IELTS Reading
Academic

Test 7

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READING PASSAGE 1

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

In some European countries, sales of animal-based dairy milk have halved since the mid-1970s, and similar trends have been reported in the US. By contrast, interest in milk products derived from plant sources such as soya beans, rice, or nuts has exploded in recent years. The plant-milk sector has annual growth of 20%, and the market is now estimated to be worth at least $2.5 billion. The plant-milk market is dominated by almond milk, which accounts for 68% of all plant-milk sales, and is the most well-known plant-based alternative to dairy milk.

Plant-milk products were once considered highly specialist items, but they are fast becoming a common sight in supermarkets and cafés. In fact, the range of products available nowadays can be quite overwhelming. Consumers can choose between numerous, different types of plant milk, many of which are offered in sweet and plain versions. Consumers hoping to make the switch away from animal-based products have to compare the individual pros and cons of different options to find the product that meets their specific needs.

Many consumers are becoming increasingly uncomfortable with the ethics of consuming animal products. Such concerns have led to a growing number of people excluding all animal products from their diets. Obviously, since all plant milks are animal-free, these consumers can simply select a plant milk based on taste or cost. Their choice may also depend on how they plan to use the milk. For instance, some products such as rice milk are less suitable for cooking compared to products made from nuts or soya.

However, when consumer choices are influenced by factors beyond basic taste preferences or financial considerations, selecting the right plant milk becomes far more difficult. For instance, many people are interested in plant milk because these products are believed to be heathier than dairy milk. However, making comparisons between different types of milk is highly complex since every product comes with health-related pros and cons.

It is known that cow's milk has higher amounts of saturated fat than plant-based alternatives. Diets high in saturated fat can lead to serious medical problems including heart disease. Dairy milk also contains more calories than many types of plant milk, which is a consideration for people concerned about weight management. A cup of cow's milk contains, on average, 152 calories, whereas almond milk contains just 40 calories per cup. However, not all plant milks are low in calories. Rice milk, for instance, contains 120 calories per cup, making it almost as calorific as dairy milk.

Of course, milk is an important product for other nutritional reasons. It is a rich source of protein, a nutrient which is vital for healthy muscle development. Dairy milk contains more protein than other types of milk, but plant milk can still be a useful source of protein for people who are avoiding animal products. Milk derived from beans or nuts is a better source of protein than that derived from grains such as oats. In fact, soya milk provides almost as much protein as cow's milk, and almond milk is another reasonable source which fulfils most people's protein requirements.

Comparing different types of milk becomes even harder when analysing the environmental impact. Environmentalists have certainly been concerned about the detrimental effects of animal-based farming for several years. This type of agriculture requires a considerable amount of land. In fact, it has been estimated that producing just one glass of dairy milk requires approximately 650m^2 of land. Cows also release additional CO_2 (greenhouse gases) into the atmosphere, which is known to contribute to global warming. Cows' waste can also pollute the surrounding land or water supplies. Therefore, it is widely accepted that there is a need for more sustainable alternatives.

In terms of carbon emissions, there is a strong argument that all forms of plant milk are better choices for the planet. One recent study showed that plant-milk production creates approximately three times fewer carbon emissions than dairy milk production. And, generally speaking, plant-milk production requires nine times less land. These are two important factors which underline why plant milk has become known for its sustainable image amongst consumers.

However, plant milk is not without its drawbacks. The main problem is that most of the crops used for plant milk require extremely high quantities of water to grow. This is particularly true for rice and almonds. Producing milk from these crops consumes far more water than is used in dairy-milk production.

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As demand for plant milk increases, the environmental impacts are becoming clearer. To grow large quantities of crops all year round, farmers often use additional lighting and heating sources, leading to extremely high energy usage. They may also use pesticides which can be harmful for the soil and pollute water supplies. In addition, large-scale almond cultivation is known to have adverse effects on wildlife, especially local bees. As well as the issues associated with pesticide use, almond farming disrupts bees' natural cycles since they are forced to pollinate the trees more often.

Of course, selecting the right milk product is ultimately a matter of personal preference. Whether or not the deciding factor is dietary, environmental or simple taste preferences, there's no doubt that consumers now have more choice than ever before.

Questions 1–6
Complete the table below.
*Choose **NO MORE THAN TWO WORDS** from Reading Passage 1 for each answer.*
Write your answers in gaps 1–6.

