

**Etapa județeană/sectoarelor municipiului București a olimpiadelor naționale școlare - 2024**

**Probă scrisă**

**Limba engleză**

**CLASA a IX-a - SECȚIUNEA B**

- Toate subiectele sunt obligatorii.
- Nu se acordă puncte din oficiu.
- Timpul efectiv de lucru este de 3 ore.

**SUBIECTUL A – USE OF ENGLISH (40 points)**

**I. Read the text below and do the tasks that follow. (10 points)**

***How Agatha Christie created the modern murder mystery***

They are assembled – maybe eight or nine people – in a small place: a snowbound train, a girls' school, an English country house. Then – oh no! A body drops. Who did this? And why, and how? Among those gathered, there is a detective saying: 'No one should leave, please!' He then begins questioning the people concerned, one by one. In the end, he collects all the interested parties and delivers the "revelation": he names the murderer and the motive and the method. Almost never does the **culprit** protest. Occasionally, he goes off and commits suicide and exits quietly, under police escort. Anyone who has ever seen a Charlie Chan movie, or played Clue, or, indeed, read a detective story of the past half century will recognize this scenario, created by Agatha Christie, the so-called Queen of Crime, in the 1920s.

The murder that sets the plot in motion is rarely shocking. For one thing, we almost never see it happen. Furthermore, the victim is ordinarily someone with whom we do not **sympathize**, even when we feel we should. Much more often, however, the victim is a rich, nasty old person who enjoys **taunting** his prospective heirs with the accusation that they wish him dead, so that they can collect their inheritances. He's usually right. Rather boringly, the most common motive for homicide in Christie is money.

**A. Choose the right synonym for the words given below, according to their meaning in the text. 3 points**

- |                        |                 |                 |              |               |
|------------------------|-----------------|-----------------|--------------|---------------|
| 1. <b>culprit</b> :    | a) offender;    | b) shoplifter;  | c) smuggler; | d) accomplice |
| 2. <b>sympathize</b> : | a) soothe;      | b) empathize;   | c) sustain;  | d) care       |
| 3. <b>taunting</b> :   | a) threatening; | b) encouraging; | c) joking;   | d) mocking    |

**B. Rephrase the following sentences so as to preserve the meaning. Use the word given WITHOUT changing it. 3 points**

1. In the end, he collects all the interested parties and delivers the "revelation". **AFTER**  
Only ..... the "revelation".

2. The victim taunts his prospective heirs with the accusation that they wish him dead, so that they can collect their inheritances. **VIEW**  
The victim taunts his prospective heirs with the accusation that they wish him dead ..... their inheritances.

3. Rather boringly, the most common motive for homicide in Christie is money. **CONSIDERED**  
Rather boringly, money ..... homicide in Christie.

**C. Four words have been removed from the summary of the text above. Choose the right words to fill-in the summary. There are four extra words which you do not need to use. 4 points**

demand, classy, testimony, opting, provoke, classic, staple, begging

In a (1) ..... mystery setting – a train, a school, or a country house – a group of individuals gathers, only for a murder to occur. A detective takes charge, prohibiting anyone from leaving as he meticulously interrogates each suspect. Eventually, he reveals the murderer, motive, and method. The culprit typically accepts their fate, sometimes (2) ..... for suicide. This timeless scenario, crafted by Agatha Christie, epitomizes the murder mystery genre. The victims, often unpleasant and wealthy, (3) ..... little sympathy, with financial gain serving as the primary motive. Christie's formula, established in the 1920s, remains a (4) ..... of detective fiction, recognizable to fans of Charlie Chan, Clue, and detective stories.

**II. Use the word given in brackets to form a word that best fits in each sentence. 10 points**

I've always been fascinated with ancient (1) \_\_\_\_\_ (CIVILIZE), so when I got the chance to visit Egypt, I was (2) \_\_\_\_\_ (INCREDIBLE) excited. The pyramids and the Sphinx were even more impressive than I'd imagined. However, what (3) \_\_\_\_\_ (STRIKE) me the most was the (4) \_\_\_\_\_ (INTRICATE) of the hieroglyphics. It was amazing to see these symbols that had been carved thousands of years ago still so well-preserved. During the tour, our (5) \_\_\_\_\_ (KNOWLEDGE) guide regaled us with tales of pharaohs, gods and everyday life in ancient times. Their explanations brought to life the (6) \_\_\_\_\_ (GRAND) and mystique of Egypt's past, making the experience all the more enriching. As we explored the temples and tombs, I couldn't help but marvel at the (7) \_\_\_\_\_ (CRAFT) and ingenuity of the ancient Egyptians, who left behind a legacy that continues to captivate the world. Overall, my visit to Egypt was a truly (8) \_\_\_\_\_ (FORGET) experience, one that (9) \_\_\_\_\_ (DEEP) my appreciation for history and the remarkable (10) \_\_\_\_\_ (ACHIEVE) of humanity across the ages.

**III. For questions 1-10, read the text below and look carefully at each line. Some of the lines are correct and some have a word that should not be there. On your answer sheet, if a line is correct, put a tick (✓) by the number on your answer sheet. If a line has a word which should not be there, write the word down next to the number on your answer sheet. 10 points**

0. *.both.* Reading books is a profound activity that enriches both the mind and
00. ....✓... expands horizons. Beyond mere entertainment, it fosters critical
1. .... thinking and empathy. Engaging with diverse characters and any narratives
2. .... enhances understanding of the human experience. Moreover, books serve
3. .... as a gateway to different cultures, not allowing readers to explore worlds
4. .... beyond their own. Through our reading, one can acquire new knowledge and
5. .... perspectives, continuously evolving intellectually. It also improves language
6. .... skills and vocabulary, making it communication more effective. Whether
7. .... or delving into fiction or non-fiction, each book offers a unique journey of
8. .... discovery and self-reflection. Thus, by cultivating a habit of reading not only
9. .... entertains but also enlightens, empowering individuals to ever navigate
10. .... life with wisdom and insight.

