Part 5

You are going to read an extract from a novel. For questions **31–36**, choose the answer **(A, B, C or D)** which you think fits best according to the text.

In the exam, mark your answers **on the separate answer sheet**.

Louisa Maguire, wedding and portrait photographer, gave her clients images of themselves as they wanted to be seen – confident and happy, with the polish of an expensive American advertising campaign. She had arrived from New York in 1993, just as Ireland was beginning to transform itself from a country of staunch Catholic conservatives into a society dominated by the neo-liberal *nouveaux riches*. In Celtic Tiger Ireland, people were no longer suspicious of success, and instead of emigrating to get rich, they were living the American Dream at home. And who better to document it than an American photographer?

Although Louisa had once harboured higher aspirations, she didn't mind doing weddings and portraits of bonny babies. After all, that was how Dutch painters had made their livings centuries before, churning out portraits that reflected their clients' prosperity. Louisa Maguire, photographer, had introduced Dubliners to high-quality black-and-white portraits in life-size formats shot with her beloved Hasselblad, which they hung on their walls like works of art. She was expensive, but that was part of her appeal.

Weddings were the other mainstay of her business. She shot them in documentary style, always telling the story of the day in a way that showed the fairytale, but she also caught the uniqueness of every occasion. Digital cameras were far easier to use than the analogue cameras she preferred, but the old-fashioned method had a *timelessness and depth that digital couldn't match. And there were few things she enjoyed more than spending* hours in the darkroom, fine-tuning a thousand shades of grey until she got a picture exactly right. Black and white was more evocative than colour, which stripped people of the dark sides that made them interesting …

Louisa drove into Dalkey Village and pulled up in front of her studio. Her assistant, Paul, was waiting for her. 'Hey, what's up? You're late,' he said, as he loaded Louisa's middle-aged Volvo Estate with equipment, then stretched himself out in the passenger seat. She would tell him eventually, but not yet. For now, Louisa wanted to drive without having to think. Sensing her mood, Paul put music on the CD player, sat back and closed his eyes. She found her way to the M50, then gunned the engine as she headed west, determined to make up time. Speeding along the highway that circled the city, she felt regret at the paving of Ireland; they were passing high-tech factories, warehouses and shopping malls, which made the outskirts of Dublin look like any European suburb.

'You ever visit the cairns?' Louisa asked Paul.

'The what?'

'The Bronze Age tombs in Meath. They're five thousand years old. There's one you can actually go inside, if you borrow the key from the people in the Big House. I'll never forget crawling down there. It was like going back to the very beginning. I had an eerie feeling that I'd been there before.'

'You Americans and your history. I thought you hated all that sentimental diddle-eye-doe auf' Oirlan' nonsense.'

'I do. I'm not talking about Oirlan'. I mean the real place underneath all that sentimental nonsense.'

'If I can't see it, I'm not interested. We're photographers, Lou. Surface is what we do.'

'I know it.' Too well, she realised.

They left the M50 and headed north on the N23 into countryside that was like a green quilt with grey stitching made stone by stone with muscle and sweat. The earth beneath held buried treasure – bronze goblets, gold torques, wisps of fabric and even human bodies preserved in the peat-rich soil. This was the Ireland she loved, although she usually kept her thoughts to herself. She didn't want anyone to suppose she was just another daft American looking for her roots.

31 What do we learn about Louisa Maguire in the first paragraph?

A She moved to Ireland because of social changes there.
B Being American helped her to get photographic work in Ireland.
C The attitudes of Irish people confused her when she arrived there.
D She had more success in Ireland than in America.

32 Louisa's attitude to doing weddings and portraits was that

A the money she could make from that kind of work was its main advantage.
B the responses of clients often made that kind of work rewarding.
C she was only likely to do that kind of work temporarily.
D she was not ashamed of doing that kind of work.

33 In the third paragraph, what is implied about Louisa's work for weddings?

A She sometimes had to persuade clients that her methods were right for them.
B She preferred photographing weddings to doing portraits.
C She showed aspects of the occasion that clients had not been aware of.
D She used analogue cameras for photographing weddings.

34 When Louisa met Paul at her studio and they got into the car,

A he did something that annoyed her.
B her mood changed.
C she decided to delay answering the question he asked her.
D he misunderstood how she was feeling.