Type of milk	General comments	Nutrition	Environmental impact
Dairy (milk from animal sources)	Demand for products in this sector has been falling	Known to be high in **(1)**_____ fat	Responsible for high levels of greenhouse gases This type of farming requires the most **(2)**_____
Rice milk	Not a good choice if the milk will be used for **(3)**_____ purposes	One cup has on average **(4)**_____ calories	High water consumption
(5)_____ milk	The market leader in the plant-milk sector	Provides adequate protein for most people's needs	Harmful for **(6)**_____ populations (e.g. pesticides and disrupts their natural cycles)

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Questions 7–11
Do the following statements agree with the claims of the writer in Reading Passage 1?
In boxes 7–11, write:

TRUE	*If the statement agrees with the information in the passage*
FALSE	*If the statement contradicts the information in the passage*
NOT GIVEN	*If there is no information on this in the passage*

7 Almond milk is the market leader in the plant-milk sector. ☐

8 Plain plant milk has become more common than sweet plant-milk products. ☐

9 Almond milk has fewer calories than rice milk. ☐

10 Milk from nuts or beans contains more protein than dairy milk. ☐

11 Plant-milk production uses eight times less land than dairy-milk production. ☐

Questions 12–13
Answer the questions below using ***NO MORE THAN THREE WORDS*** *from the passage for each answer.*
Write your answers in boxes 12–13.

12 By how much has the plant-milk sector increased?

_____

13 What are extra energy sources used for in large-scale crop agriculture?

_____

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Question 14

Which of the following is the most suitable title for Reading Passage 1?
Choose the correct letter, A, B, C, D or E.
*Write the correct letter **A–D** in the answer box below.*

A Why plant milk is less eco-friendly than consumers believe

B How consumers choose between plant and dairy milk

C Why the plant-milk industry has become so influential

D How milk trends affect dairy and plant farmers

E Why the dairy industry is in decline

READING PASSAGE 2

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

Start-up Success

Laura Willetts shares her business secrets

Section A

Don't let false assumptions about entrepreneurs prevent you from following your start-up ambitions. If your idea of an entrepreneur is a middle-aged business professional in a smart suit, think again. Not all entrepreneurs spend years in the business world before starting their company. While it's certainly not unusual for employees to become business owners after gaining work experience, it's not the only route to start-up success. It's also time we stopped believing that entrepreneurs have to be born with a natural instinct for business. In reality, there's no magic ingredient that ensures success in business; it's about hard work and making smart choices.

Section B

Owning a business can be financially rewarding, but if that's your main motivation, think carefully about whether the risks are worth it. Many employees in senior positions in large companies earn far higher salaries, and of course, have greater financial security. On the other hand, entrepreneurship has many other appealing aspects. I personally get a great deal of satisfaction from turning my creative ideas into business reality. Interestingly, one recent survey showed that this and the chance to be one's own boss were the two main reasons why people wanted to start their own business. This survey revealed that another top priority was the chance to create something for the local community.

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Section C

Whatever your reason for setting up a business, you should start with a clear idea. Entrepreneurs spot gaps in the market by identifying a problem which needs to be solved, and developing solutions. However, business ideas don't have to be completely brand-new innovations. Instead, you can improve what is already currently available or find a way to do it in a unique or different way. For instance, many successful business owners identify ways to adapt existing ideas so that they appeal to a different type of consumer. Being an entrepreneur is about noticing these opportunities and finding ways to make them attractive to potential customers.

Section D

Take your time in the initial planning stages of your start-up. Careful preparation can help you to avoid making time-consuming or costly mistakes in the long run. Market research is a key part of this process because it's important to understand your target consumers. Market research can also reveal unexpected problems with your product, or reasons why you might need to change your business plan. One common market-research method is focus groups. This is where a wide variety of consumers share their feedback about your product or service, and it can be an effective way of discovering what the public really thinks.

Section E

You also need to plan how you will cover the costs of starting your business. Unless you have substantial savings, you'll need financial support from external sources. Traditionally, this meant either applying for bank loans or selling a share of your business to investors. More recently, crowdfunding has become a popular funding strategy. Rather than relying on one investor, crowdfunding provides entrepreneurs with numerous investors, all of whom invest relatively small amounts. From the investor's perspective, this reduces the risk since they're not lending large sums. From the entrepreneur's perspective, it means that they don't have to give up so much control of their company. But, of course, whatever decisions you make about funding your start-up, take advantage of professional finance advice.

Section F

In fact, I'd recommend getting as much guidance as possible when starting out. Many young people now study business degrees specifically to learn all about entrepreneurship, and there's certainly value in that. However, if you don't have formal qualifications, don't let a lack of academic training hold you back. As well as all the useful resources available online, it's worth attending local business events and workshops. These events can teach you practical skills, and also offer opportunities to make valuable business connections. They are a great way to gain insights from other entrepreneurs.

