Task 1 – Gapped Text

Read the text below about a student who decided to take a break from social media.
Eight sentences have been removed.
Choose the correct sentence **A–I** to fill each gap **(1–8)** There is **ONE extra sentence** you do not need.

At the beginning of the year, Karim decided to take a break from social media for ten days. (1) _____. What initially seemed like a simple decision soon turned into a surprisingly difficult challenge.

On the first day, he removed all social media applications from his phone. (2) _____. As a result, he became more aware of how often he used to check his phone without any real purpose.

Over the next few days, Karim struggled to adjust to the change. (3) _____. He found himself picking up his phone out of habit, only to realise there was nothing to check.

Gradually, however, his attitude began to shift. (4) _____. He started to focus more on his studies and even developed new habits, such as exercising regularly and reading before bed.

Despite these improvements, there were still moments when he felt uncomfortable. (5) _____. This made him realise how dependent he had become on constant communication.

By the end of the experiment, Karim had gained valuable insights into his behaviour. (6) _____. He understood that much of his time online had been spent passively rather than productively.

After returning to his normal routine, he made a conscious effort to change his habits. (7) _____. Instead of checking his phone continuously, he began to use it more purposefully.

Overall, the experience had a lasting impact on him. (8) _____. It encouraged him to find a healthier balance between online and offline life.

Sentences A–I

A. At times, he felt disconnected from current events and social interactions.
B. In particular, he noticed a significant improvement in his concentration levels.
C. This decision was influenced by his growing concern about wasted time online.
D. He admitted that breaking this habit required more effort than expected.
E. Consequently, he decided to set strict limits on his daily screen time.
F. This meant he no longer had instant access to updates or notifications.
G. As a result, he became more mindful of how he spent his free time.
H. Initially, he experienced a sense of boredom and restlessness.
I. He even considered repeating the experience in the future.

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Task 2 –Reading

The Impact of Remote Work

In recent years, remote work has become increasingly common, particularly following global changes in working patterns. While some companies have returned to traditional office environments, many continue to offer flexible working arrangements. This shift has significantly altered the way people approach their professional lives.

One of the main advantages of remote work is the increased flexibility it provides. Employees are often able to organise their schedules more independently, which can lead to improved work-life balance. For example, avoiding long commutes allows individuals to spend more time on personal activities or with their families.

However, remote work also presents certain challenges. Without direct supervision, some employees may struggle to remain focused and productive. In addition, the lack of face-to-face interaction can lead to feelings of isolation, particularly for those who rely on social contact in the workplace.

Another important consideration is communication. While digital tools make it possible to stay connected, they cannot always replace in-person discussions. Misunderstandings may occur more easily, and collaboration can sometimes become less efficient.

Despite these challenges, many experts believe that remote work will continue to play an important role in the future. The key lies in finding a balance that maximises its benefits while minimising its drawbacks.

Questions (Choose A, B, C, or D)

1. What is the writer's main aim in the text?
   A) To promote remote work as the best option
   B) To describe the advantages and disadvantages of remote work
   C) To explain why offices are no longer needed
   D) To compare different types of jobs

2. What is one benefit of remote work mentioned in the text?
   A) Employees receive higher salaries
   B) Workers have more control over their time
   C) Companies reduce all costs
   D) Employees work fewer hours

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3. What does the phrase “this shift” in paragraph 1 refer to?
   A) The increase in office jobs
   B) The change towards remote work
   C) The development of new technology
   D) The reduction of working hours

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4. What problem may remote workers experience?
   A) Too much supervision
   B) Difficulty concentrating without structure
   C) Lack of technical skills
   D) Too many meetings

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5. How can remote work affect communication?
   A) It completely improves teamwork
   B) It removes all misunderstandings
   C) It can make communication less effective
   D) It eliminates the need for discussion

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6. What can be inferred about remote work?
   A) It is only temporary
   B) It is likely to remain important in the future
   C) It is suitable for all workers
   D) It will replace all office jobs

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7. What does the word “maximises” in the last paragraph mean?
   A) Reduces
   B) Increases as much as possible
   C) Ignores
   D) Measures

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Read the article by Madeleine Howell.



