READING PASSAGE 1

*You should spend about 20 minutes on **Questions 1-13**, which are based on Reading Passage 1 below.*

The Cloud of Promise: The 2008 Olympic Torch and Relay

Prior to the 2006 Winter Olympics in Turin, Italy, Lenovo, an international China-based computer company, signed up to be an Olympic sponsor in the 2006 Games as well as the 2008 Summer Olympics in Beijing, China. Moreover, it won the bid to design the Olympic torch for 2008. The company's design, 'Cloud of Promise', upstaged the designs of over 300 competitors. The 'Cloud of Promise' sought to wed modern technological design with elements from traditional Chinese aesthetics and culture. The design mimicked the form of a traditional Chinese scroll, which signified the invention of paper - one of the four great inventions of ancient China - as well as the color red, an auspicious colour in China, and swirling 'lucky clouds' that visually evoked the thought of the Olympic rings.

Yet it was not merely something pretty to look at. The cutting-edge technology used to create the torch was part graphic design and part rocket science. Fashioned from polished, lightweight aluminum-magnesium alloy, the torch came in at 72 cm in height and only 985 grams. The international team of designers sought to create a torch that was 'attractive to those who see it, and light for those who carry it'. Also contributing to the item's wieldable quality was the presence of a thin rubber-based varnish on the handle to facilitate grip and ease of handling.

For the internal portion of the torch, Lenovo turned to the China Aerospace Science and Industry Group. Indeed, both the private and state-sponsored technological acumen of China were on full display. Of crucial importance was the requirement that the flame remain lit for the entire duration of the torch's long journey, including during a widely publicised side trip in which athletes lugged a modified replica to the summit of the Himalayan mountain range. Inside the handle of the Olympic torch was a small canister of pure liquid propane, which was presumably chosen over the conventional precedent of using mixed gases due to propane's strong resistance to cold. When the ignition switch was turned on, it created a sudden drop in pressure, causing the gas to vaporise and flow through tiny holes at the top of the torch, fueling the 'never-ending' Olympic flame.

The designers also came up with a pressure-stabilisation system and a heat-recovery device that provided further security against the flame's extinguishment, and had the foresight to include a special oxidiser in the replica to supply the necessary oxygen for propane to combust in environmental conditions of low oxygen, such as on Mt. Everest, where this flame would have to withstand extremely low air pressure, frigid temperatures, and high winds. All in all,

LIVEWORKSHEETS

the Olympic torch was rumored to be able to withstand temperatures of minus 40 degrees Celsius, rains of five centimetres per hour, and winds of 65 kilometres per hour, and the rigorous preparation paid off on 8 May when a team of mountaineers scaled the summit of the world's most famous mountain on live television to be seen across the globe. This side trip was conducted separately from the main relay, which at the time was occurring on the Chinese mainland.

Of course, the carriers of the torch were the people selected to bear it in the prestigious Olympic torch relay, and 21,800 participants got the opportunity to run with the torch in the main relay. The relay was the longest in Olympic history, starting in March of 2008 in Olympia, Greece and ending in August in Beijing, China with the lighting of the cauldron in the opening ceremonies. The torchbearers traversed a route of 137,000 kilometres involving 6 continents, 21 countries and 113 Chinese cities, and was thus a true world tour. Although the relay was unprecedented in scale, its magnificence was at times overshadowed by unusual and unfortunate circumstances. For instance, the planned June trip through the province of Sichuan was postponed until August due to the devastating 7.9 magnitude earthquake that happened there in May of 2008.

In addition, the relay endured widespread political demonstrations and protests by activists demanding that China change its position on Tibet and condemning its controversial human rights record in general. As a result, the torch relay was unusually costly in terms of security: in London, nearly 2,000 law enforcement officers were employed to confront thousands of protestors, who were trying to extinguish the Olympic flame and encourage sponsors to boycott the relay and the Olympic games, which cost -750,000. And in France, over 3,000 motorcycle police accompanied the torch and torch bearers as they travelled through Paris. In a sense, the emotional and symbolic effects of the torch representing goodwill and the Olympic image were muted by the controversy and surrounding security presence, which inhibited the torch's public accessibility. The 'Journey of Harmony' around the world had not been so harmonious after all, and the international press pounced on the opportunity to make disparaging statements about the relay, using such headlines as 'a Tour de Farce' or 'Torch's Journey Descends into Chaos'.

In the end, however, the torch found its proper place, arriving in Beijing on 6 August and being paraded around the capital for three days. The final relay was conducted by seven famous Chinese athletes, each taking their turn in getting the torch to the stadium, where it was then turned over to six-time Olympic gymnastics medallist, Ning Li. In a dramatic finale, the relay ended with Li being lifted in the air by cables as if he had taken flight, and he 'flew' a complete lap around the stadium before finally reaching and lighting the cauldron in a dazzling and triumphant display.

LIVEWORKSHEETS

Questions 1-7

Do the following statements agree with the information given in Reading Passage 1?

In boxes 1-7 on your answer sheet, write

TRUE	*if the statement agrees with the information*
FALSE	*if the statement contradicts the information*
NOT GIVEN	*if there is no information on this*

1 The design and technology that went into the torch were solely developed by Lenovo.

2 Lenovo's 2008 torch required a different type of propane when it was taken to the Himalayas.

3 Turning the torch's ignition switch on resulted in an instantaneous decrease in pressure.

4 Although the 2008 torch relay was a momentous undertaking, it was not the longest in history.

5 The security cost for the London portion of the relay was highest along the entire route.

6 In Paris, the public's access to the torch was high due to a smaller security presence.

7 Some media outlets made negative comments about the torch relay.

LIVEWORKSHEETS

Questions 8-13

Answer the questions below.

*Choose **ONE WORD ONLY** from the passage for each answer.*

Write your answers in boxes 8-13 on your answer sheet.

8 Which traditional Chinese motif was the physical design of the Olympic torch largely based on?

9 What was added to the exterior of the torch to make it easier to carry?

10 What did athletes carry when they went to the top of the Himalayas?

11 Which part of the torch allowed the flame to withstand the harsh conditions on Mt. Everest?

12 What natural disaster was mentioned as a disruption to the schedule of the torch relay?

13 What allowed the final athlete in the relay to appear suspended above the stadium?

LIVEWORKSHEETS