Section G

I've learned the hard way that even if you want to have complete control over your business, it's not a smart use of your time. When I first started out, I thought I could handle all the decisions that needed to be made, and I was desperate to be involved in every single activity. Consequently, I wasted a lot of time doing things that I wasn't particularly good at. I now recognise the importance of building the right team around you. You have to accept that others may be more qualified to take on certain roles, so be open to their suggestions. This enables you to spend your time focusing on developing the overall business.

Section H

Of course, no matter how much you prepare, you're bound to make mistakes. It's impossible to avoid all difficulties, but successful entrepreneurs manage to learn from them. When something goes wrong, it provides an opportunity for further growth and a chance to come back even stronger. That's why I think the real key to business is your mindset. If you have the determination and the right attitude, you can turn setbacks into successes.

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Questions 15–21
Reading Passage 2 has 8 sections, A–H.
*Choose the correct headings for Sections **A–E** and **G–H** from the list of headings below.*
Write the correct number i–ix in answer boxes 15–21.

Example:

	Answer
Section **F**	*v*

List of headings	
i	Why you can't do everything
ii	Separating myth from reality
iii	Understanding your consumers
iv	Learning from failure
v	Benefitting from support
vi	Finding inspiration
vii	Funding your start-up
viii	The financial risks entrepreneurs face
ix	What drives entrepreneurs?

15 Section **A** ☐

16 Section **B** ☐

17 Section **C** ☐

18 Section **D** ☐

19 Section **E** ☐

20 Section **G** ☐

21 Section **H** ☐

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Questions 22–24
*Chose **THREE** letters, A–F. Write the correct letter A–F in answer boxes 22–24.*

*The list below gives some reasons why people may want to start their own business. Which **THREE** of these reasons are mentioned in the text as the most influential ones according to research?*

A The process of turning a concept into something real gives people a sense of achievement.

B Running your own business can bring considerable financial benefits.

C Being an entrepreneur means you have control over your work.

D People enjoy the challenge of doing something which involves risks. ☐ **22**

E Setting up a business can provide opportunities to help others. ☐ **23**

F You can learn more by running a business than by working for a company. ☐ **24**

Questions 25–27
*Complete the sentences below using **NO MORE THAN TWO WORDS** from the passage for each answer.*

Write your answers in boxes 25–27.

25 In the early stages of a start-up, it's important to understand your customers by conducting …

_____

26 Crowdfunding is thought to be a safer form of investment because individuals don't have to invest …

_____

27 Interest in entrepreneurship can be seen from the growing number of students taking …

_____

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READING PASSAGE 3

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

Skateboarding Cities

Section A

Unlike other popular outdoor pursuits such as football or cycling, skateboarding has had quite a negative reputation throughout its relatively short history, as shown by the lack of government support for it in many places. Sadly, this creative sport has sometimes been misunderstood as something that encourages antisocial behaviour when it actually has a lot to offer youngsters and urban communities. However, there are positive signs that city planners are finally starting to realise the benefits of skateboarding as a way of encouraging people to stay active. Cities are changing their approach to skatepark design. This is an important step because, when skateboarding facilities are planned effectively, they can bring communities together and enhance the urban environment.

Section B

Is there an activity better suited to urban environments than skateboarding? For street skaters, the entire city becomes a playground, where pavements, benches, walls and steps can be used to perform tricks. However, the growing popularity of skateboarding amongst teenagers hasn't always been supported by city authorities. Skateboarding has often been treated as a nuisance that should be contained and restricted rather than as a sport that should be encouraged. As a result, many of the original twentieth-century public skateparks were designed primarily to keep skateboarders out of city centres and off the streets.

Section C

Skateparks became popular in the 1970s, especially in North America. Like tennis courts or swimming pools, skateparks provide people with areas to practise their skills. Skateparks usually include concrete ramps, steps, slopes and metal rails. However, in many cases, public skateparks that were built in the 1970s were unsuitable for skateboarding in cold or wet weather, and had no lighting. These sites were not always maintained well, so over time they fell into such poor condition that they were not safe to use. Additionally, many of them were located in inconvenient locations or in undesirable parts of the city. As skaters found more suitable places instead, skateparks started to attract people behaving in antisocial ways. This, unfairly, created further negative impressions of skateboarding and skaters. Eventually, many of these skateparks were either redeveloped for other purposes or abandoned as "areas to avoid". This shows how poor urban design can isolate and even create tensions between communities.

