.

G The species is primarily mild-temperate to subtropical and naturally adapted to regions with cool winters and hot summers, but certain types are grown in home dooryards in tropical areas such as various islands of the Bahamas and West Indies. In southern Florida, fruit development is enhanced after a cold winter. Elsewhere in the United States, the pomegranate can be grown outdoors as far north as Washington County, Utah, and Washington D.C., though it doesn't fruit in the latter locations. It can be severely injured by temperatures below 12° F (-11.11° C). The plant favors a semi-arid climate and is extremely drought-tolerant.

H Rooted cuttings or seedlings are set out in pre-fertilized pits 2 ft (60 cm) deep and wide and are spaced 12 to 18 ft (3.5–5.5 m) apart, depending on the fertility of the soil. Initially, the plants are cut back to 24 to 30 in (60–75 cm) in height and after they branch out the lower branches are pruned to provide a clear main stem. In as much as fruits are borne only at the tips of new growth, it is recommended that for the first 3 years the branches be judiciously shortened annually to encourage the maximum number of new shoots on all sides, prevent straggly development and achieve a strong, well-framed plant. After the 3rd year, only suckers and dead branches are removed.

LIVEWORKSHEETS

How to go about it

For questions **9–13**:

- Flow charts usually have a heading so use this to locate the relevant part of the text.
- Treat the flow-chart like a summary. The text may be in note form so pay particular attention to the grammar.
- Sometimes the information in the flow-chart may be in a different order from the reading passage.

Don't forget!

- For questions that require you to complete information, check the number of words required for each blank space.

Questions 1–4

The reading passage has eight paragraphs **A–H**.

Which paragraph contains the following information?

NB You may use any letter more than once.

1 what the inside of the pomegranate looks like

2 domestic cultivation of the pomegranate tree

3 what the pomegranate tree looks like

4 the area where the pomegranate tree originated from

Questions 5–8

Do the following statements agree with the information given in the reading passage?

Write:

TRUE	if the statement agrees with the information
FALSE	if the statement contradicts the information
NOT GIVEN	if there is no information on this

5 The pomegranate tree lives only for a short time.

6 The flowers of the pomegranate are particularly enticing to both bees and birds.

7 The seeds make up a small proportion of the weight of the pomegranate fruit.

8 The pomegranate tree can withstand very dry weather conditions.

Questions 9–13

Complete the flow-chart below.

Choose **ONE WORD ONLY** from the passage for each answer.

The Reproduction of Pomegranates

Cuttings sown in **9** .....

↓

Soil fertility dictates gap between plants

↓

At first plants clipped

↓

To make branchless **10** ....., lower growth is removed

↓

Pomegranate found at the **11** ..... of new growth

↓

Branches cut back yearly over 3 years to:

- produce new shoots
- stop untidy **12** .....
- make the plants shapely and sturdy

↓

From the third year onwards only **13** ..... and dead branches cut off

LIVEWORKSHEETS