

CPE 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 Power of the Algorithm

Algorithmic curation has become a dominant force in shaping contemporary cultural consumption. Digital platforms now **0** _____ vast quantities of content, organising them into personalised streams designed to maximise relevance and engagement. While this model is widely presented as an expansion of choice, it may also foster a subtle convergence of taste.

Such systems rely heavily on prior behaviour, using it as a guide for future recommendations. As a result, content that closely **1** _____ with established preferences is prioritised, while material that might challenge or unsettle the user is quietly marginalised. Over time, exposure to difference can be **2** _____ by an increasingly refined version of what is already familiar.

The paradox lies in the sheer abundance on offer. Although options appear limitless, they are constrained by invisible parameters that structure discovery itself. Cultural engagement becomes less an act of exploration than one of passive **3** _____, with novelty carefully **4** _____ to avoid disengagement. Distinction is not eliminated, but rendered predictable.

Defenders of algorithmic systems often contend that they only reflect individual tastes rather than **5** _____ them. Yet this claim is difficult to substantiate when visibility is unevenly distributed. What is promoted gains traction, and what gains traction acquires legitimacy. Cultural value, once **6** _____ through critical debate, is increasingly determined by patterns of engagement.

In this way, algorithmic curation risks narrowing not only what is encountered, but what is **7** _____ conceivable. To treat such systems as neutral is to overlook the fact that curation is never purely technical – instead, it is **8** _____ normative, encoding assumptions about value, relevance and taste.

0	A <u>compile</u>	B assemble	C accumulate	D amass
1	A aligns	B converges	C coincides	D corresponds
2	A displaced	B eclipsed	C overridden	D substituted
3	A reception	B absorption	C consumption	D acquiescence
4	A diluted	B rationed	C moderated	D filtered
5	A steering	B structuring	C sculpting	D shaping
6	A mediated	B negotiated	C adjudicated	D arbitrated
7	A culturally	B realistically	C conceptually	D socially
8	A inherently	B implicitly	C tacitly	D structurally

CPE 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) JUST

When the World Watches

There is something distinctive about the way the Olympics capture attention. Sports that pass largely unnoticed for most of the year suddenly occupy centre stage, watched by audiences who may struggle to explain the rules but can sense the significance of the moment. The rarity of the occasion itself is where this intensity comes from, not 0 _____ superior athletic skill.

Because the Games occur only once every four years, they resist becoming routine. Events that might otherwise feel niche acquire weight precisely 9 _____ they are fleeting. The viewer's engagement is primarily driven by an awareness that the opportunity to witness it is temporary rather than the performance itself. The fear of missing out 10 _____ becoming a part of something is too great.

The Olympics also compress national identity into a brief, highly visible form. For a few weeks, athletes are framed less as individuals than as representatives, their success interpreted 11 _____ collective terms. This symbolism is often powerful, even for spectators who remain sceptical of overt nationalism. It is possible to recognise the constructed nature of the spectacle 12 _____ still responding to it.

Yet the appeal of the Games lies as much in what they suspend as in what they promote. Daily divisions are momentarily 13 _____ aside, replaced by a shared narrative of effort and excellence. Viewers follow unfamiliar disciplines 14 _____ virtue of the context that elevates them – they might not have even heard of the sport before. The Games, briefly, ask for your undivided attention.

15 _____ the closing ceremony the spell is broken. Stadiums empty, athletes disperse, and public focus shifts elsewhere. What remains is a memory of having paused, however briefly, to watch the world come together 16 _____ a single event. The Olympics endure precisely because they are temporary rather than constant.

CPE 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) RESISTANCE

Quiet Quitting: A Shift in Workplace Attitudes

The phenomenon known as "quiet quitting" has recently gained widespread attention, not as an outright refusal to work, but as a subtle form of 0 _____ in which employees limit their efforts strictly to what is contractually required. While some critics interpret this behaviour as a sign of declining professional 17 _____, others argue that it reflects a rational response to blurred boundaries between work and personal life. In many cases, employees report that their initial enthusiasm has dwindled due to chronic 18 _____ and a lack of recognition. In other words, their hard work often goes 19 _____ by the higher-ups.

Proponents of quiet quitting contend that it is less about disengagement and more about self-preservation. They suggest that workers are becoming more 20 _____ of the long-term consequences of regular overwork, particularly in environments where upward mobility remains 21 _____. From this perspective, scaling back effort is 22 _____ as there is simply no incentive to work harder. Such attitudes may ultimately lead to reduced organisational productivity and hinder collaborative innovation.

Despite these concerns, some organisations have responded by reassessing their management practices. Increased emphasis is now being placed on transparency, equitable workloads, and 23 _____ engagement between management and staff. Recognising valuable contributions from each team member could address the root cause of the issue.

It is difficult to tell whether quiet quitting represents a temporary reaction or a more permanent transformation of workplace culture. One thing is clear – businesses should make haste to 24 _____ that human capital is their most valuable asset, and treat it accordingly.

- 0. RESIST
- 17. COMMIT
- 18. EXHAUST
- 19. SEE
- 20. SENSE
- 21. ATTAIN
- 22. JUST
- 23. MEAN
- 24. CERTAIN

CPE 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 eight words**, including the word given.