Section D

Fortunately, there are shining examples around the world of superior ways to serve skaters' needs. Some approaches focus on integrating skateboarding facilities into cities rather than attempt to create separate skating areas. For instance, the local council in the English city of Bristol decided to improve a pedestrian subway area to make it more welcoming for skaters. They improved the surfaces and made the open central area even better for skateboarding by installing a simple low wall at very low cost. These simple changes have transformed the area, making it safer for both skaters and pedestrians.

Section E

In fact, bringing skaters and non-skaters closer together to share the same space can improve cooperation and understanding. Barcelona is known as one of Europe's most "skateboard-friendly" cities. Skateboarding is a common sight throughout this beautiful coastal city, and it is increasingly part of Barcelona's culture. Skateboarding is encouraged and there are numerous areas where the walkways, steps and ledges accommodate skaters' needs without impacting non-skaters. As a result, skaters and non-skaters respect each other. Interestingly, Barcelona has gained a worldwide reputation for skateboarding, and has profited from increased tourism as a result. Local skaters also benefit from the chance to improve their techniques with skaters from all over the world.

Section F

Of course, there is still a need for public skateparks. When skateboarding experts' voices are heard, councils can create facilities suitable for skaters of different levels of skill or experience. Skateparks must be located in safe, popular public areas that have other amenities such as cafés or good transport links. This will encourage more

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young people to take up the sport and there will be more people around to ensure that they learn how to skate safely, making injuries less likely. It will also make skateboarding a popular leisure option for families, which will open up new commercial and social opportunities in the local area.

Section G

Traditionally, parks and playgrounds have been the main leisure spaces in cities, and there's no doubt that these amenities bring communities together. Skateboarding facilities can offer similar benefits to urban communities, and, in many cases, breathe new life into cities. There's no reason why skateparks can't become part of the urban landscape. However, this can only be achieved if representatives of the skateboarding community are consulted so that the facilities are created in the right way.

Section H

International stars such as Tony Hawks and Sky Brown are inspiring new generations to pick up a skateboard, and it is great to see how they are raising the profile of the sport. Skateboarding teaches people a range of physical skills, and encourages people to overcome challenges. Team spirit is strong within skater communities, and this teaches children about the value of helping one another. Now it is time for cities to create the right environment to enable the sport to develop even further. If they do this, we can all benefit.

Questions 28–33
Reading Passage 3 has 8 sections labelled A–H.
Which paragraph contains the following information?

*Write the correct letter **A–H** in answer boxes 28–33.*

NB: You may use any letter more than once.

28 An example of how a city has benefitted financially from skateboarding ☐

29 A suggestion about how to make skateparks better for beginners ☐

30 A reason why skateboarding is becoming more popular ☐

31 An inexpensive way to create skateboarding opportunities in cities ☐

32 A definition of the function of skateparks ☐

33 A reason why skaters stopped using many public skateparks ☐

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Questions 34–36
Choose the correct letter, A, B, C or D.
*Write the correct letter **A–D** in answer boxes 34–36.*

34 The writer argues that skateboarding should

A receive more funding than other leisure activities.

B be applauded for the way it has improved its reputation.

C be promoted in both urban and rural areas.

D receive more recognition for the positive influence it can have.

35 What point does the writer make about skateparks from the 1970s?

A It was a mistake to base them on other sport facilities.

B Their design flaws eventually had a negative impact on cities.

C The materials they were made of were difficult to repair.

D They were built in areas that were too crowded.

36 Barcelona's approach to skateboarding has been to

A support skateboarding as part of the city's identity.

B invest tourist revenue in skateboarding facilities.

C attempt to keep skateboarding away from city centres.

D focus on developing skateboarding as an international sport.

Questions 37–40
*Complete the summary below. Chose **NO MORE THAN TWO WORDS** from the passage for each answer.*
Write your answers in gaps 37–40.

Skateboarding

As an activity which is closely associated with urban life, skateboarding is a pastime which attracts both positive and negative opinions. For city councils, the challenge is to find ways to encourage people to practise their sport without it becoming a **(37)**_____ to other city residents.

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One strategy is **(38)**_____ skateboarding facilities into city streets and neighbourhoods. The benefit of this approach is that skaters and non-skaters learn to respect each other.

Sadly, many skateparks in the past were not designed well. They were not suitable for skating in certain types of **(39)**_____, and were often difficult to reach.

If authorities want to take advantage of what skateboarding can offer, they must design new skateboarding facilities with skaters' needs in mind. In order to do this, it is essential that people who truly understand skateboarding **(40)**_____. This will ensure that the skateparks can benefit both skaters and the local community.

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