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National  
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**X827/76/02**

**ESOL  
Reading**

FRIDAY, 24 MAY  
10:15 AM – 11:25 AM



Fill in these boxes and read what is printed below.

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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.



**Read the THREE texts and attempt ALL questions****Text 1**

Read the article below and attempt the questions that follow.

- 1 The first rule of small talk, as anyone who has worked behind a bar can testify, is don't say what's on your mind. Rule two, don't make reference to politics, religion, money, health and so on. The price of a pint of beer and the weather are safe bets and can be discussed in idle chat night after night, often with the same regular customer, as if never mentioned before. There's no confrontation and there's nothing major that's been given away. Or so it was once thought.
- 2 Now, economists Professor Daniel Sgroi and Neha Bose from the University of Warwick have conducted what they think is the first study of its kind, putting 338 individuals through an IQ and personality test before placing them in pairs to play two games, in which the extent of cooperation affected the outcome. The study found that just four minutes of passing the time with a stranger can give away key aspects of personality which, in turn, influences later behaviour.
- 3 The study divided the 338 participants into two groups. In one group, participants could chat with their partner for four minutes. The other group had no communication. The participants were then asked to guess aspects of their partner's personality and intelligence, and anticipate whether they would act cooperatively or selfishly in two games. Personality types had been divided on the one hand into 'extroverts', which the academics describe as having 'sociability, enthusiasm and projecting positivity' and on the other hand 'neurotics' who were seen as having 'high emotion, fearfulness, impulsivity'.
- 4 The pairs who had earlier made small talk scored more highly on guessing their partner's IQ and answers to the personality test and the extent of their contributions in the games, with little disparity between the genders. 'In even a few minutes, we will start to form a mental model of the person we are talking with,' explained Sgroi. 'Are they extroverted or introverted; do they seem upbeat or downbeat? These sorts of impressions will be imperfect, but they will be productive.'
- 5 In their paper, the academics quote an example of two diplomats engaged in week-long negotiations that are progressing slowly until, on the Wednesday, one chats to the other that he needs to be home by Friday to attend an opera with his wife. 'Immediately a connection was formed on two fronts: a shared antipathy to opera and a shared interest in keeping spouses happy. The pace picked up, and the diplomat went home as scheduled, with a signed agreement in hand.'
- 6 Yet small talk, whether directly useful or not, is under threat. Two strange years placed it in temporary incubation as we all stayed at home. But now, it might have the potential to take place again. In queues, bus stops and on buses and trains among other venues. What's often hindering it? Smartphones don't exactly help. They offer hours of isolated entertainment, gossip, several hundred holiday snaps, Instagram, arguments on Twitter and much else. But unless a person is actually conducting a conversation, a phone provides the user with no requirement to listen or engage.



Text 1 (continued)

- 7 Studs Terkel, the great writer who captured the stories and voices of hundreds of ordinary Americans in his work, once wrote: ‘We are more and more into communications and less and less into communication.’ And in the 1980s, Anna Deavere Smith, another American writer, spent years asking a range of people their responses to three questions (not necessarily to be recommended as a cue for small talk). Have you ever come close to death? Do you know the circumstances of your birth? Have you ever been accused of something you did not do? In her book, *Talk to Me*, she said her aim was ‘to listen between the lines’, ‘to dig deeper than the surface’. Listening has a value.
- 8 Chatting to a stranger you may never meet again may not have an outcome of the kind described in the Warwick study — but it can leave a lasting impression. A little human engagement may help to change a mindset stuck in a darker place or inject humour at a time when it’s otherwise in short supply. As the Irish newspaper columnist Maeve Higgins wrote in the *New York Times*, idle chat gives you connection, ‘some idea of that odd-shaped part of a human being that’s invisible to the eye’. For Higgins, people in the USA, her new country of residence, have lost the art of chat. Instead, they prefer to get right to ‘the heavy goods’. As Higgins explains, chatting about inconsequential things allows you to take a breath and relax in each other’s company. When you begin a casual conversation, it lets the other person know you’re friendly and interested — without forcing an intense (and possibly unwelcome) discussion onto them. We neglect it at our peril.

Questions 1–3: Complete each gap with **NO MORE THAN TWO WORDS** from the text.

