

Etapă județeană / a sectoarelor municipiului București a olimpiadelor naționale școlare-2026

Probă scrisă

Limba engleză

CLASA a IX-a - SECȚIUNEA A

- Toate subiectele sunt obligatorii.
- Se acordă zece puncte din oficiu.
- Timpul efectiv de lucru este de 3 ore.

SUBIECTUL A – USE OF ENGLISH (40 points)

I. Read the following text and put the verbs in brackets in the correct form 10 points

The evening 1) ____ (fall) slowly over the town when he realised that he 2) ____ (wait) there for far too long. He 3) ____ (hope) that something 4) ____ (change), but nothing ever 5) ____ (happen). If he 6) ____ (know) how the night would end, he 7) ____ (leave) earlier. Now he stood still, wondering whether he 8) ____ (make) the right choice, or whether everything 9) ____ (be) a mistake that could never 10) ____ (undo).

II. Use the word given in capitals to form a word that fits in each sentence. 10 points

The decision seemed almost (1) _____ (LOGIC) at first, taken in a moment of emotional (2) _____ (IMPULSE) rather than calm reflection. Yet, as time passed, its (3) _____ (AMBIGUITY) nature became clearer. What initially appeared to be a sign of weakness gradually revealed an unexpected inner (4) _____ (STRONG). Silence, once perceived as (5) _____ (THREAT), turned into a form of quiet resistance. In this state of uneasy waiting, even the smallest (6) _____ (MEAN) gesture gained significance, while doubt itself became strangely (7) _____ (PRODUCT). The room, filled with dim light and heavy thoughts, reflected the (8) _____ (INTENSE) of the moment, a fragile balance between fear and hope, between (9) _____ (ACT) and restraint. In the end, what remained was not regret, but a deep sense of (10) _____ (ACCEPT).

III. Complete the second sentence so that it has a similar meaning to the first, using the word given. Do not change the word given. You must use between two and five words, including the word given. 10 points

- | | |
|---|----------|
| 1. I didn't tell her the truth, and now I regret it deeply.
I _____ her the truth. | WISH |
| 2. He interrupted what he was saying when he suddenly saw her.
He _____ when he saw her. | STOPPED |
| 3. It is generally believed that the novel drew inspiration from real events.
The novel _____ inspired by real events. | HAVE |
| 4. He was too tired to finish writing the report.
He _____ the report because he was too tired. | CARRY |
| 5. My sister is an actress and a dancer as well.
My sister is an actress _____ a dancer. | ADDITION |

IV. Translate the following text into English. 10 points

Era un început de primăvară și totul părea că respiră altfel. Lumina cădea blând peste oraș, iar pe aleile parcului, copacii încă golași prindeau viață încet, ca și cum ar fi ezitat să creadă în renaștere. Ioana își plimba degetele peste cotorul unei cărți vechi și zâmbea fără motiv. Era liniște, dar o liniște plină de sens – ca și cum universul ar fi făcut o pauză, doar pentru ca ea să-și aducă aminte cine este.

(Cătălina Stamate, *O sută de zile cu tine*)

SUBIECTUL B – INTEGRATED SKILLS (50 points)

I. Five sentences have been removed from the text below. For each question, choose the correct answer from the sentences A-H. There are three extra sentences which you do not need to use. Write your answers on your answer sheet. 10 points

Community Sports Festival

Staying active is important for both physical and mental health, and the Community Sports Festival aims to promote exactly that. Held every summer in a local park, the event brings together people of all ages and fitness levels. **1)** _____. Families, students and even seniors are encouraged to take part.

The festival offers a wide range of activities, from football and basketball to yoga and dance classes. Professional trainers and volunteers guide participants through each session. **2)** _____. This makes the event accessible even to those who have never tried sports before.

Besides physical activities, there are also information stands focused on healthy lifestyles. Visitors can learn about balanced diets, stress management and the importance of regular exercise. **3)** _____. Many people say they leave the festival feeling motivated to change their daily routines.

Children are a major focus of the festival as well. Special games and competitions are organized just for them, combining fun with movement. **4)** _____. Parents appreciate that their children are learning healthy habits in an enjoyable way.

The organizers hope the festival will have a lasting impact on the community. **5)** _____. Their goal is to create a more active, connected and healthier population.

- A** They hope participants will continue exercising even after the event ends.
- B** Everyone is welcome, regardless of experience or ability.
- C** Experts are available to answer questions and give practical advice.
- D** This helps children associate sport with enjoyment rather than pressure.
- E** All activities require expensive equipment and professional skills.
- F** Clear instructions and a friendly atmosphere help people feel confident.
- G** The steps that should be taken are not clear yet.
- H** You cannot be wrong whatever you choose.

II. You have seen the following announcement on a website and decided to write a letter. 40 points

Join the Community Sports Festival Team!

Are you interested in sports and healthy living? Do you enjoy working with people and being part of a team? We are looking for motivated high school students to help organize activities, welcome participants and support trainers during the Community Sports Festival.

If this sounds like you, don't hesitate to apply!

Starting from the text above, write your letter to the event coordinator.

In your letter:

- Say why you are interested in this opportunity
- Describe any relevant experience you have
- Explain what personal qualities make you a suitable candidate

Write your letter in 180–200 words.

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Probă scrisă

Limba engleză

CLASA a IX-a - SECȚIUNEA B

- Toate subiectele sunt obligatorii.
- Se acordă zece puncte din oficiu.
- Timpul efectiv de lucru este de 3 ore.

SUBIECTUL A – USE OF ENGLISH (40 points)

I. Read the text below and do the tasks that follow.

10 points

Over many centuries, the United Kingdom has forged a distinctive cultural identity through the continual interplay between historical tradition and modern innovation, a synthesis that defines much of its national character. This duality is evident in Britain's simultaneous **reverence** for canonical figures such as Shakespeare and its commitment to remaining at the forefront of scientific research, technological advancement, and industrial development. Frequently characterised as a cultural superpower, the nation—particularly through London as a global hub—embodies a landscape where venerable institutions coexist with experimental artistic movements and cutting-edge scholarship. Ceremonial practices of great antiquity, including royal processions and state rituals, **unfold** alongside the work of world-class universities and research centres, thereby illustrating a productive tension between continuity and transformation that lies at the heart of British cultural life.

Alongside these enduring traditions, contemporary Britain actively incorporates modern and multicultural influences that reflect decades of migration and global interconnectedness. Customs such as afternoon tea and the Changing of the Guard persist not as static relics, but as living practices that are continually performed and collectively experienced, reinforcing a shared sense of heritage while remaining relevant in a changing society. At the same time, new cuisines, languages, and artistic expressions have been **woven** into the cultural fabric, ensuring its ongoing evolution. Had Britain failed to respond to the pressures and opportunities of an increasingly globalised world, its cultural identity might have stagnated; instead, it continues to balance respect for historical legacy with an openness to progress, shaping a national identity that is simultaneously rooted in the past and responsive to the demands of the present.

A. Choose the right synonym for the words given below, according to their meaning in the text.

3 points

- | | | | | |
|-----------------------|------------------|----------------|----------------|--------------|
| 1. reverence : | a. respect; | b. fear; | c. loyalty; | d. curiosity |
| 2. unfold : | a. expand; | b. occur; | c. reveal; | d. spread |
| 3. woven : | a. supplemented; | b. juxtaposed; | c. integrated; | d. balanced |

B. Rephrase the following sentences so as to preserve the meaning. Use the word given WITHOUT changing it.

3 points

- | | |
|--|-------------|
| 1. Few Britons begin their day without a cup of tea. | OFF |
| Rarely _____ their day without a cup of tea. | |
| 2. I regret not visiting the British Museum first thing in the morning. | WISH |
| I _____ the British Museum first thing in the morning. | |
| 3. British culture is different today because the Scots have preserved many Celtic traditions. | NOT |
| British culture _____ if the Scots had not preserved many Celtic traditions. | |

C. Four words have been removed from the summary of the text above. Choose the right words to fill in the summary. There are four extra words which you do not need to use. 4 points

innovation, heritage, evolve, ceremonial, coexist, identity, resist, stagnate

Britain has developed a distinctive national _____ (1) by balancing respect for tradition with openness to change. Historical practices and modern institutions continue to _____ (2), reflecting a dynamic relationship between continuity and progress. While long-standing customs reinforce a shared sense of _____ (3), multicultural influences and creative expression allow British culture to continually _____ (4) in a globalised world.

II. Use the word given in brackets to form a word that best fits each sentence. 10 points

In recent years, the study of literature has grown to include far more than classic novels and poetry. Today, readers explore stories written by authors from many cultures, engaging with narratives that introduce new themes and challenge familiar styles. Literary (1) (**CRITICISE**), once seen as something only specialists could do, has become more (2) (**ACCESS**) thanks to online platforms that allow wider discussion. A noticeable change is the increasing (3) (**POPULAR**) of genres like graphic novels and speculative fiction, which were once considered less serious. Their success has encouraged teachers and researchers to (4) (**THINK**) what counts as true literary value.

