Reading PART 6

TASK INFORMATION

- In Reading Part 6, you read four texts.
- Each text contains a writer's opinions about a central topic.
- You have to identify shared or contrasting opinions on each of the issues.
- Within each text, the writer gives their opinion about three or four issues related to the central topic.
- You need to skim and scan each text to find what each writer says about an issue.
- There are four questions, one about each of the four issues that the writers comment on.
- You must then decide if the writers' or reviewers' opinions are the same or different.
- The texts can also be four different reviews about the same book, film, etc.
- Each question is worth two marks.

PRACTICE TASK

1. Read extracts from four reviews of a book about global politics. Answer the questions.
Which reviewer
1 shares an opinion with reviewer D about the depth of analysis in the book?
2 has a different opinion to the other reviewers about the regions the author has chosen to focus on?

How did you do?
2. Check your answers.
3. Read the first question in Ex 1 again.
1 Highlight the sections of text in each review that comment on Campbell's depth of analysis.
2 Read the opinion expressed by reviewer D. Is the reviewer positive or negative about the level of Campbell's analysis?
3 Read the opinions expressed by reviewers A, B and C. Which one is closest in meaning to that of Reviewer D? Why?

4. Read the second question in Ex 1 again.
1 Highlight the sections of text that relate to the choice of regions included in Campbell's book.
2 Make notes in the table below about what each reviewer (A-D) says about the choice of regions included in Campbell's book.

3 Which three reviewers have very similar opinions?
4 What is the answer?

THE GLOBAL GAME
Four reviewers comment on Sheila Campbell's book

A
The Global Game is an ambitious book about decision-making on a global scale. Each of its twelve chapters covers one of the world's geopolitical hotspots, identifying and analysing the decisions that have led to their instability and suggesting likely scenarios as to how events there will unfold. There's everywhere you'd expect to be included in such a book and plenty of surprises too. However, the treatment of the current situation in each region, and the influence that global superpowers have or are seeking to have there, borders on the superficial at times.

B
What I found unusual about Campbell's impressively researched book is how often I found myself agreeing with the conclusions she draws at the end of each chapter. Not only that, I discovered revelation after revelation in her detailed exploration of each of the regions, and the decisions that led up to their current state of unrest. Had I been asked to name the twelve most significant areas of political tension around the globe, my list would have included perhaps six of those selected by Campbell. I would never have predicted the others she's included.

C
The blurb on the back of Campbell's book makes the rather extravagant promise that never before has a book of this type examined global geopolitics so comprehensively. The majority of books that make such claims often then spectacularly fail to live up to them, but this is definitely not the case with *The Global Game*. However, I can't help wondering whether Campbell was adventurous enough when making the decisions about where to write about. It would have upped the interest levels considerably had I come across at least a few chapters on somewhere I wasn't expecting to read about.

D
As one would expect, the longest chapters in Campbell's book deal with the places that we see in the news most often. What I was pleasantly taken aback by, however, was the inclusion of sections dealing with the situations in parts of the world where I didn't even know tensions existed. That said, it wasn't always possible to come away from many, if any, of the chapters with a good understanding of the actual circumstances there. Campbell appears to have avoided tackling much of the complexity that one needs to fully comprehend any region.

LIVEWORKSHEETS

STRATEGIES AND SKILLS

Identifying contrasting opinions

Texts in Part 6 often contain opinions which appear to contradict what the writer actually believes. The speaker puts forward one opinion, but also indicates that she or he actually holds a contrasting view.

1 Read the short extracts from Part 6 texts and choose the correct answer (A–C).

1 Whilst the majority of commentators on the subject of economic progress believe there should be a reduction in regulation for businesses to almost zero, I'm of the opposite opinion entirely.

The writer believes that there should be

A. no regulation for business.
B. less regulation for business.
C. more regulation for business.

2 I came to this book having heard from many different quarters that Kinsella was a truly original writer. I'm not sure how many other authors those who told me this had read, but it can't have been many.

The writer believes that Kinsella

A. writes in an original way.
B. isn't a particularly original author.
C. writes some original and some unoriginal material.

3 I've never gone along with the opinion which many educational policy-makers hold that having art lessons in schools should be universal.

The writer believes that

A. not all students should have to go to art lessons.
B. art lessons should be compulsory for all students.
C. decisions about art lessons should be left to the government.

