

CAE Reading and Use of English Part 1

For questions 1-8, read the text below and decide which answer (A, B, C or D) best fits each gap. There is an example at the beginning (0).

The Unlikely Racing Driver

Lilian Bryner's **0 path** to professional motorsport was a very unusual one. A highly qualified pilot from Switzerland, she only began her racing career at the **1 _____** age of 37. Despite her late start, she quickly **2 _____** a reputation for remarkable skill and cool-headedness under pressure. Bryner did not see her background as a **3 _____**; in fact, she believed her piloting training gave her a unique edge, fostering a steady hand and intense powers of **4 _____** that were invaluable on the track.

Her career is best **5 _____** for her success in endurance racing. She competed in prestigious events like the 24 Hours of Le Mans, often **6 _____** as the only female driver in a top-tier team. Bryner never sought the spotlight, preferring to let her performance speak **7 _____** itself. She gained the respect of her peers not through words, but by consistently delivering fast, reliable stints behind the wheel. Her story serves as a powerful reminder that passion and talent can flourish at any **8 _____** of life, defying all conventional expectations.

0	A way	B path	C route	D passage
1	A ancient	B advanced	C mature	D grown
2	A earned	B won	C achieved	D deserved
3	A drawback	B handicap	C obstacle	D difficulty
4	A fixation	B attention	C concentration	D commitment
5	A remembered	B recognized	C known	D regarded
6	A performing	B functioning	C operating	D working
7	A about	B of	C for	D with
8	A part	B phase	C half	D stage

CAE Reading and Use of English Part 2

For questions 9-16, read the text below and think of the word which best fits each gap. Use only one word in each gap. There is an example at the beginning (0).

Write your answers IN CAPITAL LETTERS on the separate answer sheet

Example: (0) **THERE**

The Moving Rocks of Death Valley

In the heart of Death Valley, **0 _____** exists one of the world's most intriguing geological mysteries: sailing stones. These are large rocks, some weighing **9 _____** much as 300 kilograms, that leave long, meandering tracks behind them on the flat, dry surface of the Racetrack Playa. For decades, **10 _____** these rocks moved without any human or animal intervention baffled scientists.

Various theories were proposed, **11 _____** from powerful dust devils to slippery algal coatings. It wasn't until the early 21st century **12 _____** a team of researchers managed to solve the puzzle. They discovered that the movement occurs

under very specific winter conditions. **13** _____ overnight rain freezes, it forms thin sheets of ice around the rocks. Then, **14** _____ sunny days, this ice begins to melt and break up. A light wind is all **15** _____ takes to push the ice sheets, which then nudge the rocks along the slick mud, leaving **16** _____ those characteristic trails in their wake.

CAE Reading and Use of English Part 3

For questions **17-24**, read the text below. Use the word given in capitals at the end of some of the lines to form a word that fits in the gap in the same line. There is an example at the beginning **(0)**.

Write your answers IN CAPITAL LETTERS on the separate answer sheet.

Example: **(0) ENDURING**

The Farmer's Market

<p>Today, when consumers opt for the supermarket convenience and online grocery deliveries, the 0 _____ popularity of the farmer's market is a curious phenomenon. These bustling hubs of 17 _____ activity offer more than just fresh produce; they give a sense of community and a tangible connection to the origins of our food. Shoppers have the 18 _____ to meet the people who grow their vegetables, bake their bread, or make their cheese, reaching a level of trust that is often 19 _____ in the anonymous aisles of a large supermarket.</p>	<p>0 ENDURE 17 COMMERCE 18 ABLE 19 ATTAIN</p>
<p>Furthermore, there is a growing 20 _____ that locally sourced food has a lower carbon footprint, making it the more 21 _____ choice for the environmentally conscious. The produce itself is often of 22 _____ quality, having been harvested at its peak rather than for its ability to withstand long-distance transportation. While the prices may sometimes be higher, many customers find the experience 23 _____ rewarding, citing the vibrant atmosphere and the pleasure of supporting local 24 _____ as justification for the extra cost.</p>	<p>20 AWARE 21 SUSTAIN 22 EXCEED 23 IMMENSE 24 PRODUCE</p>

CAE Reading and Use of English Part 4

For questions **25-30**, 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 three and six words, including the word given. Here is an example **(0)**.

0 The workings of the brain were puzzling for scientists for a long time until research helped them understand it.

HAD

How _____ scientists for a long time until research helped them understand it.

Answer: THE BRAIN WORKED HAD PUZZLED

25 The moment we landed, the storm began.

SOONER

No _____ than the storm began.

26 "I'm sorry I didn't call you yesterday," Tom said to Sarah.

APOLOGISED

Tom _____ Sarah the previous day.

27 It's possible that John didn't get the message we sent him.

MIGHT

John _____ the message we sent him.

28 It's a pity I didn't apply for that scholarship when I had the chance.

ONLY

If _____ for that scholarship when I had the chance.

29 She started her current job exactly two years ago.

SINCE

It _____ she started her current job.

30 The conference was cancelled due to the speaker's sudden illness.

LED

The speaker's sudden illness _____ of the conference.

CAE Reading and Use of English Part 5

You are going to read an article about a person learning a skill. For questions 31-36, choose the answer (A, B, C or D) which you think fits best according to the text.

The Quiet Satisfaction of the Potter's Wheel

My journey into pottery began, like many misguided projects, with a wave of confidence from watching online videos. I was captivated. I saw a shapeless lump of clay placed on a wheel and, under the potter's calm guidance, transformed into a flawless, symmetrical vase. It looked less like a craft and more like a kind of quiet magic. It seemed so effortless. How hard could it be? I immediately signed up for a beginner's course, my mind already filled with images of the elegant cups and bowls I would create.