To understand this (5) (**TRANSIT**), we spoke with Dr. Elena Marlowe, a respected researcher who studies how storytelling develops as society changes. She explains that modern readers show greater (6) (**ACCEPT**) of different voices and enjoy more complex portrayals of characters. Even so, debates continue. Some critics argue that the rapid (7) (**EXPAND**) of genres may affect the quality of books, while others believe it represents a much-needed (8) (**REVIVE**) of creativity. What is clear is that literature keeps evolving, offering new chances for (9) (**REFLECT**) and discussion. According to Marlowe, the future of reading depends on how ready we are to accept change while keeping the (10) (**ESSENCE**) love of storytelling alive.

III. For questions 1-10, read the text below and look carefully at each line. Some of the lines are correct and some have a word that should not be there. On your answer sheet, if a line is correct, put a tick (✓) by the number. If a line has a word which should not be there, write the word down next to the number on your answer sheet. 10 points

- (0)**on**..... One of the most enjoyable on ways of spending free time these days
(00)✓..... is taking part in activities that help people unwind.
(1) Many adults now join on weekly groups for painting or creative writing,
(2) which allow them to express themselves freely without any pressure.
(3) In recent years, interest has been steadily grown in hobbies
(4) that encourage relaxation, sometimes even inviting also families to join.
(5) This shift has become more noticeable as the people search
(6) for meaningful ways to disconnect from their busy routines.
(7) At the same time, organisers must be ensure that sessions
(8) remain accessible, so that no one should feels excluded from the experience.
(9) Several centres have already introduced a simple booking systems
(10) to make participation more easier and improve the overall enjoyment.

IV. Translate the following text into English. 10 points

Îi trecu prin minte că ar trebui să-l cheme iarăși pe Petre, să-i spună că mâine în zori vor pleca înapoi pe front și deci să nu uite ceva pe aici... În același timp, însă, își dădu seama că i-e frică să rămâie singur cu gândurile-i proprii. Îi era rușine că simțea asta, dar nu se putea opri și numai din dorința de a-și ascunde teama se gândea la Petre, parcă astfel ar fi căutat să-și alunge frica. Își dădea seama că s-a sfârșit tot și-i părea rău că s-a sfârșit așa. Cum ar fi vrut ca totul să fi fost altfel!

(Camil Petrescu, *Ultima noapte de dragoste, întâia noapte de război*)

B. Integrated Skills (50 points)

I. Five sentences have been removed from the following text. Choose from the sentences A-F the one which fits each gap 1-5. There is one extra sentence which you do not need to use. 10 points

Traditional dishes are often seen as windows into a culture's history, but in a globalised world, many people feel increasingly disconnected from the foods their grandparents once prepared. How can we rediscover the meaning behind traditional eating?

After growing up in a small coastal town in South Korea, food anthropologist Min-Seo Park became fascinated by the way recipes travel across generations. Her interest deepened when she moved abroad for university and realised how much she missed the flavours of home. She began interviewing migrant families about their food memories and noticed a pattern: people often rediscovered their cultural identity through cooking. **1**..... Park says that this emotional connection is one of the strongest motivators for people to return to traditional dishes, even when they live far from their birthplace. In many cultures, traditional meals are not simply about taste, but about ritual. Preparing a dish slowly, using specific tools or ingredients, can create a sense of belonging that modern fast-food culture rarely provides. **2**..... While some younger people may initially resist these customs, many eventually find comfort in the familiarity and symbolism behind them.

Chef and culinary historian Luis Herrera, who has spent decades documenting regional recipes in Latin America, believes that traditional food survives because it adapts. He explains that dishes evolve as families migrate, ingredients change, or new cooking methods become available. **3**..... Whether it's adding a local spice, substituting an unavailable vegetable, or adjusting cooking times, families reshape their culinary heritage while keeping its essence alive. Herrera encourages people to explore traditional food not only through cooking, but also through shared experiences. He suggests visiting local markets, talking to vendors, or attending community food festivals. **4**. Interactions like these, he says, help people understand the cultural stories behind the dishes and appreciate the diversity of global food traditions.

Your relationship with traditional food can depend on your openness to new flavours and your willingness to learn about the cultures behind them. **5**..... With so many opportunities to explore global cuisines, reconnecting with traditional eating can be both a personal journey and a way to strengthen community ties.

Today, more people than ever are seeking out authentic food experiences, whether by taking cooking classes abroad, joining cultural supper clubs, or simply asking older relatives to share their recipes. As Park notes, traditional food is not disappearing — it is being rediscovered, reinterpreted, and celebrated in new ways. And perhaps that is what keeps these dishes alive: the desire to taste not only the food itself, but the stories it carries.

- A. *These small encounters often reveal details that no cookbook could ever capture.*
- B. *This flexibility is what allows traditional dishes to survive across continents and generations.*
- C. *Many families describe cooking as a way of keeping memories alive, especially when living far from home.*
- D. *This can help you recognize how your own food habits have been shaped by history and migration.*
- E. *But these rituals can feel overwhelming for those who are used to quicker, more convenient meals.*
- F. *Some of the researchers argue that traditional food is becoming relevant in modern societies.*

II. Starting from the text above, answer the following announcement on a website. 40 points

Have you recently visited a restaurant that specialises in a cuisine from another culture? Write a review of the restaurant, including:

- **a brief description of the restaurant**
- **what you discovered about the culture it represents**
- **whether you would recommend it to people your age and why**

We'll post the best reviews on the website next month.

Write your review in 220-250 words.

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**Probă scrisă
Limba engleză
CLASA a X-a –SECȚIUNEA A**

- Toate subiectele sunt obligatorii
- Se acordă zece puncte din oficiu
- Timpul efectiv de lucru este de 3 ore

SUBIECTUL A- USE OF ENGLISH (40 points)

I. Read the following text and fill in the blanks with ONE word only.

10 points

For the modern teenager, the smartphone has (1) _____ become a tool, but a central part of their identity. Only in recent years (2) _____ society begun to realize the true extent of this digital bond. Most teens spend (3) _____ than five hours a day staring at their screens. Parents often worried about television in the past, but the phone is far more personal. Even so, many adults are now starting to see the creative potential of these devices. A teenager is (4) _____ likely to be seen without their phone than without their keys, as most of their social life happens online. (5) _____ the constant distractions, many students use apps to organize their studies and express their creativity. Today, experts consider mobile technology to be a primary influence (6) _____ adolescent development. Many children do not receive their first device (7) _____ they are at least twelve years old. Strange as it (8) _____ seem, the most significant social changes have happened in just the last decade. There are now millions of apps available, from gaming to mental health trackers. Today, social media platforms are (9) _____ of the most visited sites in the world, with the most popular (10) _____ TikTok and Instagram, which occupy the majority of a teen's free time.

II. Use the word given in brackets to form a word that fits in each sentence.

10 points

- | | |
|--|-------------------|
| 1. The government's decision to cut funding was deeply _____ to the local artists. | COURAGE |
| 2. He was frustrated by the _____ of his plans. | PRACTICE |
| 3. It would be _____ to go hiking in this weather with proper gear. | ADVISE |
| 4. These core exercises are designed to _____ your abdominal muscles. | STRONG |
| 5. His sudden _____ from the company surprised all his colleagues. | DEPART |
| 6. He became _____ when choosing which university to apply to. | DECIDE |
| 7. He answered the question _____ | CONFIDENCE |
| 8. The research team is studying the _____ between the two species. | RELATION |
| 9. The speaker was accused of _____ the facts to suit his argument. | REPRESENT |
| 10. The _____ of the contract led to a long and expensive court case. | LEGAL |

III. Complete the second sentence so that it has a similar meaning to the first sentence, using the word given. Do not change the word given. You must use between two and five words, including the word given.

10 points

- | | |
|---|---------------|
| 1. After many successful years in office, everyone respected the mayor.
The mayor _____ after many successful years in office. | HIGHLY |
| 2. "Did John leave last night?" Fiona asked us.
Fiona asked us if _____ night. | LEFT |
| 3. I'm sure that it was the sound of the rain that disturbed me.
It _____ of the rain that disturbed me. | BEEN |
| 4. I didn't realize that the smartphone would be so addictive when I first bought it.
Little _____ the smartphone would be when I first bought it. | DID |
| 5. The dentist is going to remove her wisdom tooth.
She _____ wisdom tooth removed. | HAVE |

IV. Translate the following text into English.

10 points

În seara aceea, însă, de îndată ce și-a mărturisit marea ei dragoste trecută, Ileana s-a schimbat din nou: a început să semene cu cea pe care o cunoscusem la început, ca și cum până atunci ar fi fost neliniștită și tulburată de o preocupare străină ei. Mi-a amintit din nou că uitasem cu atâta ușurință făgăduiala de a-i aduce cartea. M-a întrebat apoi dacă, într-adevăr, scriitorii de romane povestesc întotdeauna propriile lor experiențe și în ce măsură o femeie pe care au iubit-o se poate transforma în eroina unei cărți. Încearca, în orice chip, să abată discuția într-un domeniu neprimejdios, cel al faptelor neutre. Începusem să mă dezmeticesc și mă bucuram că găsesc o femeie inteligentă cu care aş putea sta de vorbă despre arta și tehnica scrisului.

(Mircea Eliade, *Nuntă în cer*)

SUBIECTUL B- INTEGRATED SKILLS (50 points)

I. You are going to read an article about camping. Five sentences have been removed from the article. Choose from the sentences A-F the one which fits each gap (1-5). There is one extra sentence which you do not need to use.