4 Imposing an immediate ban on single-use plastics seems attractive but may ultimately end up being counterproductive, as the processes used in creating replacement materials are equally polluting.

The writer believes that a ban on single-use plastics

A. must be implemented straight away.
B. is impossible as there are no replacement materials.
C. should be thought about carefully before imposing it.

5 There's a general consensus that student behaviour in schools is on the decline, yet the majority of evidence that's presented to support this viewpoint is subjective.

The writer believes that standards of behaviour in schools

A. are open to question.
B. are falling.
C. are the same as before.

6 We're already seeing several effects of the new transport policy, which are perhaps not what the government had in mind when it promised that the policy would lead to cleaner air in the city.

The writer believes that the government's new transport policy

A. was full of empty promises.
B. has had unexpected consequences.
C. is creating cleaner air in the city.

2 **Highlight the sections of text in each extract that allowed you to work out your answer.**

LIVEWORKSHEETS

IDENTIFYING SIMILAR OPINIONS

3 Read the pairs of sentences. Do they have a similar meaning or different meanings?

1 A The false assumption that many would-be authors make is that writing is a natural talent.
B Those who see themselves as future authors often mistakenly believe they were born into the role.

2 A Archaeology is of as much use to us as a species as learning how to cook plastic.
B I think the view of archaeology as an outdated field of study has thankfully gone out of fashion.

3 A Climate change must be at the front of every organisation's mind when making any business decision.
B No plans should be made in companies without considering the implications for climate change.

4 A The billions it costs to stage huge sporting events would be far better spent on directly funding new amenities for residents.
B I've yet to see a city that's hosted a big sporting event that doesn't have a huge legacy of publicly accessible facilities that wouldn't otherwise have been built.

5 A Thorough inspections in the country's schools are of equal importance today as they ever were.
B Calls for a relaxation of the strictness of the school inspection framework are misguided and should be resisted.

4 Read the two extracts from Part 6 texts. Decide whether the statements (1–10) that follow are true or false.

EXTREME SPORTS

Anna Caicedo
There's a highly vocal minority who continually call for the abolition of extreme sports. While I can comprehend the motivation behind their arguments, that they cost lives and taxpayers' money to treat them when things go wrong, I have a more fundamental issue with their approach: how to define an extreme sport. Far greater losses to life and the economy occur due to people sustaining injuries or serious health issues such as heart attacks while playing tennis than happen because of base jumping. One suggestion is to replace extreme sports with electronic equivalents, which of course carry little or no risk. I was distinctly sceptical about these at first but have greatly warmed to the idea after trying an early prototype of just such a system. There's far more regulation of dangerous sporting activities these days, thanks to governing bodies being set up to supervise these sports and ensure events are as safe as can be. People would revert to doing the sports illegally and in a far more hazardous way should a ban on extreme sports be implemented.

Stephen Tenby
I appreciate that the majority of extreme sports have had official organisations put into place overseeing them, which set standards that participants must follow. While this has been applauded by many, I find the idea of creating rules for something so inherently dangerous utterly pointless. It simply doesn't get away from the fact that a disproportionate number of people who partake in these sports end up dead or seriously hurt. The only solution to this is to prevent these sports from being practised anywhere. Given the correct incentives, I'm convinced that those who thrive on the kind of adrenaline rush extreme sports provide could be encouraged to become involved in safer versions of their chosen sport, which either already exist or are in the latter stages of development. Free-fall parachuting in a wind tunnel is an example of one that's already in place. Virtual reality simulations of sports such as base jumping must also be a possibility, given the computing power we have at our disposal these days.

LIVEWORKSHEETS

1 Caicedo is part of a minority who oppose the abolition of extreme sports.
2 Caicedo has no sympathy with the reasons given for banning extreme sports.
3 Caicedo suggests that conventional sports cause more actual harm than extreme ones.
4 Caicedo thinks that virtual reality versions of extreme sports aren't worth considering.
5 Caicedo says banning extreme sports would cancel out the positive effects of sports governing bodies.
6 Tenby thinks having governing bodies overseeing extreme sports is a waste of time.
7 Tenby thinks it would be close to impossible to persuade people to stop practising extreme sports.
8 Tenby says alternative versions of extreme sports either are, or soon will be, available.
9 Tenby uses free-fall parachuting as an example of a safe, virtual extreme sport that's already available.
10 Tenby believes electronic versions of many different sports are possible.