(Source: © guy harrop / Alamy Stock Photo)

Living and Working on the Road

Forget working from an office, from home or even from a hotel. A growing number of so-called 'digital nomads' are pushing the benefits of working and living in a portable office, with ever-changing views and the opportunity to meet like-minded people. The ultimate dream is definitely a better work-life balance, with the added bonus of far fewer bills and expenses. It has become increasingly possible to work from anywhere in the world.

One couple, Sally and Gary, run an online tuition business. While renting out their five-bedroom house, they've been travelling around England and France. They retrained as teachers in their 40s and built a business based at their home. They've always been inspired by travel programmes, and it was when they moved to online tuition that the couple became convinced they could tutor regardless of their location. In my opinion, this would be a dream for many people. They set out to find a vehicle that would double up as an office, and bought an old ambulance that they converted into their tiny home and workspace.

One of the reasons parents want their tuition is for the one-to-one tutor and pupil connection. While I think some parents feel their children are on computers enough, online tuition works in exactly the same way as face-to-face, offering flexibility for them and convenience for their pupils. Many parents are grateful they don't have to drive to a tutor's house at 6 p.m. and wait outside for an hour while their child has a lesson; they can be anywhere too. Of course, the couple can only tutor when they can guarantee a Wi-Fi signal, something they struggled with in the early days. They've now added a Wi-Fi aerial and things have improved.

They love never knowing what will be around the corner. The beauty of living and working on the road is that you stumble across sights you wouldn't expect. You come across all sorts of interesting people and this, to me, is most appealing. They are hopeful that one day they will ship their vehicle over to Canada, the United States or southern Africa. They've got no fixed plans to go back to life as it was before, but as their grandchildren grow up, they'll want to spend more time close by, but with the option of getting away.

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Emma, 26, worked in marketing for five years but left this role to travel the world and retrain as a yoga teacher, doing freelance marketing as she went. Before she bought her campervan, she had felt a huge amount of pressure to stay in an office job and save to buy a house. But she decided to take this money and buy an office on wheels instead. It was the best decision she's ever made.

She stayed with her brother in a campervan in Australia for the first time a few years ago and fell in love with the lifestyle, but never saw it as something she could do full-time. When she returned to England with no work, the job interviews she had were for office roles that had received thousands of applications. She must have found this very disappointing. However, she noticed a gap in the market for creative marketing for small businesses, and realised, as her new business built up, that she could work from anywhere. She can live the life she wants, while producing work that's better than any she would be able to in an office. She can work whenever it is needed, and be there when a client needs her.

The costs of living on the road are so low compared with property rental prices that it's allowing her to save. She uses an App to find camp sites with Wi-Fi and she's stayed at some amazing places at a fairly low cost; experiences she wouldn't have had if she'd got a job in an office. What really stands out for her is that she's driven the length of the country, but never feels lonely. She's now travelled solo such a lot, she's used to it.

It all sounds like an amazing adventure. For me, the people who pursue this liberating lifestyle are true pioneers. Perhaps, one day, the rest of us will follow.

(Source: https://www.telegraph.co.uk/family/life/wfc-middle-class-nomads-work-live-campervans/)

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Identify which of the options (A–D) is correct for Questions 21–25 by marking a cross in the box ☒. If you change your mind about an answer, put a line through the box ☒ and then mark your new answer with a cross ☒.

21 The main goal of living and working on the road is to

(1)

- ☐ **A** search for different views every day.
- ☐ **B** meet others with the same lifestyle.
- ☐ **C** use time in a more rewarding way.
- ☐ **D** save money by not living in a house.

22 Which of the following is true about Sally and Gary?

(1)

- ☐ **A** They still own a family home.
- ☐ **B** They bought a new campervan.
- ☐ **C** They used to teach for a college.
- ☐ **D** They offer people group lessons.

23 In the future, Sally and Gary would like to

(1)

- ☐ **A** lead a more predictable life.
- ☐ **B** meet lots of different people.
- ☐ **C** travel to more distant places.
- ☐ **D** live with their grandchildren.

24 Which of the following is true about Emma?

(1)

- ☐ **A** She has an office job in marketing.
- ☐ **B** She used savings to change her life.
- ☐ **C** She was new to life in a campervan.
- ☐ **D** She has travelled with her friends.

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25 What pleases Emma the most about life on the road?

