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National Qualifications 2026

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X827/75/02

ESOL Reading

FRIDAY, 29 MAY

9:00 AM – 10:10 AM

X8277502

Fill in these boxes and read what is printed below.

Full name of centre

Town

Forename(s)

Surname

Number of seat

Date of birth

Day | Month | Year

Scottish candidate number

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.

Do not remove any exam materials. You must leave this booklet on your desk; if you do not, you could lose all the marks for this paper.

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Text 1

Read the article below and attempt the questions that follow.

1 A UK restaurant is rethinking relationships with customers, suppliers and the entire food economy to fuel an ambitious 'pay as you can' model. Top Table feeds all who arrive, regardless of ability to pay. In the past year the restaurant has fed about 20,000 people at below-cost price (many haven't paid at all) no questions asked. At the same time, it rescued 3.4 tonnes of food destined for bins and paid local suppliers reasonable prices for the rest.

2 Top Table, located in the west of England, is a not-for-profit organisation which has a creative approach to cooking, sources local produce and pays a fair wage. It has made enough money to employ 22 members of staff. No work is done by volunteers. The initiative is a bold response to the current political and social climate.

3 This year an estimated 8 million adults and 3 million children are facing food insecurity in the UK — twice the figure of three years ago. Rampant inflation has driven up the cost of both grocery shopping and dining out, and sadly healthier eating options often have higher costs per calorie. Hospitals have seen an alarming rise in admissions among patients with low vitamin and mineral levels, as well as malnutrition, and this has led many doctors to suggest these problems are rooted in poverty.

4 According to a spokesperson from the UK green action group, Refocus, 'The UK's farms, businesses and especially households, throw away a combined 6 million tonnes of edible food every year. This is enough to feed everyone three meals a day for 11 weeks. Aside from the immorality of the large scale dumping of food while children go to bed hungry, such waste has a huge impact on the climate. Taking into consideration: agriculture, manufacture, packaging, distribution, treatment and disposal, wasted produce accounts for approximately 18 million tonnes of carbon emissions each year.'

5 Top Table's general manager Mick Southgate says that diners sit together at long, canteen-style tables, in an atmosphere he describes as "radical hospitality", emphasising an inclusive, welcoming environment. Top Table, he claims, aims to go the extra mile. The restaurant opens its doors at 10am for coffee and cake. Lunch is served from noon, five days a week. Dinners are available on Thursdays, Fridays and Saturdays. A typical lunch service feeds between 100 and 250 people, says Southgate. 'And it's the kind of place that if you came and there wasn't a seat at the table, we would simply roll out more tables.'

6 Southgate hopes to replicate their business model elsewhere. He believes they have discovered a unique way to help many individuals address the social problems they face every day. 'Essentially we are a restaurant,' he says. '. . . but really, we are so much more. We are a business prioritising fair wages for staff and dealing with ethical suppliers, but we don't expect customers to pay more because of our objectives. We make sure that all our meals are 'pay as you can' and we're committed to that promise.' Southgate's business is maintained through income drawn from its sales and activities and so far has been unsuccessful in gaining any income from grant applications. Losses on food, with about half of diners paying less than cost price, are balanced by the steady income provided by takings from the café and bar. 'We are showing people in the food industry what the future of world food could look like,' says Southgate. 'But it's only the future if you don't want to become a millionaire while doing it.'

7 Although everyone eats the same meal in the restaurant, that doesn't leave chefs without room to experiment. Menus are determined by whatever is available but prioritise raw food and minimising waste. There is also a preference for in-season produce from suppliers in the nearby area whenever possible. In Southgate's words, 'We're not pro-organic, anti-organic, pro-vegetarian or anti-vegetarian, we're just pro-food.'

Text 1 (continued)

8 Top Table tackles interlinked issues at the same time. However, the group prefer not to focus on problems, trying instead to maintain the excitement and inspiration that comes from their shared vision. Southgate says, 'We are collectively trying to answer a question: what if everyone in our community had access to great food and people to eat it with?'

