



FOR OFFICIAL USE

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National  
Qualifications  
2024

Mark

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**X827/75/02**

**ESOL  
Reading**

FRIDAY, 24 MAY  
10:05 AM – 11:15 AM



Fill in these boxes and read what is printed below.

Full name of centre

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Town

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Forename(s)

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Surname

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Number of seat

--

Date of birth

Day

--	--

Month

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Year

--	--

Scottish candidate number

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**Total marks — 35**

Read the THREE texts and attempt ALL questions.

You must NOT use a dictionary.

Write your answers clearly in the spaces provided in this booklet. Additional space for answers is provided at the end of this booklet. If you use this space you must clearly identify the question number you are attempting.

Use **blue** or **black** ink.

Before leaving the examination room you must give this booklet to the Invigilator; if you do not, you may lose all the marks for this paper.



**Text 1**

Read the article below and attempt the questions that follow.

- 1 Many people will be familiar with the great British design classic, the red telephone box, which was once found on every high street in Britain, as well as remote locations in the countryside. In 1990, there were over one hundred thousand of these phone boxes, but with the rise in popularity of mobile phones and the fact that virtually everyone in the UK owns one nowadays, phone boxes became used far less frequently and many have disappeared. In the mid-eighties, some phone boxes were sold off to private collectors in Britain and abroad, to be used as garden design features, or even turned into indoor showers. However, about five thousand phone boxes still stand in areas with high accident rates or low coverage from mobile phone networks and their principal purpose is to connect people to emergency services. Other unused phone boxes have been adopted by local charities or councils and are increasingly redeployed in creative ways.
- 2 Converting red phone boxes into mini community libraries or book exchanges has become popular in the past decade and can be witnessed in many forms throughout the country. People can donate books, or take one away, and everyone can help to spruce up the shelves. City dwellers may find the idea quaint, but the main benefit is for those living in rural communities, far from a library. It's a great way to read books for free and have unlimited access round the clock. It is also a means to re-use items that might otherwise go to waste.
- 3 In a scenic village in Scotland stands a phone box with a most delicious surprise inside — homemade goodies such as shortbread and cookies. Two young entrepreneurs have set up the kiosk on the outskirts to provide a service for their tiny community. After their funding application was rejected, the pair turned to the residents of the village for support and everyone donated a small sum. Visitors are expected to place their money in an honesty box, a common practice in rural Scottish communities. They have been in business for a year and so far the amount left in the honesty box has matched the number of cakes sold. This might have something to do with the fact that the field next to the box happens to be patrolled by Highland cows.
- 4 A few metres from a former post office building, which has been transformed into an art studio, sits a converted phone box with possibly the tiniest and cosiest internet café in Wales. Seated inside, you can pick up information about nearby tourist attractions and surf the net. It has to be said that the signal tends to come and go and it could take a while to get through, but you can make yourself a cup of tea while you're waiting. There is a guest book to be signed and the surprising inclusion of some celebrity names has no doubt boosted its popularity. And of course, no visit would be complete without a selfie in front of the box.
- 5 Complete with a sound system and even disco lights, a former phone box in Devon has been turned into a mini nightclub and it has proven to be a hit with visitors since it was launched in 2018. Dancers pay £1 for each piece of music they listen to and the funds go to a local charity. The downsides are that there is only room for one or, at a squeeze, two people, so wild dancing is out of the question, as the regulars will know. Also, it closes at 10 pm every night to avoid complaints from neighbours.
- 6 Finally, it should be noted that not all red phone boxes actually remain red. Several boxes in London have been given a coat of green paint and converted into solar spaces. Basically, they have solar panels fitted to the roofs and the resulting power is offered as free charging to the public for their smartphones. This represents the best example of perfect synergy between the old and the new.



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Text 1 questions

MARKS DO NOT WRITE IN THIS MARGIN

Questions 1–5: Complete each gap with **NO MORE THAN TWO WORDS** from the text (refer to paragraphs 1–2).

