

FOR OFFICIAL USE



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National  
Qualifications  
2023

Mark

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**X827/76/02**

**ESOL  
Reading**

WEDNESDAY, 24 MAY

10:15 AM – 11:25 AM



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Fill in these boxes and read what is printed below.

Full name of centre

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Surname

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Number of seat

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Date of birth

Day

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Month

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Year

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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.



\* X 8 2 7 7 6 0 2 0 1 \*

Read the THREE texts and attempt ALL questions

Text 1

Read the article below and attempt the questions that follow.

- 1 This has been the time of a thousand faces. Every face is an inch or two high on my laptop screen, and trapped inside a rectangle. The rectangles form a wall of faces that builds up brick by brick. As each new face arrives, the wall rearranges itself. The faces keep coming, popping up magically from wherever they are in the world, happy to be seen.
- 2 During pauses in meetings, my eyes scan the virtual room. You can look long and hard at people's faces online in a way that would be rude in real life. I have never before paid this much attention to how a hairline runs along the top of a forehead, or an eye sits in its socket, or a jawline merges with a neck. I hadn't noticed how vulnerable faces are — so soft, fleshy and bruisable — and how they move between moods. The faces look by turns dazed, focused, sweetly attentive, full of faraway thoughts that no one could guess at.
- 3 Encountering faces like this feels oddly intimate, but also inadequate. All the intricate topography of their features is gone. Some faces are right in front of a window, which bathes them in impenetrable shadow. Others are too near the screen and blanched by its blue-light glow. Others move jumpily, out of sync with their speech, or freeze mid-flow, with eyes closed and mouth open, as if in ecstatic prayer.
- 4 Strangest of all, none of these faces ever returns my gaze. We can't maintain eye contact because we are looking at our screens, not our webcams. The whites of human eyes are bigger than those of other animals, which allows us to pick up on where they are looking, a vital social cue. Even when those eyes are no bigger than full stops on your screen, you can still tell when they are not looking at you.
- 5 We are born hungry for other people's faces. Babies less than 10 minutes old have been shown to prefer a picture of a human face to other images. Our brains are so eager to spot faces that this accounts for the most common form of something called pareidolia, the human tendency to make meaningful shapes out of random visual stimuli. People can't resist seeing faces in cloud formations, knobbly tree trunks, house frontages, pieces of toast . . . All it takes is the barest suggestion of two eyes and a mouth. The brain does the rest.
- 6 Recognising other people's faces is a basic building block of social life. Most of us do it effortlessly. We can identify someone we know from a childhood photo of them, and someone we haven't seen for years even though their face is now a saggy, wrinkled version of the one we knew. No one knows exactly how this virtuoso human skill works, but it seems to involve making a rough calculation about how the face knits together as a whole, rather than ticking off all the individual elements. That is why composite faces of criminal suspects are such bad likenesses. An eyewitness tries to recreate a face by choosing from a collection of parts — but we read faces more intuitively and impressionistically than this.
- 7 The problem with being so good at reading faces is that we over-read them. The neurons in the temporal and frontal lobes of our brains just start firing and making on-the-spot calculations, behind which sit unconscious biases. Multiple studies have pointed to the "attractiveness halo effect" — people with good-looking faces are seen as more competent, cleverer, and nicer than the norm. As the internet and the smartphone have made it easy to share images of our faces, these snap judgments have become part of daily life. Social media companies know that other people's faces are clickbait. It's called Facebook for a reason. Showing your face is part of the business model.



8 People younger than me have a phrase they use when conversing online: “I see you.” It can be used for everything from complimenting a friend on a new haircut to comforting them when they feel rejected or wronged. At heart it means “I have noticed your existence.” Now that, after lockdown, we are locking eyes with each other again, I realise how much I have missed being “seen”. The other day I saw a friend outside the supermarket and we stopped to talk, like we did in the before times. The face in front of me didn’t blur or pixelate like the ones on my laptop, nor was there any disconcerting time lag in the way it responded to mine. It just picked up where it left off a year ago, noticing my nods and smiles and mirroring them with its own – a wordless message I had almost forgotten how to read. Roughly translated it said: “I see you.”

**MARKS** DO NOT WRITE IN THIS MARGIN

Questions 1–4: Complete each gap with **NO MORE THAN TWO WORDS** from the text.

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| 1. Every time another person joins the writer’s video meeting, the group of faces _____ .        | 1 |
| 2. At convenient moments the writer will _____ the collection of faces in front of them.         | 1 |
| 3. The _____ the author sees on the faces are not constant.                                      | 1 |
| 4. The experience of viewing the faces seems _____ , because of problems with light or movement. | 1 |

Questions 5–7: Choose the correct answer for each question and tick (✓) **one** box.