Text 1 Questions

Questions 1–5: Complete each gap with **NO MORE THAN THREE WORDS** from the text **(refer to paragraphs 1–4).**

1. Some food used by Top Table would otherwise be _____

_____. **1**

2. The number of people in Britain affected by _____

has doubled in recent times. **1**

3. _____

has meant that food is much more expensive than it used to be. **1**

4. Health professionals think _____

is the reason why people are not getting the nutrients they require today. **1**

5. As well as the ethical aspect of food waste disposal, Refocus are concerned about

how it affects _____. **1**

[Turn over

Text 1 questions (continued)

Question 6: Choose **two** correct answers and tick (✓) **two** boxes **(refer to paragraph 6).**

6. What does Mick Southgate say about his business strategy at Top Table? **2**

A He has no plans for any additional restaurants. ☐

B He thinks their ideas are potentially life changing. ☐

C He believes in paying employees a reasonable salary. ☐

D He accepts that it may need to change over time. ☐

E He relies heavily on external funding. ☐

Questions 7–8:

7. Which word in paragraph 3 means 'worrying or causing fear'? **1**

_____

8. Which phrase in paragraph 5 means 'to exceed expectations'? **1**

_____

Question 9: Choose the correct answer and tick (✓) **one** box **(refer to paragraphs 7–8).**

9. The menus at Top Table: **1**

A present a wide range of options. ☐

B exclude processed foods. ☐

C favour locally sourced ingredients. ☐

D promote vegetarian dishes. ☐

Text 1 questions (continued)

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

10. The main focus of this article is: **1**

A Setting new standards for staff working conditions. ☐

B Finding exciting new ways of dining out. ☐

C Protecting the environment through food choices. ☐

D Fighting against hunger and isolation. ☐

[Turn over

Text 2

Read the article below and attempt the questions that follow.

1 An elderly neighbour who grew up in Eastern Europe told me how they used to live their days by the three eights: eight hours of work, eight hours of free time and eight hours of sleep. Nice. I assume weekends were free. It's strange how quaint this 8-8-8 notion sounds nowadays, but eight-hour working days add up to 40 hours a week, which was once standard here, wasn't it?

2 I suppose there could be some explanation as to why you would work longer hours than that. It could be that you need to do so to put food on your table, which is fair enough — or most unfair, if you see what I mean. On the other hand, you're probably doing punishing hours because your employer, or your industry, demands it. After all, it is in the interests of making the company as much money as possible and, in some cases, enriching yourself along the way. Either way, it's no good. You need non-working waking hours for your own health, your family's wellbeing and the good of the community.

3 This week, some junior employees of the US bank Goldman Sachs have had a grumble, daring to point out that they are putting in as much as 95 hours a week. If they were squeezing those hours in from Monday to Friday — which I appreciate they are not — their numbers would be an awful long way from 8-8-8. Ninety-five hours work over just five days comes out at an exhausting 19 hours a day. That's some shift. Goldman's boss, David Solomon, seems to have taken notice. He has made the decision to further enforce a rule the bank already has, one which will safeguard junior bankers' time off from Friday evening to Sunday morning.

4 And in case potential clients think he might be getting soft, in an address he gave to his 34,000-strong global workforce, Solomon said: 'Just remember, if we all make that little bit of extra effort for our client, even when we feel that we're reaching our limit, it can really make a difference in how we perform at work.'

5 That quote is pure gold. How can working to the point that you feel you are "reaching your limit" be anything but negative for your performance? People working those kinds of hours can't be at the top of their game. You wouldn't want to get in a taxi driven by someone who has been at the wheel for 13 hours and is reaching their limit, so why would you pay huge sums for the services of a banker who must be just as worn out? Would you want a surgeon at his or her limit operating on you? Of course not, even though that most likely does happen. But let's not go there.

6 Apparently, working from home has made things worse. Even if you are not working terribly long hours in total, the way work and home life blend into each other creates a major headache. In order to have an effective work-life balance, those magic words everyone talks about, you must be able to keep these blocks of time separate from each other.

7 I would have thought the march of human progress, especially with the advancement in AI and technology in general, should be towards the goal of eight hours' work, eight hours' play and eight hours' sleep. But we seem to be getting further away from it all the time. The management consultants I know all seem to put in absurd hours, too. These, as I understand it, are the very people who are paid a fortune to tell us how to run things better. But they can't even organise themselves properly to hire enough people to do the necessary work in a reasonable time.