1. Trivial topics are \_\_\_\_\_  
 which are good not just for one conversation but for a series of them. 1
2. Using small talk with customers avoids \_\_\_\_\_. 1
3. The result of the activities in the experiment depended on how much  
 \_\_\_\_\_ there was. 1

[Turn over



**Text 1 questions (continued)**

**Question 4:** Choose the correct answer and tick (✓) **three** boxes.

4. Which **THREE** of the following are mentioned in Sgroi and Bose’s paper? **3**
- A Instructions to ask partners about their personalities.
  - B The prediction of another person’s behaviour.
  - C Praising other people for their contributions.
  - D Improved intelligence among participants.
  - E Similarity between male and female behaviour.
  - F A bond formed by the enjoyment of music.
  - G How small talk facilitated negotiations.

**Questions 5–6:** Choose the correct answer for each question and tick (✓) **one** box.

5. What does the writer say about public spaces? **1**
- A They are where small talk happens now.
  - B They offer the opportunity for small talk.
  - C Small talk no longer takes place there.
  - D People discourage small talk there.
6. The writer’s main point about smartphones is that: **1**
- A at least they have an amazing range of content to offer.
  - B they can provide the chance to talk to someone.
  - C it’s difficult to conduct natural small talk on them.
  - D most of what they offer doesn’t involve conversation.



Text 1 questions (continued)

Questions 7–9: Match each person to an opinion A–D. There is **ONE** opinion that you do NOT need.

- |                       |                          |   |
|-----------------------|--------------------------|---|
| 7. Studs Terkel       | <input type="checkbox"/> | 1 |
| 8. Anne Deavere Smith | <input type="checkbox"/> | 1 |
| 9. Mauve Higgins      | <input type="checkbox"/> | 1 |

- A Starting small talk is a relaxed, unthreatening thing to do.
- B Talking a lot doesn't mean we are talking genuinely.
- C Small talk can sometimes emerge out of serious talk.
- D We should work hard to understand what people really mean.

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

- |   |                          |
|---|--------------------------|
| 10. What is the best summary of the writer's opinion of small talk? | 1                        |
| A It helps us discuss life's more difficult questions.              | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| B It's both practically and emotionally useful.                     | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| C It's appropriate in some contexts but not in others.              | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| D Too much can limit honest engagement between people.              | <input type="checkbox"/> |

[Turn over



Text 2

Read the article below and attempt the questions that follow.

- 1 Over the past century, political parties and brands have spent huge sums of money on trying to get our attention and influence our decisions. Today, the playing field is changing. Influencers with thousands or even millions of social media followers can convert their following into an income by making their feeds live billboards you pay to subscribe to.
- 2 It is becoming increasingly accepted that ‘influencing’ is a viable career, providing a potentially luxury lifestyle; once you have figured out how to get people’s attention, you can monetise yourself as both product and salesperson. Often we do not even think of the most successful influencers as digital workers, since they market themselves as relationship gurus, financial experts and activists. Some influencers even offer teaching on how you can emulate their success.
- 3 The problem is that success in this world is not as attainable as some make it seem. It all boils down to a numbers game — the more followers you have, the more money you can make — and a worrying trend of being addicted to accumulating followers by any means necessary is emerging among wannabe influencers. For many influencers, deception is lucrative, and many go to extreme lengths to feign their wealth. There is even big business now in creating studio sets designed to imitate the inside of a private jet or luxury hotel room that influencers can hire to get that all important photo for their social media account. An even more concerning development is that businesses offering regulated products such as cosmetic surgery procedures and financial services have increasingly turned to influencers to market their goods, away from the scrutiny of regulatory bodies.
- 4 Another industry to profit from the influencer phenomenon is fashion. Fast-fashion companies throw vast amounts of money and products at the young women they pick to wear their clothes, and they have created a new economy that appears to offer an easy job — if you have the right look. At the age of 19, accounting student Aga Kolbin began noticing that the pictures she took of herself and posted online were getting more and more attention from her followers. ‘Back then, I didn’t really have an approach as such. If I went out and I liked how I looked, I would take a picture to post online. But as time went on, I developed a greater awareness of the types of photos that make people stop scrolling, and how to tag my posts to reach the widest audience.’
- 5 In 2018, Aga’s pictures also caught the attention of fast-fashion companies and brands investing heavily in influencer marketing. It was then she started to think, ‘Let me try to make more out of this.’ She turned her Instagram page into a business account and then began tagging fashion brands. Not long after, in a move that started Aga’s journey into the world of online collaboration, clothing brand FashionNow started giving her clothes that were in keeping with her social media image. Aga had the desired aesthetic and the right audience. She subsequently became one of a dozen brand ambassadors for a London-based chauffeur company targeting those desperate to present themselves as successful. Limousines can be rented by the hour for theatrical posing. They don’t need to go anywhere. When I interviewed Aga in 2019, she had 50,000 followers. Months later, when she surpassed 250,000, much as she was enjoying university life, she was finding it was no longer viable to balance work and studies and she realised something had to give. At the time of writing, the bulk of the money she makes is from social media ads and affiliate work for local companies.