The reality, I soon discovered, was a lesson in humility. The first hurdle was 'wedging' the clay—the process of kneading it to push out air bubbles. On screen, it was a simple, rhythmic motion. In practice, it was a strenuous, messy struggle. My arms ached, and no matter how hard I tried, the clay simply refused to do my bidding. But this was just the warm-up for the main event: the wheel itself.

My first time sitting at the spinning wheel was a test of patience and human spirit. The instructor demonstrated 'centring'—the essential skill of anchoring the clay perfectly in the middle of the wheel. With a few easy pushes, her clay became a still, smooth dome. When I tried, it was a catastrophe. My hands, which I had always trusted, turned into clumsy, foreign objects. The clay wobbled, shuddered, and flew off at wild angles. I was losing a battle of wills. My first many attempts produced a series of lopsided, pathetic forms that collapsed the moment I touched them. The floor was soon spattered with grey sludge, and my apron was covered in it. My initial confidence had evaporated, replaced by a deep respect for anyone who could master this craft.

Yet, within the frustration, there was a strange appeal. The potter's wheel demands your complete attention. You can't let your mind wander to your shopping list or a work problem; the clay will instantly sense your distraction and rebel. I began to see that this total absorption was the whole point. It was a forced form of mindfulness. The noise and demands of the outside world faded away, replaced by the physical sensation of the cool, wet clay and the steady hum of the wheel.

Then, after what felt like endless failure, it happened. One evening, when almost looking forward to more disappointment, my hands seemed to understand something new. I stopped trying to force the clay and began to guide it. The wobbling went away and the clay became still, centred, a perfect cone under my palms. It was a moment of pure, quiet triumph. When I pressed my thumbs into the centre, the walls rose evenly, forming a delicate, hollow shape. It wasn't a masterpiece—the walls were thick and a little uneven—but it was my bowl. It was there, and it felt like a reward for all my patience.

I still take classes. What I make is still a long way from the elegant pots I admired online. My pieces have their flaws; a handle might be awkward, a glaze might not turn out as I'd hoped. But I've started to appreciate these imperfections. They are the fingerprints of the process, a sign that a human hand made them, not a machine. The potter's wheel taught me more than how to shape clay; it taught me the value of sticking with something, the value of commitment, and the profound satisfaction of creating something real with your own hands.

31 What is the writer's main purpose in the first paragraph?

- A** To explain the technical process of making pottery.
- B** To describe the initial appeal and motivation for trying pottery.
- C** To criticise the misleading nature of online tutorials.
- D** To compare different methods of learning a new craft.

32 What did the writer discover about 'wedging' the clay?

- A** It was easier to master than using the wheel.
- B** It required more strength and effort than anticipated.
- C** It was the least enjoyable part of the process.
- D** It was a skill best learned through online videos.

33 How did the writer feel after their first attempts on the potter's wheel?

- A** Annoyed that the instructor's help had been ineffective.
- B** Confident that they would improve with more practice.
- C** Unsure whether they want to pursue this hobby.
- D** Humbled by the difficulty of the task.

34 What does the writer suggest about the 'total absorption' required by pottery?

- A** It is an exhausting and stressful demand.
- B** It makes the learning process unnecessarily intense.
- C** It is a welcome escape from daily pressures.
- D** It is similar to the focus needed for office work.

35 The writer's description of the moment they successfully centred the clay emphasises

- A** the sudden and unexpected nature of the achievement.
- B** the amount of effort it took to achieve the result.
- C** the need for better equipment to facilitate learning.
- D** the extensive guidance they received from their instructor.

36 What does the writer now feel about the imperfections in their pottery?

- A** They show how much room for improvement there still is.
- B** They are a reminder of the handmade nature of the items.
- C** They add value to the item.
- D** They can only be avoided by the machine.

CAE Reading and Use of English Part 6

You are going to read four reviews of the novel 'The Cartographer's Silence' by Ernesto Rivaldi. For questions 37-40, choose from the reviewers **A-D**. The reviewers may be chosen more than once.

Review A

Rivaldi's latest offering, 'The Cartographer's Silence', is a formidable addition to the genre of literary historical fiction. The novel's story is brilliant: an ageing mapmaker in 18th-century Venice is commissioned to create a chart of the Republic's territories, only to discover that the political powers demand he omit certain islands and distort coastlines to suit their expansionist narratives. Rivaldi's prose is meticulously crafted, with every sentence full of symbolic weight. The protagonist's internal conflict—between his artisan's integrity and the threat of poverty or worse—is delivered with excruciating precision. However, this precision might make the novel overly ponderous. It reads deliberately slow, mirroring the painstaking work of cartography itself, which may try the patience of readers seeking a more dynamic plot. It is a book to be admired for its intellectual richness and lyrical beauty, yet one that remains at a certain emotional arm's length, its characters serving more as vessels for its grand ideas than as flesh-and-blood beings we would care about.

Review B

The Cartographer's Silence' major strengths are its atmosphere and moral inquiry. Rivaldi excels in immersing the reader in the damp alleys of Venice and the claustrophobic workshop of his protagonist, Elio. The central metaphor of the novel—that maps are not records of reality but projections of power—is explored with remarkable attention to detail. We witness Elio's gradual transformation from a naive craftsman, proud of his technical skill, into a disillusioned and complicit actor in a state-wide deception. The supporting cast, particularly a shrewd print-shop owner who becomes an unexpected ally to the protagonist, is vividly drawn and provides a much needed counterpoint to Elio's growing isolation. While the book is certainly challenging and demands the reader's full attention, it never feels like a chore. The tension comes not from action and drama, but from the quiet, seismic shifts in Elio's conscience. This is a moving novel about the price of compromise and the silent spaces where truth is forced into hiding.

