ACTION PLAN

1 Read the instructions at the top of the page, the title and the sub-heading (if there is one). These will tell you what the subject is of the four texts.
2 Read the four questions and highlight the key words in each one.
3 Read the first text carefully and highlight the sections of the text that relate to each question. Write the relevant question numbers next to each of these highlighted sections.
4 Do the same for each text.
5 Compare the highlighted sections in the four texts which relate to question 37. Read the opinions carefully and decide which are similar and which are different. Then choose the answer to question 37.
6 Do the same for the other three questions.

Follow the exam instructions, using the advice to help you.

You are going to read four extracts from articles in which experts give their views on home schooling, the practice of educating children at home rather than at school. For questions **37 – 40**, choose from the experts **A – D**. The experts may be chosen more than once.

TIP

As an additional technique, you may find it useful to use four different colours to highlight the relevant sections of text for each question. For example, highlight question 37 and the sections in the four texts that relate to that question in yellow. Do the same for question 38 in green, and so on.

Home schooling

In some countries, particularly the USA, increasing numbers of parents are choosing to educate their children at home rather than send them to school. Is this a positive development?

A

Once only the wealthy could afford the resources that schools could offer, but more widespread affluence and ready access to the internet means the balance has changed and, in many ways, learning works better from a kitchen table than in an institutional setting. Massive changes in technology, communications and work practices have had a huge impact on home life, with parents and children often spending very little time together. So if a decision is taken for one parent, or both parents, to educate their children in person, this tends to lead to much healthier relationships. Parents' understanding of their children and commitment to their best interests will usually make up for whatever specific expertise they may be short of. The contention that being home-schooled engenders isolation, overlooks the array of clubs, groups and associations in which home-schooled children participate no less than any of their peers, and where they mix with a wide spectrum of people.

B

A conventional school is a microcosm of the wider society that students will become members of. Learning how to get on with other pupils and staff is invaluable preparation, and something that cannot be achieved outside school. Because schools have to deal with large numbers of pupils, however, their focus tends to be on the group rather than the individual and, as a consequence, only limited individual attention can be given to the particularly gifted or to those with special learning needs. For such pupils, education in the responsive setting of the home may well be a desirable alternative, given adequate professional support. The majority of adults are ill-equipped to provide their offspring with the in-depth cross-curricular knowledge that pupils need. I could help my daughter through the history curriculum, but I couldn't do much for her in other subjects. Also, although we love each other, I would fear for what being in each other's company constantly would do to our relationship – and I doubt we're unusual in that respect.

LIVEWORKSHEETS

C

The claim that home schooling enhances the family has plausibility. If parents deliver their own children's education, with all the time and emotional investment that entails, the chances are that their close family ties will be reinforced. That said, the home is where you eat, sleep and play, and is therefore not particularly conducive to the concentration needed to absorb certain types of knowledge. Of course, education is not just about knowledge acquisition; it's also about the development of the whole person, including what it takes to live alongside and communicate effectively with individuals of all kinds. Mainstream schools tend to excel at this, whereas home schooling falls short. Once children are mature enough, most will gain more educationally from being in class with a trained professional than alone with a loved one who lacks the requisite skills.

D

High-calibre teachers will often be the first to admit that their know-how largely comes from doing their jobs rather than being instructed in how to do them, and similarly, the majority of parents who are motivated enough to tutor their own sons and daughters full time will become proficient through practice. The process is also likely to be immensely helpful in terms of bonding, and thus runs counter to what, unfortunately, is happening in much of society – the fragmentation of traditional interpersonal structures. Education at home also means children can avoid being subjected to peer pressure, bullying, rowdiness and other aggravations that school pupils have to deal with and which get in the way of education. Another common misconception is that keeping young people out of 'normal' school removes them from society. Home educators actually go to great lengths to involve their children in an impressive diversity of cultural and social contexts.

Which expert

shares A's view regarding the variety of interaction that is possible for home-schooled children? **37** ☐

expresses a different view from the other three experts regarding the likely impact of home schooling on the family unit? **38** ☐

shares B's view on how well-suited parents are to teach their children? **39** ☐

has a different view from A on whether the home is a suitable environment for academic learning? **40** ☐

FOLLOW-UP

Did you follow all the steps in the Action plan?

Advice

37 *What does A think about the variety of interaction that is possible for home-schooled children? Does A think the variety of interaction is good or limited?*

38 *Remember that the writers may not use the actual word 'family'.*

39 *First, check what B says about parents teaching their own children. Does B think they are well-suited or not?*

40 *Does A think the home is a suitable environment for learning?*

LIVEWORKSHEETS