IELTS Academic Mock Paper 2

Candidate question paper

Original EWS practice • Academic route • Edition 5 November 2026

FREE QUESTION PAPER

Name: _____

Date: _____

Use this paper for supervised practice. It contains 40 Listening questions, 40 Reading questions, two Writing tasks and all three Speaking parts. Blank response pages are included. Filled answers and teacher scripts are in a separate paid guide.

Listening needs a teacher to read the matched script. Recordings are not supplied in this edition. This is a teacher-led practice paper, not an audio-complete timed mock.

Reading: 60 minutes. Writing: 60 minutes. Speaking: 11-14 minutes with an examiner/partner. Teacher-led Listening timing depends on the reader; do not report a standardised score.

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The cases and practice data are fictional unless otherwise stated. These materials are independent EWS practice, not actual IELTS past papers, predictions or an endorsed IELTS product. Final papers are end-of-course practice, not official examinations.

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Listening

40 questions • Four parts • Teacher-led practice

Follow each group's answer limit. Listen once while the teacher reads. Do not look at a script. Write answers on the blank response page.

Part 1 - Bicycle Maintenance Course Booking

Questions 1-5: Complete the booking form. Write NO MORE THAN TWO WORDS AND/OR A NUMBER for each answer.

1. Participant's first name: _____
2. Course date: _____
3. Start time (a.m.): _____
4. Discounted fee: Rs. _____
5. Room: Workshop _____

Questions 6-10: Choose the correct letter, A, B or C.

6. What extra item should Malini bring?

A. tools
B. an old cloth
C. gloves

7. Which entrance should she use?

A. customer entrance
B. gate beside car park
C. rear door

8. Which topic is covered first?

A. brakes
B. gears
C. punctures

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9. Which topic is NOT included?

A. puncture repair
B. wheel building
C. gears

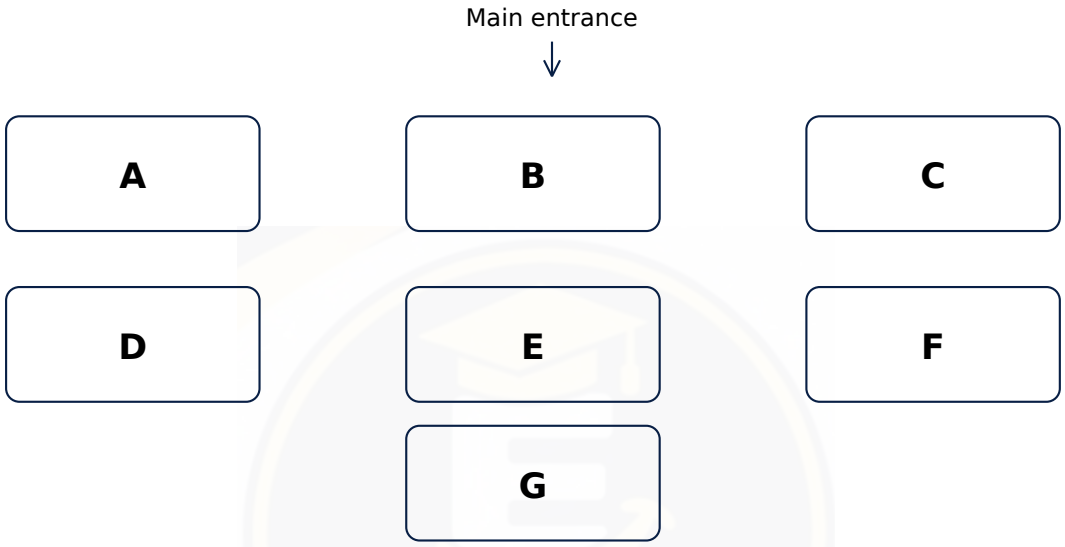
10. What will be emailed after the course?

A. a guide and video
B. a receipt only
C. a tool list

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Part 2 - Northbridge Learning Centre

Plan - letters mark possible locations



Questions 11-15: Label the map. Choose the correct letter, A-G.

11. Which letter shows Reception? _____

12. Which letter shows the Lecture Hall? _____

13. Which letter shows the Workshop Lab? _____

14. Which letter shows the Computer Room? _____

15. Which letter shows the Quiet Study room? _____

Questions 16-18: Choose the correct letter, A, B or C.

16. The study-planning talk begins at:

A. 10.00
B. 10.30
C. 11.15

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17. Why must visitors choose between the two practical sessions?