Example:

The actor completely ignored the director's suggestions.

NOTICE

The director's suggestions _____ by the actor.

ANSWER: WERE PAID NO NOTICE OF

25 It's possible that the results were influenced by external factors.

RULED

The influence of external factors _____ in the results.

26 The manuscript's discovery in a remote monastery was accidental.

CAME

The discovery of the manuscript _____ accident.

27 He only agreed to the proposal because he was under pressure.

NOT

Had _____ he would not have agreed to the proposal.

28 They say that the painting was stolen during the war.

HAVE

The painting _____ during the war.

29 The teacher explained the rules so clearly that no one asked any questions.

SUCH

The teacher _____ no one asked any questions.

30 It was wrong of me to assume that she would automatically agree.

GRANTED

I _____ she would automatically agree.

CPE Reading and Use of English Part 5

You are going to read an article about public transport and rising car ownership. For questions 31-36, choose the answer (A, B, C or D) which you think fits best according to the text.

Caught in the Traffic: Cities at a Crossroads

At seven-thirty on a weekday morning, the roads leading into most major cities begin to resemble slow-moving car parks. Engines idle, tempers fray, and the promise of a swift commute dissolves into a daily test of patience. What makes this scene particularly striking is that it unfolds in cities that have spent decades investing heavily in public transport. Underground lines extend further than ever, tram networks have been revived, and bus fleets have been modernised, with routes reaching far beyond city limits. Yet despite these efforts, the number of private cars on the road continues to rise, steadily eroding the advantages such systems were designed to provide.

For many suburban commuters, the decision to drive is not always born of preference, but of frustration. A journey that should, in theory, be straightforward can become unpredictable when it depends on multiple connections, each vulnerable to delay. Miss one train or bus, and the entire schedule unravels. Over time, these small nuisances add up, nudging even the most environmentally conscious travellers towards the perceived dependability of their own vehicle. Ironically, as more individuals choose to do so, the roads become less reliable too, trapping everyone in the very congestion they had hoped to avoid.

This growing dependence on private cars has consequences that extend beyond the traffic jams, that have long become the norm. Buses and trams, which often share road space with cars, are inevitably slowed down, making them less attractive to passengers. As service efficiency declines, so too does ridership, reducing revenue and limiting the capacity for further investment. What emerges is a gradual, almost imperceptible public transportation death spiral — with each small shift away from public transport making the system incrementally weaker.

City authorities have not been blind to these developments. Measures such as congestion charges, restricted traffic zones, and dedicated lanes for buses have all been introduced with the aim of rebalancing the system. In some cases, these initiatives have delivered measurable improvements, particularly where enforcement is consistent and alternatives are readily available. Elsewhere, however, their impact has been diluted by political resistance or partial implementation, leading to outcomes that fall short of expectations.

Alongside these efforts, cycling has been promoted as a practical and affordable alternative, especially for shorter journeys. In cities that have invested in protected bike lanes and integrated cycling into their transport planning, the results have been striking: more people on bicycles, fewer short car trips, and a noticeable shift in how urban space is used. Nevertheless, such success stories remain uneven. In many places, cyclists must still contend with fragmented infrastructure and safety risks that discourage widespread adoption, particularly among less confident riders.

Hovering over all of this is the longer-term issue of urban sprawl. As property prices in city centres continue to climb, increasing numbers of people are pushed further out, into suburbs and satellite towns. For these residents, the daily commute often involves significant distances, and public transport options may be limited, complicated, or time-consuming. Faced with these constraints, the car becomes less a luxury and more a necessity — a tool for navigating a system that does not fully accommodate their needs.

What makes the situation particularly difficult to resolve is that each of these factors reinforces the others. Expanding road capacity may offer temporary relief but ultimately encourages more driving. Improving public transport requires substantial investment, which is harder to justify if passenger numbers are falling. Encouraging cycling demands infrastructure as much as a cultural shift in how cities prioritise different modes of transport. There is no single solution, and attempts to only address singular aspects of the problem are unlikely to succeed.

If there is a lesson to be drawn, it is that urban transport systems function as interconnected ecosystems rather than independent components. Policies that fail to recognise this complexity risk producing unintended consequences. Without a coordinated approach — one that simultaneously improves public transport, supports alternative modes such as cycling, and discourages unnecessary car use — cities may find themselves locked into patterns of congestion that risk becoming too difficult to reverse, and no amount of funding will be able to address it.

31 What is the main point made in the first paragraph?

- A** Public transport systems have expanded beyond what cities require.
- B** Investment in public transport has failed to reduce car usage.
- C** Increasing car ownership is diminishing the benefits of public transport.
- D** Traffic congestion is primarily caused by poor urban planning.

32 What does the writer suggest about suburban commuters?

- A** They tend to underestimate the impact of their travel choices.
- B** They are gradually becoming more dependent on private cars.
- C** Their preference for driving is largely based on convenience.
- D** Their decisions are largely shaped by the unreliability of public transport.

33 The third paragraph suggests that the decline in public transport

- A** is to a great extent the result of deliberate policy decisions.
- B** occurs progressively as a consequence of shifting user behaviour.
- C** is inevitable once car ownership reaches a certain level.
- D** primarily affects systems that rely on shared road infrastructure.

