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**OLIMPIADA NAȚIONALĂ DE LIMBA ENGLEZĂ – ETAPA LOCALĂ**

**11 februarie 2026**

**CLASA a XII-a, SECȚIUNEA A**

* **Toate subiectele sunt obligatorii.**
* **Se acordă 10 puncte din oficiu.**
* **Timp de lucru: 180 minute**

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

**I. Read the following text and fill each of the blanks with one word only that fits best.**

**(10 points)**

**The origin of language**

The truth (1) \_\_\_\_ nobody really knows how language first began. Did we all start talking at around the same time (2) \_\_\_\_ of the manner in which our brains had begun to develop?

(3) \_\_\_\_ there is a lack of clear evidence, people have come up with various theories about the origins of language. One recent theory is that human beings have evolved in (4) \_\_\_\_ a way that we are programmed for language from the moment of birth. In (5) \_\_\_\_ words, language came about as a result of an evolutionary change in our brains at some stage.

Language (6) \_\_\_\_ well be programmed into the brain but, (7) \_\_\_\_ this, people still need stimulus from others around them. From studies, we know that (8) \_\_\_\_ children are isolated from human contact and have not learnt to construct sentences before they are ten, it is doubtful they will ever do so. The research shows, if (9) \_\_\_\_ else, that language is a social activity, not something invented (10) \_\_\_\_ isolation.

**II. Use the word given in brackets to form a word that fits in each gap. (10 points)**

Many people believe that success is purely a matter of talent, but this view is far too (1) \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (**SIMPLE**). In reality, long-term achievement usually requires a high level of (2) \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (**DEDICATE**) and the ability to deal with (3) \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_(**FAIL**). What often separates successful individuals from others is their (4) \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (**WILL**) to continue despite setbacks.

Moreover, the modern workplace demands constant (5) \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (**ADAPT**), as technology is developing at an increasingly rapid pace. Those who show (6) \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (**FLEXIBLE**) and enthusiasm to learn new skills are more likely to remain (7) \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (**EMPLOY**). On the other hand, a lack of motivation or (8) \_\_\_\_\_\_ (**PREPARE**) can lead to career stagnation.

Ultimately, personal growth depends on self-awareness and the (9) \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (**ABLE**) to reflect on one’s strengths and weaknesses. Without this, even the most (10) \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (**ingenuity**) people may struggle to reach their full potential.

**III. Read the following text and choose the best option A, B, C or D. (10 points)**

**The Microscope**

A crucial invention in the development of science and medicine was the microscope. It was (1)... the principle that light could be “(2) ...” or bent by a glass lens. It was soon discovered that tiny objects could be magnified (3) … size when viewed through a glass lens that had been ground and polished in a specific (4) … . Although the principle was known to the Chinese as early as 1000 A.D, it was not until the 13th and 14th centuries in Europe (5) … it was put to practical use in the form of eyeglasses. In Europe, the first microscope was invented by brothers Zacharias and Hans Janssen, two Dutch eye glassmakers, around 1590. They built a “compound” microscope, so called because of its two (6) … . The most significant development and use of the microscope during this period, however, belongs to another Dutch optician, Antonie van Leeuwenhoek (1632-1723). Born in Delft, Holland, he became skilled at (7) … very sharp and accurate magnifying lenses. Some of his single-lens microscopes were able to magnify up to three hundred times the object's (8) … size, and around 1660, he began a serious study using these instruments. He was the first to discover bacteria and other microscopic organisms, naming these tiny creatures “animalcules”. (9) … to this discovery, small creatures such as fleas and maggots were thought to “spontaneously generate” from a single (10) ..., such as rotting meat in the case of maggots.

1) A. based upon B. based by C. based in D. based at

2) A. refracted B. retracted C. retorted D. retraced

3) A. by B. on C. in D. with

4) A. procedure B. manner C. fashion D. character

5) A. when B. than C. then D. that

6) A. optics B. lenses C. magnifiers D. glasses

7) A. granting B. grinding C. scraping D. rubbing

8) A. present B. substantial C. actual D. current

9) A. According B. Due C. Owing D. Prior

10) A. origin B. root C. source D. fountainhead

**IV. Complete the second sentence so that it has a similar meaning to the first sentence, using the word given. Do NOT change the word given. You must use between 3 and 6 words, including the word given. (10 points)**

1. The football club is now being run by an experienced accountant. **TAKEN**

An experienced accountant ……………………… running of the football club.

2. I was disappointed to hear that Leo had decided not to play basketball any more. **UP**

Leo's decision to …………………… a disappointment to me.

3. People believe that the company is planning major changes. **BELIEVED**

The company ……………………… major changes.

4. Lucy was very pleased to be given an award. **DELIGHT**

Much ……………………… given the award.

5. Police are warning people to check for forged notes which are currently in circulation.

**LOOKOUT**

Police are warning people to be …………… forged notes which are currently in circulation.