A. both need registration
B. they are full
C. they happen at the same time

18. Where may visitors make phone calls?

A. quiet study room
B. courtyard
C. café

Questions 19-20: Complete the notes. Write A TIME ONLY for each answer.

19. The digital-library tour begins at: _____

20. The café closes at: _____

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Part 3 - Research Project on Food Waste

Question 21: Write A NUMBER ONLY.

21. How many complete household diaries are in the final sample? _____

Questions 22-23: Choose the correct letter, A, B or C.

22. Which type of waste was largest?

A. cooked food
B. fresh vegetables
C. bread

23. Why do people often cook too much?

A. food is cheap
B. they cannot estimate portions
C. recipes are unclear

Question 24: Complete the sentence. Write ONE WORD ONLY.

24. Leftovers are often forgotten at the back of the _____.

Questions 25-26: Choose the correct letter, A, B or C.

25. What causes confusion?

A. storage temperatures
B. use-by and best-before labels
C. packaging sizes

26. What comparison will the students now focus on?

A. age group
B. household size
C. income

Questions 27-28: Match each presentation responsibility with the correct student. Write A for Arjun or L for Leila.

27. Method and sample: _____

28. Results and chart: _____

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Questions 29-30: Choose the correct letter, A, B or C.

29. Main recommendation:

A. expiry-label campaign
B. smaller fridges
C. meal-planning tool

30. Revised chart deadline:

A. Tuesday afternoon
B. Thursday morning
C. Friday afternoon

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Part 4 - Lecture: Cognitive Offloading

Questions 31-40: Complete the notes. Write ONE WORD ONLY for each answer.

31. Cognitive offloading uses external tools to reduce information held in the _____.
32. A shopping list frees memory for other _____.
33. Calendar reminders and search engines can act as external _____ systems.
34. Offloading can improve _____.
35. People expecting saved information remembered fewer _____.
36. They remembered better where the information could be _____.
37. Constant navigation may reduce knowledge of a city's broader _____.
38. A balanced approach includes paying attention to _____.
39. Students need internal knowledge to judge whether an answer is _____.
40. The key is deciding what can safely be delegated to _____.

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Listening response page

Write one answer for each numbered question. This is a blank candidate sheet, not an answer guide.

1.	_____	21.	_____
2.	_____	22.	_____
3.	_____	23.	_____
4.	_____	24.	_____
5.	_____	25.	_____
6.	_____	26.	_____
7.	_____	27.	_____
8.	_____	28.	_____
9.	_____	29.	_____
10.	_____	30.	_____
11.	_____	31.	_____
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13.	_____	33.	_____
14.	_____	34.	_____
15.	_____	35.	_____
16.	_____	36.	_____
17.	_____	37.	_____
18.	_____	38.	_____
19.	_____	39.	_____
20.	_____	40.	_____

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Academic Reading

60 minutes • 40 questions • No extra transfer time

Read all three passages and answer every question. Write the correct letters, words or numbers within the stated limits.

Passage 1 - SPONGE CITIES: DESIGNING WITH RAIN

A Cities often treat rain as a drainage problem: water falls on roofs and roads, enters pipes and is carried away as quickly as possible. This approach developed when urban planners were mainly concerned with preventing streets from flooding and separating wastewater from living areas. Yet modern cities increasingly face two apparently opposite pressures at the same time. Intense storms can overwhelm drainage systems, while longer dry periods create pressure on water supplies. Climate projections suggest that both extremes may become more common in many regions. These conditions have encouraged interest in 'sponge city' design, a broad term for neighbourhoods that absorb, store and reuse more rainwater instead of immediately sending it into underground pipes. The metaphor is useful because it describes a change in behaviour: rather than acting like a hard shell that rejects water, the city temporarily holds part of it.

B The idea is not based on one technology. It combines many small interventions distributed across streets, roofs, parks and private developments. Permeable pavements allow water to pass through gaps rather than running across a sealed surface. Rain gardens collect water in shallow planted areas where soil and roots slow its movement. Green roofs temporarily hold rainfall before releasing part of it through drainage or evaporation. Parks can be designed to flood safely during storms and then return to normal use. Some buildings store roof water in tanks for later irrigation or cleaning. None of these measures is likely to solve urban flooding alone, but together they can reduce the speed and volume of runoff entering conventional drainage networks. That matters because a pipe system that fails during a short peak may cope successfully if the same volume arrives more slowly.

