Part 5

You are going to read a magazine article about a famous pianist and the young student who became his pupil. For questions **31–36**, choose the answer (**A**, **B**, **C** or **D**) which you think fits best according to the text.

Mark your answers **on the separate answer sheet.**

A musician and his pupil

Paul Williams interviews the famous pianist Alfred Brendel.

Over six decades the pianist Alfred Brendel gradually built up and maintained a dominant position in the world of classical music. He was an intellectual, sometimes austere, figure who explored and recorded the mainstream European works for the piano. He wrote and played a great deal, but taught very little. Those who knew him best glimpsed a playful side to his character, but that was seldom on display in his concerts. It was a disciplined, never-ending cycle of study, travel and performance.

And then, four or five years ago, a young boy, Kit Armstrong, appeared backstage at one of Brendel's concerts and asked for lessons. Initially, Brendel didn't take the suggestion very seriously. He had had very few pupils and he saw no reason to start now. He quotes from another famous pianist: 'You don't employ a mountain guide to teach a child how to walk.' But there was something that struck him about the young boy – then about 14. He listened to him play. Brendel explained, 'He played remarkably well and by heart. Then he brought me a CD of a little recital he had given where he played so beautifully that I thought to myself, "I have to make time for him." It was a performance that really led you from the first to the last note. It's very rare to find any musician with this kind of overview and the necessary subtlety.'

As Brendel is bowing out of the public eye, so Kit is nudging his way into it – restrained by Brendel, ever nervous about the young man burning out early. Kit, now 19, is a restless, impatient presence away from the lessons – always learning new languages; taking himself off to study maths, writing computer code or playing tennis. All under the watchful eye of his ever-present mother. On top of all this he composes. 'This was very important,' Brendel says. 'If you want to learn to read music properly it is helped by the fact that you try to write something yourself. Then I noticed that Kit had a phenomenal memory and that he was a phenomenal sight reader. But more than this is his ability to listen to his own playing, his sensitivity to sound and his ability to listen to me when I try to explain something. He not only usually understands what I mean, but he can do it. And when I tell him one thing in a piece, he will do it everywhere in the piece where it comes in later.'

Brendel catches himself and looks at me severely. *line 51* 'Now I don't want to raise any expectations. I'm very cross if some newspapers try to do this. There was one article which named him as the future great pianist of the 21st century, I mean, really, it's the worst thing. One doesn't say that in a newspaper. And it has done a great deal of harm. As usual, with gifted young players, he can play certain things amazingly well, while others need more time and experience. It would be harmful if a critic was there expecting the greatest perfection.'

It is touching to see the mellowness of Brendel in his post-performing years. He explains 'When I was very young, I didn't have the urge to be famous in five years' time, but I had the idea I would like to have done certain things by the age of 50. And when I was 50, I thought that I had done most of those things, but there was still some leeway for more, so I went on. Although I do not have the physical power to play now, in my head, there are always things going on, all sorts of pieces that I've never played. I don't play now but it's a very nice new career.'

LIVEWORKSHEETS

31 What is the writer emphasising in the first paragraph?

A the wide range of music that Brendel has played
B the total dedication of Brendel to his art
C the reluctance of Brendel to take on pupils
D the light-hearted nature of Brendel's character

32 Brendel uses the quotation about the mountain guide to illustrate that

A it is not always easy to teach people the basics.
B it is unwise to try to teach new skills before people are ready.
C people can learn new skills without help from others.
D it is unnecessary for an expert to teach people the basics.

33 What made Brendel first decide to accept Kit as a pupil?

A He seemed so young and serious.
B He was so determined and persistent.
C He could play without the music.
D He had an extraordinary talent.

34 Which of Kit's musical abilities does Brendel admire the most?

A He is able to write music himself.
B He is able to understand and respond to advice.
C He can play a piece of music the first time he sees it.
D He is able to remember all the music he has ever played.

35 Why does the writer use the phrase 'catches himself' in line 50?

A He realises he has said too much to a journalist.
B He doesn't enjoy giving interviews to journalists.
C He wants to be careful he doesn't upset any music critics.
D He resents the way that he has often been misquoted.

36 What is Brendel doing in the final paragraph?

A justifying his lack of ambition when he was young
B expressing regret at the loss of his physical strength
C describing his present state of mind
D explaining which pieces he prefers to play now

LIVEWORKSHEETS

Part 6

You are going to read a newspaper article about a blind runner. Six sentences have been removed from the article. Choose from the sentences **A–G** the one which fits each gap **(37–42)**. There is one extra sentence which you do not need to use.

Mark your answers **on the separate answer sheet.**

Blind Runner

Paul Hardy reports on a blind runner called Simon Wheatcroft who enjoys taking part in marathon and ultra-marathon races, running distances between 42 km and 160 km.

Running marathons, a race of 42 km, has become increasingly popular. This distance poses extreme physical and mental challenges for anyone, but for Simon Wheatcroft there is another hurdle; he has been blind since he was 18 years old.

For the past two years Simon, now 29, has been overcoming his disability to compete in marathons and ultra-marathons by training with runners who act as his guides, and also, rather uniquely, by teaching himself to run solo, out on the streets. 'I got bored exercising indoors, so thought, "I'll have a go at running outside",' he explains. **37** Then he got bored again and wanted to try running on the roads.