- 1. As \_\_\_\_\_ have become more widespread, the number of red phone boxes has decreased. 1
  
- 2. Some phone boxes ended up with \_\_\_\_\_ around the world. 1
  
- 3. Red phone boxes still working today are mainly used to provide a way of contacting \_\_\_\_\_ . 1
  
- 4. People from \_\_\_\_\_ are most likely to take advantage of libraries in phone boxes. 1
  
- 5. These libraries enable \_\_\_\_\_ day and night. 1

Question 6:

- 6. Which phrase in paragraph 2 means ‘to tidy’? 1  
\_\_\_\_\_

Question 7:

- 7. Which **two** statements are **TRUE** about the phone box in Scotland? Tick (✓) **two** boxes. 2
  
- A The most popular brands of snack can be found there.
  
- B The owners stand and sell home baking from the phone box.
  
- C The kiosk is in the centre of the village.
  
- D It was funded by the local community.
  
- E People are trustworthy when paying for the cakes.
  
- F Some customers are scared away by the cows.



Text 1 questions (continued)

Questions 8–9: Choose the correct answer for each question and tick (✓) one box (refer to paragraphs 4–6).

8. The internet café benefits from: 1

- A its location inside an art gallery.
- B a reliable internet connection.
- C a drinks delivery service.
- D visits from famous people.

9. Which one of the following is **NOT** true about the disco phone box? 1

- A It has become a popular attraction.
- B The money goes to a good cause.
- C The dancing has to remain calm.
- D The residents regularly complain.

Question 10: Choose the correct answer and tick (✓) one box (refer to the whole text).

10. The best title for this article would be: 1

- A The history of the red telephone box.
- B Various uses for red phone boxes.
- C Phone boxes and charitable causes.
- D How to transform a red phone box.



## Text 2

Read the article below and attempt the questions that follow.

- 1 Step inside G Adventures' office in Clerkenwell, London, and you may never want to leave. A welcome sign illuminates visitors' names as they enter the office, and the décor is exciting — meeting rooms have pop music or Royal Family themes. The travel company's staff get one annual complementary family trip, and every Friday afternoon, employees from all sides of the business are encouraged to hang out in its downstairs meeting room. 'The light airy space, bright colours and happy vibe make the office a fun and vibrant place to come to work,' says Casey Mead, Global Public Relations lead at G Adventures. 'Knowing we have the freedom to be with others in our communal area or take some space in one of the London-themed phone booths or egg chairs, makes the office a great place to be.'
- 2 A strong company culture can be important in helping productivity and creating a happy workforce. With a table football and ping-pong room, Alphabet's office in Farnborough, Hampshire, has two of the usual ingredients seen in trendy offices the world over. But it's not just the fun stuff that draws people in. The vehicle-hire company has recently introduced an 'intrapreneur laboratory', in which staff can turn their business ideas into a reality, with the help of company resources. Since its launch in October, it has seen 110 applications from staff and produced 74 new ideas.
- 3 'We put a lot of time and energy into meeting the personal and professional requirements of our 400-plus UK employees,' says Adam Lupton, a director at Alphabet. 'Highly engaged employees are more effective, more dedicated and more passionate, exactly the sorts of people our clients want to deal with. Our end goal is to have happy, healthy and motivated employees, it's a win for the business and a win for staff.'
- 4 Lydia Fairman, an HR and resourcing specialist, says today's workers are looking for opportunity and recognition from an employer. 'Flexible family-friendly policies are vital if employers want to have a diverse workforce, with a proper mixture of people reflecting modern Britain, as well as an engaged one, and they should also make the most of technology to enable people to work remotely.'
- 5 At Aisle Eight's office in east London, they've gone to great lengths to create a workplace that feels homely. The owners' two dachshunds and French bulldog visit several times a week, and every Friday at 5 pm a different employee of the Public Relations agency gets to show off their bottle-juggling skills and serve up cocktails for their colleagues. And it doesn't end in the office, either — the company splashes out on annual summer and Christmas away days, exploring cities such as Barcelona and Amsterdam. 'We wanted to create a culture where our team would look forward to coming to work, and that meant working hard to build the right team who all shared the same vision and had the same work ethics,' says Aisle Eight co-founder Lauren Stevenson.
- 6 Beyond a good salary and job satisfaction, today's jobseekers look for a good company culture, where employee happiness is just as important as increasing profits. In practice, this means flexitime and employee wellbeing are a given, and strong parental-leave policies, where new mums and dads are supported to take the necessary time off, are an essential part of the company. Creating a strong company culture takes time and effort, but it's worth the effort. Happy staff have been found to be 12% more productive than unhappy employees, so there's incentive to create an enviable company culture — with or without the ping-pong table.