10 points

The World's Most Famous Ski Resorts Continue to Attract Winter Tourists

Every winter season, ski resorts across the globe prepare for an influx of international visitors eager to experience high-quality slopes, scenic mountain landscapes, and reliable infrastructure. Despite rising travel costs and increasing concerns about climate change, certain destinations continue to attract large numbers of tourists, largely because they have managed to adapt to changing expectations and environmental challenges.

Among the most prominent of these destinations is Val Thorens in France, which is frequently ranked as one of the highest ski resorts in Europe. Its altitude plays a crucial role in maintaining dependable snow conditions, even during milder winters. Travel analysts often note that the resort's continued success can be attributed to the fact that it _____ (1), ensuring consistent skiing opportunities when other resorts are forced to close runs.

In North America, Whistler Blackcomb in Canada has established itself as a global leader in winter tourism. The resort's vast terrain and advanced lift system allow it to accommodate a wide range of skiers. However, skiing alone does not explain its popularity. Many visitors emphasise that Whistler Blackcomb appeals particularly to mixed-ability groups because it _____ (2), making it possible for each member of a group to enjoy a personalised holiday experience.

Meanwhile, Zermatt in Switzerland offers a markedly different appeal. Located beneath the Matterhorn, the resort is internationally recognised for its emphasis on tradition and exclusivity. The absence of cars in the village contributes to an atmosphere that many visitors describe as refined and tranquil. Critics argue that Zermatt has remained competitive precisely because it _____ (3), preferring to maintain its character rather than transforming itself into a mass-tourism destination.

Outside the traditional European and North American ski markets, Niseko in Japan has seen a significant rise in international visitors over the past decade. Renowned for its deep powder snow, the resort attracts experienced skiers from around the world. What distinguishes Niseko from its Western counterparts is the way in which skiing is integrated into everyday life. Visitors frequently comment that the resort _____ (4), offering insight into local customs that extend well beyond the slopes.

Taken together, these examples illustrate that the appeal of the world's most famous ski resorts lies not only in the quality of their skiing but also in their ability to provide a broader travel experience. When choosing a winter destination, experts advise travellers to assess their priorities carefully, as long-term satisfaction often depends on _____ (5) rather than on reputation alone.

- A. the extent to which a destination aligns with travellers' underlying motivations and priorities
- B. has resisted the pressure to expand rapidly at the expense of its cultural and environmental integrity
- C. successfully caters to contrasting skill levels and leisure preferences within the same destination
- D. positions winter sports within a broader cultural framework that shapes visitors' daily experiences
- E. has developed strategies that reduce its dependence on short-term weather fluctuations
- F. maintains a strong international marketing presence through high-profile sporting events and media exposure

II. You have recently visited a skiing resort. Write a **review for a travel magazine** describing your experience.

Your review should address the following aspects:

- a general description of the resort and accommodation options
- the quality of skiing facilities and available services
- the type of visitors for whom the resort is most suitable
- an overview of the resort's main strengths, as well as any potential drawbacks

Write your review in 200-220 words.

40 points

Etapa județeană / a sectoarelor municipiului București a olimpiadelor naționale școlare - 2026

Probă scrisă

Limba engleză

CLASA A X-A - SECȚIUNEA B

- Toate subiectele sunt obligatorii.
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SUBIECTUL A – USE OF ENGLISH (40 points)

I. Read the text below and do the tasks that follow.

10 points

Greek mythology has become the subject of numerous modern misconceptions, many of which are widely accepted as fact. These misunderstandings often arise from popular culture – particularly cinematic adaptations – or from the **syncretic** blending of simplified narratives across generations. The Titans, primordial deities who preceded the twelve Olympian gods, are often portrayed in modern media as purely antagonistic. Ancient sources, however, present them as anthropomorphic beings, endowed with both virtues and flaws. Similarly, Zeus is frequently imagined as omnipotent, yet classical mythology depicts him as neither all-powerful nor entirely autonomous; his authority is constrained by fate (*Moirā*) and the independent actions of other gods. Hades is another commonly misunderstood figure. Far from malevolent, he is a necessary ruler of the underworld, maintaining cosmic order rather than embodying moral evil. Pandora, too, is widely misrepresented. Hesiod describes her as the first mortal woman, created by Hephaestus at Zeus's command, who **subsequently** becomes an ancestral figure in human lineage. Modern retellings often emphasize the infamous "Pandora's box," but in the original account, she opens a *pithos*—a large jar—through which suffering and hardship are released, leaving only hope behind. Greek mythological figures often occupy a **liminal** space between humanity and divinity, reflecting the nuanced moral and emotional qualities attributed to the gods.

A. Choose the right synonym for the words given below, according to their meaning in the text.

3 points

- | | | | | |
|-------------------------|--------------|-------------|---------------|-------------------|
| 1. syncretic: | a. separate | b. isolated | c. integrated | d. fragmented |
| 2. subsequently: | a. thus | b. later | c. previously | d. simultaneously |
| 3. liminal: | a. threshold | b. complete | c. distant | d. ordinary |

B. Rephrase the following sentences so as to preserve the meaning. Use the word given WITHOUT changing it.

3 points

1. These misunderstandings often arise from popular culture or from the syncretic blending of simplified narratives across generations. **THESE**

Rarely _____ except through popular culture or the syncretic blending of simplified narratives across generations.

2. Far from malevolent, Hades is a necessary ruler of the underworld, maintaining cosmic order. **NOT**
If Hades _____ the necessary ruler of the underworld maintaining cosmic order.

3. Pandora, too, is widely misrepresented. Hesiod describes her as the first mortal woman. **BY**
Despite _____ Hesiod as the first mortal woman.

C. Four words have been removed from the summary of the text above. Choose the right words to fill in the summary. There are four extra words which you do not need to use.

4 points

underdog; love; misunderstood; hope; talents; flaws; misheard; underworld

Greek mythology is often (1) due to popular culture and simplified retellings across generations. The Titans, though sometimes depicted as villains, were deities with both virtues and (2) Zeus, often seen as all-powerful, is limited by fate and the actions of other gods. Hades is a neutral ruler of the (3), and Pandora, the first mortal woman, releases hardship into the world but leaves (4) Greek gods and heroes reflect complex moral and emotional qualities that blur the line between humanity and divinity.

II. Use the word given in brackets to form a word that best fits in each sentence.

10 points

Prodigies dazzle us with their virtuoso violin concertos, (1)..... (**SEEM**) prescient chess moves, and vivid paintings. While their work would be enough to impress us if they were 40, prodigies typically reach adult levels of performance in (2) (**VERBAL**), rule-based domains such as chess, art, and music *before the age of 10*. Just because prodigies exist doesn't mean life is (3) (**HOPE**) if you weren't a prodigy. In a wide range of fields, especially ones that require (4) (**LEADER**) and creativity, elite experts who weren't child prodigies far (5) (**NUMBER**) those who were. Late blooming is possible.

Which is why I believe it's so important for society to have an accurate (6) (**UNDERSTAND**) of how talent develops, and the (7) (**ENVIRONMENT**) structures that support flourishing in every child. I recommend an educational system that (8) (**POSE**) children to as many materials as possible, and leaves the door continually open for accelerated and (9) (**RICH**) resources whenever a child displays his or her (10)..... (**READY**) for engagement.

III. For questions 1-10, read the text below and look carefully at each line. Some of the lines are correct and some have a word that should not be there. On your answer sheet, if a line is correct, put a tick (✓) by the number on your answer sheet. If a line has a word which should not be there, write the word down next to the number on your answer sheet.

10 points

- (0) ..some.. Ballet is a classical dance form that combines some rigorous technique
(00) ..✓... with expressive storytelling, demanding both physical precision and
(1) emotional depth. Originating in the Italian Renaissance courts and also
(2) later refined in France and Russia, where it has evolved into a global art form
(3) celebrated for its discipline and elegance. Dancers train for years to
(4) master turnout, pointe work, and controlled extensions, of transforming
(5) their bodies into instruments of fluid expression. Choreography in ballet often
(6) balances symmetry and narrative, blending so technical feats with the subtle
(7) conveyance of character and emotion. Ballet companies cultivate both a
(8) rigorous culture, where endurance, flexibility, and artistry coexist under no
(9) exacting standards. The evolution of contemporary ballet has just expanded
(10) classical vocabulary, incorporating modern techniques and innovative staging.

IV. Translate the following text into English.

10 points

Printr-a VI-a, citisem pentru a doua oară *Cireșarii* și visam numai la expediții și exploratori. Tare aş fi vrut să plec, să explorez și să fac descoperiri, dar nu știam unde și cum. De fapt, nu puteam pleca niciunde, că trebuia să merg la școală, iar drumurile mele erau scurte și mereu aceleași: traversam Calea Moșilor pe la intersecția mare de la Eminescu, mai mergeam vreo două sute de metri pe trotuarul de vizavi de blocul meu, pe lângă Librărie și Pâine, și făceam dreapta pe strada școlii. Alte drumuri - ocazionale - mă purtau pe străduțele din spate sau până la intersecția cu Republicii, la cinema Miorița. Însă nicăieri, în toate aceste locuri, nu era nimic care să merite explorat sau descoperit. Nici măcar în gangurile aparent misterioase care duceau în parcurile din spatele blocurilor, și nici în clădirea albă, ca un cub.

