**THE INTERNATIONAL ENGLISH LANGUAGE OLYMPIAD**
**CONSTANȚA SEPTEMBER 2024**
**USE OF ENGLISH**
**LEVEL B2**

**All questions are compulsory**
**Alloted points: 40**
**Alloted time: 90 minutes**

**I. Read the text below and do the tasks that follow** **(10 points)**

On the surface – in media headlines and on the front page – the world seems a cruel, cutthroat, combative place. We hear regularly about all manner of human violence, deceit, and egotism. Yet noting the infinite ways by which all of us could harm and be harmed by others – our vast potential for **malice** on the one hand and our thorough vulnerability on the other – compels the conclusion that the amount of actual harm most humans do unto others is astonishingly small.

Moreover, if you travelled places in your life, then you probably noticed that kindness, not cruelty, is the **coin of the realm** everywhere. **Stranded** in a foreign town, you are much more likely to receive help than be harmed by those around you.

As a general rule, human beings are exceedingly prosocial. This tendency emerges early: infants as young as 14 to 18 months of age help others achieve their goals, for example, by helping them to fetch out-of-reach objects or opening cabinets for them. They do this irrespective of any reward from adults... and very likely with no concern for such things as reciprocation and reputation.

We seem to be biologically predisposed toward kindness. Yet, as our cognitive capacities and our social world grow more complex in the process of development, our behaviour becomes increasingly conditioned on both internal and environmental circumstances. For example, with time, we begin to take others' intentions into account when judging their and our own actions. Research has found that people may be more likely to reciprocate kindness when they can rule out a strategic motive.

**A. Answer the following questions, according to the text.** **(4 points)**

1. According to the first paragraph, to what extent do humans harm each other?
2. When you travel how are you most likely to be treated by those around you?
3. How do 14-to-18-month-old infants show their prosocial inclination?
4. How does our behaviour change in relation to the growth of our cognitive capacities and our social world, according to the last paragraph?

**B. Choose the right synonym for the words given below, according to their meaning in the text.**
**(3 points)**

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|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **1.** | **malice**: | **a)** hatred | **b)** meanness | **c)** grudge | **d)** deception |
| **2.** | **coin of the realm**: | **a)** currency | **b)** tradition | **c)** norm | **d)** transaction |
| **3.** | **stranded**: | **a)** stuck | **b)** standing | **c)** grounded | **d)** shipwrecked |

**C. Rephrase the following sentences so as to preserve the meaning.** **(3 points)**

**1.** They do this irrespective of any reward from adults.
They do this even _____ by adults.
**2**. As our cognitive capacities grow more complex, our behaviour becomes increasingly conditioned.
The more complex our cognitive capacities grow, _____ becomes.
**3.** We begin to take others' intentions into account when judging their actions.
Only when judging their actions, _____ others' intentions into account.

**II. Use the word given in brackets to form a word that fits in each gap. (10 points)**

The small **(1)** _____ (**COAST**) town of Medmerry has found an unusual way to reduce the risk of flooding: let the sea in. The scheme involved the **(2)** _____ (**DESTROY**) of part of the existing sea wall and the building of seven kilometres of new, higher defences further **(3)** _____ **(LAND)**, closer to local communities. This has led to the **(4)** _____ (**CREATE**) of a large area of wetland, capable of absorbing the energy of the waves and therefore bringing about a **(5)** _____ (**SUBSTANCE**) reduction in flooding at times of storm and high tides.

According to environmental **(6)** _____ (**SCIENCE**), who have been doing some research, this ambitious project will also turn the whole area into a **(7)** _____ (**MASS**) nature reserve. It is already attracting large numbers of birds and other (**8)** _____ **(WILD)** and eventually it should provide a safe home for some of the country's most **(9)** _____ (**DANGER**) species. This is **(10)** _____ **(BIND)** to attract more visitors to the area, although it remains unclear whether numbers will have to be limited in order to protect the reserve.

