

I. LISTENING (50 points)

PART 1. You will hear part of a presentation by an urban planning student about the roles of rivers in cities around the world.

For questions 1–5, complete the notes. Write ONE WORD ONLY for each answer.

Reclaiming urban rivers

Causes of damage to city rivers

In earlier periods, rivers could absorb household waste because urban **1** _____ were limited.

This changed when city growth led to a much greater volume of sewage entering the water.

River pollution was made worse by industrial **2** _____ from factories along the banks.

Evidence of recovery

The Thames is now clean enough for animals such as seals, and even a **3** _____ was once seen there after swimming in from the sea.

New uses of riverbanks

In Los Angeles, part of the plan is to create space where locally produced **4** _____ can be displayed.

In Paris, riverside roads are closed in summer so that temporary **5** _____ can be created for the public.

(Adapted from IELTS Cambridge 20 – Test 1- Listening Section 4)

Your answers:

1.	2.	3.	4.	5.
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PART 2. You will hear a recording about fast food prices.

For questions 6–10, decide whether each of the following statements is TRUE or FALSE.

6. Fast food used to be an affordable choice for a quick meal.

7. Ingredients such as beef, chicken, potatoes, and bread have become more expensive mainly because of increased consumer demand.

8. Problems such as trucking shortages and port delays mainly slow down service rather than increase meal prices.

9. Some chains increased workers' pay in order to keep and attract staff.

10. Loyalty programs help reduce menu prices for customers.

(Source: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OYjYeQRF-38>)

Your answers:

6.	7.	8.	9.	10.
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PART 3. You will hear an interview with two script editors, Mike Summers and Sarah Alexander, in which they talk about working in the television industry.

For questions 11–15, choose the answer (A, B, C or D) which fits best according to what you hear.

11. What does Mike identify as the main focus of his daily work on Eden Lane?

- A the development of detailed storylines for each episode in the series
- B the encouragement of consistently high-quality writing from his team
- C careful attention to the overall direction and continuity of the show
- D the need to ensure producers remain satisfied with ongoing progress

12. What first led Mike to consider script editing as a career?

- A the realisation that he was not suited to earning a living as a writer
- B an interest in script work which he developed during his studies
- C the discovery that he preferred working closely with other writers
- D the fact that script editing offered better pay than script writing

13. According to Sarah, which quality makes applicants more attractive to television companies?

- A a strong willingness to accept any role within the television industry
- B a genuine interest in and enthusiasm for a particular programme genre
- C creative abilities that can already be applied effectively in television
- D well-developed views on how television programmes ought to be made

14. What does Sarah suggest may result from watching television in a thoughtful, analytical way?

- A a tendency to focus closely on particular aspects of a programme's content
- B a better understanding of how scripts are structured and developed
- C an opportunity to establish contact with people working in the industry
- D an ability to express opinions in a balanced and constructive manner

15. What do Mike and Sarah agree is necessary for a soap opera to be successful?

- A a combination of both sympathetic and unsympathetic characters
- B a dramatic ending to each episode that maintains audience interest
- C regular changes in the cast to keep the storyline feeling fresh
- D situations in which characters face difficulties in achieving their aims

(Adapted from C1 Advanced 4 – Test 2 – Listening Part 3. Page 49)

Your answers:

11.	12.	13.	14.	15.
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PART 4. You will hear part of a talk about OPEC and its influence on global oil prices.

Complete the summary below. Write NO MORE THAN THREE WORDS AND/OR A NUMBER from the recording for each answer.

Oil is used in many everyday products, so changes in its price can affect the cost of items such as plastic gloves and **(16)** _____.

The price of oil is mainly influenced by supply and demand, as well as the actions of OPEC, an organisation that supplies about **(17)** _____ of the world's oil.

OPEC was established in **(18)** _____ by five founding countries, including Saudi Arabia and Venezuela. It was formed to monitor petroleum market stability and prices, which had previously been controlled by **(19)** _____ oil companies.

Today, OPEC members produce over 40% of the world's crude oil and control more than **(20)** _____ of the world's proven crude oil reserves.