**SUBIECTUL B – INTEGRATED SKILLS 50 points**

**Read the text below and do the tasks that follow.**

Second-hand bookshops are an endangered species. Both official statistics and personal experience bear this out. The one proper second-hand bookshop in the area where I live - a ramshackle old place squeezed between an estate agent and a milliner - disappeared while I was on holiday. A nasty shock for all local book lovers. By proper I mean it sold only books and not any old second-hand, or ‘pre-loved’ as they say, rubbish. There are quite a few shops now, usually charity shops, where you can get second-hand books, but it’s only a small part of their stock.

It was a wonderful place for browsing and making exciting discoveries. There were a couple of small café tables and chairs so you could sit and read, and the proprietor would offer to make you a cup of coffee on a small camping stove he had in the back. He would even offer to make bacon and eggs if he thought you were worth a chat. It’s only in that kind of a place that kind of thing can happen, and I wish there was more of it.

Browsing is at the heart of shopping for books. A recent study has shown that people still find most of their books by in-store browsing and this is taken as evidence of the continuing importance of real bookshops for selling real books, but even these are disappearing from the high street. Besides, their stock, though large, is often quite predictable, whereas a second-hand bookshop is full of surprises and serendipity comes into play. More often than seems feasible you find something you didn’t know you were looking for or didn’t realise you wanted.

The largest second-hand books website searches through 140 million books for sale, but browsing among the shelves is rewarding in ways which surfing the net can never be, despite the sometimes-generous discounts. If there is a particular book you want then, yes, the Internet is just the ticket: you type in the title, pay by credit card, and your book arrives the next day. Perfect. But you don’t get those happy accidents, the wonderful discoveries that occur when you browse in a real second-hand bookshop, where the books are not neatly ordered and categorised; and where you might find a Fabulous Furry Freak Brothers annual stuck between a history of the Aztecs and a book on conchology.

I don’t mean to give the impression that I’m after comic books when I trawl the second-hand bookshops. First editions are not my thing (though if I find one at the right price then I won't turn my nose up at it), nor fine bindings, antiquarian books, or signed copies (though I have come across a few at rock bottom prices). What I’m after, now that I think about it, are books that I feel I should have read. I was a bad student and read everything except what was on the set book list, and am trying to catch up. Also, many of the books I want are out of print.

There are obvious reasons why second-hand bookshops are on the way out. As already mentioned, there is the Internet. Another factor affecting the sale of second-hand books is the spread of charity shops. You would think this is an unarguably good thing, though whether having a large number of charity shops in your town signals economic decline or a growth in benevolence I’m not qualified to say. I have often used such shops to buy second-hand paperbacks and to get rid of books I’m not going to reread. And it’s good to know that somewhere in the world a disadvantaged person is going to benefit. Despite this feel-good factor, I would rather go to a second-hand bookshop proper; not only because they’re better stocked and the staff actually know something about books, but because each time another charity shop opens it threatens the survival of the real thing. They simply can’t compete with shops that have access to free stock and labour (they are mainly staffed by volunteers), that price books at lower levels, and are registered as charities.

This situation is not one that receives much, if any, media attention. You do see articles in the press lamenting the decline in reading and how the Internet, especially among the young, is reducing attention spans to that of a goldfish. I doubt many people with e-readers ever use them for more than holiday reading, as it’s more convenient than lugging physical books around, or online newspapers or magazines. Yet I think there are enough people out there who still prefer the physical object to the virtual and will want to see the survival of the second-hand bookshop and the wonderful surprises waiting on its shelves.

**I. For each question decide which answer (A, B, C or D) fits best according to the text. (10 points)**

**1. What do you think the writer misses most about his local second-hand bookshop?**

A. its relaxed atmosphere

B. the breakfasts he got there

C. the fact that it didn’t sell pre-loved rubbish

D. its convenient situation

**2. What is the main reason the writer finds ‘real’ bookshops not as good as second-hand ones?**

A. Despite their size, they have limited stock.

B. Too many other people do their browsing there.

C. You’re unlikely to find something unexpected.

D. There are fewer of them and they are harder to find.

**3. What does the writer enjoy that some may see as a disadvantage?**

A. not being able to find the book he wants

B. the lack of organised bookshelves

C. the less efficient delivery of books

D. having to pay for purchases in cash

**4. What is the writer mainly looking for when he shops for books?**

A. books that are currently out of print

B. books by writers of comedy

C. first editions signed by the author

D. books that he failed to read in the past

**5. What is the main criticism the writer has of charity shops?**

A. Their staff know nothing about books.

B. They use unpaid labour and free stock.

C. They cause second-hand bookshops to close.

D. They only stock second-rate material

**II. Writing 40 points**

Write an **article** for your school newspaper discussing the enduring value of traditional, printed books in today’s high-tech world. **(220-250 words)**