**III. Five sentences have been removed from the text below. Read the text and use the sentences A – G to fill in the gaps in the text. There are TWO sentences which you do not need. (10 points)**

'I never expected to get many followers when I started writing my blog,' says Joey Benson, now 15. 'I just wrote down my thoughts about films I'd seen at the cinema. I didn't think anyone would take my opinions seriously or even be particularly interested in them.'
Since he started blogging two years ago, however, Joey's attracted tens of thousands of readers, some of them professional film critics, who are interested in his fresh approach to reviewing films. **(1)** _____ This attention has led to him tripling the number of hits his blog receives, and he now gets sent free tickets for screenings of new films for his age group.

Joey's style is informal and chatty, and he presents an interesting angle on the films he sees. Instead of simply commenting on how amazing the special effects are, or how effective the soundtrack is, Joey delves into psychological subject matters like what it was that made the bad guy turn bad or whether the heroes of the story have hidden motives. **(2)** _____ Why was that particular animation process selected?

Joey has certainly made an impact on the teenage and film critic blogging scenes. His ideas are far from predictable, and he never fails to surprise readers with a new take on old themes. He makes it seem easy, but not all young, or indeed older, bloggers hit the right tone. It's definitely something he manages, though.
With so many talented bloggers out there, how does Joey stand out from the crowd? He says it's crucial to either find something no one's written about before or a new way of approaching a subject, like he does. You don't have to present a balanced opinion of an issue. **(3)** _____ They probably won't come back again, either.

If you're hoping to reach a wide range of readers with your blog, following advice from experienced bloggers like Joey is a wise move. **(4)** _____ This means you automatically limit the number of hits you receive on your blog.
'Remember the expression "first impressions count"?' asks Joey. 'Well, that doesn't just stand for meeting people but when aiming to make an impact with your blog-writing too. Draw the reader in by writing a funny or surprising title. **(5)** _____

One last word from Joey: 'Don't try too hard to use big fancy words or get too hung up on things like grammar. It's important to check your work afterwards for things like spelling errors, though, and make sure it flows well and is relevant to your target readers. Oh, and make sure you check your facts! You don't want to get into trouble about what you've written. Good luck!'

**A.** Then keep their interest by addressing them personally, asking questions and making them think.'
**B.** He started at the age of thirteen by telling us about his own experiences of blog writing and offering tips for other young bloggers starting out.
**C.** A national newspaper recently picked up on his unique style and he's since appeared in an article about teenage bloggers.
**D.** Age doesn't matter when you're writing about something you feel strongly about.
**E.** He isn't only interested in considering this kind of things, but in the technicalities of film-making, too. Why did they choose that camera angle to shoot that scene from?
**F.** However, simply repeating the same thing over again without backing up your ideas with actual examples is unlikely to make readers stick around for long.
**G.** This makes it tempting to use jargon and technical words that people familiar with the field will know. Be aware, though, that a general audience may not, and you may put them off by doing so.

**IV. Fill in the blanks with ONE suitable word in each gap.** **(10 points)**

Reading is good **(1)** _____ us. In fact, there is plenty of evidence that reading for pleasure is **(2)** _____ than just another leisure pursuit – it actually improves our mental and physical health. Reading extended texts, **(3)** _____ as novels or biographies, **(4)** _____ requires intense concentration for a considerable period of time, helps to lengthen attention span in children and improves their ability to think clearly. However, experts say **(5)** _____ is essential to acquire the habit of reading extensively **(6)** _____ a small child, while the brain is still developing.

Reading can undoubtedly **(7)** _____ beneficial to our mental well-being. Reading not **(8)** _____ helps combat feelings of loneliness, but it also allows people to relax and forget their problems for a **(9)** _____. The concentration required during the act of reading seems to ease muscle tension and slow the heart rate. Researchers have found that just six minutes of reading can reduce stress levels by as **(10)** _____ as two-thirds.