Weeks of gradual exploration followed, walking a route alone. **38** It took him along little-used pavements alongside a busy main road. He also recruited technology to help him form his mental map of the area using a smartphone app, to provide feedback through headphones about his pace and distance. This information could then be cross-referenced with his knowledge of the route and any obstacles.

Now, having covered hundreds of km alone on the route, Simon has been able, gradually, to phase out the app. 'When I first started I had to really concentrate to an unbelievable level to know where my feet were falling. Now it has become quite automated.' **39** 'I did make a few mistakes early on – like running into posts. But you only run into a post once before you think "Right. I'm going to remember where that is next time",' he laughs.

Joining Simon for a training session, it's striking how natural and fluid his movement is; he takes shorter, shallower, more gentle steps than most runners, using his feet to feel his way. His landmarks are minute changes in gradient and slight variations in the running surface. **40** 'I have to believe this route is going to stay consistent, and there won't be things like roadwork signs or big rocks,' he says.

41 'I try to concentrate on the millions of footsteps that go right and think positively,' he explains. When it comes to racing in ultra-distance events, Simon has to use guides to run sections of the course with him; after all, it would be almost impossible to memorise a 150 km stretch of countryside by heart. However, the physical and practical advantages of training in the fresh air, on his own terms, are vast and have boosted his confidence in his running ability as well as providing inspiration to others.

But for Simon the real thrill and motivation for training come from simply being able to compete on equal terms. **42** 'I can't hide the fact I'm blind,' he says, 'but at the same time I would rather compete with everybody else and not be put into a special group. Being visually impaired doesn't mean you can't run.'

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A These provide the familiarity and consistency essential for the blind runner.

B Their support gave him extra confidence regarding his changing surroundings.

C Simon believes the feelings of liberation and independence he gets from running solo far outweigh any anxiety over such dangers.

D He began by training on football pitches behind his house, running between the goalposts.

E It gives him a great opportunity to run with everyone.

F That's not to say the learning curve has been without incident.

G As a result of this slow experimentation, he was able to memorise a set five-kilometre course.

LIVEWORKSHEETS

Part 7

You are going to read an article in which four graduates discuss going to university. For questions **43–52**, choose from the graduates (**A–D**). The graduates may be chosen more than once.

Mark your answers **on the separate answer sheet.**

Which graduate

says people should be allowed to consider a range of options apart from university?	43	
says that some people are expected to make important decisions before they are ready?	44	
initially rejected something she was told?	45	
was unaware of the alternatives to university?	46	
says that the type of learning at university is different from that at other institutions?	47	
felt when she was a student that she might not be doing the right course?	48	
says that some people discover that what is studied at university is not useful in the workplace?	49	
was uncertain about her reasons for going to university?	50	
says graduates have an advantage when applying for jobs?	51	
was expected to go to university despite being a fairly average student at school?	52	

LIVEWORKSHEETS

Why go to university?

Four graduates talk about their experiences.

A Sonia

While I was doing my physics degree people would often say I was acquiring skills I'd be able to use in my future career, even if I didn't become a physicist. It sounded like nonsense to me: if I did another job in the end, what could be relevant about knowing what's inside an atom or how to operate a laser? It turns out they were referring to the wealth of other skills you pick up along the way. Communication and problem-solving are just two of these. In contrast to the way you may have been taught before, university teaches you to be innovative and to think for yourself. Going to university is about more than just studying though! I got to make friends from all over the world and they have proved to be useful work contacts.

B Jane

I went to university because it was the career path expected by school, parents and classmates (to an extent) and also because I didn't really have a clue about what other options were open to me. It's difficult to know how things would have turned out if I hadn't gone. I do know that the job I do 'requires' a degree to do it, though there must be alternative ways of developing these skills. The degree, like it or not, is the screening method used by large numbers of employers and as such opens certain doors. It's certainly harder to get into all sorts of careers without a degree. The debates about university education typically revolve around routes into employment, yet for many the degree is barely relevant to the work we end up doing later on. It gives access to a certain type of career but the actual degree can often be of little practical value.

C Lydia

There is a lot of pressure on teenagers to know exactly what they want to do with their lives. As a high-achieving student at school, the alternatives to university didn't really appeal to me. So I took up a place at a good university but ended up studying something I wasn't sure I was interested in. Some people know what they want to do from a young age, and for those people, going to university straight out of school may be a great idea. However, many of us are very unsure of our future ambitions aged 18, and should therefore be given as many choices as possible, rather than being pushed into a degree course. Many of my friends went to university straight from school.

D Bethany

I don't really remember making the decision to go to university. Everyone always assumed I would, even though I was never the most gifted academically. Someone asked me during my second year why I had gone, and I remember not being able to answer the question. Maybe it was the way I was raised? Maybe it was the school I went to? But university was the next step. I had a great time there, I must say. It's so much more than the place you go to get a degree. You learn so many life skills that I would urge anyone to give the idea some thought. Since graduation I've had a string of jobs. University is an excellent decision for some, and may provide the right qualifications to start a career. But for others, going straight into a job is just as appropriate.

LIVEWORKSHEETS