- |   |                          |
|---|--------------------------|
| 5. What does the writer say about eye contact?        | 1                        |
| A No one really wants to look at the writer.          | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| B We should look directly at our webcams in meetings. | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| C It’s useful to see where other people are looking.  | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| D We focus on people with larger eyes.                | <input type="checkbox"/> |



Text 1 questions (continued)

6. Pareidolia can be best defined as the habit of 1
- A focusing on faces in preference to other images.
  - B seeing visual patterns where they don't really exist.
  - C finding faces when looking at natural scenes.
  - D spotting hard-to-see noses and mouths in pictures.
7. What does the writer say about recognising the faces of others? 1
- A We can do it without needing to think about it.
  - B We recognise the young better than the old.
  - C We have no idea about how this is done.
  - D It works by appreciating individual parts of the face.

Questions 8–10: Use **NO MORE THAN FOUR WORDS** from the text to answer each question.

8. What aspect of reading the face has been researched a lot? 1
- \_\_\_\_\_
9. What might we show admiration for by saying 'I see you'? 1
- \_\_\_\_\_
10. There are two drawbacks of online meetings mentioned in the text. One involves visual problems. Which is the other kind of problem? 1
- \_\_\_\_\_



Text 1 questions (continued)

Question 11: Choose the correct answer and tick (✓) one box.

11. Which would be the best summary of this text?

1

A What we can and can't see when we look at faces online.

B Why we should trust our instincts when we look at faces.

C The importance of getting your face right to present it online.

D Why we should avoid the world of video meetings.

[Turn over



## Text 2

Read the article below and attempt the questions that follow.

- 1 There's a man sitting at the first-floor window of the house that lies on the other side of my back fence. It's early August, the weather is sweltering, and his window is wide open. He's talking on a hands-free phone, laughing in that ingratiating manner that suggests a large payday is at stake. He speaks in a fashionable sales patter that sounds similar to real conversation, but crucially isn't, and he's practically broadcasting his story to me and my neighbourhood. We are not thrilled. I already know the story: WFH.
- 2 Working from home is one of the biggest stories of our time. I've been home-based for about two decades and for most of that time, before my neighbour began advertising his WFH status, I was a local exception, left to my own devices in tranquil isolation. No one was much engaged in the emotional dynamics of my daily work regime. But now it's become a national topic of conversation.
- 3 WFH has brought into focus a general dissatisfaction with the monotony of nine-to-five. A lot of people have noticed how exhausting commuting is, how infuriating office politics can be, the banality of open-plan offices and the tyranny of those dull sandwiches. It's led to a belief that something more profound and long-lasting is under way, and raised fundamental questions about how we see work and where we do it. If you can work from home, for instance, does it matter where home is?
- 4 Heather Trainer (not her real name) has taken remote working to its logical conclusion. A 57-year-old university administrator, she spent the lockdown working in the flat she shares with two friends — both of whom were away. She rather enjoyed the freedom that her isolation brought her. Then her friends returned and everything began to feel a little cramped. So she decided to visit a friend in Crete, where she has remained for the last couple of months, with plenty of space and the beach not far away. "You do have to manage the heat," she says, mentioning that the temperature is 32C. "But I'm not complaining." Not wishing to provoke ill-feeling among her colleagues, she hasn't "advertised" her whereabouts. Only her immediate team knows where she is. "If I'm on a meeting with a wider group of people," she explains. "I blur the background or use a photograph." Her boss was "a bit taken back" when she presented her plan, but failed to come up with any prohibitive objection. Her employer's concern, she says, was that while it may be acceptable in her case, "what would it mean if everyone did it?" "It's definitely something to be considered," she concedes.
- 5 Recruitment consultant Richard Blake says remote working changes not just our understanding of a working community and the company ethos, but also our very concept of physical reality. Suddenly there is no "there" there. "But if there is no shared space, what's to stop employers following the example of many customer-care call centres, and employ much cheaper staff based in the developing world?" states Blake.
- 6 The idea of remote work has been around for some time. Back in 1973 a former Nasa engineer named Jack Nilles wrote a book arguing for remote work as a way of relieving traffic congestion. Entitled *The Telecommunications-Transportation Tradeoff*, it was not exactly a bestseller. But it planted a flag for staff dispersal despite the obvious limitations of technology at that time.