[Turn over



\* X 8 2 7 7 5 0 2 0 5 \*

**Text 2 questions**

**Questions 11–14:** Complete each gap with **NO MORE THAN THREE WORDS** from the text (refer to paragraphs 1–2).

11. If you work for G Adventures you will get a/an \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ every year. 1
12. G Adventures wants staff to \_\_\_\_\_  
together every week. 1
13. Table football and ping-pong represent typical \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ of workplace fun. 1
14. Alphabet’s workers get the chance to take their own \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ and put them into practice. 1

**Questions 15–16:**

15. Which phrase in paragraph 3 means ‘most important aim’? 1  
\_\_\_\_\_ .
16. Which word in paragraph 4 means ‘involving people from different backgrounds’? 1  
\_\_\_\_\_ .



**Text 2 questions (continued)**

**Questions 17–20:** Match each person below to an opinion (A–E).

There is one opinion that you do **NOT** need.

- |                      |                          |   |
|----------------------|--------------------------|---|
| 17. Casey Mead       | <input type="checkbox"/> | 1 |
| 18. Adam Lupton      | <input type="checkbox"/> | 1 |
| 19. Lydia Fairman    | <input type="checkbox"/> | 1 |
| 20. Lauren Stevenson | <input type="checkbox"/> | 1 |

- A It's important to help workers have a good work-life balance.
- B We need to give employees more cultural opportunities.
- C The quality of our workers will make us attractive to customers.
- D Staff can choose different places to work or relax in our office.
- E It's important for everyone to agree on our company's values.

**Questions 21–22:** Choose the correct answer for each question and tick (✓) **one** box.

- |   |                          |   |
|---|--------------------------|---|
| 21. What does the writer suggest about job satisfaction in the final paragraph? |                          | 1 |
| A It's more important than a good salary.                                       | <input type="checkbox"/> |   |
| B It's an important start but workers need more.                                | <input type="checkbox"/> |   |
| C It can be achieved quite quickly.   | <input type="checkbox"/> |   |
| D It's related to the amount of flexitime on offer.                             | <input type="checkbox"/> |   |

[Turn over



Text 2 questions (continued)

22. What would be the best title for this text? (refer to the whole text).

1

A How a variety of approaches creates a happy workforce.

B How office design improves job satisfaction.

C How family-friendly policies meet workers' needs.

D How to make the workplace a more fun environment.



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**Text 3**

Read the article below and attempt the questions that follow.

