

Part 1 (8 points, 1 point per item). You are going to read a text about the importance of handwriting. Eight sentences have been removed from the text. For questions 43–50, choose from sentences A–K the one which best fits each gap. There is one sentence which you do not need to use. There is an example (0)

Has handwriting become obsolete?

Many progressive educators believe that handwriting is becoming obsolete in the 21st century. (0) A Computers are everywhere and an increasing number of schools expect students, even those in Grade 1, to do their work on handheld tablets. So why bother teaching students how to handwrite? Unfortunately, much of the debate about handwriting tends to dwell on minor issues. (43) _____ They squabble over whether handwritten signatures on legal documents will eventually be replaced by electronic signatures. Finally, they differ on the need for students to read historical documents in their original, handwritten, form. (44) _____ A much more important issue is whether learning how to handwrite helps students to master important skills such as reading. And even more importantly whether writing words on paper is better for learning than typing them on a tablet. (45) _____ Fortunately, research gives us a clear answer. Dr. Hetty Roessingh, a professor at the University of Calgary and an expert in the field of language and literacy, has found that making students print letters by hand, particularly before the end of the second grade, plays an important role in their reading development. According to Roessingh, printing creates memory traces in the brain that assist with the recognition of letter shapes. (46) _____ In other words, handwriting helps students move information from their short-term memories into their long-term memories, while typing does not. When students practise printing by hand, they learn how to read and write more quickly and more accurately. Contrary to a popular myth, repetition is not a bad thing. (47) _____ Students who get insufficient practice in printing letters by hand invariably develop weaker writing skills than students who regularly practice the skill.

In the upper elementary grades, it is still important for students to learn cursive writing. Roessingh notes that connecting letters together in a script makes it possible for students to write more quickly and this contributes to the quality of the writing outcomes. (48) _____ Precious and scarce working memory spaces become available to select better vocabulary and get it onto the page in interesting, organized ways. Learning does not come automatically. For most students, it is genuinely hard work as our brains are not naturally wired for the foundational skills of reading and writing. To achieve mastery, these skills need to be explicitly taught, regularly practised and constantly reinforced. Learning how to write individual letters and words by hand, and doing so fluently, is essential to establish reading as an automatic skill. In contrast, primary grade students who do their assignments on keyboards and tablets miss out on this valuable skill development. (49)

_____ The thing they do is they simply press a button to get the letter they want. Often the spell-checker feature supplies the correct spellings so students never learn how to independently spell more challenging words. Far from being obsolete, handwriting remains an important skill in the 21st century and beyond. Paper and pencil may not be as flashy as the latest hand held tablet, but it will help students learn a lot more. (50) _____ Many progressive educators do not agree, but the evidence proves them wrong.

- A *It isn't hard to see how they came to this conclusion.*
- B Typing on a keyboard does not have the same impact.
- C For example, supporters and opponents of handwriting argue about how often students will find themselves in situations where computers are not available.
- D When writing by hand becomes both legible and fluent, reflecting a sense of automaticity, the writer is able to generate more text.
- E However, as important as these questions seem, they miss the bigger picture.
- F On the other hand, students who handwrite fluently can engage with more challenging texts.
- G If the answer to these questions is yes, then it makes sense to keep paper and pencils in the classroom.
- H Instead of training their young brains to memorize particular letters, every time they have to painstakingly type a word.
- I Only by committing foundational skills to long-term memory can students move on to more advanced tasks.
- K Sometimes the simple things really do work best.

Part 2 (10 points, 1 point per item). You are going to read a text about urban wildlife in the United Kingdom. There are two tasks to this text (a and b). For questions 51–53, choose the answer A, B or C which fits best according to the text. For questions 54–60, complete the answers by inserting words from the text.