34 How does the writer present the overall impact of measures such as congestion charges and restricted traffic zones?

- A** As potentially effective, though often weakened by uneven implementation
- B** As fundamentally flawed due to strong public opposition
- C** As beneficial primarily in reducing suburban commuting distances
- D** As unnecessary in cities with well-developed public transport systems

35 Why has cycling not been adopted more widely in some cities?

- A** It requires a level of physical fitness that many people lack.
- B** Existing infrastructure does not adequately support safe cycling.
- C** Public attitudes towards cycling remain largely negative.
- D** It is impractical for commuting over longer distances.

36 What overall conclusion does the writer reach?

- A** People naturally gravitate towards using private cars.
- B** Isolated interventions are unlikely to resolve systemic transport issues.
- C** Improving road networks doesn't dissuade people from driving.
- D** Urban transport policies are constrained primarily by financial considerations.

CPE Reading and Use of English Part 6

You are going to read an article about the daily life of a professional e-sports player. Seven paragraphs have been removed from the extract. Choose from the paragraphs **A–H** the one which fits each gap (**37–43**). There is one extra paragraph which you do not need to use.

Trying Too Hard? Professional E-sports.

To the uninitiated, the life of a professional e-sports player appears deceptively straightforward: hours spent in front of a screen, refining skills in a virtual environment, participating in high-stakes tournaments and having a growing audience of ardent fans. The reality is far less casual. At the highest level, gaming is not simply a matter of talent or intuition; it is a tightly regulated discipline, shaped by routines that leave little room for spontaneity and even less for error.

37 __

A typical day begins well before any matches are played. Players review recordings of previous games, analysing not only their own decisions but also those of their opponents. Patterns are identified, tendencies noted, and strategies adjusted accordingly. What might appear instinctive is, in fact, the outcome of sustained and highly methodical preparation.

38 __

This emphasis on preparation reflects a broader transformation within the industry. As e-sports has expanded in scale and visibility, informal play has given way to structured systems in which performance is continuously monitored and refined. Teams now rely on a network of support staff — coaches, analysts and even psychologists — whose role is to eliminate inconsistency wherever possible.

39 __

Yet this increased level of organisation has not been universally welcomed. For some players, particularly those who entered the profession when it was less formalised, the shift has required a significant adjustment. What was once an individual pursuit has become subject to scrutiny from a number of third parties, with expectations that extend beyond in-game performance.

40 __

The consequences of this shift are not confined to how players train. Maintaining concentration over extended periods requires a level of mental endurance that is not immediately apparent to spectators. Small lapses in focus can have disproportionate effects, particularly in games where outcomes are determined in fractions of a second. Over time, the cumulative strain can become difficult to manage.

41 __

Complicating matters further is the public nature of the profession. Matches are broadcast to large audiences, and performance is subject to immediate and often unfiltered evaluation. While this visibility can serve as a powerful motivator, it also ensures that mistakes are preserved and revisited, sometimes long after the event itself.

42 __

Despite these pressures, many players describe a strong sense of commitment to their work. The opportunity to compete at the highest level, to test one's abilities against equally dedicated opponents, provides a compelling reason to persist. For some, the very structure that imposes such demands also offers a sense of purpose.

43 __

For those who remain, however, the experience resists simple characterisation. It is neither purely a form of entertainment nor entirely analogous to traditional sport, but something that occupies a more ambiguous position — one that continues to evolve as the industry itself matures.

A What is less immediately visible is the extent to which this routine is deliberately constructed. Training schedules are calibrated with considerable precision, combining individual practice with team-based exercises designed to replicate competitive conditions. Even periods of rest are planned in advance, not as a concession but as a necessary component of competitive performance over time.

B In this respect, the experience diverges sharply from conventional notions of gaming as a form of leisure. The intensity of focus required leaves little room for distraction, and what might once have been associated with relaxation becomes, under these conditions, a source of continuous cognitive demand. The distinction between work and play becomes increasingly difficult to discern.

C Accompanying this change is a degree of tension that was previously absent. Players accustomed to operating independently must now adapt to environments in which their decisions are subject to ongoing evaluation, both from within their teams and from external observers.

D At the same time, the environment in which players operate is shaped by factors that extend beyond the game itself. Team dynamics, communication styles and even shared living arrangements can influence performance, sometimes in ways that are difficult to quantify but impossible to ignore.

E This pressure is further intensified by the relatively short duration of many professional careers. Reaction times, widely regarded as critical to performance, tend to decline with age, limiting the period during which players can compete at the highest level. As a result, the stakes associated with each performance are often perceived as unusually high.

F For newcomers, the adjustment can be particularly abrupt. Expectations are immediate, and the pace at which improvement is required leaves little margin for error. What begins as enthusiasm may give way to a more cautious approach as the realities of continuous competition become apparent.

G Nevertheless, it would be misleading to present this development as entirely restrictive. For many players, the introduction of structured support has enhanced rather than diminished their ability to perform, providing resources and insights that would otherwise be unavailable.