(Adina Popescu, *Povestiri de pe Calea Moșilor*)

SUBIECTUL B –Integrated Skills (50 points)

I. Five paragraphs have been removed from the following interview. Choose from the paragraphs A-F the one which fits each gap 1-5. There is one extra paragraph which you do not need to use. 10 points

Mobile apps have undeniably transformed how we learn, putting the power of education literally in the palm of our hands. With a smartphone or tablet, a student in a remote village can access the same resources as someone in a top-tier university city. (1)

But apps do more than just make learning convenient—they make it interactive and engaging. Imagine learning chemistry not by memorizing the periodic table, but by virtually mixing elements to see reactions happen in real time. (2)

Collaboration is another area where apps shine. Platforms like Google Classroom or Kahoot! allow students to share ideas, work on projects together, and get instant feedback from teachers. This cultivates teamwork and communication skills—skills that are critical in today’s professional world. Statistics support this impact: a survey by Pearson found 83% of teachers believe educational apps improve learning outcomes, and nearly half of K–12 teachers report daily app usage in classrooms.

However, the picture isn’t all rosy. Mobile apps can also be double-edged swords. For starters, they can encourage superficial learning: it’s easy to chase points, badges, or immediate quiz feedback without truly grappling with underlying concepts. Students may become “score chasers,” focusing on completing tasks rather than thinking deeply. The constant distractions from notifications—both educational and non-educational—can fragment attention, weaken memory consolidation, and even lower critical thinking skills. (3)

Moreover, personalized learning algorithms, while powerful, carry hidden risks. They can inadvertently limit exposure, showing students content they are comfortable with rather than pushing them to confront challenging, unfamiliar material. Over time, this could narrow intellectual growth, making learners excellent at what they already know but less adaptable in novel situations.

Despite these pitfalls, the potential of mobile apps remains enormous – if used wisely. The key is intentional integration: apps should complement, not replace, traditional study, discussion, and critical thinking. (4)

In the end, mobile apps are neither inherently good nor bad – they are tools. Like any tool, their impact depends on how students and educators wield them. (5) As we move further into the digital age, the challenge isn’t whether apps should be used – it’s *how to use them wisely* to truly transform education.

A: Quizzes, games, simulations, and gamified challenges turn passive learning into a hands-on experience that caters to different learning styles. Some apps even use adaptive algorithms to personalize lessons: struggling with calculus? The app can offer extra practice. Excelling in history? It might push you to analyze primary sources or debate interpretations.

B: This enhanced accessibility breaks down barriers of geography and finance, allowing learners to study at their own pace – reviewing a tricky physics concept at midnight or practicing a foreign language during a bus ride. In theory, this should lead to better understanding and higher performance.

C: Imagine a history class where an app provides interactive timelines, but students then debate the causes of wars in class, or a math app that offers dynamic problem-solving challenges followed by group discussions of strategies. This balance harnesses the best of technology while safeguarding the depth of learning.

D: Traditional educational methods often leave students struggling because every learner has unique skills, pace, and background. However, AI technology in education makes it easy to address these differences by adapting lessons and providing real-time feedback and support.

E: For instance, a student might spend ten minutes on an app exploring historical events but get sidetracked by a social media notification, losing the thread of complex ideas.

F: When used thoughtfully, they make learning more accessible, personalized, and engaging. When misused, they risk distraction, shallow engagement, and cognitive narrowing.

II. You are the head of the student council in your high school. The principal has asked you to write a report on applications commonly used by students in your school. Starting from the text above, write a report to describe two educational applications, highlighting how they support students study as well as any potential downsides, and provide a recommendation for the most effective application for student learning. 40 points

Write your report in 220-250 words.

Etapa județeană / a sectoarelor municipiului București a olimpiadelor naționale școlare –2026
Probă scrisă
Limba engleză
CLASA a XI-a - SECȚIUNEA A

- Toate subiectele sunt obligatorii.
- Se acordă zece puncte din oficiu.
- Timpul efectiv de lucru este de 3 ore.

SUBIECTUL A – USE OF ENGLISH (40 points)

I. Read the following text and fill in the blanks with ONE word only.

10 points

Many cities around the world are attempting to reinvent themselves by investing heavily in so-called “smart” technologies. Sensors regulate traffic flow, apps monitor energy consumption, and public services are increasingly automated. If implemented **1.** ____ care, such innovations can significantly improve the quality of urban life. Rarely **2.** ____ technological progress been so closely linked to everyday routines.

However, not everyone is convinced that smart cities are the solution they claim to be. Critics argue that, **3.** ____ appealing as the concept may sound, it often prioritises efficiency over human interaction. Surveillance systems, **4.** ____ intended to enhance safety, may also erode privacy.

As **5.** ____ as sustainability is concerned, smart infrastructure can certainly reduce waste and emissions. Yet these benefits are frequently unevenly distributed, with wealthier districts enjoying far greater access **6.** ____ poorer ones. This raises the question of **7.** ____ technology truly serves the public interest or merely reinforces existing inequalities.

Ultimately, the success of smart cities depends not only on innovation, but also on governance. Without clear regulations and public accountability, even the most advanced systems risk becoming tools of control rather than instruments **8.** ____ progress. Going beyond **9.** ____ impressive statistics and glossy presentations, citizens must ask themselves whether they are gaining convenience **10.** ____ the expense of autonomy.

II. Choose the correct answer A, B, C or D.

10 points

1. If the management ____ more decisively at the outset, the controversy ____ escalated and public confidence ____ undermined.

- A. acted / would not have / had not been
- B. had acted / might not have / would not have been
- C. were to act / will not have / is not
- D. has acted / would not / has not been

2. I understood Hamlet only after I had seen it on stage.

- A. Only after seeing Hamlet on stage I understood it.
- B. I understood Hamlet only after I did see it on stage.
- C. Only after seeing Hamlet on stage did I understand it.
- D. Only after I saw Hamlet on stage had I understood it.

3. The official is believed ____ the figures deliberately, which ____ the findings unreliable and ____ further investigation.

- A. manipulating / makes / leads to
- B. to be manipulating / made / led to
- C. to have manipulated / has made / prompted
- D. having manipulated / making / prompting

4. The committee has denied _____ prior knowledge of the incident, insisting that all members _____ informed only after the matter _____ public.

- A. to have had / were / became
- B. to have / had been / had become
- C. having had / have been / became
- D. having / should be / has become

5. Had the company _____ more transparent in its dealings, the dispute _____ avoided and its reputation _____ less damage.

- A. being / will be / suffers
- B. to be / would have been / would suffer
- C. been / might have been / would have suffered
- D. having been / had been / suffered

6. It's very important that we _____ as soon as there _____ any change in the patient's condition.

- A. would be notified/will be
- B. will be notified/has been
- C. be notified/is
- D. should be/will have been

7. The witness claimed _____ under considerable pressure at the time, though this _____ later questioned and _____ never conclusively proven.

- A. acting / is / was
- B. to act / was / has been
- C. having acted / is / has been
- D. to have acted / was / has been

8. No account _____ taken of the long-term consequences, nor _____ adequate measures _____ to mitigate the risks.

- A. was / were / implemented
- B. had / were / implementing
- C. is / had / been implemented
- D. has / had / implemented

9. The proposal was rejected, not because it _____ impractical, but because it _____ insufficiently detailed and _____ widespread concern.

- A. was / was considered / raised
- B. had been / had considered / has raised
- C. is / is considered / rises
- D. was / was considered / rose

10. Suppose Alison _____ practising an hour before Robert _____, how long _____ when he _____ at the gate?

- A. started / had arrived/ had she practised/ stopped
- B. was starting / arrived / did she practise/ had stopped
- C. has started / had arrived / has she been practising/ has stopped
- D. had started/ arrived/ had she been practising/ stopped

III. Complete the second sentence so that it has a similar meaning to the first, using the word given. Do not change the word given. You must use between two and five words, including the word given.

10 points

1. Someone has suggested changing the company logo.

FORWARD

A suggestion has _____ the company logo.

2. Jane's cooking soon impressed her friends.

REPUTATION

Among her friends, Jane soon gained _____ a good cook.

3. When it comes to football, there is very little Tim doesn't know.

GAPS

There are very _____ of football.

4. They had no success in contacting their friend before the departure.

MANAGE

They _____ hold of their friend before the departure.

5. I didn't particularly like either of the two dresses which the shop assistant showed me. **NEITHER**

The shop assistant showed me two dresses, _____ very much.

IV. Translate the following text into English.

10 points

Sala de Bal fusese decorată după indicațiile ei precise. O sută de spiriduși munciseră trei zile și trei nopți, în mai multe schimburi, supravegheați îndeaproape de Domnul Azi, pentru a-i duce la îndeplinire toate dorințele în ceea ce privește decorațiunile, aranjamentele florale, meniul și momentele artistice. Cei trei membri ai trupei The Leprechauns, acum rămași din nou fără solist, își ocupaseră deja locurile pe scenă. Urmasii să cânte doar muzică ambientală, ceea ce avea să-i convină de minune lui Tempus, care nu suporta melodiile zgomotoase, specifice stilului Future Rock. În bucătărie, toți cofetarii de la Temps d'Amour lucrau de zor la finisarea tortului cu patru etaje, ba nu, cinci, ba nu, șapte – Poimărți nu se putea hotărî asupra numărului! Mai întâi ceruse câte un etaj pentru fiecare copil, apoi a decis să includă în numărătoare și restul familiei extinse, însă abia aici au început încurcăturile. Prin urmare, cofetarii lucrau în niște emoții teribile, știind că oricând ar putea fi rugați să mai adauge sau să mai elimine câte un etaj.