Review C

There is much to commend in Ernesto Rivaldi's 'The Cartographer's Silence', primarily its stunning evocation of a historical period and its core theme. Rivaldi has clearly done his research, and the details of pre-industrial mapmaking are fascinating. The novel poses urgent questions about the nature of truth and the artist's role in a manipulative society that feel strikingly relevant to our modern era of misinformation. Yet, for all its conceptual strengths, the novel fails in the character department. Elio, the cartographer, remains an enigmatic and largely passive figure throughout. His internal struggles are told to us rather than viscerally felt, and his key decisions often seem more like plot necessities, not organic developments of his character. The novel is too busy with its grand thesis to forge a deep emotional connection. It is, in the final analysis, a beautifully constructed vessel, but one that leaves an aftertaste of emptiness.

Review D

With 'The Cartographer's Silence', Ernesto Rivaldi has crafted a work of rare and haunting beauty. The novel's greatest strength lies in its ability to make a seemingly esoteric subject—the craft of cartography—into a gripping human drama. The prose is evocative, painting pictures with words as masterfully as Elio does with ink and parchment. Unlike some reviewers, I found Elio's journey from integrity to complicity and towards a form of redemption to be entirely compelling and emotionally resonant. His silence, as he chooses to omit a rebellious island from his map, becomes a deafening roar in one's mind, where the more attentive readers are likely to see references to the political landscape of today. The pacing might feel slow, but it serves to build an almost unbearable psychological tension. This is a book that

lingers long after the final page is turned, forcing one to think over the little silences and omissions in our own lives. It is, no doubt about it, a masterpiece of quiet intensity.

Which reviewer ...

37 shares **Reviewer A**'s opinion about the emotional connection readers feel towards the characters?

38 expresses a similar view to **Reviewer C** on how true the book's themes are to contemporary issues?

39 has a different opinion from the others on the depth of the main character's portrayal?

40 disagrees with **Reviewer A**'s idea on the pace of the narrative?

CAE Reading and Use of English Part 7

You are going to read an article about the rise of "slow productivity". Choose from the paragraphs **A - G** the one which fits each gap (**41-46**). There is one extra paragraph which you do not need to use.

The Case for Slow Productivity in a Fast-Paced World

In an era defined by relentless notifications, overflowing inboxes, and the cult of overworking, a counter-movement is gaining momentum. Its name is "slow productivity," and it's not about doing less work, but about achieving more by focusing on less at once.

41 ____

This stands in stark contrast to the prevailing culture of "performative busyness," where being overwhelmed and doing (or pretending to do) everything at once is often worn as a badge of honour. The core philosophy of slow productivity is simple: true, meaningful progress comes from single-mindedness, not from frantic multitasking.

The origins of this mindset are often traced back to the slow food movement, which emerged as a protest against fast food. Similarly, slow productivity is a conscious pushback against the tyranny of hustle culture.

42 ____

Furthermore, the tools designed to make us more efficient—instant messaging platforms, project management software—can often have the opposite effect. They fracture our attention, leaving us feeling drained yet unaccomplished at the end of the day.

So, what does slow productivity look like in practice? It begins with a radical shift in how we manage our attention. One of the key principles is to limit active tasks to a very small number, ideally focusing on one significant project at a time.

43 ____

Another crucial tactic is to establish clear boundaries between work and personal time. This means having the discipline to stop working at a reasonable hour and not checking emails in the evening. This protected downtime is not lost; instead, it's invested.

44 ____

Of course, adopting this approach is not without its challenges. Many workplaces actively encourage or even demand constant connectivity. There can be a palpable fear that by not being immediately available, you will be perceived as less dedicated or ambitious.

45 ____

Proponents argue that the benefits are undeniable. By working in this more intentional way, the quality of output improves significantly. You produce better work in less time because you are fully engaged with the task at hand.

46 ____

Ultimately, slow productivity is all about long-term. It's a long-game strategy for a fulfilling career and life, rejecting the burnout-inducing sprint for a purposeful marathon. It asks an awkward, but necessary question of what we really are after: the appearance of being busy, or the reality of doing great work.

A This is because our brains need rest to consolidate learning and generate creative insights. Some of the best ideas occur when we are disconnected from our desks, allowing the subconscious mind to work on problems.

B For instance, a writer might dedicate her morning solely to writing a chapter, free from the distraction of emails or social media, and only handle administrative tasks in the afternoon. This ensures that her prime energy is spent on her most important work.

C It champions working at a natural, sustainable pace, prioritizing deep focus over shallow activity, and producing high-quality work that has lasting value. Or, to put it in a more colloquial manner, it helps to avoid spreading yourself thin.

D This involves a cultural shift within organizations. Forward-thinking companies are now implementing "no-meeting" days and discouraging after-hours communication to foster a more productive and healthier work environment.

E Its principles are increasingly being applied in education, where students are encouraged to delve deeply into subjects rather than simply memorising facts for exams, promoting a more profound and lasting understanding.

F This pressure is particularly intense in competitive fields like finance or law. However, the growing visibility of burnout is forcing both employees and employers to question the long-term viability of these demanding cultures.

G This constant state of being "always on" can lead to significant stress and burnout. The pressure to respond instantly to every message creates a reactive work style, where long-term goals are perpetually pushed back in favour of short-term demands.

CAE Reading and Use of English Part 8

You are going to read four opinions about cycling. For questions **47-56**, choose from the people (**A-D**). The people may be chosen more than once. When more than one answer is required, these may be given in any order.

Which person ...