5 Read the texts in Exercise 4 again and decide whether Caicedo and Tenby are likely to agree or disagree with these statements.
1 Extreme sports should be subjected to a complete ban in all forms.
2 Regulatory bodies for extreme sports have had a positive effect.
3 Virtual versions of extreme sports are something that should be encouraged.
4 Certain people seem to be at risk should be prevented from playing conventional sports.

IDENTIFYING PARAPHRASES AND SYNONYMS
Often, each writer uses vocabulary and expresses ideas related to the topics of the questions in different ways. It's important to be able to identify paraphrases and synonyms that will guide you to each writer's opinion on a particular topic.

6 Match vocabulary used by Anna Caicedo (1–8) with a synonym or paraphrase used by Stephen Tenby (a–h).

Anna Caicedo	Stephen Tenby
1. abolition	a. version
2. regulation	b. oversee
3. prototype	c. end up hurt
4. governing body	d. put into place
5. sustain injuries	e. prevent from being practised
6. electronic equivalent	f. official organisation
7. supervise	g. virtual reality simulation
8. implement	h. standard

TIP
Words or ideas in the options often occur in the text, but this does not mean that the option is correct. They may be distractors, placed there to make the correct answer more challenging to find. Read the relevant part of the text very carefully to determine whether the meaning matches.

7 Write as many synonyms of the words and expressions in bold as you can.
1 the **business** was a success _____
2 an **environmentally friendly** product _____
3 the **implications** of the policy are unclear _____
4 **reducing** employees' hours _____
5 her writing has improved **vastly** _____
6 it had **minimal** impact on the economy _____
7 these are **challenging** times _____
8 **progress** has been good _____

LIVEWORKSHEETS

F. You are going to read four reviews of a book about the media. For questions 1-4, choose from the reviews A-D. The reviews may be chosen more than once. Mark your answers on the separate answer sheet.

The power of the media
Four reviews of The Media Machine by Alexander Grahame?

A

The Media Machine attempts to unpick the complex relationships between business, media and politics in the western world. Author Alexander Grahame's 25 years in the news industry enable him to analyse the topic with authority and in great detail. Despite his intimate knowledge of the media's inner workings, however, I didn't come away from the book feeling that I had been party to any great revelations. Without doubt, the main points are eloquently stated, but have all largely been made before in other such studies. His main focus is on how each news title, whether broadsheet or tabloid, subtly manipulates its readers towards a certain opinion. The media's ability to do this gives them great influence over those in power, but hasn't that always been the case? Social media's involvement, however, adds a new dimension, and the author's conviction that its algorithms will create even greater societal divisions are frighteningly plausible.

B

The printed media's ability to seek to control the thoughts, minds and supposedly democratic decisions of their readership, asserts Alexander Grahame in The Media Machine, has never had such dangerous consequences as it does today. Few sane people would disagree. According to Grahame, what has complicated this issue beyond recognition is the internet. Astonishingly complex coding now provides each user with news based on what they've previously clicked on and read. His assumption that this will create ever deeper and more heated disagreements within populations, however, is not backed up with any convincing evidence. Despite this, Grahame's arguments throughout the book are put forward with the degree of assurance you'd expect from such a well-respected journalist. Although the idea of press exploitation of people's attitudes and beliefs has been written about on many occasions before, the other countless fresh insights included in the pages of The Media Machine make it well worth reading.

C

The main emotion I was left with after reading Alexander Grahame's The Media Machine was concern. He paints a believably bleak picture of what humanity has in store thanks to the seemingly endless number of news feeds available to us on our devices, and the effect that this may have on social integrity. Grahame comments so perceptively on this and many other contentious issues that I had never even considered that I eventually lost count. My sense of unease is caused in part by how persuasively the claims made within the book are put across. The conviction with which Grahame writes is impressive. One small irritation is that too much space is given to how much power traditional news titles have over their readers, and hence who they want to win in an election. This has clearly been the case for many decades, if not centuries, yet to my knowledge no society ever fell apart because its media expressed a variety of opinions.

