

Technique

Read the title and skim the questions first, especially the summary. Use the information from these to predict the content of the reading passage.

Reading passage 5

You should spend 20 minutes on questions 1–13, which are based on Reading Passage 5.

Young people – coping with an unpredictable future

Young people here in Asia and indeed in every continent are facing new challenges at an unparalleled pace as they enter the global economy seeking work. But are the young in all parts of the globe fully equipped to deal with the unforeseen hazards of the twenty-first century?

With the globalization not just of commerce, but all knowledge itself, young graduates in India, Pakistan, or China are just as prepared for the future as their counterparts in any other nation. Except for one thing, that is. Young people wherever they are still lack something of paramount importance. There was a time when those companies or nations with the most knowledge had the edge on their competitors. That is now almost gone.

In future, the success of all nations and companies, and indeed the success of young workers, will depend not on analytical thinking as has been the case until now, but on creativity and flexible thinking. This will have huge implications on the way companies and people function.

Knowledge has now become like the light from the light bulb. It is now available to all of us, East and West, North and South. We can now 'switch it on' in India, China, or Korea as easily as in, say, France or Australia. Knowledge is also packaged into systems that allow professionals of any kind and level to move around the world in the employ of multinational companies much more easily than in the past. So it matters less and less where people are from, where they are working, or where they move to. The same rules and systems apply to all.

With this knowledge-based industry now firmly established, mainly as a result of the Internet, economies and people have to move on to another level of competition. What will make or break the economies of the future in Asia and the West is not workforces equipped with narrow life skills, but the more creative thinkers who can deal with the unknown. But the world is still churning out young workers to cater for knowledge rather than creativity-based economies. Edward de Bono has long championed lateral thinking and his work has found its way into many companies and conservative institutions.

More recently, Daniel Pink in *A Whole New Mind* (2005), a book about the mindset needed for the coming century, has predicted that success in the future will depend on creative thinking, not analytical thinking – more use of the right side of the brain as opposed to the left.

Knowledge-based professions which control the world like banking, management, etc. Pink argues, will wane as more and more jobs are replaced by computers, a prospect governments must wake up to or they will have hordes of young people trained for a redundant world system. The analytical brain types that have dominated job interviews in recent years have had their day. Those who see the bigger picture at the same time, i.e. those who use the right side of their brain as well or more than the left or can switch between the two at will, are about to come into their own.

The most prized individuals will be those who think outside the analytical boxes. If governments are sleep-walking into this situation, young people need not do so, but can prepare themselves for this dramatic evolution. Broadly speaking, young people are much more flexible and prepared to adapt to new situations than their older counterparts. Their very familiarity with ever-changing technology and the processes that go with it equips them to be proactive, and to develop their skills beyond the purely analytical. Take the gigantic leaps that have been made in the economies of South-East Asia in recent years. Advanced transport infrastructures and systems for knowledge transfer are more evolved than in many so-called advanced western countries which are lagging behind their eastern counterparts.

Businesses, rather than universities, can provide opportunities that introduce elements of unpredictability and creativity into aspects of training or work experience to teach employees to cope with the shifting sands of the future. The young will be encouraged to do what they do best, breaking out of existing systems and restructuring the way things are done. Older people will need to side with them in their readiness to remould the world if they are to survive in the future workplace. We may be in for a bumpy ride, but whatever else it may be, the future does not look dull.

Questions 1–7

Complete the summary below using the list of words, (A–K) from the box below.

Young people everywhere are having to overcome new **1** as they look for work. The ubiquity of knowledge means that companies and young workers need something else to stay ahead of their **2** Workers, no matter where they are from, can plug into systems. This has huge **3** With the end of knowledge-based industries, Daniel Pink has forecast that success in the future will depend on **4**, not analytical. The power of professions like banking, management, etc. will, it is argued, take on a **5** as more jobs are carried out by computers. Young people who use the right side of their brain as well as their left are about to assume a **6**, so more work-based training involving the **7** of uncertainty is in order.

- | | |
|-----------------------|-------------------------|
| A spread | G goals |
| B greater role | H creative minds |
| C obstacles | I results |
| D consequences | J value |
| E lesser role | K rivals |
| F management | |

Questions 8–10

Choose three letters, A–F.

Which **THREE** of the following predictions are made by the writer of the text?

- A** The role of creative thinkers will become more important.
- B** South-East Asia will develop more advanced systems for knowledge transfer.
- C** The use of technology will reduce people's creative abilities.
- D** Older people will find it hard to adapt to future workplace needs.
- E** Businesses will spend increasing amounts of money on training.
- F** Fewer people will enter knowledge-based professions.

Questions 11–13

Choose the correct letter, **A**, **B**, **C** or **D**.

- 11** According to the writer, some systems are more advanced in South-East Asia than in the West because
- A** managers are more highly qualified.
 - B** the business environment is more developed.
 - C** the workforce is more prepared to adapt.
 - D** the government has more resources.
- 12** According to the writer, training for the developments that he describes will be provided by
- A** governments.
 - B** universities.
 - C** schools.
 - D** businesses.
- 13** The writer concludes that
- A** older people will have to be more ready to change.
 - B** businesses will have to pay young people more.
 - C** young people will not need work-based training.
 - D** university lecturers will not have to adapt their courses.