Reading Passage 2

1 You should spend 20 minutes on questions 1–14 which are based on Reading Passage 2.

Technique
Survey the title, the reading passage and the questions within about 8–10 seconds to understand what your task is. Read the title and skim the text then the questions. Decide what type of passage it is: mainly historical, problem and solution or argumentative?

Chartism: a people's petition to Parliament

The early decades of the 1800s are well known as a period of discontent and social unrest. The Industrial Revolution meant the decline of traditional rural communities and the growth of a working-class urban population, particularly in the new industrial towns of the North such as Manchester. Living and working conditions for the urban factory worker were frequently appalling and gave rise to a number of movements aimed at bettering working-class conditions. One such movement was Chartism, which aimed to present a people's charter, or petition for reform, to parliament. It had a number of aims, but first and foremost among them was the granting of universal suffrage, or the vote for all men over the age of 21.

There had been several previous attempts in the early 1800s to build a solid working-class movement, most notably the attempt to establish a universal trade union known as the Grand National Consolidated Trade Union or GNCTU. In 1834, however, this trade union collapsed. The subsequent disillusionment led to a growth of interest in other possible ways of giving voice to the desires and grievances of the workers. In 1836, the London Working Men's Association was founded, led by William Lovett. Its aim was to reform parliament, and in 1838 it issued a charter demanding six political reforms, including universal suffrage. Most of these demands were to be taken up by the Chartist petitioners.

So began the Chartist movement. Other centres of this movement were located in Birmingham, and in the north of England. In Birmingham, the movement was championed by Thomas Attwood, a banker who was interested in leading the movement for parliamentary reform in the Midlands, and Joseph Sturge, a wealthy corn merchant. The key figure in the north of England was Fergus O'Connor, at that time the editor of the newspaper *The Northern Star*. In 1839, a Chartist National Convention assembled in London. The delegates talked of proclaiming a 'sacred month' or general strike, and collected signatures for a great petition. This petition was presented to parliament but it was rejected in the Commons by 235 votes to 46. Thereupon the National Convention proclaimed a general strike, but a week later cancelled the proclamation and ignominiously dismissed itself. The government meanwhile had taken action and additional troops had been sent to those areas where Chartism was strongest. Disturbances in Birmingham were crushed, and William Lovett was arrested. The only other Chartist rising occurred in Monmouthshire where a group of miners marched in Newport. Again, this Newport Rising was quickly crushed and its leaders transported for life.

In 1842, a second petition was presented to parliament but was again rejected by 287 votes to 49. A series of riots and strikes followed, most notably the Lancashire Plug Plot, where strikers went round the mills removing the plugs from boilers. Again, government troops moved in to crush all such disturbances and many Chartists were arrested. William Lovett subsequently abandoned the cause, and Fergus O'Connor rose to prominence as the main Chartist leader.

In 1848, under the leadership of O'Connor, a third Chartist petition was drawn up known as the 'Monster Petition'. It was intended to be taken to parliament in a large procession, but the government took elaborate military precautions, and the procession was forbidden to cross the Thames. It was therefore taken to parliament in three cabs instead. O'Connor had claimed that the petition contained five million signatures, but in the event it was found to contain less than two million, and a great many of these were false. Parliament refused to discuss it, and the Chartist movement was discredited.

Despite the fiasco of the third petition, the Chartist movement gave expression to a number of proposals which were later adopted to produce a reformed parliamentary system. Universal manhood suffrage, the abolition of the property qualification and a secret ballot all featured among the Chartists' demands and all of them were eventually granted, but the process of reform was slow and was not fully achieved until the early 20th century. In essence, the demands of the Chartists were too far ahead of the times, and consequently the government took very resolute action to control and suppress their actions. Doubtless the essayist Thomas Carlyle, writing in the mid 19th century, expressed the fear of many MPs when he wrote, 'These chartisms are our French Revolution. God grant that we, with our better methods, may be able to transact it by argument alone.'