H This duality is perhaps most evident in the way players themselves describe their routines. While some emphasise the discipline required to maintain performance, others point to the monotony that such discipline inevitably entails, suggesting that the same structures that enable success can also contribute to fatigue.

CPE Reading and Use of English Part 7

You are going to read four extracts in which experts discuss the role and future of handwriting. For questions 44–53, choose from the people (A–D). The people may be chosen more than once.

Which person ...

- 44 recognises a potential advantage but ultimately presents it as insufficient in the face of broader forces? __
- 45 suggests that certain limitations can force people in charge to optimise their business practices? __
- 46 recognises demand-side forces influencing business behaviour? __
- 47 suggests survival through niche positioning rather than scale competition? __
- 48 implies that regulatory frameworks may unintentionally favour large corporations? __
- 49 concedes that being unable to delegate can hurt productivity? __
- 50 questions the assumption that widely praised developments benefit all participants equally? __
- 51 suggests that collaboration between small businesses could be a viable strategy? __
- 52 points out how smaller businesses can have lower exposure to risks? __
- 53 suggests that established ways of categorising businesses may become less clear-cut? __

A. Marta Klein, independent retailer

People often describe lower scale enterprises as inherently vulnerable, but that overlooks how constraints can actually facilitate choice. Without the option to spread risk across multiple ventures, every change has to be deliberate. In that sense, it can lead to a kind of operational clarity that larger organisations with more diffuse priorities don't always achieve.

That said, the ability to pivot shouldn't be confused with long-term security. I've adapted the way I operate — like many others — but those adjustments don't fundamentally alter the scale at which I'm working. External pressures still apply, and they can shift quickly. Being responsive doesn't eliminate underlying exposure; it just makes it more manageable in the short term. Frustratingly, having to react and adapt inevitably detracts you from the bigger picture, as you simply won't have time and energy for everything, since you usually have to attend to all matters personally.

B. Daniel Wu, tech consultant

There's a tendency to frame small businesses as somehow more authentic, as if they operate outside the logic and limitations that govern larger corporations. In reality, both are shaped by the same forces, including the whims of their clientele. If they prioritise speed, convenience or affordability, businesses of all sizes will have to adjust in response. That dynamic limits how differently small firms can realistically behave.

Where things become less straightforward is in relation to technology. It's often presented as an equaliser, but in practice it can reinforce existing imbalances. Platforms may expand reach, but they also mediate access, often in ways that favour scale. A small business can participate, but rarely on terms it can define.

C. Leila Haddad, policy analyst

Regulation is frequently discussed in terms of fairness, but equal application does not necessarily produce equal outcomes. Requirements that appear neutral can impose uneven burdens, particularly when compliance demands time, expertise and administrative capacity. Larger organisations tend to absorb these demands more easily, whereas smaller firms often have to reallocate what little resources they have to meet them.

It is also worth noting that scale affects responsiveness. Smaller firms can often implement changes more quickly, as decision-making is less dispersed. There are no executives to greenlight every single major change, so progress is not hampered by bureaucracy. Finally, having a smaller operation means reduced opportunity costs, so there is less at stake, making it easier to try different approaches. All of this allows altering business practices around emerging regulations with little to no downside.

D. Tomasz Nowak, cooperative founder

The assumption that small businesses must compete directly with large corporations is, I think, part of the problem. In many cases, the more effective strategy is to avoid that comparison altogether. Specialisation allows smaller firms to operate in areas where scale offers little advantage, fostering expertise that is hard to replicate.

There's also increasing interest in joint effort approaches. Independent businesses can share resources or coordinate activities while retaining autonomy, creating forms of resilience that wouldn't be possible individually. These arrangements don't necessarily remove existing pressures, but they can change how those pressures are experienced.

What's interesting is how this begins to blur established distinctions. A network of small firms can, in certain respects, function like a larger entity, which undermines the practice pigeonholing businesses based on their size.

Answer Keys

Part 1

1 A – aligns. To align here means to be compatible, to show a great degree of sameness. We get shown similar content to one that we are used to. ‘Converges’ suggests movement from different points towards a shared end. ‘Coincides’ implies simultaneity, not preference matching. ‘Corresponds’ fits semantically, but it is less idiomatic in preference-based filtering

2 A – displaced. This conveys replacement through gradual pressure rather than outright removal — key to the argument. The variety of content diminishes as the algorithm gives you more of what you want. ‘Eclipsed’ focuses on being overshadowed, not replaced. ‘Overridden’ implies an active, conscious decision. Finally, ‘substituted’ is too neutral and mechanical, it doesn’t convey the meaning of slow erosion.

3 C – consumption. As we know, the idea of consumption normally has a negative connotation, here used in cultural critique. ‘Reception’ is too neutral, thus failing to convey criticism. ‘Absorption’ is more about internalisation, not behaviour. The most exotic here, ‘acquiescence’ means reluctant acceptance.

4 C – moderated. It fits the best because it implies controlled adjustment rather than removal. To dilute is to weaken by introducing a difference. To ration fits food rather than content. ‘Filtered’ was already implied earlier; here we need to show a degree control rather than selection.