47. admits to having reservations about the financial aspect of getting into cycling? ____

48. believes cycling has made them more aware of their local environment? ____

49. mentions a specific physical benefit unrelated to fitness or weight? ____

50. feels that cycling has improved their ability to manage daily pressures? ____

51. states that cycling requires a significant initial period of adaptation? ____

52. expresses frustration with the behaviour of some traffic participants? ____

53. sees cycling as a practical solution to certain daily problems? ____

54. suggests that the activity has had a positive impact on their personal finances? ____

55. acknowledges that safety concerns could understandably deter people? ____

56. found that cycling helped them rediscover a forgotten sensation? ____

A. Ben

I took up cycling primarily as a rational response to two major headaches: the soul-crushing traffic and the ridiculous,

ever-rising cost of fuel and public transport. This decision has done wonders for my daily routine! That's not to say it was without its upfront costs. The initial outlay for a reliable, well-made bike, a sturdy lock, a helmet, and high-visibility gear was pretty steep. However, I've recouped that cost many times over by slashing my monthly transport expenditure. My commute is now the most predictable and often the most enjoyable part of my day; I arrive at work feeling energised and clear-headed rather than stressed from gridlock. Admittedly, you have to develop a thick skin and a defensive riding style. An aggressive minority of drivers seem to view cyclists as a personal inconvenience, and their deliberate close passes are genuinely frightening moments that cast a shadow over the experience. It's a real shame, because on a quiet country road early in the morning, there's no feeling quite like it—the efficiency, the quiet, the self-reliance.

B. Clara

For me, cycling was never primarily about transport; it was a conscious decision to reclaim my fitness and wellbeing after nearly a decade of sedentary desk work. The first few weeks were brutal, to say the least! My leg muscles ached so bad I considered seeing a doctor, and I would run out of breath in no time at all. But I persevered, and the physical and mental payoff has been nothing short of incredible. Time on the bike has become my essential moving meditation. Focusing on the rhythm of my pedalling and the road ahead allows me to process the day's stresses and decompress fully. I'm now convinced that this mental reset is the primary reason I now sleep so well and wake up feeling properly refreshed. It's an improvement to my life that I never expected when I first wobbled away from my house on two wheels.

C. David

What cycling offers me, above all else, is a sense of liberation—a feeling I hadn't really experienced since the endless summers of my childhood. It's not just a form of exercise; it's a tool for pure, spontaneous exploration. Since I started, I've discovered countless small parks, winding canals, and hidden historical alleyways in my own city that I had blindly passed for years. You become attuned to your surroundings, noticing the subtle changes in the seasons, all the small details you are completely sealed off from inside the climate-controlled bubble of a car. You feel connected to the world you're moving through. Of course, this wonderful sense of freedom comes with a fair deal of risk. I've had my fair share of near misses with both cars and people, and I completely understand why the danger factor puts so many people off. The infrastructure in most cities, with its painted lines that offer no real protection, simply isn't designed with a cyclist's safety as a priority, and that's a terrifying reality for a new rider.

D. Sarah

My relationship with the bicycle is complicated. I absolutely love the idea on paper: it's eco-friendly, wonderfully healthy, and efficient. In practice, however, it demands a state of constant, unrelenting vigilance. You cannot afford to switch off. You must learn to anticipate every possible hazard—from a car door swinging open in your path to a pedestrian stepping off the kerb while staring at their phone, or a driver suddenly deciding to turn into you. It's a complex skill set that one slowly builds over time, combining spatial awareness, risk assessment, and predictive thinking. Once you do achieve that competence, the feeling of zipping through congested streets is priceless. However, even with all the experience under the belt, I still find sharing road space with much larger, faster vehicles to be stressful. While the health benefits are definitely there, the mental load of having to actively fight for your life on every single journey is exhausting, and it's why many of my friends refuse to even consider cycling seriously. It's a real shame, because for me cycling has become a lifesaver – it helped me get rid of the chronic backpain that has been plaguing me for years.

Answer Keys

Part 1

1 B – advanced. When we talk of an advanced age, we mean that somebody is older than anybody else in this situation. It is quite unusual to pick up any sports (even racing) at the age of 37. We could use ‘ancient’ to refer to somebody who is truly old – well over 70, for instance. The word ‘mature’ is more about having a well-developed emotional side, not talking so much about the age itself.

2 A – earned. To earn (a) reputation is a common collocation. To deserve a reputation would be more appropriate if we were talking about something negative.

3 B – handicap. ‘Handicap’ implies a disadvantage she had to overcome, fitting the context of her late start and gender. There is a common stereotype that women can be worse drivers than men, more so in the competitive setting like a race. ‘Obstacle’ shouldn’t be chosen because of the indefinite ‘a’ article.

4 C – concentration. Because of her piloting background, her ability to concentrate came in handy in races. ‘Fixation’ is something you are so focused on and obsessed with that it becomes a problem. ‘Attention’ and ‘commitment’ do not convey the necessary meaning here.

5 C – known. To be best known is another common collocation you should know at this level. ‘Best remembered’ is not nearly as common.

6 A – performing. The idea here is that she was performing the role of the race car driver.

7 C – for. To speak for itself means to be evident enough to be noticed. The meaning here is that she wanted to prove her worth as a driver through actions rather than words.

8 D - stage. A stage of your life is a big part of it, especially one that is associated with a particular period (in this case, being a professional driver). ‘Half’ could probably be used in the context of ‘either half of your life’, where ‘either’ shows one of the two options (the first half and the second half). ‘Phase’ means one of the several parts in something and indicates some kind of planning, e.g. ‘the first phase of the operation’.

Part 2

9 as. We use ‘as much as’ to mention a certain number. Note that the author uses ‘much’ and not ‘many’ because we refer to the weight itself, not the number.

10 how. To baffle means to confuse, to be a source of questions. The scientists couldn’t understand why (or how) the rocks moved on their own.