8 And who, except those Goldman Sachs juniors, is really bothered? Perhaps this is the deal: run yourself into the ground until your mid-30s. Never mind the exhaustion or damage this will do to your health or relationships; eventually the stack of cash in your wallet will be so big that you'll be able to sail off into retirement before you are 40, if you're not burned out by then already.

Text 2 Questions

Questions 11–13: Choose the correct answer and tick (✓) **one** box **(refer to paragraphs 1–3)**.

11. The writer thinks that the idea of 8 hours of work, play and sleep is: **1**

A Something that only ever happened in Eastern Europe. ☐

B Useful for people who work at the weekend. ☐

C An odd idea that he has never heard of before. ☐

D A lifestyle that used to be normal in his own country. ☐

12. What does the writer say about working extra hours? **1**

A People are doing it because food prices are so high. ☐

B Their company will discipline them if they don't do it. ☐

C It's most likely for the benefit of the employer. ☐

D Your health and wellbeing will be positively affected. ☐

13. Goldman Sachs workers have been: **1**

A working 95 hours from Monday to Friday each week. ☐

B doing a high number of hours including weekends. ☐

C trying the 8-8-8 hour work/play/sleep pattern. ☐

D working only on Friday evenings and Sundays. ☐

[Turn over

Text 2 questions (continued)

Questions 14–15:

14. Which word in paragraph 2 means 'very difficult and making someone feel tired'? **1**

_____

15. Which word in paragraph 3 means 'to protect something from being lost'? **1**

_____

Questions 16–20: Complete each gap with **NO MORE THAN THREE WORDS** from the text **(refer to paragraphs 4–6).**

16. The boss of Goldman Sachs gave his opinion during a/an _____

_____ to company workers worldwide. **1**

17. The article states that people's _____

in their role is affected in a harmful way by working too many hours. **1**

18. Tired bankers are not worth the _____

they are charging when they are unable to carry out their jobs properly. **1**

19. The problem is even more serious for those people who are

_____. **1**

20. Keeping time when you do your job and your free time apart is necessary for a

successful _____. **1**

Text 2 questions (continued)

Question 21: Choose the correct answer and tick (✓) **one** box **(refer to paragraph 7)**.

21. What is the writer's opinion about management consultants? **1**

A They don't work as many hours as other types of worker. ☐

B Companies should pay them more to give workers better advice. ☐

C They have trouble sorting out their own working situations. ☐

D Businesses need to hire more of them if they want success. ☐

Question 22: Choose the correct answer and tick (✓) **one** box **(refer to whole text)**.

22. What would be the best title for this article? **1**

A All work and no play is not good for you. ☐

B Why home working remains a major problem. ☐

C Junior bankers complain about their pay. ☐

D How to save for a successful retirement. ☐

[Turn over

Text 3

Read the article below and attempt the questions that follow.

1 State schools in England should set up debating clubs and train teachers in the art of encouraging classroom discussions to help children develop speaking skills for their future, a senior leader at Eton College has said. Private schools often have unlimited resources to work on enrichment and communication skills outside the demands of the curriculum. However, teachers in state schools, who often work with disadvantaged children with additional needs, say they are not provided with sufficient training to focus on speaking skills.

2 The British government has said it wants to embed speaking skills in all schools as an educational priority, and a new focus on speaking is expected to form part of an upcoming curriculum and assessment review. A report by the Sutton Trust, a UK-based educational charity, found that 96% of teachers think life skills are as important as or more important than formal academic qualifications in determining how well young people do in adulthood. But many state school teachers say their schools do not provide good opportunities for pupils to develop such skills.

3 Eton College views the art of public speaking as being necessary preparation for their pupils to become high flyers in the world of work. Jonathan Noakes, Eton's director of teaching and learning, said there were things that Eton did that could not be done in every state school. Eton has far smaller class sizes and most boys are already confident speakers when they arrive: 'We teach through discussion. It is not okay for a boy at Eton to be silent in lessons — and that makes a big difference,' Noakes said. 'We also specifically train teachers to run lessons as discussions. In a teacher's first year at the school, we run coaching days for them throughout the year, and one of those looks at how best to generate discussions in class.'

4 Noakes adds by saying, 'We want to make sure right at the beginning that they have these skills. But we also teach how to do a presentation more than once, and in more than one subject. Overall, these skills are practised again and again throughout the school.' Eton also has a debating society and a model United Nations society that discusses UN resolutions, but neither are compulsory for pupils.