(Adina Rosetti, *Misterul orașului Lunivineri*)

SUBIECTUL B – INTEGRATED SKILLS (50 points)

I. Five paragraphs have been removed from the article below. Choose from the sentences A-F the one which fits each gap (1-5). There is one extra paragraph which you do not need to use.

10 points

At 3.45, on a rainy morning in May, two years ago, I woke to a chorus of alarm clocks and headed down to a market street in London to meet Phil, my school friend and business partner. On arriving there, I found him setting up the stall with our meal kits: boxes with all the fresh ingredients already chopped, washed, and weighed.

1.....

Neither of us had had any previous business experience. We had, though, followed the advice of countless startup guides and new business seminars for those just starting out: we had written a business plan, identified market trends, and developed a product.

2.....

While this sort of research was invaluable, we were faced with a slight problem. On the basis of our research findings, we'd have 95% of adults across all socio-economic groups buying our products at a cost of £6 per go, at least four nights a week- for all eternity.

3.....

This gave us confidence that our plan was a good one. However, it also highlighted that maybe we'd missed something, that there were clearly some fundamental questions that hadn't been answered and couldn't be tested in this way. Was our product right? Would people actually buy it?

4.....

Fortunately, we landed on our feet, selling 100 meals on our first day of trading. And despite a few nail-biting initial hours after the market opened, our rather direct promotional activity (literally grabbing customers off the street) finally paid off. To our great delight, we sold out by the end of the day.

5

The street market offered us a low-cost and flexible platform from which to start building up a record of sales. These proved essential in developing future sales, raising finance from banks and building up relationships with suppliers. It's amazing how much more seriously people in such crucial sectors take you when they can check out a product that is actually selling. Even if that is only in small quantities, rather than one that is only hypothetical. The most valuable aspect of our experience in the street market was that it allowed us to communicate with our customers on a daily basis and respond to their feedback on our products, marketing and pricing in real time. Over the three months, we were able to take many small-scale risks and experiment with many different recipes, points of sales and kinds of messaging, allowing us to develop those that worked and tweak those that proved unpopular.

A. That, of course, excludes the extras they would buy for their close friends and family. Clearly, people were so taken with the idea that they would want to share it with others.

B. Above and beyond the pleasing sales figures, the insights gained from that opening session were so useful that we kept our stall at Whitecross Street Market for three months. Looking back, we would not recommend any other approach to businesses that are launching products for the first time.

C. Phil and I had also organised focus groups to try out early prototypes and set up an online questionnaire. We'd even pestered commuters in train stations to find out what they thought of the concept.

D. How much this fairly low-budget advertising campaign achieved in terms of helping to boost sales is difficult to evaluate, not least because it proved impossible to determine what proportion of our customers had actually been influenced by it. All we can say with a fair degree of certainty is that the market research we carried out enabled us to identify the target audience pretty accurately.

E. This was it. After months of painstaking planning, our task was simple: cast aside the books and theory, make up our products and get them into the kitchens of paying customers.

F. This realisation, that the proof of the pudding is in the eating, led us to the 3.45 a.m. wake-up calls and a real drive to test our products on the paying public. We rented a stall at Whitecross Street Market, splashed out on a second-hand chiller, decorated our stall and made the tentative leap from business plan to business.

II. You have just finished an entrepreneurship course offered by your school. The principal of your school has asked you to write a report for the school council about two different courses the students might attend. In your report you should:

- describe the courses giving details about the place and duration
- discuss the benefits of attending the courses
- recommend the more appealing one

Write your report in 220-250 words.

40 points

Etapă județeană / a sectoarelor municipiului București a olimpiadelor naționale școlare - 2026

Probă scrisă

Limba engleză

CLASA a XI-a - SECȚIUNEA B

- Toate subiectele sunt obligatorii.
- Se acordă zece puncte din oficiu.
- Timpul efectiv de lucru este de 3 ore.

SUBIECTUL A – USE OF ENGLISH (40 points)

I. Read the paragraph below and do the tasks that follow.

10 points

It is widely acknowledged that no-one has mastered the English language better than William Shakespeare, whose words of wisdom have become proverbs in their own right, like these two lines from Romeo and Juliet:

What's in a name? That which we call a rose

By any other name would smell as sweet.

But did the Bard get it all wrong? Was he really just **unwittingly** expressing the domination of DWEM's (Dead, White, European Males) over language and culture?

In recent years, particularly in the USA, the spread of political correctness has been denounced as an attack on free speech. The idea behind "P.C." (political correctness) is that some words offend people, and should be avoided. While avoiding offensive vocabulary is an excellent principle, the excesses it has led to have been counterproductive, bringing the whole idea into **derision**.

When ordinary words such as deaf were outlawed (aurally challenged was invented as a euphemism), many people agreed that things had gone too far! Calling someone aurally challenged in no way reduces their handicap; on the contrary, as a longer expression than deaf, it draws attention to the disability and may sound deliberately **facetious**.

200 years ago, an Englishman called Thomas Bowdler rewrote Shakespeare's works, changing all the vocabulary which could not "with propriety be read aloud in a family". Bowdler gave his name to a new word in English: *to bowdlerize*. No-one today would dream of recommending the bowdlerized version of Shakespeare; yet in his way, Bowdler was only being politically correct, by the standards of his time.

A. Choose the right synonym for the words given below, according to their meaning in the text.

3 points

- | | | | | |
|-------------------------|--------------|---------------|------------------|-----------------|
| 1. unwittingly : | a. clearly | b. finally | c. inadvertently | d. unwisely |
| 2. derision : | a. assertion | b. mockery | c. deference | d. ignorance |
| 3. facetious : | a. mean | b. immoderate | c. flippant | d. hypocritical |

B. Rephrase the following sentences so as to preserve the meaning. Use the word given WITHOUT changing it.

3 points

1. It is widely acknowledged that no-one has mastered the English language better than William Shakespeare. **WHO**
It is widely acknowledged that it _____ the best.

2. While avoiding offensive vocabulary is an excellent principle, the excesses it has led to have been counterproductive.

A

As excellent _____ vocabulary may be, the excesses it has led to have been counterproductive.

3. No-one today would dream of recommending the bowdlerized version of Shakespeare.

ANYONE

On _____ recommend the bowdlerized version of Shakespeare.

C. Four words have been removed from the summary of the text. Choose the right words to fill in the summary. There are four extra words which you do not need to use. 4 points

limiting; cross-examine; question; widely; founded; ludicrous; commendable; mere

William Shakespeare is widely celebrated as the master of English, with many of his lines, such as those from *Romeo and Juliet*, becoming proverbial. However, some critics (1) whether his works reflect the dominance of dead, white European males over language and culture. In recent years, especially in the USA, political correctness has been criticized as (2) free speech. While avoiding offensive language is (3), its excesses – like replacing “deaf” with “aurally challenged” – have often been counterproductive or even facetious. This mirrors earlier efforts, such as Thomas Bowdler’s 19th-century family-friendly edits of Shakespeare, which were considered politically correct at the time but are now (4) rejected.

II. For questions 1-5, think of one word only which can be used appropriately in all three sentences. Write only the missing word on your answer sheet. 10 points

1. The negotiations finally reached a _____ after weeks of intense debate.
She stood at the _____ of the cliff, staring into the distance.
His career is at a crucial _____, and one mistake could ruin everything.
2. He made a passing _____ about the weather before changing the subject.
The professor asked the students to write a short _____ on the article.
Her facial _____ suggested she was far from convinced.
3. The scandal caused a serious _____ in the company’s reputation.
There was a noticeable _____ in his voice when he spoke about the issue.
The earthquake left a deep _____ running through the old building.
4. It can be very _____ for young graduates to find stable employment in the current economic climate.
The witness provided the police with _____ evidence that ultimately led to the suspect’s conviction.
My grandfather is getting a bit _____ of hearing, so you might need to speak up when talking to him.
5. He got the job because he had a useful _____ in the company who arranged an interview for him.
We used to phone each other regularly, but I haven’t been in _____ with her for some time.
In my job I have personal _____ with members of the public every day.

III. For questions 1-10, read the text below and look carefully at each line. Some of the lines are correct and some have a word that should not be there. If a line is correct, put a tick (✓) by the number on your answer sheet. If a line has a word which should not be there, write the word down next to the number on your answer sheet. 10 points

Many teenagers today feel that under pressure to maintain a strong online presence. Social media platforms offer spaces where young people can express themselves creatively. Online profiles often become a carefully constructed version of the self, rather than a reflection of everyday in reality. Influencers, who appear confident and successful, can unintentionally to set unrealistic standards. As a consequence, some users begin to measure by their own worth against likes and views. This constant exposure may result in anxiety, especially among younger adolescents. Many teens report feeling anxious about this posting content that might be judged negatively. While social media can encourage connection, it can also amplify feelings of isolation as well. Experts argue that digital education should focus on how to evaluate online content critically. Without guidance, users may internalise distorted images of success as though normal. Learning to disconnect occasionally is therefore an essential skill in the digital age. Ultimately, social media can be empowering even if used with awareness and balance.