11 ranging. A number of possible reasons for rocks moving are mentioned in the text. Another thing to note is that we could do without any word in the gap. However, keep in mind that you should never be leaving empty gaps in CAE Use of English Part 2, as an empty gap is never going to be the right answer.

12 that. The structure goes ‘It wasn’t until ... that’ and it is a set one, meaning you shouldn’t be changing it. The temptation to use ‘when’ is understandable, but it doesn’t make the set structure and therefore shouldn’t be chosen.

13 when/if. This is a zero conditional sentence – one that speaks about things that are always true. ‘If’ or ‘when’ to introduce the condition and sentence in the Present Simple to show the result.

14 on. We use ‘on’ to talk about particular days, be it days of the week or dates.

15 it. ‘All it takes’ shows how little is required to achieve something.

16 behind. The trails (traces, paths) that are left behind the moving rocks.

Part 3

17 commercial. Adjective that keeps the double ‘m’ in the root.

18 ability. Even though ‘shoppers’ is in the plural, ‘ability’ doesn’t have to be.

19 unattainable. If something is unattainable, it means that it is impossible to get. In this case, consumers of foods made by large companies will never have the level of trust and familiarity they have with the small local sellers.

20 awareness. Growing knowledge and realisation of environmental impact is what they are talking about here.

21 sustainable. Something that can be sustained (supported) over longer periods of time.

22 exceeding. Don’t be fooled into answering ‘excellent’, as the key verb would have to be ‘excel’ then.

23 immensely. An adverb that is very easy to misspell.

24 producers. The plural form is here because the word ‘producer’ is countable, and if used in the singular would need an article, either ‘a local producer’ or ‘the local producer’, both fitting just fine.

Part 4

25 sooner had we landed. The idea here is that one thing took place immediately after the other. In this case we use inversion, putting the auxiliary verb ‘had’ before the subject (I).

26 apologised for not having called/not calling. We are free to use either the more complex Present Gerund (‘not having called’) or the simple gerund form. The first one is better in showing that the call (or the absence of the call) happened before the apology took place.

27 might not have got/received. A thing to note here is that the tense changed from Past Simple in the original sentence to Past Perfect in the answer.

28 only I had applied. We use structures like ‘if only’ to show regret. In other words, the speaker is sorry that he didn’t do something in the past.

29 has been two years since. As the answer has to have ‘since’ in it, it also forces us to use a Perfect tense. Present Perfect fits here just fine.

30 led to the cancellation. Please note that the definite article is needed as a part of the ‘of’ structure; Moreover, it is specific and known from context.

Part 5

31 B. Looking at the process of making things out of clay charmed the author and made him try it himself. Answer A is incorrect – no real technical or in-depth information is given. Author makes no criticism of any kind in the first paragraph. Paragraph Two mentions how hard the process actually is, but again, without any complaint towards online tutorials. Finally, there is no comparison of different learning methods.

32 B. A couple of words lead us here to choose answer B. ‘Strenuous’ means requiring physical effort. ‘My arms ached’ refers to the amount of effort required for wedging. Even though operating the wheel is mentioned (‘it was just a wamp-

up for the main event), there is no direct comparison in difficulty. And while it was difficult, the author doesn't say that they didn't enjoy the process.

33 D. The word 'humbled' means that the author suddenly was much less sure about their own skills and felt that people who can do that well deserve respect. The instructor is only mentioned in the context of them being quite good at centring, no criticism expressed. Answer B doesn't work, as the author doesn't say anything about hoping to get better.

34 C. This part of Paragraph 4 sets the positive tone of the correct answer: 'The noise and demands of the outside world faded away...'. All other options have a clear negative meaning, which is absent in the paragraph.

35 A. The crucial part is in Paragraph 5: '...almost looking forward to more disappointment...'. The sudden breakthrough came as an unexpected, but pleasant surprise. Answer B mentions a minor detail – how much failed attempts it took to finally achieve something. The instructor's input once again fails to get mentioned.

36 B. Answer C shouldn't be chosen because they do not add value on their own. Instead, they become the living proof of their man-made nature. Answer D is not ideal either – it is indeed true that machines can avoid them, but it is not directly stated in the text, nor is it the focal point of the paragraph. Nothing is mentioned about room for improvement; the author accepts the fact that his art has flaws, nothing else.

Part 6

37 C. Both A and C comment on a lack of deep emotional connection. A is saying the characters are 'at a certain emotional arm's length, and that they work as vessels (devices) rather than real characters. C concurs, mentioning that the author 'neglects to forge a deep emotional connection', and that it is difficult to relate to the character's choices.

38 C. Reviewer C mentions that the themes of the books 'feel strikingly relevant to our modern era of misinformation'. Reviewer D raises a similar point, saying that 'the more attentive readers are likely to see references to the political landscape of today'.

39 D. Reviewers A, B, and C all, to varying degrees, find the protagonist somewhat emotionally distant or passive. Reviewer D explicitly disagrees, finding the character's journey 'entirely compelling and emotionally resonant'.

40 D. Reviewer A finds the narrative to be 'deliberately slow' and potentially trying readers' patience, while Reviewer D argues the deliberate pace 'serves to build an almost unbearable psychological tension,' viewing it as a strength.

Part 7

41 C. It follows the introduction of the term 'slow productivity' by explaining the basics, letting the reader know what it is. This is later contrasted with 'performative busyness' in the next sentence.

42 G. Paragraph G logically follows the mentioned 'hustle culture' by explaining the negative consequences of its pressure, leading into the next paragraph about tools that worsen the problem.

43 B. It provides a concrete, practical example of the principle mentioned in the previous sentence: 'focusing on one significant project at a time.' The example of the writer illustrates this perfectly.