5 While many state schools already work effectively on developing children's skills in using spoken language, Noakes acknowledged the additional challenges facing state school teachers: 'I've seen in state schools, where classes are 30 students or more, that it can be much more challenging to get everyone involved in discussions.' At Eton, sixth-form classes have eight to 12 pupils, and in year 9 there are up to 22 pupils. 'I think for most state schools, because their context is different, it makes sense to consider specific training for teachers to encourage discussions in lessons. Debate clubs in state schools could, I think, also be an excellent way to help students to learn these skills.'

6 Avoiding arguments seems like the most sensible option for the classroom, as we seek to maintain a calm atmosphere, yet research indicates that focused discussions, such as debating, can improve learning. Learning to disagree and argue offers many benefits for classroom learning. We know that teenagers who are exposed to disagreement in debate are motivated to produce higher quality arguments, as well as to provide better evidence. Disagreement can encourage motivation and interest if we can get it right. We know that students can struggle to see all sides of an argument, but this natural desire to argue one side ultimately ends up compromising learning. However, balanced arguments — with productive disagreement — offer learners the tools for academic success.

7 Alice Byrne, a senior assistant head teacher of a Coventry state school with a high number of challenging pupils, said: 'For us, speaking is embedded throughout the curriculum, from when students first start in year 7, right the way up into sixth form. In lessons, we specifically set aside time for students to talk, and some of our strongest debaters nowadays are young people who, in the past, might have been overlooked due to their specific needs.'

Text 3 (continued)

8 Sir Peter Lampl, the founder of the Sutton Trust, summed up his organisation's viewpoint on the matter: 'The ability to express ideas and thoughts in a confident and straightforward way is essential for young people to represent themselves in university and job applications, and to get on in the world of work.'

Text 3 Questions

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

23. Speaking skills are taught less in state schools because staff aren't offered

_____ compared to those in private schools. **1**

24. Making speaking skills a/an _____

is part of a new government strategy. **1**

25. Most teachers believe pupils will do better as adults if they learn

_____ as well as how to pass exams. **1**

Question 26: Choose **two** correct answers and tick (✓) **two** boxes **(refer to paragraphs 3–4).**

26. Which **two** of these statements are true about Eton College? **2**

A Speaking skills are regarded as a requirement for a successful career. ☐

B The Eton approach could easily be used in state schools. ☐

C Eton pupils are not allowed to talk in class. ☐

D Teachers get lessons on how to teach speaking skills. ☐

E Pupils must join one of the two speaking societies. ☐

[Turn over

Text 3 questions (continued)

Questions 27–28: Choose the correct answer for the questions below and tick (✓) **one** box **(refer to paragraphs 5–6).**

27. In state schools, pupils often don't take part in class discussions because: **1**

A they are good at speaking and don't need to practise. ☐

B teachers don't want them to talk in class. ☐

C there are too many pupils in the class. ☐

D pupils don't believe they are good at speaking. ☐

28. A good way for state schools to teach speaking is by: **1**

A asking pupils to debate with teachers. ☐

B encouraging pupils to argue with each other. ☐

C taking an interest in what pupils fight about. ☐

D teaching pupils to have organised disagreements. ☐

Question 29:

29. Which word in paragraph 6 means 'accepting lower quality in something'? **1**

_____

Text 3 questions (continued)

Question 30: Match the people below (i–iii) with their opinions (A–D) about speaking skills. There is one extra opinion that you do **NOT** need.

(i) Alice Byrne ☐ **1**

(ii) Sir Peter Lampl ☐ **1**

(iii) Jonathan Noakes ☐ **1**

A Repetition is a key component in improving speaking skills.

B Teenagers would prefer more time for discussion in class.

C Children with additional needs can be successful speakers.

D Clear communication is crucial for working life.

Question 31: Choose the correct answer for the question below and tick (✓) **one** box **(refer to the whole text)**.

31. The best title for this article is: **1**

A Teach children how to disagree productively. ☐

B Less teaching, more chatting. ☐

C All schools need to change direction. ☐

D Private schools teach state schools. ☐

[END OF QUESTION PAPER]

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