5 D – shaping. ‘Shaping’ works the best here because it shows systematic control over something, how something is changed literally ‘given shape’. ‘Sculpting’ suggests deliberate artistry rather than systemic influence. ‘Structuring’ refers to organising or arranging something according to an underlying framework. ‘Steering’ is about giving the general direction to something, often without controlling it fully.

6 A – mediated. ‘Mediated’ captures the idea of cultural value being shaped through institutions and discourse. ‘Negotiated’ suggests compromise between parties. Both ‘adjudicated’ and ‘arbitrated’ are more common for legal context, implying formal judgment that take place in courts of law.

7 C – conceptually. This one explores the limits of thought and imagination shaped by exposure. ‘Culturally’ is too broad and focuses on the sociological aspect. ‘Realistically’ shifts the focus from what a concept (a theoretically possible thing) to an actually possible one. This clashes with the rest of the context, where we explore possibilities rather than probabilities. Finally, ‘socially’ focuses on norms, not cognition.

8 A - inherently. Being an integral, vital part. This signals that normativity is an intrinsic quality, not an accidental one. ‘Implicitly’ refers to lack of explicitness, not essence. ‘Tacitly’ focuses on the fact that it is unspoken (silent). ‘Structurally’ is possible here, but it shifts focus to design rather than values.

Part 2

9 because. The author is explaining why exactly the Olympic Games are so captivating. We can't use 'why' here as it would need the structure to also have the verb 'to be'.

10 on. If you miss out on something (or miss out on doing something), the you fail to experience it or be a part of it.

11 in. Interpreting something from a particular perspective. In this case, athletes' success is understood as a team effort of their respective national team.

12 while. 'While' works both as a contrasting device and as a way to show simultaneity.

13 set. If you set something aside is to choose to ignore something temporarily, to change the way you act. Note that 'put aside' is more common for literal action of putting something away (e.g. for later use).

14 by. 'By virtue of something' is a fixed expression with the meaning 'because of/due to'.

15 after. Contextual clues help us understand that the unique atmosphere goes away as soon as the games come to an end.

16 for. Choosing 'for' highlights the particular reason why people come together. Keep in mind that 'to' shouldn't be used as it is too literal – people don't simply come TO the event. They come for a particular purpose.

Part 3

17 commitment. Dedication to one's work. Note the difficult spelling.

18 exhaustion. Exhaustion is the kind of fatigue that doesn't go away easily because it has been accumulated over a long period of time.

19 unseen. An employee's efforts do not get noticed by the management. Note the passive voice here.

20 sensitive. Keep in mind the difference between 'sensitive' and 'sensible'. If you are sensitive to something, then you are aware of it happening. 'Sensible' is more about common sense and practicality.

21 unattainable. Impossible to get or reach. In this case, the context clearly points at the fact that promotion is impossible, so we have to add the negative prefix.

22 justified. The main challenge here comes from choosing between 'justified' and 'justifiable'. The latter is more common for something that can possibly happen, while the former is about something that has already happened. Therefore, it works better here, where the employees have already been putting in minimum amount of effort as they lack incentive to work harder.

23 meaningful. By meaningful engagement they mean fruitful interaction between rank-and-file employees and higher management. When direct communication between them is in place, staff is more likely to feel appreciated and committing to their duties more diligently.

24 ascertain. A rather formal word, here it means 'to realise, to acknowledge'.

Part 4

25 cannot be ruled out. To rule something out is a fixed expression meaning 'to consider something impossible'. We are effectively using double negative meaning to show that it is in fact possible that the results could have been affected from the outside.

26 in a remote monastery came about by. The only challenge here is using 'to come about by accident' to show that the discovery was unintentional.

27 it not been for the pressure. A combination of inversion and the third conditional structure.

28 is said to have been stolen. The impersonal 'they say' is replaced by the passive voice structure. Note that 'have been' is not a part of a Present Perfect tense, but one of the passive structure. Remember that you are discouraged to make unnecessary tense changes.

29 gave such a clear explanation that. An emphatic structure to stress how clear the explanation was. Note the indefinite article taken by the word 'explanation'.

30 took it for granted that. In this context, taking something for granted means assuming it to be true without doubting it or thinking about it. The speaker was convinced that the woman would agree.

Part 5

31 C. The first paragraph emphasises that, despite pouring money into the public transport system, the number of private cars keeps going up, undoing the effort to make public transportation effective. The other options either overgeneralise (Answer B), introduce ideas not mentioned (Answer A), or misidentify the main cause (Answer D).

32 D. The text states that the decision to drive is "not always born of preference, but of frustration," particularly due to unreliable connections and delays. Commuters have literally no choice but to resort to private cars once again. Answer B focuses on the outcome rather than the cause; the matter of convenience brought up in Answer C is not found in the paragraph; the assumption made in Answer A is, again, not in the text.

33 B. The third paragraph describes a gradual "death spiral," where declining efficiency leads to reduced usage and further decline. Option B accurately reflects this progressive process driven by changing user behaviour. Answer C is an overstatement. Even though the idea of road-sharing is brought up as problematic (Answer D), it is not the main argument of the paragraph. Answer A is not mentioned.

34 A. The writer presents these measures as sometimes effective but often weakened by inconsistent implementation or resistance. The word 'particularly' helps us identify emphasis of the sentence. Answer B mentions certain political resistance, but this is not the reason the approach is flawed fundamentally. Answer C is not mentioned explicitly.