44 A. This paragraph explains why exactly the 'protected downtime' mentioned in the previous sentence is so important, citing the neurological and creative benefits of rest and how it is an investment rather than wasted time.

45 F. Paragraph F addresses the 'challenges' and 'fear' mentioned in the previous paragraph, specifying where this pressure is intense (finance and law) and introducing the counter-argument about burnout.

46 D. The theme of the previous paragraph about workplace culture gets a continuation, showing a positive solution and how 'forward-thinking companies' are implementing the article's ideas, leading to the concluding paragraph about sustainability.

Part 8

47 A. Ben mentions that you have to invest heavily into this hobby and gives a list of things that one has to buy before they can enjoy it.

48 C. David talks about the joy of exploration, finding new things in the neighbourhood they wouldn't have if it weren't for their bike.

49 D. Last sentence of Sarah's paragraph has her sharing how she benefitted from cycling in a non-fitness way.

50 B. The process of riding and focusing on the road allows them to 'decompress' - that is, to leave their worries behind, to forget about things that trouble them.

51 D. Understanding all the dangers of urban cycling and reacting to them is 'a complex skill set that one slowly builds over time'.

52 A. The aggressive drivers are what Ben is unhappy about. Note that even though Sarah (D) mentions similar aspect, she doesn't seem to be angry at them.

53 A. Beating the traffic isn't easy, but cycling seems to work for Ben.

54 A. While Ben had to invest a lot of money initially, cycling has allowed him to save a lot of money: 'I've recouped that cost many times over'

55 C. Last part of Sarah's paragraph gives reasons why cycling might not appeal to some people because of its dangerous nature.

56 C. The beginning of the paragraph mentions David feeling liberation – something he hadn't had since he was a child.

Vocabulary

The vocabulary below is meant to help you with the more difficult words. If the word isn't on the list then you are either supposed to know it or it is too specific to be worth learning and you don't have to know it to answer the question.

Symbols in brackets mean part of speech (see bottom of the list). Sentences in italics give examples of usage for some more complex words and phrases.

And remember — you are not given a vocabulary list (or a dictionary) at your real exam.

Part 1

Remarkable(adj) – unusually good and therefore worth noting.

Cool-headedness (n) – the ability to maintain good judgement even in difficult, stressful situations.

Background (n) – (here) your past occupation with all the experience and qualifications. *His background in finance allowed him to manage the family budget effectively.*

Edge(n) – (here) an advantage.

Foster(v) – to encourage development of something. *In our family, we foster free thinking and independence.*

Invaluable(adj) – extremely important, integral.

Top-tier (adj) – of highest rank or quality.

Peers(n) – people of the same age, social status, or occupation. Here they mean other members of the racing team.

Stint(n) – a racing term, meaning a part of the race where you are behind the wheel (as opposed to simply observing the race, e.g. when the other driver from your team is racing).

Flourish (v) – to develop quickly and successfully.

Defy(v) – to challenge, especially if the chances of winning are low.

Part 2

Intriguing(adj) – interesting because of being mysterious or unexpected.

Meandering(adj) – wavy or curvy, as opposed to being straight.

Intervention(n) – involvement, especially one that is not asked for.

Baffle(v) – to confuse, to be impossible to explain or understand. *Your refusal to attend your brother's wedding baffles us all!*

Algal(adj) – relating to algae, or seaweed.

Coating(n) – a thin outer layer that is not a part of the original object. *This coating prevents the car from rusting.*

Nudge(v) – a very light push. *I nudged the golf ball just a little bit to put it in the final hole of the course.*

Part 3, 4

Opt for (phr v) – to choose one of the given options.

Bustling(adj) – busy, full of activity. Bustling outdoor markets can be really stressful for a person who is used to the peace and quiet of smaller shops.

Hub(n) – a centre of activity or attraction. This city has become a powerful business hub thanks to massive foreign investment.

Produce (n) – fruits and vegetables. Note that the word is a noun and the first syllable is stressed.

Tangible(adj) – something that can be seen or felt; real. *Although the company spent quite a lot of money on the project, there were no tangible results after six months of work.*

Aisle(n) – a row or line of something. In this case, they talk about the lines of display shelves one sees in supermarkets and other large shops.

Carbon footprint – quantified (expressed in a number) amount of carbon monoxide and dioxide that a person generates. In short, it is an attempt to show how much waste we create through all of our actions.

Withstand(v) – able to endure poor conditions. *Houses built in seismic regions are supposed to be able to withstand earthquakes up to a certain magnitude.*

Vibrant(adj) – bright, energized.

Justification(n) – a reason or an excuse for something. *My justification for buying this expensive car is that it might help me project the image of success.*

It's a pity – a phrase to show that you regret something.

Part 5

Pottery(n) – the art of making pots and dishes out of clay. The collective term for such dishes is pottery too.

Misguided (adj) – a misguided project is without a definite plan or direction. Used negatively.

Captivated(adj) – attracted to something because you find it fascinating.

Lump (n) – a small piece of something soft with no definite shape.

Sign up (phr v) – to join, to become a member. *I signed up for the annual charity marathon.*

Humility(n) – the state of having no pride and realisation that you are not better than anybody else.

Hurdle(n) – barrier or obstacle on your way to your goal.

Keanding(n) – the process of pushing and moving around a soft mass of something in order to make it more even and uniform, something you would normally do with a piece of dough before baking it.

Strenuous(adj) – requiring a lot of physical effort.

Do one's bidding – to follow orders, to obey commands.

Anchor(v) – try to keep something in one place.

Clumsy(adj) – awkward, without ease.

Shudder(v) – to shake violently. *The car started shuddering, and in a few moments the engine died.*

Wobble(v) – to move from one side to another due to not being steady.