Text 2 (continued)

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6 FashionNow operates on a simple concept: it invests in cheaply manufactured clothes from partner organisations and manages to glamourise them enough to sell them for a substantial profit. Demand is undeniably high, and yet, in the UK alone, more than 300,000 tonnes of the clothes produced end up in household bins each year, with less than 1% recycled. While the origin of fast-fashion doesn't lie with FashionNow, it does appear to be better than any of its competitors at driving the demand for clothes which are manufactured to be worn just once, by turning a generation of young women into mass marketers without a care for what it is they are selling. It feels like it is not even that companies like FashionNow are lying about who they are and what they are doing. They are actually creating a culture where they and their target market just don't care.

Questions 11–15: Complete each gap with **NO MORE THAN TWO WORDS** from the text.

11. Influencers make money by transforming their social media accounts into \_\_\_\_\_ . 1
12. Many successful influencers promote themselves as industry specialists rather than \_\_\_\_\_ . 1
13. People trying to become influencers are obsessed with \_\_\_\_\_ in whatever way they can. 1
14. Influencers can rent spaces for photoshoots that \_\_\_\_\_ extravagant locations. 1
15. Companies that sell products which require regulation use influencers to avoid \_\_\_\_\_ from the authorities. 1

Questions 16–17: Give short answers to the following questions.

16. What word in paragraph 3 means 'to give a false appearance of'? 1
17. What does a young woman need to become an influencer with a fast-fashion brand? 1



**Text 2 questions (continued)**

**Question 18:** Choose the correct answer and tick (✓) **three** boxes.

**18.** What **THREE** things do we learn about Aga’s work as an influencer?

**3**

- A She had a clear strategy from the start.
- B The first brand she worked with was FashionNow.
- C She changed her style when she started with FashionNow.
- D FashionNow wanted her to attract different followers.
- E She has teamed up with a company that sells luxury vehicles.
- F She gave up her degree to focus on influencer opportunities.
- G A large percentage of her income comes from advertising.

**Questions 19–20:** Choose the correct answer for each question and tick (✓) **one** box.

**19.** What is FashionNow’s business model?

**1**

- A It generates profit from investments.
- B It produces garments at a minimal cost.
- C It markets low-cost goods at inflated prices.
- D It specialises in upmarket products.

**20.** The author accuses FashionNow of:

**1**

- A having started the concept of fast-fashion.
- B exploiting the influencers they work with.
- C covering up corrupt business practices.
- D lacking environmental conscience.





Text 3

Read the article below and attempt the questions that follow.

- 1 Can watching short films featuring actors impersonating Charles Darwin and Albert Einstein improve your brainpower? Researchers working in 100 British primary schools will try to find out, thanks to a grant from the Education Endowment Foundation to test whether instructing children aged 10 and 11 in ‘growth mindset’, an idea from American psychology, can improve results. ‘Growth mindset’ is the name given by psychologist Carol Dweck to the idea that intelligence can develop, and that effort leads to success.
- 2 Her influential research, which has been lapped up by thousands of teachers in the UK, divides people according to what Dweck calls implicit theories of intelligence. If we think talent or braininess is innate and something we cannot change, we have a ‘fixed mindset’. If we believe our performance at school and in life can be changed by our attitude, and particularly by how we cope with setbacks, we have a ‘growth mindset’. The British study, called *Changing Mindsets*, will test its effectiveness using videos and quizzes developed by the education company Positive Edge in year 6 classrooms, while psychologists will train teachers for one day.
- 3 ‘Expectations change neurology; if you have low expectations of a child their brain starts to function worse,’ says Sherria Hoskins, the Portsmouth University professor leading the study. ‘We’re not saying you can turn a child who is struggling at maths into a maths genius. The message is about getting better.’ The videos feature actors playing Darwin, Einstein and Olympic athlete Wilma Rudolph, describing their achievements in ways that emphasise a growth mindset. ‘There was nothing special about my intellect,’ announces Darwin. ‘The ability to change and adapt has been key to our existence.’
- 4 The study will look at what Hoskins calls ‘learning behaviour’ as well as attainment, meaning how children manage themselves and whether they learn from mistakes. But the results will depend on test scores, and whether the pupils who receive the training and watch the films do better than a control group who do not. ‘It’s about the language you use with pupils,’ Hoskins says. ‘Instead of praising them around ability or static factors related to who they are — for example, saying “you’re so good at drawing” — you move to feedback based on effort, strategy and results. Many people don’t realise praise can be dangerous.’
- 5 While there is widespread support for the principle of evidence-based policy, and for an approach that promotes trying over talent, growth mindset itself is a topic of heated debate. Last year Dweck was reported to be concerned about growth mindset ‘misuse’, and told Schools Week she was kept awake at night by the fear that mindset was becoming ‘another simplistic way to talk about self-esteem’ — an idea bandied about by teachers who had not properly understood it and used it to ‘make kids feel good about any effort’. She is also frustrated by the extent to which views are polarised, with mindset viewed either as a magic wand or a here-today-gone-tomorrow fashion.