- 1 Everything you do changes your brain. Even reading this article is shaping and modifying the connections in your brain. This process — known as neuroplasticity — is the brain’s response to life experiences and it plays a vital role in the way that we develop new abilities and understanding. Imagine, then, if we could take control of that process. Then, surely, we could teach our brains to be better at, well, anything.
- 2 That’s the idea behind so-called ‘brain training’ apps. We’re told that by playing and solving different types of puzzles our general memory abilities will be enhanced, and we’ll be better at concentrating on difficult everyday tasks. But recently, a group of over 100 neuroscientists and psychologists issued a warning stating that app producers tend to exaggerate the benefits of brain games and that some companies have even published false data to support their claims.
- 3 While brain training games and apps may not live up to the hype, it is well established that certain other activities can have benefits that promote overall brain health and keep the mind sharp. One of these is learning to play a musical instrument. Music making engages both halves of the brain equally, creating strong connections between the two halves. Brain scanning studies have revealed significant differences in brain structure between musicians and non-musicians of the same age. For example, the areas of the brain involved in movement and hearing appear to be larger in professional keyboard players while the area responsible for processing touch sensations from the left hand is increased in violinists.
- 4 But what about those of us who are not professionals? Well, lucky for some, it seems that it’s not necessary to keep up your music lessons into adulthood in order to see the benefits. In one 2013 study, researchers divided retired teachers into three groups based on the level of formal musical training they had received as children. Participants in group one had received no training at all; group two had done between one and three years of lessons; and group three had received between four and 14 years of training. The researchers played recordings of complex speech sounds to the participants and asked them to respond when they heard a particular word or phrase. As we age, our ability to understand speech, especially in environments with a lot of background noise, has a natural tendency to deteriorate and so our response times increase. Participants who had received musical training of any kind had faster responses than those who’d had no training. This suggests that even limited training in childhood can preserve the ability to process speech sounds and protect against an age-related decline in hearing. Interestingly, the extent to which a musicians’ brain is affected seems to be closely related to the age at which musical training began. Those who started training at the youngest age showed the largest changes when compared with non-musicians.
- 5 Another major benefit of learning a musical instrument compared with brain training games is what psychologists refer to as ‘transfer effect’. ‘Put simply, does the skill you are learning help you to be better at other things too?’ explains Catherine Loveday, neuropsychologist at the University of Westminster. ‘Obviously, if you play a brain training memory game for hours on end, day after day, you’ll get better at the game — that’s neuroplasticity for you. But being an expert in a single, specific memory game isn’t exactly a useful life skill and there is no evidence to suggest that brain training games result in a general improvement in brain function.’ However, learning to play a musical instrument seems to have a far broader effect by improving other abilities that are seemingly unrelated. For instance, research shows that musical training increases memory function and, perhaps more surprisingly, professional musicians usually outperform non-musicians in terms of their literacy skills. Would it be fair to say, then, that learning to play a musical instrument is one of the most effective forms of brain training there is? ‘Oh, absolutely,’ agrees Catherine. ‘However, it’s worth bearing in mind that there are varying degrees of benefit depending on which instrument is being learned, and the intensity of the training programme.’



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**Text 3 questions**

**Questions 23–25:** Complete each gap with **NO MORE THAN TWO WORDS** from the text (refer to paragraphs 1–2).

23. Neuroplasticity is a key part of how humans \_\_\_\_\_ their skills and knowledge. 1

24. Brain training apps use \_\_\_\_\_ to help people improve their ability to concentrate. 1

25. Experts have warned that some brain training game producers are using \_\_\_\_\_ in their evidence. 1

**Question 26:**

26. What phrase in paragraph 3 means ‘meet expectations’? 1

\_\_\_\_\_

**Questions 27–30:** Choose the correct answer for each question and tick (✓) **one** box (refer to paragraphs 3–5).

27. According to brain scanning studies, how is a musician’s brain different to the brain of a non-musician? 1

- A Both sides of their brain are the same size.
- B The overall size of their brain is bigger.
- C Their brain appears to be more sensitive.
- D Parts of their brain are more developed.



**Text 3 questions (continued)**

28. All of the participants in the 2013 study:

1

- A used to work in education.
- B taught professional musicians.
- C currently play musical instruments.
- D learned instruments as children.

29. What did the 2013 study reveal?

1

- A Musicians experience more rapid hearing loss than non-musicians.
- B Participants with no musical training missed some of the speech sounds.
- C The younger participants responded most quickly to the speech sounds.
- D A little musical training is enough to see improvement in brain response.

30. What does Catherine Loveday say about brain training games?

1

- A Spending time on them has no benefit.
- B Using them can help improve other skills.
- C The skills learned have limited value.
- D They do not help to improve your memory.

[Turn over



Text 3 questions (continued)

Questions 31–32: Give short answers to the following questions (refer to paragraph 5).

31. According to the text, what **two** abilities are improved by learning to play a musical instrument?

2

1. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

32. According to Catherine Loveday, what **two** things affect how much a person gains from musical training?

2

1. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

[END OF QUESTION PAPER]



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Text 3 – Article is adapted from “Want to ‘train your brain’? Forget apps, learn a musical instrument” from The Guardian, 24 October 2016. Reproduced by permission of The Guardian. © Guardian News & Media Ltd 2024.



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