Lopsided(adj) – uneven, with one side disproportionately bigger than the others.

Sludge(n) – thick mud or waste. *There were puddles of weird liquid on the floor and heaps of sticky sludge.*

Apron(n) – a piece of protective clothing that mostly covers the front of your body and legs, used to prevent you from staining your clothes.

Rebel(v) – to act against somebody's will or orders. The stress in the verb form is on the last syllable.

Mindfulness(n) – the state of paying close attention to something.

Hollow(adj) – empty on the inside.

Flaw(n) – an imperfection.

To stick with something – (informal) to keep doing something, especially if you face failure or difficulty.

Commitment(n) – the idea is expressed well in the previous entry. Commitment is the act of doing something over long period of time, not quitting, especially because you made a promise or people are counting on you.

Part 6

Formidable(adj) – great to the point of being frightening.

Commission(v) – to hire a professional to perform a service for you. Often used to talk about artistic professions.

Omit(v) – to leave something out intentionally; to skip.

Distort(v) – to change the original shape of something for the worse. *The broken mirror distorted our reflections.*

Narrative(n) – a way of presenting some idea or set of ideas. *The pro-immigration political narrative seems to be losing momentum.*

Meticulously (adv) – done carefully and with great attention to detail.

Protagonist (n) – the main character of a work of fiction.

Artisan(n) – a professional in a certain craft. *Becoming an artisan is not just a matter of training – a certain degree of talent is necessary to succeed.*

Integrity(n) – having strong principles that you stick with and do not change depending on the situation.

Ponderous(n) – used negatively here in the meaning of being unnecessarily slow.

Vessel(n) – a person with a particular quality or trait of character.

Inquiry(n) – used figuratively here, an inquiry can mean either a question or an investigation.

Excel(v) – if you excel at something, it means you are extremely good at it.

Damp(adj) – unpleasantly wet.

Naive(adj) – without experience and as a result having more idealized picture of the world.

Disillusioned(adj) – disappointed because something you liked or believed in turned out to be not as good as you had thought.

Complicit(adj) – Involved in a crime.

Deception(n) – the act or plan of trying to deceive (give somebody wrong information in order to benefit from it).

Shrewd(adj) – able to see and understand a situation for what it is and benefit from this understanding.

Counterpoint(n) – an contrasting or opposing idea, element, or theme that is presented alongside another to highlight

differences or create a more complex whole. *The cheerful melody serves as a counterpoint to the song's sad lyrics, creating a bittersweet feeling.*

Chore(n) – a routine or tedious task, especially a household one; something that is unpleasant or boring to do. *For him, grocery shopping isn't a chore but a pleasant way to relax and clear his head.*

Seismic(adj) – relating to or characteristic of an earthquake; used to describe a very sudden, dramatic, and far-reaching change. *The invention of the internet caused a seismic shift in how we communicate and access information.*

Evocation(n) – the act of bringing a feeling, memory, or image strongly into the mind; a powerful recreation of an atmosphere or idea. *The novel's evocation of 1920s Paris is so vivid you can almost smell the bakeries and hear the jazz.*

Manipulative(adj) – behaving in a way that cleverly controls or influences others to your advantage, often unfairly or unethically.

Throughout(preposition/adv) – in every part of a place, or during the whole of a period of time. *The theme of redemption is present throughout the entire film.*

Viscerally(adv) – in a way that is felt deeply and instinctively, not intellectually; relating to the gut feelings. *I am viscerally afraid of heights; my body reacts with panic before my mind can even process it.*

Thesis(n) – the main idea, theory, or argument that is presented in a piece of academic writing or other work and is supported by evidence. *The central thesis of her book is that technology is fundamentally changing human nature.*

Aftertaste(n) – a taste, often unpleasant, that remains in the mouth after eating or drinking; (here) a lingering feeling or impression left by an experience. *The meeting ended politely, but the disagreement left a bitter aftertaste.*

Haunting(adj) – beautiful, sad, or mysterious in a way that is difficult to forget and remains in your thoughts. *The haunting sound of the cello stayed with me long after the concert had ended.*

Esoteric(adj) – intended for or understood by only a small number of people with specialized knowledge; obscure and difficult for most to understand.

Evocative(adj) – strongly evoking or creating a feeling, memory, or image; full of atmosphere. *The old, faded photograph was evocative of a summer I had long forgotten.*

Redemption(n) – the act of saving or being saved from a fault, error, or evil state; atoning for a past mistake and improving yourself.

Compelling(adj) – powerfully capturing your attention and interest; convincing and persuasive.

Deafening(adj) – extremely loud; a silence or absence of sound that is so profound it feels overwhelming.

Part 7

Relentless(adj) – continuing without stopping or becoming less intense, often in a way that seems harsh or demanding.

Overflowing(adj) – so full that the contents spill over; used to describe a place or a person that has an abundance of something, like an emotion.

Momentum(n) – the force or speed that allows something to continue moving or developing, making it easier to keep going. *After winning the first three games, the team had the momentum and felt they could win the championship.*

Prevailing(adj) – the most common, influential, or widespread one at a particular time. *Despite some opposition, the prevailing opinion in the company was to expand into the Asian market.*

Performative(adj) – an action or statement done mainly for public show or to create a specific impression, rather than being a sincere expression.

Overwhelmed(adj) – feeling unable to think clearly or act effectively because you have too many things to deal with or something is too intense.