Text 3 (continued)

- 6 There are other critical voices. Matt O’Leary, an education lecturer at Birmingham City University, tweeted his scepticism about his six-year-old daughter being graded on her attitude to learning. While he believes that children are influenced by continuous putdowns and a culture of positivity is crucial, he says the idea of schools grading attitude is ‘very worrying’. He also fears that, far from cutting against the grain of increased testing and hierarchies, mindset could become yet another thing children are assessed on. He also questions why the new study is needed when a previous one, in 2013, showed no statistically significant effect, and suggests there is “a bit of desperation” to unearth more evidence in favour of the theory.
- 7 The sociologist, David James, takes this further. While he says, ‘it’s great to dwell on the fact that intelligence is not fundamentally genetic and unchangeable’, he believes the limitations of mindset outweigh its uses. ‘If teachers are being rewarded on the basis of whether they get a few kids over the “C” borderline this year, it’s very naive to come along and say “you need to change the way your kids think about themselves”. It individualises the failure — “they couldn’t change the way they think, so that’s why they failed”.’ He believes the search for individually focused explanations is what lies behind the current interest in ‘character’ and argues that psychology, with its quizzes and links to self-help, has more popular appeal and is more to current policymakers’ tastes than sociology, with its structures and systems.
- 8 No one I spoke to denied that evidence exists showing mindset to be a factor influencing learning. Doubts centre on whether results similar to those obtained in the USA will be obtained in English schools. Will the films’ dramatic stories, stirring music and inspirational messages have any demonstrable effect on the children who see them? All will be revealed when the study’s results are published.

Questions 21–24: Complete each gap with **NO MORE THAN TWO WORDS** from the text.

21. Researchers will be testing a theory that greater \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ is needed for those who wish to achieve something. 1
22. The way we \_\_\_\_\_ difficulties  
is of interest to Dweck. 1
23. Sherria Hoskins thinks that \_\_\_\_\_  
of a pupil can cause problems. 1
24. An actor tells us that the \_\_\_\_\_  
that someone is born with is not key to that person’s success. 1



Text 3 questions (continued)

Questions 25–27: Choose the correct answer for each question and tick (✓) one box.

25. Hoskins' experiment will have succeeded if: 1
- A everyone generally does well in attainment and learning behaviour.
- B good learning behaviour improves faster than attainment does.
- C children who get the training say they appreciated the films.
- D those without training get lower test scores than those who did training.
- 
26. Dweck is worried about her theory: 1
- A being used in too simple a way.
- B being used to change teachers' mindsets.
- C lowering pupils self-esteem.
- D vanishing in a short space of time.
- 
27. For Matt O'Leary, if teachers use growth mindset theory, they should use it to: 1
- A improve the learning of the youngest pupils.
- B grade pupils on their attitudes.
- C challenge the excessive focus on exams.
- D make related qualifications available.



**Text 3 questions (continued)**

**Questions 28–30:** Match each expert to an opinion A–D. There is ONE opinion that you do not need.

28. Sherria Hoskins

1

29. Matt O’Leary

1

30. David James

1

- A Mindset theory shouldn’t be used to blame people.
- B It’s vital to show people from the past praising growth mindset.
- C Telling a pupil they’re intelligent can be a mistake.
- D Enough research has already been done on this topic.

**Question 31:** Choose the correct answer and tick (✓) one box.

31. What is the best title for this text?

1

- A Dangers of growth mindset theory.
- B Brain power experiments of the past.
- C New experiment on a controversial theory.
- D Benefits of growth mindset for every school.

  
  
  


**[END OF QUESTION PAPER]**







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