35 When Lousia mentioned the cairns to Paul,

A he said that her attitude to the place was typical of Americans.
B he indicated that he had had a different experience at the place.
C he said that he was not at all surprised by her feelings about the place.
D he suggested that he did not regard it as a place worth visiting.

36 During their conversation, Louisa agreed with Paul that

A his attitude to his work was more limited than hers.
B she had a tendency to be too sentimental.
C her attitude to aul' Oirlan' was a foolish one.
D only what was visible mattered to them in their work.

Part 6

You are going to read four extracts from articles about research into the educational value of computer games. For questions **37–40**, choose from the extracts **A–D**. The extracts may be chosen more than once.

Do computer games have educational value?

Four journalists consider some recent research findings.

A Yvonne Cheney

Nobody is claiming that computer games are going to solve the world's problems, but even the most mindless of them taps into real human abilities and emotions. Gamers may not reflect on how the characters and scenarios they engage with could help them to interact with others in the real world, but recent research at the State University suggests that the games do perform such a function. In other words, far from retreating into another world, adopting another persona and acting out fantasies unconnected with real life, gamers are taking part in meaningful interaction and developing worthwhile skills. Leaving aside for a moment the issue of whether the games are addictive or not, or how much time gets devoted to them, this meticulous study adds more weight to the growing consensus that gaming may be good for us.

B Declan Morton

We have heard a great deal recently about the cognitive benefits of gaming. Playing computer games, even the most banal of them, would seem to keep the brain active and to replicate the kind of thought processes that are valuable in the real world. Researchers at the State University take this idea a step further, however, claiming that the games develop interpersonal skills as well as cognitive ones. Although I have no argument with the way the study was conducted, this conclusion seems to be a step too far, and I can't see too many people taking it very seriously. The evidence that gaming can become compulsive behaviour, and not just in teenagers, is quite convincing and it seems perverse to suggest that such an individualistic pastime, that takes the player off into a world of complete fantasy, could ever promote interpersonal skills in the real world.

C Lydia Porter

New Research at the State University suggests that playing computer games may not be so bad for us after all. This is not the first study to suggest that gaming can have both social and cognitive benefits for the individual, and the claim that mental agility is promoted by gaming is well documented in the literature. Even the popular notion that gaming takes over people's lives in a negative way, stifling social development, is being questioned – and not before time. As one commentator neatly puts it: 'For today's teenager, the computer game is just as compelling and absorbing, but no more harmful, than the novels of Jane Austen were for her grandmother at the same age.' The current study would benefit from further work, however, as the researchers seem to be making quite sweeping claims on the basis of relatively thin evidence. Having said that, the idea put forward here that social skills may develop as a result of gaming is an intriguing one, that's sure to spark some lively debate.

D Stig Strellson

For those of us who are both enthusiastic gamers and perfectly well-adjusted human beings, the accusation frequently heard that gaming is both addictive and harmful has always smacked of prejudice and ignorance in equal measure. Fortunately, recent studies into the cognitive and social benefits of gaming are now setting the record straight. The latest study, carried out at the State University, takes the argument further, claiming that gaming actively promotes real-world interpersonal skills. Although it is sure to attract quite a bit of attention, this study is clearly just scratching the surface of a big issue. The fact that only a small geographical area was studied detracts a little from the findings. It is nonetheless, a further step in the right direction in terms of dispassionate debate on this emotive subject.

Which writer

has a different view from Cheney regarding the social benefits of gaming? 37

doesn't share Morton's opinion about the addictive nature of gaming? 38

agrees with Porter's point regarding the researcher's methodology? 39

presents a different argument to the others regarding the likely impact of the research? 40

Part 7

You are going to read an article about a competition in Britain in which the winners are the towns and cities considered the most attractive, particularly with regard to flowers and plants. Six paragraphs have been removed from the article. Choose from the paragraphs **A–G** the one which fits each gap (**41–46**). There is one extra paragraph which you do not need to use.

In the exam, mark your answers **on the separate answer sheet**.

The 'Britain in Bloom' competition

Every year, more than 1,000 towns and villages across Britain are in fierce competition to reap the benefit of the Britain in Bloom awards. William Langley reports.