C Supporters emphasise that these systems can provide benefits even when no flood occurs. More vegetation can cool streets, create habitat and improve the appearance of dense neighbourhoods. Captured rainwater may be used for irrigation or street cleaning, reducing demand for treated drinking water. In some projects, redesigned public spaces have encouraged walking, play and recreation. The soil and vegetation used in rain gardens can also trap a portion

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of pollutants before water reaches rivers. This collection of side benefits is one reason engineers increasingly work with landscape architects, public-health specialists and ecologists rather than treating drainage as an isolated technical system. A project may therefore be justified not only by the floods it prevents, but by the everyday value of the space it creates.

D However, the term 'sponge city' can create unrealistic expectations. Soil can absorb only a limited amount of water, and every storage area has a maximum capacity. During an exceptionally intense or long storm, green infrastructure may become saturated and conventional drains are still needed. Maintenance is another challenge. Permeable surfaces can become blocked by sediment, rain gardens may fail if plants die, and underground storage tanks require inspection. Leaves and litter can obstruct inlets. A project that looks impressive in its first year may perform poorly later if local authorities do not budget for routine maintenance. Designers must therefore calculate not only construction cost but also who will inspect, clean and repair each element over several decades.

E Retrofitting existing cities is particularly difficult. New districts can reserve space for ponds, wider planting strips and drainage corridors before construction begins. Older neighbourhoods may have narrow streets, buried utilities and valuable buildings that leave little room for large changes. Property ownership can further complicate projects because the most useful location for a rain garden may cross several private boundaries. Some cities therefore make gradual improvements whenever roads are repaired, car parks are rebuilt or public squares are redesigned. Others offer incentives for private building owners to install green roofs or storage tanks. This incremental approach is slower, but it avoids the cost and disruption of rebuilding entire drainage systems at once and allows planners to learn from early projects.

F Equity has also become part of the discussion. Flood-prone districts are often home to lower-income residents who have fewer resources to repair damaged homes or relocate temporarily. They may also lack insurance or live in rented accommodation where decisions about improvements belong to landlords. Yet attractive green infrastructure can raise nearby property values and, in some cases, contribute to displacement if rents increase. A park that reduces flood risk but pushes existing residents out of the neighbourhood would solve one problem while creating another. Planners therefore face a double responsibility: they must reduce environmental risk without making neighbourhoods unaffordable to the people the investment was intended to protect. Some programmes link flood upgrades with rent protections, affordable housing policies or grants for existing homeowners.

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G There is also a question of measurement. A conventional pipe has a relatively clear capacity, but a distributed network of gardens, roofs and porous surfaces changes with weather, vegetation and maintenance. Cities need monitoring systems that show whether installations are actually absorbing the expected amount of water. Sensors can provide useful data, but they add cost and technical complexity. Simpler approaches include measuring soil condition, checking how quickly standing water disappears after storms and comparing flood reports before and after installation. Without such evaluation, officials may continue funding attractive projects without knowing which designs perform best.

H Researchers generally describe sponge-city design not as a replacement for conventional engineering but as an additional layer of protection. Pipes, pumps and flood barriers remain necessary in many places. The advantage of a distributed system is that thousands of small surfaces and spaces can manage part of the rainfall before it reaches those larger structures. It can also be expanded gradually as neighbourhoods change. The most successful projects appear to combine engineering capacity, ecological design, long-term maintenance, monitoring and social planning. The idea is therefore less revolutionary than its name suggests. It does not remove the need for drainage; it changes the relationship between urban surfaces and the water that falls on them.

Questions 1-5: Choose the correct heading for paragraphs A-E from the list below. Write the correct Roman numeral, i-viii.

i. More than one technology
ii. A new response to two water problems
iii. Benefits beyond flood control
iv. Why green systems still need conventional drainage
v. Difficulties in older neighbourhoods
vi. A social risk linked to improvement
vii. A combined model rather than a replacement
viii. Building underground railways

1. Paragraph A _____
2. Paragraph B _____
3. Paragraph C _____
4. Paragraph D _____

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5. Paragraph E _____

Questions 6-9: Do the statements agree with the information in the passage? Write TRUE if the statement agrees, FALSE if it contradicts the passage, or NOT GIVEN if there is no information about it.

6. Sponge-city design is based on one main drainage technology. _____

7. Parks can sometimes be designed to flood safely during storms. _____

8. The rain gardens described were all installed in 2024. _____

9. Maintenance problems can reduce performance over time. _____

Questions 10-13: Complete the sentences. Choose ONE WORD ONLY from the passage for each answer.