\* X 8 2 7 7 6 0 2 0 6 \*

- 7 It would be another two years before the term “personal computer” was coined, and another decade before affordable and easy-to-use home computers came on the market. Even then the necessary technological infrastructure — the internet, emails, mobile phones — were in their infancy. But by the time of the millennium, working from home was a much more feasible ambition for a growing number of the workforce. And yet: some cutting-edge media organisations frown on WFH. In 2013 Yahoo chief executive Marissa Mayer explained that in order “to become the absolute best place to work, communication and collaboration will be important, so we need to be working side by side. That is why it is critical that we are all present in our offices.”
- 8 And it’s not just company bosses who take this view. An opinion piece for the New York Times last month saw the comedian Jerry Seinfeld take issue with the idea of remote working: “Everyone hates to do this. Everyone. Hates. You know why? There’s no energy. Energy, attitude and personality cannot be ‘remoted’ through even the best fibre optic lines.” But as much as I could do without my neighbour’s remoting, the fact is that the genie of WFH is out of the bottle, and the early signs are that, no matter what the government say, it isn’t going to go back in again.

**MARKS** DO NOT WRITE IN THIS MARGIN

**Questions 12–16:** Choose the correct answer for each question and tick (✓) **one** box.

12. How does the writer feel about the man on the first floor?

1

A irritated

B curious

C angry

D pleased

13. Which of the following is true about the writer?

1

A He began working from home recently.

B He used to be unique in his area.

C He encouraged others to work from home.

D Locals criticised him for working from home.

[Turn over



\* X 8 2 7 7 6 0 2 0 7 \*

Text 2 questions (continued)

14. Which of these aspects of normal work does the writer **NOT** say is boring? 1
- A the hours
- B the travel
- C the workspace
- D the food
- 
15. Heather went to Crete partly in order to 1
- A be more sociable.
- B get some time alone.
- C have more room to work.
- D benefit from the hot weather.
- 
16. When Heather told her boss about her plan, he 1
- A asked her to inform her colleagues.
- B wasn't surprised that she decided on it.
- C tried to find a rule to block her.
- D suggested it to other employees.





**Text 2 questions (continued)**

**Question 17:** Match each person (i-iv) with an opinion (A – E) by writing the correct letter in each box.

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

- |                     |                          |   |
|---------------------|--------------------------|---|
| (i) Richard Blake   | <input type="checkbox"/> | 1 |
| (ii) Jake Nilles    | <input type="checkbox"/> | 1 |
| (iii) Marissa Myer  | <input type="checkbox"/> | 1 |
| (iv) Jerry Seinfeld | <input type="checkbox"/> | 1 |
- A It means that the dynamism of the workplace is lost.
- B It should be embraced by cutting-edge organisations.
- C It means that a particular problem can be solved.
- D It limits essential company interactions.
- E It alters our sense of the world around us.

**Questions 18–19:** Complete each gap with **NO MORE THAN THREE WORDS**.

18. Which phrase in paragraph 7 means ‘disapprove of’? 1
- \_\_\_\_\_
19. Which phrase in paragraph 8 means ‘disagree’? 1
- \_\_\_\_\_

**Question 20:** Choose the correct answer and tick (✓) **one** box. Refer to the whole text.

20. Which sentence best summarises the writer’s view of working from home? 1
- A Despite its problems, it will be with us for the foreseeable future.
- B It is being gradually accepted by workers and managers.
- C It has been an option for professional workers for a long time.
- D It will never be popular among normal working people.



### Text 3

Read the article below and attempt the questions that follow.