OPEC ministers meet twice a year in Vienna to decide whether oil output should be increased or reduced in order to maintain **(21)** _____.

In the early 2000s, rapid development in China and limited growth in oil production caused oil prices to rise sharply. As a result, countries such as the U.S. and Canada started to exploit oil that was more difficult to extract. Because these countries were not restricted by cartel decisions, their supply increased and OPEC's **(22)** _____ began to weaken.

Later, increased supply and lower demand in Europe and Asia caused oil prices to fall. This created **(23)** _____ in countries such as Venezuela, where oil is the main **(24)** _____ of the economy.

Since 2016, oil prices have risen steadily again. That year, OPEC agreed to its first production cut since 2008, reducing output by around **(25)** _____ a day.

(Source: https://youtu.be/mlWmJt8O8Kw?si=pW7Za0MPyj7y1Ro__)

Your answers:

16.	17.
18.	19.
20.	21.
22.	23.

24.	25.
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II. LEXICO-GRAMMAR (40 points)

Part 1. For questions 26 - 45, choose the correct answer A, B, C, or D to each of the following questions. Write your answers in the corresponding numbered boxes provided.

26. The candidate still expects to be re-elected _____ the results of the latest opinion poll.

A. without B. apart C. nevertheless D. notwithstanding

27. In an effort to increase his newspaper's _____, the editor introduced a weekly competition.

A. propaganda B. distribution C. circulation D. dispersion

28. Katie really _____ her mother. She has got the same character.

A. takes after B. takes up C. takes in D. takes on

29. That cupboard must always be _____ locked.

A. guarded B. shut closed D. kept

30. I saw a thief take Norman's wallet so I ran _____ him, but I couldn't catch him.

A. after B. into C. over D. near

31. Making mistakes is all _____ of growing up.

A. chalk and cheese B. part and parcel

C. top and bottom D. odds and ends

32. We have a _____ future ahead with little comfort, food or hope.

A. cruel B. pessimistic C. grim D. fierce

33. His French is roughly _____ with my Japanese, so communication was rather difficult.

A. in harmony B. on a par C. on equal term D. on good terms

34. We welcome the new regulations, which become _____ on the first of the next month.

A. effective B. efficient C. efficacious D. effect

35. He had a momentary _____ of concentration and before he knew it the car had spun out of control.

A. lapse B. loss C. slip D. mistake

36. Last weekend, _____ nothing to watch on television, we sang karaoke together.

A. there being B. there having C. having had D. being

37. He _____ his life to the skill of the surgeons.

A. keeps B. owes C. preserves D. maintains

38. I have been meaning to _____ repairing that fence for ages.

A. get on to B. get up to C. get round to D. get out of

39. Not only is little Robbie's grammar incoherent and his spelling atrocious but his

pronunciation is also _____.

A. slothful B. sluggish C. hazard D. haphazard

40. "Do you think Dennis took the money?" – "I wouldn't _____ him"

A. put it past B. rub it up C. pass it over D. think it through

41. Janet will see you if you use the computer without permission. She has eyes like a _____.

A. hawk B. fox C. goose D. bird

42. I am not _____ liberty to tell you anything about his private life.

A. in B. at C. by D. on

43. I'm so _____ under with work at the moment - It's awful!

A. fogged B. snowed C. rained D. iced

44. Knowing the confidential details gave him a(an) _____ over the other candidates.

A. edge B. possibility C. exertion D. fringe

45. In her speech the Prime Minister _____ tribute to the valuable contributions to society made by voluntary organizations.

A. paid B. sent C. brought D. gave

Your answers:

26.	27.	28.	29.	30.	31.	32.	33.	34.	35.
36.	37.	38.	39.	40.	41.	42.	43.	44.	45.

Part 2. For questions 46 - 55, write the correct form of each bracketed word in each sentence in the corresponding numbered boxes provided.