10. Green roofs can temporarily hold _____.

11. Permeable surfaces may become blocked by _____.

12. Older neighbourhoods may contain buried _____.

13. Planners must reduce flood risk without making areas _____.

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Passage 2 - WHO SHOULD PAY FOR PACKAGING WASTE?

A For much of modern retail history, packaging was treated as a minor part of a product: it protected goods, carried a brand and helped transport items efficiently. Environmental policy has changed that perspective. In many countries, packaging now represents a significant share of household waste, and governments are looking for ways to make producers responsible for what happens after a product is sold. One increasingly common policy is Extended Producer Responsibility, or EPR, under which manufacturers contribute financially or operationally to the collection, sorting and recycling of the packaging they place on the market. The exact form varies widely. In some systems, companies pay fees to a national recycling organisation; in others, industries organise collection themselves.

B The logic behind EPR is straightforward. Municipal recycling systems are expensive, but local authorities have little control over how packaging is designed. A council may be asked to recycle a container made from several bonded materials even though it cannot easily be separated. Another package may be technically recyclable but so small or lightweight that sorting machines fail to capture it. If producers pay more when their packaging is difficult to recycle, they have an incentive to redesign it. In theory, this shifts part of the cost from taxpayers to companies that influence material choice and encourages designers to consider end-of-life treatment before a product reaches the market.

C Design incentives can be powerful, but they depend on how fees are calculated. If every producer pays the same amount per kilogram, there is little reward for creating packaging that is easier to process. More advanced systems therefore use 'eco-modulated' fees: recyclable, reusable or lower-impact packaging pays less, while complex materials pay more. Setting these fees is technically difficult because environmental impact depends on several factors, including collection rates, transport distances, energy use and the availability of recycling markets. A material that performs well in one country may perform badly in another if local facilities cannot process it. Policymakers must therefore update fee structures as technology and markets change.

D EPR can also improve data. Producers may be required to report how much packaging they sell and what materials it contains. Better information helps governments estimate future waste flows and plan recycling capacity. It may also reveal which sectors are responsible for rapid growth in particular materials. However, reporting creates administrative costs, especially for small firms that sell only limited quantities. Some systems reduce the burden by using simplified

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reporting for small producers, exempting very small quantities or allowing industry organisations to report on behalf of many companies. The challenge is to collect enough information to guide policy without creating paperwork that costs more than the environmental benefit.

E Critics argue that producer responsibility does not automatically guarantee high recycling rates. Consumers still need convenient collection systems and clear instructions. Sorting facilities need sufficient capacity, and recycled material needs a buyer. If any part of this chain is missing, better packaging design alone may achieve little. A bottle that is technically recyclable is still wasted if households have no collection service, and carefully sorted plastic has little value if manufacturers prefer cheaper virgin material. There is also a risk that companies simply pass compliance costs to consumers through higher prices.

F Supporters reply that higher prices can itself be part of the signal. If disposable or difficult-to-recycle packaging becomes more expensive, reusable alternatives may become more competitive. Retailers may redesign products to reduce material or offer refill systems. Yet the social effect matters. Essential products should not become unaffordable because of poorly designed fees, and low-income households have less flexibility to absorb price increases. Policymakers therefore need to distinguish between encouraging better packaging and creating unnecessary cost for consumers. Some proposals return part of the revenue to households or use it to improve collection services in disadvantaged areas.

G Another debate concerns imported goods. A domestic manufacturer can be identified and charged relatively easily, but products bought directly from overseas online sellers may enter a country without an obvious local producer. If these goods avoid fees, domestic companies may face a competitive disadvantage while the waste still enters local recycling systems. Governments are experimenting with rules that make online marketplaces responsible for reporting or collecting fees from foreign sellers. Enforcement remains difficult because digital commerce crosses borders far more easily than waste-management law.

H The strongest EPR systems are therefore not purely financial mechanisms. They connect producer fees with clear labelling, reliable collection, recycling standards, data reporting and investment in processing infrastructure. They also review fee structures as technology and markets change. The broader lesson is that waste policy cannot begin only when a product reaches the bin. Decisions made during design and manufacturing can determine whether recycling is easy, expensive or practically impossible, but those decisions operate within a larger system that also includes consumers, local authorities and recycling industries.

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Questions 14-18: Choose the correct letter, A, B, C or D.