0 _that_
00 _✓_
1 _____
2 _____
3 _____
4 _____
5 _____
6 _____
7 _____
8 _____
9 _____
10 _____

IV. Translate the following text into English.

10 points

Deci și ea era o cetate care trebuia cucerită, am gândit, dar una mai grea, căci îmi sugera legătura ei strânsă cu moartea. Atât, alte ziduri nu avea, dar ăsta, singurul, cum să-l escaladezi? Am început să ieșim, să ne plimbăm împreună prin oraș. Nineta era bine îmbrăcată, chiar elegantă și strada o schimba, devenea gravă, aproape străină, plăcută și veselia îi pierdea de pe chip. Avea chiar un ochi cercetător, imobil când se uita la ceva. Se uita cu o lăcomie pe care n-o descifram, oricum strada o schimba, aveam chiar impresia că nu mai era cu mine și nu știam încotro îi zburau gândurile și ce fel de gânduri. Apoi acasă la ea devenea altă ființă... Aceste plimbări au adus ruptura, neașteptată pentru mine, incredibilă. Ieșirea în lume e plină de surprize, da, e bine între noi doi, dar împreună cu alții privirea ei nu-ți mai aparține, surâsul ei nu-i mai înflorește pe chip când o privești, râde pe neașteptate de ceea ce spune altul și ești stupefiat să descoperi că deși e aceeași nu-ți mai aparține, aici e drama, e aceeași... Dar asta avea să mă chinuie mult mai târziu. Ruptura mea cu Nineta a fost mai simplă, dar nu inexplicabilă, fiindcă fusesem avertizat.
(Marin Preda, *Cel mai iubit dintre pământeni*)

SUBIECTUL B – INTEGRATED SKILLS (50 points)

I. Five paragraphs have been removed from the following text. Choose from the paragraphs A-F the one which fits each gap 1-5. There is one extra paragraph which you do not need to use. Write your answer on your answer sheet.

10 points

Banning phones in schools is not linked to pupils getting higher grades or having better mental wellbeing, the first study of its kind suggests. Students' sleep, classroom behaviour, exercise or how long they spend on their phones overall also seems to be no different for schools with phone bans and those without, the academics found. However, they did find that spending longer on smartphones and social media in general was linked with worse results for all of those measures.

The first study in the world to look at school phone rules alongside measures of pupil health and education feeds into a fierce debate that has played out in homes and schools in recent years. Dr Victoria Goodyear, the study's lead author, told the BBC the findings were not "against" smartphone bans in schools, but "what we're suggesting is that those bans in isolation are not enough to tackle the negative impacts". **1.....**

The University of Birmingham's findings, peer-reviewed and published by the Lancet's journal for European health policy, compared 1,227 students and the rules their 30 different secondary schools had for smartphone use at break and lunchtimes. The schools were chosen from a sample of 1,341 mainstream state schools in England. The paper says schools restricting smartphone use did not seem to be seeing their intended improvements on health, wellbeing and focus in lessons. **2.....**

The study used the internationally recognised Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Wellbeing Scales to determine participants' wellbeing. It also looked at students' anxiety and depression levels. It asked form teachers about whether their students were on target, below or above target in English and maths. Joe Ryrie, director of the campaign group Smartphone Free Childhood, told BBC Radio 4's Today programme the results were "surprising", because teachers in their network had reported benefits of bringing in phone bans at their schools. **3.....**

Charlie got his first smartphone in Year 8 - but a strictly enforced ban meant he was not allowed to bring it with him until he started sixth form. Anyone caught with a smartphone in the lower school at Twyford School, west London, has it confiscated for the rest of the term, which senior staff say is such an "unpopular" punishment that it works as a strong deterrent. Charlie says the smartphone ban "forces you to hang out and chat with your friends". **4.....**

However, students at other schools where phones are banned have told BBC News they have seen benefits like less bullying and better social skills - factors not included in the University of Birmingham study. Its authors said more research was needed in this area to draw any links.

Ysgol Aberconwy, a school in Conwy, changed rules recently so that students' phones are locked inside magnetic pouches unless a teacher unlocks them for use during class. The school cites research suggesting rising loneliness at school, and the suggestion that time on social media is linked to lower life satisfaction for some children. Georgie, 15, says before the rule change, the atmosphere at school "was quite aggressive". Now, Georgie feels arguments do not escalate so much or as often. Head teacher Ian Gerrard says while bullying hasn't been "completely eradicated", the pouches have created "a safe space within school" where students "don't need to worry about those things".

Other schools have found parents wanting contact with children to be a sticking point when introducing new rules around phones. **5.....** One student recently got on a bus going in the wrong direction, and ended up at the other end of the line to his home neighbourhood - without a smartphone on him to check a map or call home.

In the UK, 96% of 12 to 15-year-olds have their own phone, according to the latest research by the online safety regulator, Ofcom. The study may intensify the debate around whether under-16s should be stopped from having smartphones altogether.

- A. Now in Year 13, he said the ban in lower school had “probably” helped him to spend less time scrolling through social media and develop healthier habits around phone use. However, he added that despite these restrictions, many of his friends were still “on their phones all the time,” particularly outside school hours.
- B. She said the focus now needed to be on reducing the amount of time students spent on their phones, adding: “We need to do more than just ban phones in schools.” She argued that without addressing young people’s wider digital habits, restrictions limited to the school day were unlikely to have a lasting impact.
- C. Despite the lack of clear-cut evidence, Georgie's mother Sarah says she "absolutely" supports Aberconwy's policy. She says she has found it tough not to be able to message her children during exam time. "It would be nice to be able to sometimes communicate with them to be able to say, 'has everything gone all right?'," she said.
- D. Within a few weeks of The Fulham Boys School in west London bringing in a "brick"-phones-only policy in September, students were "over it", head teacher David Smith says - but "teething problems" came from parents worried about their children travelling across the capital without apps to help them.
- E. However, the research did find a link between more time on phones and social media, and worse mental wellbeing and mental health, less physical activity, poorer sleep, lower grades and more disruptive classroom behaviour.
- F. He also said the average time children in the study reported spending on their phones - four to six hours - was a "terrifying amount of time to spend scrolling or swiping". He said tougher regulations were needed to make social media platforms safer and non-addictive to children.

II. You have seen the following announcement on a website.

Send us an **article** about whether mobile phones should be banned in schools and how their use affects students' mental health.

- To what extent do smartphones influence concentration, anxiety levels, and social interaction among teenagers?
- Should schools introduce stricter rules, or is technology an essential part of modern education?
- What impact could banning phones have on students' wellbeing and academic performance?

Write your article starting from the text above. (250-280 words)

40 points

Etapa județeană / a sectoarelor municipiului București a olimpiadelor naționale școlare - 2026

Probă scrisă

Limba engleză

CLASA a XII-a - SECȚIUNEA A

- Toate subiectele sunt obligatorii.
- Se acordă zece puncte din oficiu.
- Timpul efectiv de lucru este de 3 ore.

SUBIECTUL A – USE OF ENGLISH (40 points)

I. Read the following text and fill in the blanks with ONE word only.

10 points

Queen Victoria

Victoria first learned of her future role as a princess (1) ____ a history lesson when she was 10 years old. Over four decades later, Victoria's governess recalled that the future queen reacted to the discovery (2) ____ declaring 'I will be good'. This combination of earnestness and egotism marked Victoria as a child of the age that bears her name. It was an era of industrialisation and colonial expansion which (3) ____ not happened before. By the end of her reign, about a third of the known world was (4) ____ her rule. However, the queen herself was resistant (5) ____ technological change even while mechanical and technological innovation was reshaping the face of European civilization. (6) ____ significantly, Victoria was a queen determined to retain political power; yet unwillingly and unwittingly she presided (7) ____ the transformation of the sovereign's political role into a ceremonial one and thus helped preserve the English monarchy. When Victoria became queen, the political role of the crown was by (8) ____ means clear or defined, nor (9) ____ the permanence of the throne itself. When she died, the change in the monarch's roles was one of social (10) ____ than of political focus.

II. Choose the best option A, B, C or D.

10 points

1. _____, the prototype failed spectacularly: nevertheless, the team _____ give up and refined the design.

- A. Predictably / did not
- B. Fortunately / would
- C. Surprisingly / could
- D. Unfortunately / must

2. She burst _____ tears upon hearing _____ news and struggled _____ composure for several minutes.

- A. into / the / regaining
- B. out / a / to regain
- C. in / those / with regaining
- D. into / that / to regain

3. The diplomats _____ conferring _____ private for hours before _____ a joint statement.

- A. were / about / issue
- B. have been / on / to issue
- C. had been / in / issuing
- D. are / in / issued

4. He glanced _____ the report and immediately picked _____ several _____ in the methodology.

- A. through / out / flaws
- B. over / up / flaw
- C. at / on / weaknesses
- D. across / off / weakness

5. The delegation insisted that concessions be made on both sides.

- A. The delegation demanded mutual concessions.
- B. The delegation insisted concessions be unilateral.
- C. Both sides refused concessions, the delegation insisted.
- D. Concessions were insisted upon only by the delegation.