35 B. The text highlights fragmented infrastructure and safety concerns as key barriers to wider adoption of cycling. Answer A sounds logical but cannot be found in the text – only confidence is mentioned. The negative attitude mentioned in Answer C can be associated with cycling perceived as risky, but this is largely reaching for an answer. Answer D justifiably addresses limitations of cycling, but they are not the main focus.

36 B. The final paragraph stresses that transport systems are interconnected and that isolated measures are unlikely to be effective. Option B summarises this conclusion accurately. Answer A is oversimplified. Answer C focuses on a minor point. Even though financial aspects are mentioned, Answer D is not the main point here.

Part 6

37 A. Paragraph A fits best here because it naturally expands on the idea introduced in the previous sentence, namely that professional gaming is a "tightly regulated discipline." The paragraph develops this by explaining that players' routines are not incidental, but structured in a certain way, with carefully calibrated training schedules and even planned rest periods. This provides a logical elaboration of the concept of discipline and control, making it a natural continuation of the introductory paragraph.

38 G. A balanced perspective on the increasing structure within e-sports is given here, which is then developed in the following paragraph. The sentence after the gap begins by referring to "this emphasis on preparation" as part of a broader transformation, and Paragraph G supports this by suggesting that structured support systems can enhance performance rather than simply restrict players. Moreover, Paragraph G provides a subtle contrast: while structure might seem limiting, it can also be beneficial. This prepares the reader for the more analytical discussion of industry changes that follows.

39 C. Paragraph C introduces the idea of tension and increased scrutiny, which is picked up immediately in the following sentence: "Yet this increased level of organisation has not been universally welcomed." Paragraph C explains why this might be the case, noting that players who were previously independent must now get used to being constantly evaluated by others. Other options do not establish this link as effectively. For example, Paragraph G focuses on benefits rather than tension, while Paragraph H discusses monotony and fatigue, which belong later in the passage.

40 H. It fits best here because it develops the psychological consequences of the structured routines described earlier. The cohesion here is both thematic and logical. It highlights the dual nature of discipline: while it enables high performance, it can also lead to monotony and fatigue. This idea connects directly to the following paragraph, which discusses the mental endurance required to maintain concentration and the strain that accumulates over time.

41 B. We go with Paragraph B here because it reframes professional gaming in conceptual terms, contrasting it with traditional notions of leisure. It emphasises that what is often seen as entertainment actually involves sustained cognitive effort and intense concentration. This directly supports the following discussion of mental endurance and the pressure players experience.

42 E. Paragraph E raises the stakes by introducing the issue of short career spans and declining reaction times. This

intensifies the sense of pressure described in the surrounding text, particularly the idea that performances are publicly scrutinised and mistakes are remembered.

43 H. For the last paragraph, we go with H as it introduces the perspective of newcomers and highlights the difficulty of adapting to professional expectations. The sentence that follows begins with "For those who remain," which implies a contrast between those who continue and those who do not.

Part 7

44 A. Klein acknowledges that small businesses can adapt quickly, but ultimately argues that this flexibility does not make them immune to external forces. Nowak from D mentions that pressures are not removed, which may seem similar. However, Nowak focuses on changing how pressures are experienced, not on the idea that an advantage is ultimately insufficient.

45 A. Marta Klein suggests that limitations can actually lead to more deliberate and focused decision-making, resulting in greater operational clarity. This reflects the idea that constraints can force optimisation. In extract C the idea of responsiveness is mentioned, but it focuses on speed and flexibility, not on constraints forcing deliberate decision-making, which is the key idea.

46 B. Daniel Wu explicitly states that businesses are shaped by the "whims of their clientele," showing that consumer behaviour directly influences how businesses operate. Klein from A discusses external pressure as well, but she does not explicitly link business decisions to customer preferences.

47 D. Nowak argues that small businesses can survive by specialising in areas where scale offers little advantage.

48 C. Haddad explains that regulations, although seemingly fair, can place a heavier burden on smaller businesses. This implies that regulatory frameworks may unintentionally favour larger organisations. Extract B mentions structural inequalities created by technology, which could be confused with regulatory imbalance.

49 A. Having to manage all aspects of a business personally can prevent focus on the bigger picture. This suggests that an inability to delegate can negatively affect productivity.

50 B. Daniel Wu challenges the idea that technology benefits all businesses equally, arguing that it can reinforce existing inequalities.

51 D. Nowak describes how small businesses can collaborate by sharing resources while remaining independent. This supports the idea that cooperation can be a viable strategy.

52 C. Leila Haddad points out that smaller firms often have less at stake, which reduces their opportunity costs and exposure to risk (lower risk exposure).

53 D. Nowak suggests that collaboration between small businesses can blur the distinction between small and large organisations. This reflects the idea that traditional categories may become less clear-cut.