Another town, another riot of begonias, hollyhocks and lupins. Cruising down streets thick with hanging baskets, planted tubs and flower-filled horse troughs, Jim Buttress, the Head Judge of the annual Britain in Bloom competition, needs no reminding that his verdict can make or break the place where you live. A nod from Jim can raise house prices, attract businesses, bring in tourists and secure council grants. Towns will do a lot to please him.

41 _____

From barely noticed beginnings nearly half a century ago, Britain in Bloom has become a cultural phenomenon, stoking passions and rivalries that are changing the way the country looks and, as a consequence, refashioning our sense of what makes a place appear attractive. More than 1,000 towns, villages and cities now enter and the event has grown into the most fiercely contested of its kind in the world. Last week, the judging entered its tense final stages and Jim was weighing up the contenders for the biggest prize of all, the Champion of Champions trophy. In the early days, according to Jim, winning depended more or less on how many flowers you could plant and how much colour you could create.

42 _____

The competition's influence extends far beyond the committees that enter it. Extravagant manifestations of floweriness have become a part of the country's visual texture. Traffic roundabouts have been turned into giant bouquets; ornamental gardens are springing up in industrial wastelands. Hanging baskets were relatively rare in Britain until the competition began. Now it's hard to find a high street in the country that isn't awash with them.

43 _____

The competition's defenders consider such criticisms over the top or, at least, out of date. Since 2001, it has been run by the Royal Horticultural Society, with the aim of supporting 'environmentally sustainable, socially responsible, community-based' programmes. The old tricks of concealing urban grime beneath forests of fuchsias or creating rustic pastiches in built-up suburbs no longer work.

44 _____

However badly these developments go down with the traditionalist element, the competition has become too important for many communities to ignore. A spokesman in Stockton-on-Tees, which won the Champion City award three years ago, says: 'Say you're a business trying to recruit staff and your town's won Britain in Bloom. It's very helpful in image terms. It makes people feel happier about living here.'

45 _____

With so much at stake, the competitive tempo of Britain in Bloom has risen to a point that has started to cause alarm. Tales of dirty tricks abound. Recently, the village of Cayton, winner of several prizes, awoke to find that a mystery attacker had destroyed its prized flower beds. Jealous local rivals were rumoured to be responsible, though nothing has been proved. Some years earlier, in one village a water bowser used for irrigation was spiked with toxic chemicals.

46 _____

Last week found Jim on his final tour before the results are announced in a month's time. 'It's been great,' he says. 'You see a lot of things when you do this job, and what I've seen most of is pride.'

A This is because, over the past decade, the judging criteria have been subtly changed. They now take into account 'conservation and biodiversity', 'recycling and limiting demand on natural resources' and 'community awareness and understanding'.

B It's not always like that, however, says Jim. 'I arrived somewhere on the train once, and there were flowers planted all around the station. It looked fantastic. When I got in the taxi, the driver said: "I don't know where all these flowers came from, they weren't here yesterday."'

C 'Some of this is exaggerated,' says Jim. 'There are rivalries, but there's a good spirit too. The competition brings out the best in communities. Go to places where there's poverty, vandalism, drugs, and you will see people working together, trying to make their surroundings look better.'

D Sometimes too much. One hired a stretch limousine to ferry him around in luxury. 'The thing had blacked-out windows,' he huffs. 'I couldn't see a thing.'

E Not everyone is thrilled, though. In a celebrated attack some years ago, the eminent historian and gardener Roy String accused Britain in Bloom of burying the country beneath an avalanche of flowers, which, he claimed, was destroying the character of otherwise perfectly attractive communities.

F Aberdeen, long wreathed in a reputation for charmlessness, has invested a great deal of money in reviving its image through the competition. Four years ago, it was awarded a gold award and a citation that described it as 'providing an outstanding combination of floral displays, wonderful trees, and numerous lovely parks'. Once known as the Granite City, the tourist-hungry city now styles itself the 'City of Roses'.

G 'But it's much more sophisticated, much more competitive now,' he says. 'People are in this thing to win it. There's a lot at stake. That sign on the way into town that says "Britain in Bloom Winner" is a real asset.'