6. _____ you _____ the contract carefully, you _____ noticed _____ discrepancies earlier.

- A. Had / read / would have / those
- B. Were / to read / will / the
- C. Did / read / would / those
- D. Have / read / might / any

7. His failure didn't deceive her.

- A. She was not taken in by his failure.
- B. She was not taken into by his failure.
- C. She was not taken aback by his failure.
- D. She was not taken of by his failure.

8. Immediately after Sam began his presentation the lights went out.

- A. Hardly had Sam begun his presentation than the lights went out.
- B. No sooner had Sam begun his presentation than the lights went out.
- C. Hardly had Sam began his presentation when the lights went out.
- D. No sooner did Sam begin his presentation when the lights went out.

9. He is in prison because a witness recognized him.

- A. He wouldn't have been in prison, if a witness wouldn't have recognized him.
- B. He wouldn't be in prison if a witness wouldn't have recognized him.
- C. He wouldn't be in prison if a witness hadn't recognized him.
- D. He would be in prison, unless a witness recognized him.

10. So much rain in March is something of a rarity.

- A. Rarely had it been so much rain in March.
- B. Rarely is it so much rain in March.
- C. Rarely it has been so much rain in March.
- D. Rarely has there been so much rain in March.

III. Complete the second sentence so that it has a similar meaning to the first sentence, using the word given. Do not change the word given. You must use between two and five words, including the word given.

10 points

- | | |
|---|---------------|
| 1. I decided right there and then to buy it and now I really regret it!
I _____ and now I really regret it! | WHIM |
| 2. When he was at his most successful, the President had enormous influence.
At _____, the President had enormous influence. | HEIGHT |
| 3. They dismissed the rumours as completely unfounded.
They didn't believe the _____ truth. | GRAIN |
| 4. It was only after the meeting had finished that she admitted the truth.
Not until the meeting _____ the truth. | DID |
| 5. The experiment failed despite meticulous planning.
The experiment _____ meticulous planning. | COME |

IV. Translate the following text into English.

10 points

A doua zi dimineața, Paul, care se trezise târziu, o găsi pe Adriana în curte, scriind într-un caiet de școală ceva. Se apropie de ea neobservat, se aplecă din spate ținându-și răsuflarea și cu o mână îi fură brusc caietul dinainte. Fata scoase un țipăt scurt.

Rămase un moment încremenită și pe urmă se aruncă asupra vărului ei.

- Nu, nu, te rog, te implor, dă-mi-l înapoi. N-ai să-l citești, nu trebuie să citești, nu vreau, jură-mi că n-ai să-l citești.

Vorbea repede, aproape fără să-și dea seama de ce spunea. Era palidă, ochii îi erau aprinși, mâinile rugătoare, trupul agitat. Paul nu înțelegea nimic. Încercase să glumească și mica lui glumă stârnise o disperare, pe care nu o așteptase, care îl încurca și pe care nu știa cum să o calmeze.

Puse caietul pe masă, fără să-l privească și încercă să se scuze.

- Dar, Adriana, n-am vrut decât să glumesc...

(Mihail Sebastian, *Orașul cu salcâmi*)

SUBIECTUL B – INTEGRATED SKILLS (50 points)

I. Five sentences have been removed from the article below. Choose from the sentences A-F the one which fits each gap (1-5). There is one extra paragraph which you do not need to use. 10 points

What inspires people to make changes in their lives?

People rarely change their lives without a reason. Whether it involves changing careers, improving relationships, or adopting healthier habits, personal transformation is usually triggered by a combination of internal reflection and external influence. Understanding what inspires such changes helps explain why some people act decisively while others remain stuck in familiar patterns. **(1) [.....]**

For many individuals, dissatisfaction is a powerful starting point. Feeling unfulfilled, overwhelmed, or disconnected can prompt people to question their current circumstances. These moments of discomfort often act as a wake-up call, forcing individuals to confront the gap between the life they are living and the life they would like to lead. Without such tension, the motivation to change may never fully develop. **(2) [.....]**

However, inspiration does not always come from negative experiences. Positive role models can be equally influential. Observing someone who has successfully transformed their life can make change seem both desirable and achievable. Seeing real examples of improvement helps people imagine alternative futures for themselves and challenges the belief that change is too risky or unrealistic.

Life-changing events also play a significant role. Major transitions such as illness, loss, relocation, or unexpected success can disrupt routines and force individuals to reassess their priorities. **(3) [.....]** When familiar structures disappear, people are often compelled to make conscious choices about what truly matters, rather than simply continuing out of habit.

In addition, gradual exposure to new ideas can inspire change over time. Books, conversations, education, and travel introduce different perspectives and values, encouraging people to question assumptions they may have accepted uncritically for years. **(4) [.....]** Unlike sudden shocks, this type of inspiration works slowly, reshaping beliefs until change feels not only necessary, but inevitable. Ultimately, change depends not only on inspiration, but on the willingness to act upon it. **(5) [.....]**

In conclusion, people are inspired to change their lives through a complex interaction of dissatisfaction, influence, and experience. While inspiration may arise suddenly or develop gradually, meaningful change ultimately depends on recognizing these signals and responding with deliberate action rather than remaining confined by familiar routines.

- A. Such moments often remove the illusion of control and highlight the need for adaptation.
- B. As a result, comparison can become a motivating force rather than a source of discouragement.
- C. Often, it is a matter of mental preparation, where a person finally feels "ready" to face the unknown.
- D. While the spark of insight is essential, it is the consistent application of that insight that leads to a new reality.
- E. This process is often subtle, influencing attitudes long before behavior visibly changes.
- F. Many people find that maintaining a strict routine is the only way to avoid these external pressures.

II. You have been asked to write an article for your high school magazine exploring the factors that motivate people to make significant changes in their lives. Starting from the text above, consider the role of dissatisfaction, role models, and life experiences, and explain which of these you believe to be the most influential.

Write your article in 250–280 words.

40 points

Etapa județeană / a sectoarelor municipiului București a olimpiadelor naționale școlare – 2026

**Probă scrisă
Limba engleză**

CLASA a XII-a - SECȚIUNEA B

- Toate subiectele sunt obligatorii.
- Se acordă zece puncte din oficiu.
- Timpul efectiv de lucru este de 3 ore.

SUBIECTUL A – USE OF ENGLISH (40 points)

I. Read the paragraph below and do the tasks that follow.

10 points

Reconciling Biological Imperatives with Contemporary Demands

The concept of 'evolutionary mismatch' can help foster self-compassion and point the way to a more rewarding existence. Simply put, we evolved in a very different environment from the one in which we now find ourselves. As a result, our brains, bodies and instincts are poorly matched to their surroundings. Understanding the life we evolved for allows us to look at our problems with more clarity and can **nudge** us towards better, more informed decisions.

Managing the difficulties we encounter often requires wrestling with our own drives, doing our best not to give in to every impulse. To lose weight, to find meaningful work, to maintain long-term, happy relationships: all demand postponing our immediate desires in the service of a longer-term goal. Why is it that following our instincts often seems to land us in so much trouble?

Human beings are highly adaptable, capable of solving problems, cooperating, and developing technology. However, our genetics and anatomy have remained largely unchanged for about 100,000 years. Therefore, genetic evolution is too slow to keep up with the rapid urban, technological, and cultural changes. So what has the fallout been?

Perhaps the starkest impact has been on our waistlines. The instinct to binge on foods rich in salt, fat and sugar kept people alive for most of human history, when the next meal was never guaranteed. Now we live in a world where calories are cheap, and where scientists devote whole careers to making foods far more appealing than any food found in nature. Obesity, once rare, has now overtaken malnutrition as the leading public health issue in many countries.

The world has developed in ways our biology hasn't been able to keep up with. If you don't take this into account as you look at your own life, you open the door to profound self-criticism, frustration, and resentment.

Conversely, rather than **berating** ourselves for not being able to control our impulses, we can start to think about helpful **mitigations**. Some solutions include keeping junk food out of the house, limiting screen time, or getting involved in community, collaborative problem-solving. These are vital ingredients for a satisfying life and will remain so, whatever technology we invent.

A. Choose the right synonym for the words given below, according to their meaning in the text.

3 points

- | | | | | |
|-----------------------|-----------------|-------------------|--------------|----------------|
| 1. nudge | a. compel | b. pressure | c. demand | d. prompt |
| 2. berating | a. scolding | b. praising | c. analysing | d. ignoring |
| 3. mitigations | a. implications | b. justifications | c. remedies | d. adaptations |

B. Rephrase the following sentences so as to preserve the meaning. Use the word given WITHOUT changing it.

3 points

- | | |
|---|------------------|
| 1. Understanding the life we evolved for allows us to look at our problems with more clarity.
Only _____ our problems with more clarity. | APPROACH |
| 2. Obesity, once rare, has now overtaken malnutrition as the leading public health issue in many countries.
In many countries, malnutrition _____ the primary public health concern. | OVERTAKEN |
| 3. If you don't take this into account as you look at your own life, you open the door to profound self-criticism, frustration, and resentment.
Should _____ the door to profound self-criticism and resentment. | RISK |

C. Four words have been removed from the summary of the text above. Choose the right words to fill in the summary. There are four extra words which you do not need to use. 4 points

fallout, engagement, align, allegations, discrepancy, prevail, afflictions, incentive

"Evolutionary mismatch" occurs because our ancient biology cannot (1) _____ with rapid modern changes. Our instincts, once vital for survival, now lead to (2) _____ like obesity and frustration. By recognizing this biological (3) _____, we can replace self-criticism with self-compassion. Instead of relying on willpower alone, we should implement environmental mitigations and community (4) _____ to foster a more satisfying existence.