- 1 Communication, whether it's conveying lifesaving messages or keeping us connected, is more important than ever. Language shapes how we think and is at the heart of our identity; technology is quietly powering a learning revolution that is having extensive cultural, social, and political implications across the globe. Given that Brits are notorious for having next to no ability with other languages, you'd think we may be sitting this innovation out. But not according to the man behind the most popular language-learning app, Duolingo. "To me, this claim about the UK appears to be unfounded. The UK is our third largest country in terms of number of users," says founder of Duolingo, Luis von Ahn.
- 2 Duolingo courses are structured like levels on a video game. You earn crowns for regular use and a jolly little tone indicates a correct response. Users become engaged and addicted in a way they never did tediously memorising verb forms at school. And the benefits of the Duolingo app are further reaching than simply being able to order a meal in a restaurant when you go on holiday. "There has been a recent move towards people learning a language to discover more about themselves, their country, their culture," explains Philip Young, Content Manager at Duolingo. "The Scottish Gaelic course has been staggeringly successful, with 570,000 learners within a year of the course's launch — that is 10 times the number of native speakers."
- 3 While the financial success of his company is a clear benefit, von Ahn reveals that his motivation lies elsewhere. His true passion is for breaking down education barriers. "There was a weird week maybe three or four years ago, where we discovered that refugees were tenaciously using Duolingo all across Europe to acquire the native language of each of the countries in order to settle into their new homes and access jobs. That same week, through an online post, we became aware that Bill Gates was using Duolingo to learn French. Normally, a billionaire would be expected to have significantly better access to educational opportunities; the astonishing fact that the same system was being utilized by refugees as by, at that time, the richest man in the world is what give me the greatest sense of pride."
- 4 You might expect that Duolingo is run by a team of language experts but that's actually quite far from the truth. Just take Harry Davis, a Product Manager, who confesses that he had no experience of language teaching when he started with the company. "I was completely clueless," he admits. "So, I went to read a bunch of books. However, this only served to puzzle and frustrate me because the texts contradicted one another; each claiming to know the best method for language learning — but they all presented conflicting ideas. I had very straightforward questions like, for example, when teaching Spanish, should you teach plurals before adjectives or adjectives before plurals? Over time, I realised that I could actually uncover the answers from the language learners themselves. So, I asked our data analysis team to devise a system to gather data from live users."
- 5 "For the pilot scheme, we targeted the following 50,000 people who signed up," says Jack Wilson, Head of Data Analysis. "Then we taught half of them plurals before adjectives, and the other half adjectives before plurals; by measuring which ones engage more and learn better, we had the answer to the question! There are millions of these deliberate decisions that you have to make constantly, and what never fails to amaze me is that the optimum approach varies by language." Using information in this way transforms how Duolingo teaches, and its courses are constantly evolving depending on data that is being collected at levels never before possible.



\* X 8 2 7 7 6 0 2 1 0 \*

6 Von Ahn’s vision, to create a society where wealth can’t buy a superior education, may seem unfeasible to some. However, the Duolingo team are confident that, before long, unlimited access to an exceptional learning experience, on a smartphone, without any prohibitive costs, will be achievable for all. They also have big plans to expand into other fields. “A lot of what we’ve learned about teaching languages could be applied to other domains. The app’s possibilities are endless,” von Ahn states. “Learning maths is similar to learning a language because it’s basically a lot of drills and repetition. Maybe not everything, of course. Learning philosophy probably isn’t comparable to learning a language. And if you want to be a doctor you probably still want to go to a really good university!”

**MARKS** DO NOT  
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MARGIN

Questions 21–25: Complete each gap with **NO MORE THAN THREE WORDS** from the text.

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| 21. The _____ of using technology in learning are widespread.                                    | 1 |
| 22. British people have a/an _____ reputation for being appalling at speaking foreign languages. | 1 |
| 23. Answering a question accurately in the app produces a/an _____.                              | 1 |
| 24. Von Ahn’s main aim was to remove _____.  | 1 |
| 25. Staff at the company are not all _____.  | 1 |

[Turn over



Text 3 questions (continued)

Question 26: Match each person (i-iv) with an opinion (A-E) by writing the correct letter in each box.

There is ONE opinion that you do NOT need.

- |       |              |                          |   |
|-------|--------------|--------------------------|---|
| (i)   | Luis von Ahn | <input type="checkbox"/> | 1 |
| (ii)  | Philip Young | <input type="checkbox"/> | 1 |
| (iii) | Harry Davis  | <input type="checkbox"/> | 1 |
| (iv)  | Jack Wilson  | <input type="checkbox"/> | 1 |
- A Different languages require different learning techniques.  
 B Discovering the breadth of users was somewhat of a revelation.  
 C Researching opposing methodology created confusion.  
 D The motivation behind people choosing to study a language has changed.  
 E Duolingo is used by companies all over the world.

Questions 27–29: Choose the correct answer for each question and tick (✓) one box.

27. The data that Duolingo collects: 1
- |   |                           |                          |
|---|---------------------------|--------------------------|
| A | is always changing        | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| B | influences teachers       | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| C | informs course design     | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| D | has always been available | <input type="checkbox"/> |
28. In paragraph 6, what does von Ahn say about the Duolingo app? 1
- |   |  |                          |
|---|--|--------------------------|
| A | It is still too expensive for some people. | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| B | It will soon be available to everyone.     | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| C | It has reached the limit of its potential. | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| D | It could be used to learn any subject.     | <input type="checkbox"/> |



Text 3 questions (continued)

29. Choose the best title for this text.

1

A How technology can transform language learning

B How Duolingo makes its profits

C Why learning a second language is critical

D Innovative ideas for language learning

[END OF QUESTION PAPER]







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