1 Do You Mind?

Reading

A Read the *Exam Reminder*. Which questions from the *Exam Task* does it apply to?

_____

B Now complete the *Exam Task*.

Exam Reminder

Looking for the main purpose or idea of a text

- The questions about the main purpose of a text will have options that contain ideas mentioned in the text, but which do not necessarily encompass the main idea.
- Look for options that focus on only one particular detail of the text and rule out those options.
- With the last remaining option, make sure the writer discusses this idea throughout the text.

Text 1

Can a type of farming affect human behaviour?

The old adage 'You are what you eat' might also apply to what you farm. A study involving Chinese students uncovered striking cognitive differences between those who live in rice-growing provinces and those who reside in areas producing wheat, with the former leaning towards collectivist thinking and the latter being more individualistic. While researchers stop short of concluding that different types of farming regions alone determine behaviour, rather than a range of sociological factors, the study gives us some insight into how an agricultural region shapes a person's character.

The indicators seem to lie in the way crop maintenance shapes human behaviour. For the rice farmers of southern China, successful production relies on interdependence. They are more or less forced to work together to maintain the complex system of planting, irrigating and harvesting rice, so there exists a large network of labour exchanges, in which farmers travel from one plantation to another, helping out where needed. Their cooperation strengthens their sociable traits, which are then passed down to their children. In contrast, wheat production can be carried out almost entirely without the help of another farmer, reducing the need for them to interact with their peers.

The researchers carrying out the study conducted tests on college students in both rice- and wheat-growing regions in order to identify any differences in how they think and view themselves. In one test, subjects were asked to do a word association task. Given the words 'train', 'bus' and 'track', those from rice-growing regions most often paired 'train' and 'track' together, placing focus on the necessity of relationships between things. Those from wheat-growing areas chose 'train' and 'bus', a more analytical choice involving abstract categorisation. Another test involved drawing circles to represent the individual and their network of friends. Students from rice provinces often represented their friends by larger circles than their own, whereas their counterparts drew their representative circles 1.5 millimetres greater on average than the circles for their friends.

Naturally, the researchers investigated other factors that might explain these behavioural differences, such as socioeconomic or cultural differences within China. Only the differences in crop regions, at least in preliminary findings, seemed to account for differences in behaviour. The heads of the study do stress that while the findings are intriguing, the participant pool must be expanded to include actual farmers from those regions.



Text 2

'Fearless' woman actually missing a part of her brain



A 44-year-old woman is at the centre of a research study involving the amygdala, a small part of the brain that controls certain emotional responses, specifically fear and anxiety. When 'SM' – an pseudonym to protect her identity – was ten years old, she suffered from an extremely rare genetic disorder called Urbach-Wiethe disease which effectively consumed this part of her brain. Scans even show two small, symmetrical black holes where the two almond-shaped nuclei that comprise the amygdala once existed. As a result, SM cannot experience fear, nor can she recognise fear in the faces of others.

Scientists placed SM in a number of frightening situations in order to monitor her reactions. In one, they guided her through a pet shop replete with snakes and spiders. Oddly, SM had previously professed a fear of snakes to the researchers, so in the pet shop, they were fascinated with her reaction. SM was totally at ease and expressed excitement and curiosity about the snakes, even cradling one in her hands and caressing its scales. When asked to rate her level of fear from one to ten, SM never rated it any higher than two in any of the scenarios she was placed in.

SM was also given an electronic diary so that three times a day she could answer questions related to how she was feeling. During the three months that SM completed the diary, she recorded experiencing a range of emotions, but never the key research element of fear.

The findings of the study could pave the way for new techniques in psychotherapy which focus on reducing the capacity of the amygdala in order to limit the impact of post-traumatic stress disorders. Researchers admit that this treatment would not be without risks, due to the role fear plays in keeping people safe. SM has been the victim of numerous crimes as an adult, remaining calm throughout all incidents, but she might have avoided potentially dangerous situations in the first place had she possessed the ability to feel fear.

LIVEWORKSHEETS

Exam Task

Read the two passages from a scientific magazine, then answer questions according to the information given in each passage.

Text 1

1 What is the main purpose of the passage?
- **a** to explain how food affects people
- **b** to profile types of individuals
- **c** to compare farming techniques
- **d** to contrast two differing lifestyles

2 Which factor accounts for rice farmers' interdependence?
- **a** regional challenges
- **b** competition from wheat farmers
- **c** labour requirements
- **d** their inherent nature

3 In paragraph 3, the **counterparts** are
- **a** wheat farmers.
- **b** friends of study participants.
- **c** other study participants.
- **d** the circle drawings.

4 Which statement is correct regarding the researchers' beliefs about the study?
- **a** They are not quite satisfied with the results.
- **b** They feel certain of farming's effects on behaviour.
- **c** They believe the findings cannot be correct.
- **d** They wish they'd studied a range of factors.

Text 2

5 What is the passage mainly about?
- **a** finding the causes of Urbach-Wiethe disease
- **b** studying neurological processes provoked by fear
- **c** limiting the effects of fearful situations
- **d** the role of the amygdala in the brain

6 Researchers felt that SM's interaction with the pet shop snakes was
- **a** intriguingly intimate.
- **b** unsurprising given her condition.
- **c** extremely dangerous and worrying.
- **d** surprisingly dispassionate.

7 What was the diary used for?
- **a** as a way for SM to record her emotions
- **b** as a system for ranking the things SM felt
- **c** as a list of SM's daily activities
- **d** as a tool to help SM feel fear

8 What can be inferred about how the scientists will further their research?
- **a** They intend to discover a way to switch off the amygdala.
- **b** They do not want to eliminate the ability to feel fear altogether.
- **c** They do not wish to alter the abilities of the amygdala.
- **d** They will seek a cure for what initially disabled SM.

Vocabulary

A **Complete the sentences with these words and the prefixes *ab-*, *dys-*, *mal-* or *mis-*.**

adjusted **behave** **errant** **function** **functional**

1 Despite coming from a slightly _____ family, Robert was a well-mannered gentleman.
2 Debra's parents scolded her harshly for her _____ behaviour during her sister's wedding.
3 Often prisoners are _____ on release and a period of acclimatisation is required.
4 The machine had a _____ and it didn't finish printing the pages.
5 The teacher told the children not to _____ while she stepped out of class for a moment.

B **Match the behaviour described by the speakers to an adjective from the list.**

1 'He told me they had found a cure for baldness and I actually believed him!' ☐
2 'It's hard to get a reaction out of Roger; nothing seems to interest him.' ☐
3 'When my dad gets an idea in his head, no one can make him change his mind.' ☐
4 'The flight attendant was friendly and patient, and she really made the flight a joy.' ☐
5 'I hate working with Thomas because he does things without asking anyone first.' ☐
6 'I couldn't believe how rude that man was. He should have been kicked out.' ☐
7 'Sarah is very careful with how she arranges her desk and how she plans her schedule.' ☐
8 'I've got a bad feeling about this area. I think we should go back.' ☐

- **a** obstinate
- **b** amiable
- **c** uneasy
- **d** apathetic
- **e** meticulous
- **f** obnoxious
- **g** compulsive
- **h** gullible



LIVEWORKSHEETS