Part 8

You are going to read a magazine article about the use of gadgets by people doing outdoor activities. For questions **47–56**, choose from the sections of the article (**A–D**). The sections may be chosen more than once.

In the exam, mark your answers **on the separate answer sheet**.

In which section of the article are the following mentioned?

why people were willing to suffer outdoors in the past	47
the need to understand certain terminology	48
a belief about what the reason for doing outdoor activities should be	49
a feeling of reassurance provided by a certain gadget	50
how many people have taken up outdoor activities because of gadgets	51
a criticism of the motivation of people who get a lot of gadgets for outdoor activities	52
a belief that gadgets may prove not to be useful	53
a belief that someone with gadgets would not be a good companion in certain circumstances	54
the high level of demand for gadgets connected with outdoor activities	55
an advantage of outdoor gadgets in addition to the benefits for users	56

On the trail of Kit Man

Gadgets that bring home comforts to the great outdoors have given rise to a new breed of outdoor adventurer. But purists are unconvinced.

A

Up there, in the clear fresh air, it isn't just the stars that are glowing. You can climb a mountain and find at the top of it a bleeping nightmare of hi-tech gadgetry and hardship-avoidance devices. Worried about getting lost? Relax with a handheld GPS unit, featuring 3D and aerial display, plus built-in compass and barometric altimeter. Even the sacred covenant between outdoor types and wet socks has come unravelled with the development of 'hydrophobic' fabrics which repel all moisture. At next month's Outdoors Show in Birmingham, all this kit and more will be on display for an audience which seemingly can't get enough of it. 'When we ask people what they come to the show for, they list two things,' says the event's sales manager, Mike Simmonds. 'One is the inspiration to get outdoors in the first place, and the other is to see the new gear, the gadgets, the breakthroughs. That's what they love.' The event, the showcase of Britain's booming adventure business shows everything the tech-savvy adventurer could wish for, from solar-heated sleeping bags to remote-controlled lanterns.

B

The rise of Kit Man, as the gizmo-fixated menace of the 21st-century mountains has been christened, reflects both changing social trends and the dizzying speed of scientific advance. Modern hikers have moved on from the Spartan routines of 50 years ago, when discomfort, bad food and danger were seen as part of the authentic outdoor experience. They also have more money and a conditioned attachment to life's luxuries. However, basic pioneering disciplines – map-reading, camp-laying, First Aid – have declined, to be shakily replaced by the virtual skills offered by technology. With so much gear now available, Kit Man and his kind stand accused by the old-schoolers of being interested only in reaching the summits of gadgetry.

C

'I think these people are completely missing the point,' huffs author and TV presenter Guy Grieve, who spent a year living alone in the Alaskan wilderness. 'The whole idea of going into the wild is to get away from the things that tie you in knots at home. I'd prefer to take as little as possible – a tent, a rifle, and a few pots and pans. All this technology, I mean, it might look fantastic on paper, but when there's a real problem, it's almost certainly going to let you down. What will see you through is the old stuff, the maps and the bits of rope. There are times when you need that kind of dependability. Who'd want to be stranded out in the wild with a gadget freak?' Travel and adventure writer Clive Tully agrees. 'Be suspicious of anything that claims to make your life easier,' he warns. 'My experience is that people who depend on technology are woefully ill-prepared in other ways. You still need to be able to read a map and do the basic stuff.'

D

None of which is enough to keep Kit Man from his toys. The mountains and hills are alive with the sound of ringing mobiles, beeping biometric pressure metres, clicking ultra-violet radiation sensors and the whirring of the current ultimate in gadget chic – a micro-helicopter which can be controlled from an iPod to send back live pictures of the route ahead. Thus tooled up, Kit Man must consider what he is to wear. And as any visit to a contemporary outdoor store shows, this involves not only acquiring new clobber, but new jargon. When he asks about a pair of pants, he will learn about Moisture Vapour Transfer Rate, Hydrostatic Heat Resistance and Wickability. It is tempting to scoff at Kit Man, but not everyone sides with the romantics. Many in the adventure business say gadgets have encouraged thousands who would otherwise not have ventured into the great outdoors. Evidence from the American market also suggests that technology has had a positive environmental impact, and increased safety standards.