**IV. Translate the following text into English. 10 points**

Ștefana a traversat șoseaua și-a continuat drumul pe trotuarul celălalt, către Doamna Ghica. Mergeam după ea cu mâinile-n buzunarele paltonului, fără să mă feresc măcar, căci ea nu se uitase niciodată în urmă și simțeam că nici n-avea s-o facă. Nu trecuse un an, ci o viață de când, pe aceeași șosea [...] merseserăm împreună pe mijlocul drumului și mai înzăpezit ca acum, și tramvaiul oprise între stații ca să ne ia, și lumea dinăuntru ne aplaudase cu palmele înghețate, râzând și bucurându-se, în ciuda nefericirii generale.

(Mircea Cărtărescu, *Solenoid*)

## B. Integrated Skills (60 points)

1. Five sentences have been removed from the following interview. Choose from the sentences A-F the one which fits each gap 1-5. There is one extra sentence which you do not need to use.

10 points

Playing has been shown to improve the mental health of adults, but most people stop in childhood. How can we rediscover the benefits of playfulness after the toys have been put away?

After Federica Pallavicini's father was treated for brain cancer, she wanted to help him with his recovery from the surgery. Inspiration came from an unusual source – video games. Pallavicini has a personal connection with gaming. As a psychologist who studies the applications of virtual reality and video games for mental health and psychological wellbeing at the University of Milano-Bicocca, Italy, she noticed the improvement on her own mental health and lower stress levels after she played Call of Duty (CoD).

1) ..... Pallavicini, however, says playing became a form of therapy that was highly beneficial in her day-to-day life, and later inspired her career in research. With this in mind, she wondered if play could help her father, too. Pallavicini had good reason to believe it could. Adults who demonstrate more playful personality traits are more motivated, creative and spontaneous.

2) ..... While less playful people struggle in their leisure time to relax and often feel bored when their minds are not preoccupied, those that are more playfully inclined are aware of new opportunities and open to trying a wider variety of activities.

René Proyer, professor of psychology at Martin Luther University Halle-Wittenberg, Germany, says that playful adults are those able to frame everyday situations in such a way that they become entertaining and intellectually stimulating. Whether it's an obsession with Candy Crush on the morning commute, playing video games with friends or even sharing a private joke with your partner or colleague, most people are playful, and yet the benefits might go unnoticed or nurtured.

The benefits of playfulness can be embraced again in adulthood, says Proyer, adding that in the same way that you might take part in meditation or exercise, playfulness should be viewed as a skill that can be developed, harnessed and used for mindfulness. A good place to start is by simply observing. Proyer suggests listing three moments at the end of every day where something spontaneous happened. It could be a funny interaction with a stranger while getting your coffee or a joke shared with your colleague. 3) .....

But Proyer urges people not to be afraid to find fun in something not normally associated with adults. Socially acceptable adult games, like board games for instance, are often accompanied by a list of rules and require a specific environment to be played. 4) ..... Sometimes activities like this also involve competition and the related frustration with winning and losing. Essentially, the more unexpected the interaction or activity, the better for experiencing and enhancing your playfulness, he says.

Your enjoyment of play can depend on both your personality and your willingness to be open to new forms of conversation and experiences. 5) ..... With the evidence so strongly pointing towards a wide array of social benefits, it can't hurt to look a little harder for those small moments that make a much bigger difference than you might think to both yourself and the people you interact with.

Video games are one of the few forms of adult play therapy that carry less social stigma, says Pallavicini. While some adults might feel the need to hide their playfulness, the market for video games and mobile gaming among adults has boomed in recent years. Playing to find the flow state can provide an enjoyable challenge and distraction from mental health issues, she says, meaning the player can work on their wellbeing without feeling pressured to improve. So with all the benefits that come along with it, it's not a stretch to say that making an effort to be a little more playful should be a part of your day. Do you ever think wistfully about your childhood toys and envy that lost feeling of playfulness? Well maybe that feeling never really left you at all – it can be just a little harder to find.

(adapted from *BBC-why-adults-should-embrace-their-playfulness*)

- A.** But these moments make up the most memorable parts of the everyday and the funniest memories of friends and family.
- B.** This does less to encourage creativity and spontaneous playful behaviour despite the elements of luck and strategy, says Proyer.
- C.** Proyer suggests that if you're most playful at home with your partner or family, for example, try using similar conversational techniques with colleagues or more distant friends and observe the results.
- D.** This will help you to begin to feel confident in being playful and make you more aware of joy in your everyday life.
- E.** The first-person shooting game put players into a simulated war, and so is more commonly associated with violence and stress than as a way of improving mental health.
- F.** There have even been links between people with more playful characteristics having lower blood pressure.

**2. Starting from the text above, answer the following announcement on a website. 50 points**

**Reviews wanted- A video game you can learn from**

**Have you recently played an instructive computer game? Write a review of the game, including:**

- **a brief description of the game**
- **what you learned while playing it**
- **whether you would recommend it to people your age and why**

**We'll post the best reviews on the website next month.**

**Write your review in 220-250 words.**