14. What is the main purpose of EPR?

A. ban all packaging
B. make producers share responsibility for post-sale waste
C. replace municipal recycling
D. remove labelling

15. Why can equal fees per kilogram be ineffective?

A. they reward difficult packaging
B. they give little incentive for better design
C. they eliminate markets
D. they are illegal

16. Eco-modulated fees are difficult to design because:

A. material colour changes
B. environmental impact depends on several factors
C. companies refuse data
D. all packaging is identical

17. Why may small producers find EPR difficult?

A. high transport speeds
B. administrative reporting costs
C. lack of products
D. too many customers

18. What do critics say better design alone cannot guarantee?

A. a lower tax rate
B. high recycling rates
C. cheaper packaging
D. more advertising

Questions 19-22: Do the statements agree with the information in the passage? Write TRUE, FALSE or NOT GIVEN.

19. Producers may have to report how much packaging they sell. _____

20. Small producers must submit their packaging reports by the last day of March. _____

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21. Companies can sometimes pass compliance costs to consumers. _____

22. Supporters believe price signals may make reusable alternatives more competitive. _____

Questions 23-26: Complete the sentences. Choose ONE WORD ONLY from the passage for each answer. A hyphenated word counts as one word.

23. Advanced EPR systems may use _____ fees to reward better design.

24. Strong EPR systems require investment in processing _____.

25. Essential products should not become _____ because of badly designed fees.

26. Decisions during design can determine whether recycling is easy or practically _____.

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Passage 3 - EXPERTISE IN THE AGE OF INSTANT ANSWERS

A Human beings have always depended on external sources of knowledge, from experienced neighbours to books, maps and professional advisers. What is new is the speed and scale at which digital systems can supply answers. Search engines, recommendation systems and generative artificial intelligence can produce explanations within seconds and can adapt those explanations to a user's question. This has led to a renewed debate about expertise. If a person can obtain an answer instantly, how much knowledge must that person still possess internally? The question matters for education, employment and public trust because societies increasingly use automated systems in domains where errors can be costly.

B One argument is that easy access makes memorisation less important. A technician can consult a digital manual, a traveller can use navigation and a student can search for a formula. Time spent memorising every detail might instead be used to understand principles, evaluate alternatives or solve unfamiliar problems. Supporters of this view point out that professionals have always used reference materials; digital tools simply make access faster and more convenient. This position is sometimes described as moving from 'knowing facts' to 'knowing how to find and use facts'.

C The argument is attractive, but it overlooks a basic problem: evaluating an answer requires some prior knowledge. A medical professional who knows little anatomy cannot reliably judge whether an automatically generated explanation is sensible. A student who has never learned basic statistics may accept a graph that is visually impressive but mathematically misleading. Internal knowledge provides the reference points needed to notice when an external source is inconsistent, incomplete or absurd. It also helps a user detect when a tool has misunderstood the question itself.

D Expertise affects the questions people ask as well as the answers they recognise. Beginners often do not know which distinctions matter, so their questions may be broad or poorly framed. Experts possess organised mental models that allow them to identify relevant variables and ignore distractions. In chess, for example, strong players do not simply remember more individual moves; they recognise meaningful patterns in positions. Similar pattern recognition occurs in medicine, engineering, law and other complex fields. Years of experience allow experts to notice subtle features that a novice may not even think to mention in a prompt.

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E Artificial intelligence may change the balance without eliminating the need for expertise. Systems can summarise documents, generate examples, translate technical language and suggest alternatives, reducing the time experts spend on routine tasks. They may also expose professionals to possibilities they had not considered. But the value of these outputs often depends on someone being able to set a goal, provide context and verify the result. In this sense, AI may amplify expertise more reliably than it replaces it. A highly skilled user can ask better questions, recognise a weak answer and integrate useful suggestions into a broader plan.

F There are also social dimensions. People frequently rely on experts not only for information but for responsibility and trust. An engineer signs a safety report, a doctor accepts professional accountability for a diagnosis, and a teacher decides whether a student's work meets a standard. A machine can generate a recommendation, but societies still need rules about who is responsible when decisions cause harm. This issue becomes especially important when an organisation claims that 'the system decided' even though humans selected the data, goals and conditions under which the system operated.

G Education therefore faces a difficult design problem. If schools respond to technology by abandoning factual learning entirely, students may lack the knowledge needed to use digital tools critically. If schools ignore technology, they may train students for tasks that machines can perform faster. A more promising approach is to teach foundational knowledge alongside deliberate practice in using external tools, including how to verify claims, compare sources and explain reasoning. Assessment may also need to change. Tasks that reward copying a standard answer are less useful when machines can generate that answer instantly; students may instead need to justify decisions, critique outputs or apply ideas to unfamiliar cases.