II. For questions 1-5, think of one word only which can be used appropriately in all three sentences. Write only the missing word on your answer sheet. 10 points

1. The official listened to the whole story, but it was difficult to tell whether he believed it because his _____ did not change at all.
'Yours faithfully' is a polite _____ which can be used to close a formal letter.
Her technique isn't perfect but she puts great _____ into her piano playing.
2. The legal team argued that the evidence was not _____ to the case at hand.
The architect's design was highly _____, as it met the requirements of blending modern aesthetics with traditional materials.
Despite the critics' harsh reviews, the film remained _____ to a younger generation of viewers.
3. After the scandal, the CEO found it impossible to _____ the trust and confidence of the shareholders.
The investment is expected to _____ a significant profit within the first fiscal year.
To _____ a better understanding of the subject, one must engage in extensive research.
4. The scientist was able to _____ a compelling case for the necessity of further funding.
You must _____ sure that all electrical appliances are turned off before leaving the building.
The artisan used high-quality leather to _____ the handmade shoes.
5. The company has decided to _____ its focus toward renewable energy in response to recent environmental legislation.
Employees who work the night _____ are entitled to a higher hourly rate and additional break time.
There has been a perceptible _____ in public opinion regarding the government's handling of the economic crisis.

III. For questions 1-10, read the text below and look carefully at each line. Some of the lines are correct and some have a word that should not be there. If a line is correct, put a tick (✓) by the number on your answer sheet. If a line has a word which should not be there, write the word down next to the number on your answer sheet. 10 points

- 0 ☒ _____ Languages are constantly evolving and changing as the world around
- 00 ☐ of _____ us does. New words are being created every single of day to describe
1. _____ new technologies and social trends. While some people they might argue
2. _____ that the quality of language is declining because of slang and textspeak,
3. _____ but linguists view this as a natural sign of a healthy, living
4. _____ communication system. One of the most fascinating aspects is how much
5. _____ words can shift in their meaning over the centuries. For an example,
6. _____ the word "nice" used to mean "foolish" or "ignorant" in the late 13th
7. _____ century. It was not until much later that it has began to take on its
8. _____ a modern, positive connotation. Understanding these shifts helps us to
9. _____ appreciate the depth of our own history. We must remember to
10. _____ that language belongs to everyone who speaks it, not just the dictionaries.

IV. Translate the following text into English.

10 points

Am pornit Google Maps urmărind coordonatele trimise de Urbex. Părea că am de mers pe jos vreo trei sferturi de oră, așa că am grăbit pasul. Mi-am făcut socoteala că nimeni nu-mi va observa dispariția o vreme, pentru că Aryanna mai avea de cântat cel puțin o oră. Mai departe nu m-am gândit ce se va întâmpla, voiam doar să ajung la clădirea aia și apoi să-i cunosc, în sfârșit, pe Urbex și gașca. În ultimele zile, pe toate aplicațiile îmi tot apăruseră imagini și filmulețe cu case părăsite și explorări urbane, deci clar ăsta era trendul momentului. Înainte să ies din parc, am simțit că-i cineva pe urmele mele, dar nu m-am uitat înapoi, de frică să nu mă răzgândesc. Am continuat să merg, concentrându-mă pe traseul care-mi apărea pe telefon. Partea enervantă cu Google Maps e că uneori îți arată fix direcția opusă și te întorci din drum de-o mie de ori. Am pățit chestia asta când am ieșit pe bulevard, am mers vreo sută de metri până mi-am dat seama că distanța creștea, deci clar trebuia să o iau înapoi. M-am întors brusc, cu ochii în ecran, și m-am ciocnit de cineva. Ne-am ciocnit așa de tare, că mi-a scapat telefonul din mână. Persoana de care mă ciocnisem, care-mi dărmase telefonul pe jos (da, evident că fix cu ecranul!) ...hai să vedem dacă vă pică fisa, că mie mi-a dat *jump scare* când am văzut-o! Da, Mara Zărnescu, care făcea o față de zici că i se-necaseră pisicile.

(Adina Rosetti, *Ultima provocare*)

SUBIECTUL B – INTEGRATED SKILLS (50 points)

I. Five paragraphs have been removed from the following text. Choose from the paragraphs A-F the one which fits each gap 1-5. There is one extra paragraph which you do not need to use. Write your answer on your answer sheet.

10 points

Schools are facing a growing problem of students using artificial intelligence to transform innocent images of classmates into deepfakes. The fallout from the spread of the manipulated photos and videos can create a nightmare for the victims.

The challenge for schools was highlighted this fall when AI-generated nude images swept through a Louisiana middle school. Two boys ultimately were charged, but not before one of the victims was expelled for starting a fight with a boy she accused of creating the images of her and her friends.

“While the ability to alter images has been available for decades, the rise of A.I. has made it easier for anyone to alter or create such images with little to no training or experience,” Lafourche Parish Sheriff Craig Webre said in a news release. “This incident highlights a serious concern that all parents should address with their children.”

The prosecution stemming from the Louisiana middle school deepfakes is believed to be the first under the state’s new law, said Republican state Sen. Patrick Connick, who authored the legislation. The law is one of many across the country taking aim at deepfakes. **1.....**

Deepfakes started as a way to humiliate political opponents and young starlets. Until the past few years, people needed some technical skills to make them realistic, said Sergio Alexander, a research associate at Texas Christian University who has written about the issue. “Now, you can do it on an app, you can download it on social media, and you don’t have to have any technical expertise whatsoever,” he said.

Sameer Hinduja, the co-director of the Cyberbullying Research Center, recommends that schools update their policies on AI-generated deepfakes and get better at explaining them. **2.....** “So many of them are just so unaware and so ignorant,” said Hinduja, who is also a professor in the School of Criminology and Criminal Justice at Florida Atlantic University. “We hear about the ostrich syndrome, just kind of burying their heads in the sand, hoping that this isn’t happening amongst their youth.”

AI deepfakes are different from traditional bullying because instead of a nasty text or rumor, there is a video or image that often goes viral and then continues to resurface, creating a cycle of trauma, Alexander said. **3.....**

Parents can start the conversation by casually asking their kids if they've seen any funny fake videos online, Alexander said. Take a moment to laugh at some of them, like Bigfoot chasing after hikers, he said. From there, parents can ask their kids, "Have you thought about what it would be like if you were in this video, even the funny one?" 4.....

If kids encounter things like deepfakes, they need to know they can talk to their parents without getting in trouble, said Laura Tierney, who is the founder and CEO of The Social Institute, which educates people on responsible social media use and has helped schools develop policies. She said many kids fear their parents will overreact or take their phones away.

She uses the acronym SHIELD as a roadmap for how to respond. The "S" stands for "stop" and don't forward. "H" is for "huddle" with a trusted adult. The "I" is for "inform" any social media platforms on which the image is posted. "E" is a cue to collect "evidence," like who is spreading the image, but not to download anything. The "L" is for "limit" social media access. The "D" is a reminder to "direct" victims to help. 5.....

As schools grapple with how to respond, experts warn that deepfake technology is evolving faster than most education systems can keep up. While some districts are beginning to update policies and provide guidance on digital ethics and online safety, many acknowledge they are still reacting rather than preventing harm. For now, educators, parents and lawmakers face growing pressure to address a problem that blurs the line between technology misuse and traditional bullying — and to ensure that students are protected in an online environment that is becoming increasingly difficult to control.

- A. And then they can ask if a classmate has made a fake video, even an innocuous one. "Based on the numbers, I guarantee they'll say that they know someone," he said.
- B. That way, he said, "students don't think that the staff, the educators are completely oblivious, which might make them feel like they can act with impunity." He said many parents assume that schools are addressing the issue when they aren't.
- C. She said the fact that the framework involves six separate steps highlights just how complex cases involving deepfake images can be. "It shows that this issue is really complicated," she added, pointing to the need for careful, multi-stage responses rather than quick or simple solutions.
- D. He described the scope of the problem as staggering. The National Center for Missing and Exploited Children said the number of AI-generated child abuse images reported to its cyber tipline soared from 4,700 in 2023 to 440,000 in just the first six months of 2025.
- E. In 2025, at least half the states enacted legislation addressing the use of generative AI to create seemingly realistic, but fabricated, images and sounds, according to the National Conference of State Legislatures. Students also have been prosecuted in Florida and Pennsylvania and expelled in places like California.
- F. Many victims become depressed and anxious, he said. "They literally shut down because it makes it feel like, you know, there's no way they can even prove that this is not real — because it does look 100% real," he said.

II. Starting from the text above, write a proposal (250–280 words) addressed to your school management in which you explain why AI-generated deepfake content is a concern for your school community, make recommendations for changes to school policy and practice to prevent and respond to deepfake cyberbullying, and evaluate possible benefits and challenges of implementing these changes. **40 points**