READING COMPREHENSION. TASK 2

Read this text carefully and answer the questions according to the text.

THE HISTORY OF TEENAGERS

As a teenager, I find it hard to imagine that humans existed without our adolescent years as we experience them now: free, rebellious, adventurous, and in search of our own identity. I chose the topic for my social sciences project when I found an article that said: "One of the most culturally significant inventions of the past century was *the teenager*." I didn't get it at first, but after finishing the article I understood that, if we could travel back in time, people would find the modern lifestyle of teenagers to be something completely strange.

In the 1500s, most western adolescents were workers, entering the world of adult labour from as early as seven years old. In rural economies, they usually worked on the farm to support the family's income*. As industrialisation spread in the 18th and 19th centuries, many adolescents became factory workers. In the late 1800s, children in the USA were contributing at least a third of family income. There was no universal schooling, and only the most privileged could depend on their parents. In other words, you were a child, started working, and then you were an adult. A separate stage in between was almost non-existent.

In the early 20th century, living conditions and education laws began to change in the developed world, allowing young people to live fully under the wings of their parents for longer. But the invention of the modern *teenager* didn't happen immediately.

Before World War II, the term 'teenager' had occasionally been used, but only became more common in the late 1940s and 1950s, when various socio-economic conditions coincided. In rich countries,

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it became much more common for a young person to stay in school during their teenage years. In the late 1940s, schooling in the UK became obligatory up to the age of 15. In the USA, high school graduations went from less than 10% at the start of the century to around 60% by the mid-1950s.

After World War II, society changed its attitude towards the rights of young people: the idea that young people had to serve their parents changed, and their wishes began to be listened, especially by commerce. In the 1950s, companies realized that teenagers could be influencers, capable of spreading fashions, and therefore could be exploited for great profit**. The perception of teenagers as cool, trendy and popular was, and still is, an invention of commerce. Teenage music, fashion and language have a strong influence on society. If the *teenager* as we know it was very much a 20th-century creation, my question is: will these cultural perceptions change again in the future?

Text adapted from: bbc.com and saturdayeveningpost.com

GLOSSARY:

***Income:** ingressos.

****Profit:** benefici.

26. The author _____ a project.

a. voted on

b. proposed doing

c. selected the topic for

27. People from past centuries would be _____ the modern teenager.

a. afraid of

b. surprised by

c. insecure about

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28. In the first paragraph, the author compares...

a. personal and academic ideas.

b. teenagers and adolescents.

c. the past and the present.

30. In the sentence 'There was no universal schooling', what does universal schooling mean?

a. Free registration in all schools.

b. Access to education for everybody.

c. Creation of schools around the world.

31. In the early 20th century...

a. education changed in developed countries.

b. young people were financially independent.

c. families' living conditions improved worldwide.

32. The modern *teenager* appeared _____ the 20th century.

a. before

b. in the middle of

c. at the beginning of

33. In the late 1940s...

a. young people stayed in school for their teenage years.

b. 60% of high school students graduated.

c. school was obligatory in the UK.

34. After World War II...

a. young people had fewer wishes.

b. young people's rights were more recognized.

c. young people had the obligation to serve their parents.

35. The author thinks that businesses...

a. design teenage fashion and language.

b. profit from the teenage market.

c. create the reality of teenagers.

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36. The author concludes that the modern *teenager* is...

a. a myth of the past.

b. a personal interpretation of history.

c. the result of 20th century cultural changes.

37. What is the right order of the following pictures according to the evolution of the concept of teenager?

A	B	C	D
			

a. D → B → C → A

b. A → B → C → D

c. B → D → A → C

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38. Match the information on the left column with the information on the right column, according to what you read in the text.

	Time in history	Teenagers... (tick **a**, **b**, **c** or **d** accordingly on your answer sheet)	Options
38.1	In the 1500s		**a.** had obligatory schooling. **b.** were factory workers. **c.** were farm workers. **d.** became a market.
38.2	In the 1800s		
38.3	In the 1940s		
38.4	In the 1950s		

39. What is the author's objective?

a. To show the pros and cons of an idea.

b. To defend an original opinion.

c. To explore a topic of interest.

40. What would be the best title for the project?

a. Teenagers aren't what they used to be.

b. Teenagers have changed the world.

c. Teenagers and the market.

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