H Workplaces face a related challenge. Organisations may be tempted to reduce training because AI can provide just-in-time answers. Yet if employees lose too much underlying knowledge, they may become unable to recognise dangerous suggestions or function when systems fail. Some firms are therefore separating tasks into those where tool assistance is routine and those where independent competence must be preserved. Aviation offers a useful analogy: automation handles many normal operations, but pilots still train for unusual situations precisely because automated support may be unavailable when conditions become abnormal.

I The debate is sometimes presented as a competition between human memory and digital access, but this is misleading. Expertise has never consisted of memorising everything. It involves structured knowledge, judgement, pattern recognition, responsibility and the ability to

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learn. Digital systems can extend these capacities, but they can also create confident errors at great speed. The practical question is therefore not whether knowledge should be stored in people or machines, but which combination allows reliable decisions in a particular context. That answer will differ across tasks: a low-risk travel recommendation requires a different level of human oversight from a medical diagnosis or structural safety decision.

Questions 27-31: Which paragraph contains the following information? Write the correct letter, A-I.

27. Which paragraph says easy access may reduce the need to memorise every detail? _____

28. Which paragraph explains why prior knowledge is needed to judge an answer? _____

29. Which paragraph describes expertise as recognising meaningful patterns? _____

30. Which paragraph discusses professional responsibility for harmful decisions? _____

31. Which paragraph proposes combining foundational knowledge with tool use? _____

Questions 32-35: Choose the correct letter, A, B, C or D.

32. According to Paragraph E, AI is most reliable when it:

A. replaces all judgement
B. amplifies existing expertise
C. removes context
D. avoids verification

33. Why may beginners ask weaker questions?

A. they have too much data
B. they do not know which distinctions matter
C. they memorise too much
D. experts prevent them

34. What is the main warning in Paragraph G?

A. factual learning is useless
B. ignoring either knowledge or technology creates problems
C. schools should ban AI
D. tools are always accurate

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35. What is the writer's final position?

A. store all knowledge internally
B. trust machines whenever possible
C. combine human and digital capacities according to context
D. memorisation is the only expertise

Questions 36-40: Complete the sentences. Choose ONE WORD ONLY from the passage for each answer.

36. Internal knowledge provides _____ points for evaluating external answers.

37. Experts use organised mental _____.

38. AI can reduce time spent on _____ tasks.

39. Societies still need rules about professional _____.

40. Reliable expertise includes judgement, pattern recognition and the ability to _____.

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Reading response page

1.		21.	
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13.		33.	
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15.		35.	
16.		36.	
17.		37.	
18.		38.	
19.		39.	
20.		40.	

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Academic Writing

60 minutes • Complete both tasks

Task 1 - about 20 minutes

The table shows the proportions of total household energy used for four purposes in 2005 and 2025. Summarise the information by selecting and reporting the main features, and make comparisons where relevant. Write at least 150 words.

Purpose	2005 (%)	2025 (%)
Heating	42	28
Cooling	18	23
Lighting	13	10
Appliances	27	39

All figures are original fictional practice data. Write at least 150 words.

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Writing Task 1 - response

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Writing Task 1 - response continued

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Writing Task 2 - about 40 minutes

Some people think governments should restrict the use of private cars in city centres. Others believe people should be free to choose how they travel. Discuss both views and give your own opinion. Write at least 250 words.

Write at least 250 words. Give reasons and relevant examples.

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Writing Task 2 - response continued

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Writing Task 2 - response continued

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Speaking practice

11-14 minutes • Three parts • Teacher/partner required

Part 1 - Introduction and interview (4-5 minutes)

Where do you live?

What do you like about your neighbourhood?

Is it a good place for young people?

How often do you use public spaces near your home?

Has your area changed in recent years?

Would you like to live there in the future?

Part 2 - Long turn

Prepare for one minute, then speak for one to two minutes. The examiner may ask one or two short follow-up questions.

Describe a place in your city or town that you think should be improved.

- where it is
- what it is like now
- what problems it has
- and explain how it could be improved

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Speaking Part 2 - preparation notes

Part 3 - Discussion (4-5 minutes)

Why do some city areas improve faster than others?

Should local residents have more influence over planning decisions?

What makes public transport attractive?

How can cities reduce traffic without harming businesses?

Are green spaces more important than new housing?

How might cities change because of climate change?

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