Reading and Use of English

Part 5 Exam task

You are going to read a magazine article. For questions 1–6, choose the answer (A, B, C or D) which you think fits best according to the text.

Who owns the networked future of reading?

Some years ago, I came across a battered copy of *The Silence of the Lambs* in a train carriage. It was during one of those lonely chunks of life when reading takes on a new importance, and I found a quite unexpected friend in that rather dark and worrying tale. The anonymous former owner had done little drawings and written notes in the margins of the book before inexplicably leaving it on public transport. Amusing, insightful and often unrelated to the actual text, the previous reader's commentary entirely changed my reading of Thomas Harris's story of a serial murderer and obsessive police procedure.

My anonymous guide was a university student, most likely a young woman, studying the book from a feminist point of view. Harris's novel is a superior police procedural, but still guilty of that genre's casual sexism, picked apart by my guide with glee.

I've often wished that I could talk to that anonymous commentator. Today, if they were using an e-reader, I might be able to by using *Readmill*, an e-reading app that, on the surface at least, will be familiar to anyone who has read a book on their smartphone or tablet. But what makes this particular app a potential best-seller is how it helps readers – and writers – talk to each other.

One of the world's most popular e-readers Amazon's Kindle, lets readers see which sections of a text have been underlined most frequently by other readers: a frustrating feature given what could be achieved. Amazon also provides a social network app for readers, but shows no sign of integrating it into its ebooks. And it seems that the Kindle is unlikely to ever truly embrace the power of networks.

The app *Readmill* aims to fulfil the potential of networked reading. Readers can underline and comment on a text as much as they like, then open up those comments for discussion among a growing community of passionate readers. It's a simple but powerful feature that could be a serious threat to Kindle technology.

But this is only the leading edge of the networked reading revolution. *Readmill* allows authors to claim ownership of their books, and interact with readers in the margins of the text. So not only could I and my anonymous commentator debate the feminist critique of *The Silence of the Lambs* but, should he feel so inspired, Thomas Harris himself could respond, in a conversation directly related to the text itself.

To understand what a fully realised network reading experience might mean, imagine reading a book published in 2013 in the year 2063. In the 50 years between these two dates, dozens of critical texts, hundreds of articles, thousands of reviews and hundreds of thousands of comments will have been made on the text. In a fully networked reading experience, all of those will be available to the reader of the book from within the text.

Authors are able to shape the discussion on their books; they can maintain a relationship with all the readers who have enjoyed their books, whether that is a few dozen or a few hundred million. And perhaps most interesting of all, readers can find each other through the books they read. In a world of seven billion people, the ability to find like minds has real value.

Of course, at a time when data privacy is a serious social issue, the question is: who owns the networked future of reading? Publishers might assume they do, but their failure to lead these innovations puts them at risk of becoming redundant. Amazon and the technology giants seem unstoppable. If that's true, we face a future where every book and every comment about it is owned, and profited from, by a handful of major corporations.

Readmill and other developers might yet deliver the future of reading back into the hands of readers and writers. But if this ideal is to become a reality, we're going to have to rethink what it means to own a book, or any kind of information, even if you created it. Perhaps the networked future of reading belongs to no one, and therefore to everyone.

LIVEWORKSHEETS

1 In the first paragraph, the writer says he did not understand
   A why someone had made notes in the book he found.
   B how his friend could have read such an alarming story.
   C why someone had left the book on the train.
   D how the previous reader's notes related to the story.
2 The writer assumes that the reader who wrote the notes
   A was very critical of the novel.
   B thoroughly enjoyed the novel.
   C was a great fan of crime fiction.
   D was impressed by the writer's informal style.
3 In the writer's opinion, *Readmill* is likely to be particularly successful because it allows readers to
   A comment on books they are reading.
   B communicate with other readers.
   C discuss other readers' comments.
   D underline passages of text.
4 The additional feature of *Readmill* highlighted in the sixth paragraph allows
   A a book's author to change what he or she had written.
   B the writer of a book to join the readers' debate.
   C readers to ask an author questions.
   D readers to comment without giving their name.
5 What future development of network reading interests the writer most?
   A Authors will be able to find out why readers like their books.
   B Readers will have access to a wide range of book reviews.
   C Authors will be able to keep in touch with some of their readers.
   D Readers will be able to contact people with similar ideas.
6 The writer hopes that *Readmill* and similar apps will
   A make possession of books a more positive experience.
   B make book publishing more profitable.
   C strengthen the influence of major publishers.
   D change how people read and write books.

Part 1

1 Read the text in the Exam task without looking at the four options. Can you think of any words which might fit the gaps?

2 Now do the exam task.

Exam task

For questions **1–8**, read the text below and decided which answers (**A**, **B**, **C** or **D**) best fits each gap. There is an example at the beginning.

Example: (0) **A** defend **B** protect **C** argue **D** preserve

Is classical music still relevant today?

Having listened to this music for more than three decades, I have often had to **(0)** ___A___ my devotion to classical music against the kind of people who have a very practical **(1)** _____ to life. I have to admit that I have often been faced with legitimate questions and arguments that made me **(2)** _____ my ideas. Over the years, I have been lucky enough to live in different **(3)** _____ of the world. Because of this I have come to the **(4)** _____ that I belong to a small group of people who believe in artistic principles that have nothing to do with humanity's desire for success or a more comfortable **(5)** _____. Quite a few people **(6)** _____ that this music belongs to the museum and is of **(7)** _____ only to those who have a particular reason to find out what music was like in the past. In some **(8)** _____ places I have visited, people simply called it western music and dismissed any possible interest for anybody outside Europe.

1	A method	B means	C way	D attitude
2	A reorder	B rearrange	C reorganise	D reconsider
3	A places	B parts	C communities	D societies
4	A conclusion	B assumption	C decision	D deduction
5	A presence	B lifestyle	C being	D survival
6	A discuss	B differ	C argue	D disagree
7	A attention	B attraction	C influence	D interest
8	A remote	B far	C apart	D separate

LIVEWORKSHEETS