Urban wildlife

Perching on the side of an old power station chimney with St Paul's Cathedral to the north and the Shard, Europe's tallest building, to the east is not where you might expect to glimpse the world's fastest bird. London landmarks, including Tate Modern and the Houses of Parliament, have been home for several years to peregrine falcons*. A surprising flash of the wild in the heart of the city, the powerful bird of prey is also a specialised hunter of pigeons, which are considered such an urban pest that in 2003 a ban was imposed on feeding them in Trafalgar Square. The abundant food sources of cities and tall buildings prove an equivalent of the species' traditional cliff-side home. For all the birds which have been born and bred in urban areas, the city has become their habitat. The peregrine is just one of many species that have invaded British cities in the last few decades, encouraged in no small part by an urban ecology movement that flourished in the 1980s. Badgers and foxes are now found in most major urban areas, aided by a more regular food supply than they can find in the countryside. Deer crowd together both on the outskirts and in central city parks. But this invasion has not been entirely peaceful. There are famously more foxes living in London than there are double-decker buses and, while some people love to see them and leave out food to entice them, others pay snipers to kill foxes for £75 per animal. Yet experts say fox numbers in the UK are relatively stable, there are around 33,000 urban foxes. Besides, ecologists argue, killing foxes would be pointless because they are territorial. Kill one, and another simply claims the territory. Until you manage the food issue, any kind of control is kind of pointless and expensive. The ecologist David Goode says that the British are accepting of urban wildlife on the whole. He attributes the live-and-let-live attitude partly to the country's long history of conservation movements and amateur naturalists, right back to the city-based natural history societies of the early 19th century. Another reason for that

accepting attitude could be stressed-out city dwellers'simple self-interest. Ecologists are at pains to stress the mental health benefits of nature in cities. Melissa Harrison, a writer and photographer, is in no doubt she'd count herself among those benefiting mentally from being around urban wildlife. Brought up in semi-rural Surrey, she realised she was very unhappy while living in heavily built-up east London, but couldn't put her finger on the reason why. "I moved house. I had no garden but could see a tree out of the window. It had a magpie^{**}nesting in it, I could watch the leaves change –I had a connection with the natural world." But the natural riches in our cities today should not be taken for granted, observers say. Previous gains could be set back by a combination of planning reforms, pressure for new housing. The capital has been losing the equivalent of 2.5 Hyde Parks a year to new developments, according to one analysis. Upcoming local government budget cuts of 10% for 2015–2016 are "likely to have further adverse implications for biodiversity conservation", warns the London Wildlife Trust, which says there has already been a "substantial impact" from previous cuts by the parliament. "The enthusiasm generated in the 80s is still resulting in things being done. But there is a degree of over-confidence creeping in now," said Goode. He warns that local authority budget cuts will mean they will employ fewer ecologists, resulting in "a lack of ecological awareness in planning". Goode gives the example of former coal yard in Camley Street, which is now a small nature reserve in the middle of King's Cross after a campaign backed by Ken Livingstone and many others stopped it being turned into a coach park. "Nowadays, you doubt whether that kind of thing would happen. There are several instances of things being set up in the 80s, and everyone was full of enthusiasm. I am convinced they would not happen now."

^{*}a peregrine falcon –a large grey and white bird that can be trained to hunt and catch small birds and animals (liet. sakalas keleivis)^{**}a magpie –a bird with black and white feathers and a long tail (liet. šarka)

a) For questions 51–53, choose the answer A, B or C which fits best according to the text. There is an example (0).

0. In the centre of London, peregrine falcons

- A have been nesting for a few years.
- B have become urban pests.
- C have started disappearing.

51. What is the situation regarding falcons in the centre of London?

- A They suffer because they miss their habitat.
- B They become stressed because it is banned to feed them.
- C They are thriving because of a sufficient amount of food.

52. Why are wild animals flourishing in British cities?

- A The urban conditions are favourable for them.
- B They have been protected for centuries.
- C They have been moved to special parks.

53. What is the ecologists' main point regarding urban foxes?

- A They have to be shot pitilessly.
- B Citizens should entice foxes into their gardens.
- C It is vitally important to deal with their feeding situation.

b) For questions 54–60, complete the answers by inserting words from the text. Write **one** word only exactly as it appears in the text. There is an example (0).

0. Does the number of foxes change in the UK?

Experts consider the fox population to be generally stable.

54. How does ecologist D. Goode refer to animal lovers of the 19th century?

He considers them to be _____ naturalists.

55. Why do ecologists try hard to point out the importance of nature to citizens?

They believe nature has a positive impact on citizens' _____ wellness.

56. How did Melissa Harrison feel after moving to a new place?

7. Why are natural riches in the city disappearing?

One of the reasons is the development of new _____ areas.

58. What has caused positive action and behaviour since the 80s?

People's _____ has led to positive action.

59. Why are environmentalists important for local authorities?

They enhance environmental _____ in city development plans.

60. How does D. Goode feel about people's willingness to support environmental initiative?

He is _____ that people would not show their keen interest.