D

Interesting though it is, Alexander Grahame's new book will probably seem to most readers more like a revision aid for a media studies degree than a groundbreaking vision of the media, politics and power. Its principal attempt to be ahead of the times relates to its focus on internet-age interference with citizens' thinking through various social platforms. Whilst this practice undoubtedly occurs, Grahame's conclusion that it has pushed whole societies to the edge of conflict is hard to have faith in. What had me nodding in agreement, however, was his frightening analysis of the sheer number of votes that can be changed when one of the big national news titles decides to change their political allegiance. This was the only section of the book in which I felt Grahame had a thorough grasp of the issue he was dealing with. Elsewhere, it was unclear whether he actually believed in his own arguments.

LIVEWORKSHEETS

Questions 37–40

Which reviewer ...

has a different opinion from the other reviewers about how confidently Grahame discusses the media?	**37**	
shares reviewer B's opinion about how original Grahame's ideas are?	**38**	
shares a view with reviewer D regarding Grahame's concerns about the political influence of newspapers?	**39**	
has a similar view to reviewer B about Grahame's predictions regarding online media?	**40**	

F. You are going to read four excerpts from articles in which education experts discuss homeschooling (educating children at home rather than at school). For questions 1-4, choose from the reviews A-D. The reviews may be chosen more than once. Mark your answers on the separate answer sheet.

Which expert ...

has a different view to the others regarding the effect of homeschooling on the behaviour of children?	**37**	
shares an opinion with D on the education progress of homeschooling children?	**38**	
expresses a different opinion to the others about government monitoring of homeschooling?	**39**	
expresses a similar view to B about whether all parents should be allowed to homeschool their children?	**40**	

LIVEWORKSHEETS

HOMESCHOOLING

A Tessa Hamilton
There's a surprising amount of controversy surrounding homeschooling. In my thirty years of working in education, twenty of which as a homeschooling advisor, I've never come across anyone who I've felt to be incapable of teaching their children adequately. There are those, of course, who benefit greatly from additional support and training, but if the necessary systems are in place whereby the authorities can scrutinise all homeschool tutors and their students, then I see no reason for concern. What's struck me over and over is how consistently mature homeschooled students seem in relation to their traditionally schooled counterparts. Perhaps the gap would close if schools opted for smaller classes, but funding issues often constrain this possibility. Were it an option, this may also go some way to allowing school students to catch up to their homeschooled peers academically.

B Virat Bhalla
Many educational commentators point to homeschooled children's exemplary conduct as one of the principal indicators as to how successful it is as an educational strategy. While I can't disagree with their assessment, I'd take issue with its importance educationally. I'd always look to their academic attainment as the truer measure of whether homeschooling is working or not, and there's a growing body of evidence that suggests these children are seriously underperforming in national tests. I think much of the blame for this must be placed at the doors of whoever has taken on the homeschooling of their children. Few of them, after all, are trained teachers, and those found lacking should be prevented from continuing. Insufficient checking up on who is teaching what to whom has also been a factor, and this should be tightened up considerably and made compulsory for all concerned.

C Elena Collias
In many countries homeschooling is frowned upon, even if it's not actually against the law. This mistrust comes at least in part from occasions on which it's been discovered that those claiming to homeschool are not actually doing what they say they're doing. That's why tight regulation and checking needs to be in place. Personally, I think this should include a prohibition being placed on adults who apply to homeschool their children who are not considered up to the task. After all, teaching is a demanding profession, whether it's done in a school environment or at home. When it's done well, however, there's little doubt that it can work wonders for any student's academic development. A highly positive side-effect is that children schooled in this way tend to be far more sensible and grown-up in their approach to life than those of a similar age in state education.

D Morio Furukawa
I can see the attraction of homeschooling, especially for those parents whose line of work results in them moving frequently from place to place. However, just as a child who moved to a new school every few months would fall behind their peers academically, so do many of those who are homeschooled. Despite these observations, I'm a great believer in parental choice and would advocate that parents be at total liberty to educate their children as they see fit, without any interference from those in authority. Nor should the state be able to disallow certain people from teaching their children in this way due to perceived doubts about their ability to do so. I'm convinced that everyone can do an adequate job given the necessary support. Students educated in this way never seem to act as responsibly as their state-schooled peers, however, perhaps because of having had fewer opportunities for social development.

LIVEWORKSHEETS