Questions 1–7

*Complete each sentence with the correct ending **A–H**.*

1 The GNCTU
2 The London Working Men's Association
3 The Chartist National Convention
4 The first Chartist petition
5 The Newport Rising
6 The Lancashire Plug Plot
7 The third Chartist petition

A was not debated in parliament.
B was a response to the government's rejection of the 1842 Chartist petition.
C was a failed attempt to establish a universal workers' movement.
D was an example of the unrest following the rejection of the 1839 petition.
E was a response to the transportation of a number of Chartist leaders.
F made an empty threat of industrial action.
G was rejected in parliament by a large majority.
H anticipated many of the demands of later Chartist petitions.

Questions 8–11

Look at the following statements (Questions 8–11) and the list of people in the box below.

*Match each statement with the correct person **A–C**.*

***NB** You may use any letter more than once.*

8 He led the Chartist movement in the North of England.
9 He was head of the London Working Men's Association.
10 He campaigned for parliamentary reform in the Midlands.
11 He was the movement's figurehead when the third 'Monster' petition was compiled.

List of people
A William Lovett
B Thomas Attwood
C Fergus O'Connor

Questions 12–14

Do the following statements agree with the information 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*

12 The 1848 Chartist procession was halted due to government intervention.
13 The third Chartist petition contained more signatures than the 1842 petition.
14 All of the Chartists' demands had been granted by 1900.

READING PASSAGE 3. Read about subjects that are taught in schools

Most students learn subjects like English, Maths, Science and Geography at school. However, some people don't think that these subjects are so useful for students. They think that these subjects will not help students to get a job later, after they leave school. So, some schools have started to teach new subjects to their students, which they think will be more useful to them in the future.

Some schools want their students to study subjects which they think will be more helpful for them to get a job in the future. One school in the United States has decided to teach their students how to do different things using computers. Their students are learning how to write computer programs and how to design mobile phone apps. Their students enjoy these new subjects, and would like to have more lessons to improve their computer skills.

Other schools want their students to learn more daily life skills. A school in the UK is teaching their students about what they should eat to stay healthy and how to cook healthy meals. In the past, most children learnt how to cook at school, but today, many schools have stopped teaching cooking, so that they can spend more time on subjects like Science and Maths. However, this UK school teaches cooking as well as other skills such as how to save money.

Finally, learning how to speak and write well is very important for both work and family life. Some people think that children do not learn these skills properly in school, because they spend so much time studying for tests. Therefore, a school in Singapore has started teaching their students how to speak and write well, and how to speak in a good way to young people and adults.

Complete the summary with words from the box. Read about subjects that are taught in schools again to help you.

future	job	money	practice	skills	subjects
work	young people				

Some schools are now teaching new things to their students which will be more useful to them in the _____**(1)**. Some of the new _____**(2)**, such as Computer Programming, can help students get a _____**(3)** when they leave school. Others help them to learn important _____**(4)** in the home, for example, how to cook healthy meals and how to save _____**(5)**. Finally, more _____**(6)** in speaking and writing can also help _____ (7) get on well with other people when they leave school, both at _____**(8)** and at home.

READING PASSAGE 4. Read the essay about tests in school. Label the paragraphs with the correct phrases from the box.

Agree with the title	Disagree with the title
Introduction of the topic	Summary of the main points

These days, children do too many tests at school

(9) _____

Every year, many students do tests at school. These tests are important because they show that children understand their school subjects, but some people think that it is not good for children to take too many tests. I think there are advantages and disadvantages to talking tests.

(10) _____

Some people think that children do too much tests at school. They think that children spend too much time studying for tests and this makes children bored of the subject. For example, if students spend a lot of time studying for English tests, this might make them think that learning English is boring. Children may also feel worried about taking tests. If they fail the test they might think that they are not good at learning.

(11) _____

However, other people think that it is important for children to take a lot of test. They think that tests can help teachers see if children understand the subjects. They also think that teachers can make tests fun for their students by playing games to help them prepare. These people think that if children have a test they will pay more attention to their lessons and they will do more work at home and at a school.

(12) _____

It is important for children to do tests in school because teachers need to know that their students understand the subject. Doing tests also helps children to pay attention in class and spend their time well. However, schools should not give too many tests to their students, because this will make children feel bored.

LIVEWORKSHEETS