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 at this level or it is too specific to be worth learning for the exam. 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

Curation (n) — the process of carefully selecting and organising content, ideas, or objects for a particular purpose or audience. *The platform's curation of articles makes it easier to find high-quality material without endless searching*

Contemporary (adj) — belonging to the present time or reflecting modern ideas and conditions. *The exhibition focuses on contemporary art that responds to current social issues.*

Relevance (n) — the degree to which something is useful, appropriate, or connected to a particular situation. *The lecturer struggled to demonstrate the relevance of the theory to real-world applications.*

Engagement (n) — the act of being actively involved or interested in something. *High levels of student engagement often lead to better learning outcomes.*

Foster (v) — to encourage or help something develop or grow over time. *Our company aims to foster innovation by giving employees more creative freedom.*

Subtle (adj) — not obvious or easily noticed, often requiring careful thought to understand. *The film conveys a subtle critique of consumer culture rather than stating it directly.*

Convergence (n) — the process of different things gradually becoming more similar or coming together. *The convergence of media platforms has changed how people consume information.*

Unsettle (v) — to make someone feel uncertain, uneasy, or disturbed. *The sudden change in tone unsettled the audience and created a sense of tension.*

Marginalised (adj) — treated as less important or pushed to the edge of a group or society. *Certain communities remain marginalised despite efforts to promote equality.*

Refined (adj) — improved or developed to a higher level of quality, precision, or sophistication. *Over time, the algorithm becomes more refined in predicting user preferences.*

Constrained (adj) — limited or restricted in some way. *Their choices were constrained by a lack of financial resources.*

Render (v) — to cause something to become a particular state or condition. *The new regulations rendered the previous system ineffective.*

Contend (v) — to argue or claim that something is true, often in a formal or reasoned way. *Critics contend that the policy will have unintended consequences.*

Legitimacy (n) — the quality of being accepted as valid, justified, or rightful. *The organisation's legitimacy depends on public trust and transparency.*

Conceivable (adj) — able to be imagined or considered possible. *It is conceivable that technological advances will reshape the job market entirely.*

Part 2

Routine (adj) — done regularly as part of a fixed pattern, often without much thought or variation. *The inspection was a routine procedure carried out at the end of each shift.*

Niche (adj) — relating to a small, specialised area or audience. *The company focuses on niche markets that larger competitors tend to ignore.*

Fleeting (adj) — lasting for a very short time and quickly disappearing. *She had a fleeting sense that something was wrong before the feeling vanished.*

Identity (n) — the sense of who people are as a group, especially in terms of shared culture, values, or nationality. *Sporting events often strengthen national identity by uniting people behind a common symbol.*

Momentarily (adv) — for a very short time. *The noise outside momentarily distracted him from his work.*

Narrative (n) — a shared story or interpretation that gives meaning to events. *The media created a narrative of collective effort and resilience during the crisis.*

Virtue (n) — a quality or factor that gives something its strength or effectiveness (often used in the phrase "by virtue of"). *The plan succeeded by virtue of careful preparation and timing.*

Spell (n) — a temporary atmosphere or emotional effect that strongly influences people. *The performance cast a spell over the audience, leaving them completely absorbed.*

Disperse (v) — to move apart and go in different directions after being together in a group. *After the concert ended, the crowd slowly dispersed into the surrounding streets.*

Part 3, 4

Outright (adv) — completely and without any doubt or limitation. *He refused the proposal outright, without even considering the details.*

Blurred (adj) — made less clear or distinct, especially in terms of boundaries or differences. *The line between work and personal life has become increasingly blurred.*

Boundaries (n) — limits that define where one thing ends and another begins, physically or conceptually. *Healthy professional relationships require clear boundaries.*

Dwindle (v) — to gradually become smaller or less in number or importance. *Her enthusiasm began to dwindle after months without progress.*

Chronic (adj) — continuing for a long time and difficult to resolve. *The company faced chronic staffing shortages throughout the year.*

Proponent (n) — someone who actively supports or argues in favour of an idea. *She is a strong proponent of flexible working arrangements.*

Upward mobility — the ability to improve one's social or professional position over time. *Many employees feel that opportunities for upward mobility are limited.*

Incentive (n) — something that motivates or encourages someone to act. *Financial bonuses can serve as an incentive to increase productivity.*

Root cause (n) — the fundamental reason for a problem. *The investigation aimed to identify the root cause of the system failure.*

Make haste to do something (phrase) — to do something quickly, often because it is necessary or urgent. *The company made haste to address the issue before it escalated.*

Remote (adj) — far away from cities or populated areas; isolated. *The manuscript was discovered in a remote monastery in the mountains.*

Part 5

Idle (v) — (of an engine) to run without moving or doing useful work. *You are encouraged to let your car idle for a minute when you start it in the morning.*

Tempers fray (phrase) — people become irritated or lose patience, especially in stressful situations. *After hours of waiting, tempers began to fray among the passengers.*

Erode (v) — to gradually weaken or reduce something over time. *Constant delays eroded public confidence in the transport system.*

Connection (n) — a linking service in a journey, such as a transfer between trains or buses. *He missed his connection and had to wait an hour for the next train.*

Unravel (v) — to begin to fail or fall apart, especially a plan or system. *The schedule quickly unravelled after the first delay.*

Nudge (v) — to gently push or influence someone towards a decision or action. *Rising costs nudged commuters towards alternative modes of transport.*