(1)

- ☐ **A** The quality of her work has improved.
- ☐ **B** She finds really cheap places to stay.
- ☐ **C** The experiences she has are exciting.
- ☐ **D** She does not mind being on her own.

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Part 3

Read the article by Colin Drury.

In Search of Green Spaces

In an era of online shopping, struggling town centres and a climate crisis, Dexley council has decided that creating a park in its town centre is the best way of regenerating this area and increasing the number of visitors. It will not simply be a green space, it will be a destination. In what some would consider to be a brave move, a shopping centre that has existed for the last 50 years will be knocked down to create an enormous public park. The shopping centre's multi-storey car park and a number of nearby shops, as well as a hotel, will also be demolished. They will be replaced by one of the country's biggest green spaces, offering landscaped lawns, wildlife areas and a range of attractive facilities, such as a picnic spot. It is one of many projects currently being spoken about around the country. Nothing like this has been attempted before in England.

Green spaces are now commonly being planned on sites previously considered for housing and business development. For example, in Hexford city centre, a park is to be created on a site where a car park and offices were previously going to be built. In Farwell city centre, a proposed park, which is part of a wider development of apartments and hotels, will become the city's biggest new green space in over a hundred years. With projects such as these, could we now be seeing the first signs of a new age of park building?

I was horrified to learn that over the last twenty years, a noticeable amount of green space has been lost to development. However, thankfully, there does appear to have been a significant change in the way people now view green spaces, and people are beginning to realise how important they are. Experts believe that one way forward is to protect the green spaces we already have from any future development. This growing awareness of the value of green spaces appears to be driving the creation of more new parks. Thankfully, the government wants to make towns and cities greener as part of its 25-year plan for the environment.

Previously, it was more likely for green spaces to be added to developments where land was left over, but this is definitely not the case anymore. Now, they are starting to be seen as a key part of these developments. This is the thinking in Dexley, where the vast new park will be bordered on one side by a river, and on the other by a remodelled high street, including new shops, restaurants, council offices and a library. Few would argue that this town is in need of regeneration. Thirty per cent of retail units are empty and over the past few years, popular high street stores have abandoned the place. The shopping centre was not only under-used, but it was also widely disliked; in a local meeting, 80 per cent of those present wanted it knocked down.

Work is scheduled to begin early next year, and there are already suggestions that the idea could be one to copy in nearby towns and cities, where they are facing shop closures and where the high streets are struggling. Yet, if all this does suggest we are entering a new era of park creation, experts suggest that we must be realistic about what is happening outside of our towns and city centres too.

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Over the last 10 years, existing parks within towns and cities have lost so much of their funding that it has become a real issue to maintain them, and this is a widespread problem. In my opinion, you can have lots of green spaces everywhere but, if they are not well maintained, or they do not offer the facilities needed by users, then their benefits are not being maximised. Therefore, there does need to be a new vision that takes this financial element into account. It must be recognised that whatever we invest in parks now is a saving for the future, for example, on healthcare.

Outside of urban centres, we are still losing green spaces to development at an alarming rate, and people do not have the same access to those that still exist. Depending on where you live, you could be far less likely to have a park nearby, one that you can walk to, compared to someone living in another area. I do agree that this worrying issue needs addressing through careful future planning, but I am optimistic that it will happen at some point in the future. There are definite signs that we are committed to investing in both new and existing parks and we will, one day, be able to maximise the potential of green spaces and improve the general wellbeing of the population.

(Source: https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/urban-parks-green-spaces-climate-crisis-b1890564.html?r=79384)

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Questions 31–40

Complete the following sentences using no more than THREE words that must be taken from one point in the text.

31 Dexley council is hoping to attract more ..... after changes to the town centre.

(1)

32 The new park in Dexley will include a ..... where families can eat together.

(1)

33 In Farwell, a new project will have ..... and green space.

(1)

34 Experts think that ..... should not be allowed on existing green spaces.

(1)

35 The park in Dexley will lie between a ..... and a commercial area.

(1)

36 In recent times, ... have closed their outlets in Dexley town centre.

(1)

37 Other struggling towns and cities might ..... the Dexley project.

(1)

38 There is a lack of ....., which makes it difficult to look after the parks we already have.

(1)

39 By offering people usable green spaces, money spent on future

..... could be reduced.

(1)

40 Some people are more likely to be able to ..... to a park than others.

(1)

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