Badge of honor (n) – something that is worn or treated as a mark of pride, especially something that others might see as a disadvantage. *For many startup founders, surviving on little sleep was seen as a badge of honor.*

Core philosophy (n) – the central, most important set of beliefs or principles that guide a person's or organization's actions. *The company's core philosophy is that happy employees create happy customers.*

Single-mindedness (n) – the quality of being focused on only one goal or purpose, ignoring distractions. *Her single-mindedness in pursuing an Olympic medal was an inspiration to the entire team.*

Frantic(adj) – done in a state of wild, hurried, and disorganized activity, often because of fear or anxiety. *There was a frantic search for the missing documents minutes before the important meeting.*

Origins(n) – the point, place, or situation where something begins or is created; its source or cause.

Mindset(n) – a person's established way of thinking, their attitudes and opinions.

Conscious(adj) – aware of something; or done with deliberate thought and intention.

Pushback(n) – a negative reaction or resistance to a plan, idea, or change. *The management's new policy received a lot of pushback from the employees.*

Hustle culture (n) – a social environment that emphasizes constant work, productivity, and side projects, often at the expense of personal time and well-being.

To establish boundaries (v) – to set clear limits regarding what is acceptable behavior from others to protect one's own well-being. *It's important to establish boundaries with your clients to prevent them from calling you at all hours.*

Downtime(n) – time when one is not working or busy; time for rest and relaxation.

Palpable(adj) – so intense that it seems able to be touched or felt physically. *The tension in the room was palpable as everyone waited for the final decision.*

Proponents(n) – people who argue in favor of or support a particular idea, theory, or policy.

Purposeful(adj) – having a clear aim or purpose; determined and intentional in your actions. *She walked into the meeting with a purposeful stride, ready to present her proposal.*

Consolidate(v) – to combine several separate items, especially businesses, debts, or information, into a single more effective or coherent whole. *The company decided to consolidate its three regional offices into one national headquarters.*

To champion (v) – to publicly support, defend, or argue for a particular cause, idea, or person. *She has long championed the cause of environmental protection in parliament.*

Shallow (adj) – not exhibiting serious thought or depth of feeling; concerned only with what is obvious or superficial.

Colloquial(adj) – used in ordinary or familiar conversation; not formal or literary. *"To kick the bucket" is a colloquial expression meaning "to die."*

Reactive(adj) – acting in response to a situation or problem rather than creating or controlling it; the opposite of proactive. *The government's approach was reactive, only implementing safety measures after the accident had occurred.*

Part 8

Reservations(n) – doubts or feelings of uncertainty that make you hesitant to fully accept or agree with something. *I have serious reservations about the feasibility of their plan; it seems too risky.*

Unrelated(adj) – having no connection or relationship to something else. *The police determined that the two crimes were completely unrelated and carried out by different people.*

Frustration(n) – the feeling of being upset or annoyed as a result of being unable to change or achieve something. *There is a growing sense of frustration among the team due to the constant delays.*

Deter(v) – to discourage or prevent someone from doing something by making them doubt it or fear the consequences. *The heavy rain deterred us from going on the hike we had planned.*

Rediscover(v) – to find something again, or to find value or enjoyment in something you had forgotten or ignored. *After years of eating fast food, he started to rediscover the joy of cooking at home.*

Upfront(adj) – (here) paid or given in advance.

Sturdy(adj) – strongly built and not easily broken or damaged; robust. *You'll need a sturdy pair of boots for walking in the mountains.*

Steep(adj) – excessive and difficult to meet. *The restaurant charges a steep price for a simple salad.*

Recoup(v) – to regain something lost, especially money or costs. *It will take the company two years to recoup its initial investment.*

Deliberate(adj) – (adj) done consciously and intentionally.

Close pass – an instance where a vehicle, especially a bicycle or car, passes another with very little space between them. *The cyclist had a scare when a bus made a close pass.*

Cast a shadow(idiom) – to create a feeling of sadness, worry, or doubt that affects a situation. *The recent layoffs have cast a shadow over the office morale.*

Inconvenience(v) – trouble or difficulty that causes minor discomfort or annoyance.

Self-reliance (n) – the ability to depend on one's own capabilities and resources, without needing help from others. *Living alone for the first time taught her a great deal about self-reliance.*

Reclaim(v) – to retrieve or recover something that was lost or taken away.

Sedentary(adj) – involving a lot of sitting and not much physical activity. *A sedentary lifestyle, spent mostly at a desk, can lead to health problems.*

Persevere(v) – to continue in a course of action even in the face of difficulty or with little prospect of success. *You must persevere with your language studies, even when it feels challenging.*

Spontaneous(adj) – performed or occurring as a result of a sudden inner impulse, without premeditation or external stimulus. *We made a spontaneous decision to drive to the coast and watch the sunrise.*

Sealed off from something (phr v) – to be completely isolated or separated from something, preventing entry or exit. *During the investigation, the entire street was sealed off from the public.*

Near miss (n) – an instance where something almost hits something else or a disaster almost happens. *The two planes had a near miss over the airport, which prompted a full safety review.*

Unrelenting(adj) – not yielding in strength, severity, or determination; constant. *The drought was unrelenting, with no rain for months on end.*

To switch off (figurative) (v) – to consciously stop thinking about work or problems in order to relax. *After a stressful day, I find it hard to switch off and go to sleep.*

Anticipate(v) – to regard something as probable or likely to happen and act accordingly. *A good manager can anticipate problems before they arise.*

Spatial awareness (n) – the conscious knowledge of where your body is in relation to the objects and space around you. *Parking a large car requires good spatial awareness.*

Congested(adj) – so crowded with traffic or people that normal movement is very difficult or impossible. *We were an hour late because the roads were heavily congested.*

Chronic(adj) – (of an illness or problem) persisting for a long time or constantly recurring. (Often contrasted with 'acute'). *He suffers from chronic back pain that prevents him from sitting for long periods.*

n — noun; v — verb; phr v — phrasal verb; adj — adjective; adv — adverb