Perceived (adj) — considered or believed to be a certain way, whether accurate or not. *The perceived reliability of cars makes them attractive to many commuters.*

Ridership (n) — the number of people using a public transport system. *Declining ridership has forced the company to reduce services.*

Imperceptible (adj) — so slight or gradual that it is not easily noticed. *The change in policy had an almost imperceptible effect at first.*

Death spiral (n) — a process of decline where one negative effect leads to another, making the situation

progressively worse. *The company entered a financial death spiral as losses continued to grow.*

Incrementally (adv) — in small steps or stages over time. *The system was improved incrementally rather than through major reforms.*

Contend with something (v) — to deal with a difficult problem or situation. *Drivers must contend with heavy traffic during peak hours.*

Urban sprawl (n) — the uncontrolled expansion of cities into surrounding areas. *Urban sprawl has increased commuting distances for many residents.*

Part 6

Uninitiated (adj) — lacking knowledge or experience in a particular area. *To the uninitiated, the process may seem confusing and overly complex.*

Deceptively straightforward (phrase) — appearing simple at first, but actually more complex than it seems. *The task looked deceptively straightforward but required careful planning.*

Ardent (adj) — showing strong enthusiasm or passion. *He is an ardent supporter of the team.*

Pattern (n) — a repeated or recognisable way in which something happens. *They analysed patterns in player behaviour to improve performance.*

Inconsistency (n) — lack of stability or uniformity, especially in performance. *Inconsistency in results made it difficult to predict outcomes.*

Scrutiny (n) — close and careful examination. *The decision was subject to intense public scrutiny.*

Confine (v) — to limit something within certain boundaries. *The discussion was confined to practical issues rather than theory.*

Lapse (n) — a temporary failure or drop in concentration or standards. *A brief lapse in focus led to a critical mistake.*

Disproportionate (adj) — too large or too small in relation to something else. *The reaction was disproportionate to the seriousness of the error.*

Compelling (adj) — strongly persuasive or convincing. *She presented a compelling argument in favour of reform.*

Persist (v) — to continue despite difficulty or opposition. *He persisted with the project despite numerous setbacks.*

Replicate (v) — to copy or reproduce something as accurately as possible. *The training aimed to replicate real competition conditions.*

Concession (n) — something accepted or allowed, often reluctantly. *Allowing extra time was seen as a concession to the team.*

Diverge (v) — to develop in different directions or become different. *Their opinions began to diverge as the discussion progressed.*

Notion (n) — an idea or belief, often general or not fully developed. *The notion that success depends solely on talent is misleading.*

Cognitive (adj) — related to mental processes such as thinking, understanding, and remembering. *The game requires high levels of cognitive ability.*

Ongoing (adj) — continuing to happen over time. *The investigation is still ongoing.*

Living arrangements (n) — the way in which people organise their housing or living situation. *Team members share living arrangements during the season.*

Error margin (n) — the small amount of error that is acceptable or expected. *There is very little error margin in high-level competition.*

Duality (n) — the existence of two contrasting aspects within one thing. *The duality of freedom and control defines the profession.*

Entail (v) — to involve or require something as a necessary part. *The role entails long hours and significant responsibility.*

Part 7

Ultimately (adv) — in the end or after considering everything. *Ultimately, the decision rests with the management team.*

Concede (v) — to admit that something is true, often reluctantly. *He conceded that the argument had some merit.*

Delegate (v) — to give responsibility or authority to someone else. *Managers must learn to delegate tasks effectively.*

Viable (adj) — capable of working successfully or being effective. *The plan is not financially viable in the long term.*

Clear-cut (adj) — obvious and leaving no room for doubt. *The solution is not as clear-cut as it initially appears.*

Constraints (n) — limitations or restrictions that affect what can be done. *Budget constraints limited the scope of the project.*

Facilitate (v) — to make a process easier or more efficient. *The new system facilitates faster communication between departments.*

Diffuse (adj) — spread out and not concentrated in one place or controlled by a single authority. *The organisation has a diffuse management structure.*

Detract (v) — to reduce the quality or importance of something. *Minor errors detract from the overall impact of the report.*

Authentic (adj) — genuine and not artificial or copied. *Customers value authentic products with a clear origin.*

Whim (n) — a sudden and unplanned decision or desire. *He bought the car on a whim without much consideration.*

Equaliser (n) — something that reduces differences and creates more equal conditions. *Technology was seen as an equaliser in the market.*

Burden (n) — something difficult or demanding that must be dealt with. *Regulation can place a heavy burden on small businesses.*

Dispersed (adj) — spread over a wide area rather than concentrated. *Decision-making is dispersed across several departments.*

Greenlight (v) — to give official approval for something to proceed. *The project was greenlit after months of review.*

Hamper (v) — to make progress more difficult. *Delays in funding hampered development efforts.*

Foster (v) — to encourage the growth or development of something. *The initiative aims to foster collaboration between teams.*

Resilience (n) — the ability to recover quickly from difficulties. *Resilience is essential in a competitive business environment.*

Entity (n) — something that exists as a distinct and independent unit. *The company operates as a single legal entity.*

Pigeonholing (n) — the act of placing someone or something into a fixed and often limiting category. *She likes pigeonholing people based on their film preferences.*