46. It's absolutely _____ why the council decided to close down the youth club. (EXPLAIN)

47. I'm scanning my gran's photos onto my computer because they'd be _____ if anything happened to them. (PLACE)

48. Astronomers at the _____ have announced that they have discovered a new comet. (OBSERVE)

49. Some people are _____ by any form of technology. (TERROR)

50. If you can respond calmly and _____, then I think that would be the best way forward. (AGGRESSIVE)

51. I'm looking for a flatmate so I'm going to put an ad in the _____. (CLASS)

52. The positive relationship between a business and a customer, often referred as "_____", is difficult to quantify financially. (GOOD)

53. After ten matches, we had the _____ record of played ten, won none, lost ten. (ENVY)

54. My cat has green eyes and a long _____ tail. (FUR)

55. The rumours are completely _____ and I would urge everyone not to believe them. (SUBSTANCE)

Part 3. There are 6 mistakes in the following passage. Find and correct them. Write your answers in the space provided below. The first one has been done as an example.

line 1	A study into family health <u>conducting</u> in California has come up with
line 2	some interesting conclusions, though these might not be accepted to
line 3	everybody. The main conclusion is that for a family to remain
line 4	healthy, the relationship between husband and wife plays a major
line 5	role. The perhaps surprising aspect of this research, however, is that
line 6	statistically the healthy family is optimistic, church-going, and
line 7	leading by a traditional male. And perhaps not so surprisingly, what
line 8	promotes the health of the husband does not necessary promote the
line 9	health of the wife, and vice versa. For example, when it comes to
line 10	expressing emotions, it is generally assumed that giving an outlet to
line 11	feelings is healthy. But according to the study, there may be
line 12	beneficial for one party but not for the other. If the wife talks more
line 13	than the husband does in these situations and gives him feelings of guilty, then he is likely to become depressed, whereas if the wife lets the husband dominate the discussions, then she in turn will be the one whose mental state will suffer.

Your answers:

Line	Mistake	Correction
1	<i>conducting</i>	<i>conducted</i>

III. READING COMPREHENSION (60 points)

Part 1. For questions 61-70, read the following passage and decide which option (A, B, C, or D) best fits each gap. Write your answers in corresponding numbered boxes. (10 points)

In today's fast-paced world, adopting a healthy lifestyle can be both a challenge and a necessity. Despite the abundance of information available, many individuals still struggle to (61) _____ consistent habits that promote long-term well-being. Rather

than resorting to short-term fixes or restrictive diets, experts emphasize a more sustainable approach rooted in balance and mindfulness.

A genuinely healthy lifestyle (62) _____ more than simply avoiding illness; it encompasses mental clarity, emotional resilience, and physical vitality. Nutrition plays a central role, with increasing evidence suggesting that highly processed foods and excessive sugar consumption may cause people to (63) _____ the risk of chronic conditions such as diabetes, cardiovascular disease, and even depression. Therefore, adopting a diet rich in whole foods, fiber, and healthy fats is strongly (64) _____ by nutritionists.

Physical activity, though frequently associated with weight management, also contributes to improved mood and cognitive function. Even moderate levels of exercise have been shown to (65) _____ the production of endorphins, the body's natural mood enhancers. Nonetheless, sedentary lifestyles remain (66) _____, particularly in urban environments where desk jobs and digital entertainment dominate daily routines.

Another essential, yet often undervalued, aspect of wellness is sleep. Studies have linked insufficient sleep to weakened immunity, impaired decision-making, and heightened stress levels. As such, establishing a consistent sleep schedule should not be (67) _____ as a luxury but recognized as a vital health practice.

Equally important is the cultivation of mental well-being. Activities such as mindfulness meditation, journaling, or even regular time spent in nature can help individuals (68) _____ stress and develop a deeper sense of presence. Over time, these habits can (69) _____ a profound transformation in one's overall quality of life.

Ultimately, living healthily is not a fixed destination but a continuous journey—one that requires intention, (70) _____, and self-compassion.

- | | | | |
|---------------------|---------------|----------------|----------------|
| 61. A. install | B. engage | C. establish | D. employ |
| 62. A. regulates | B. entails | C. evolves | D. assists |
| 63. A. mitigate | B. elevate | C. pose | D. incur |
| 64. A. promoted | B. claimed | C. advertised | D. processed |
| 65. A. intensify | B. stimulate | C. encounter | D. undertake |
| 66. A. prevalent | B. reluctant | C. negligible | D. dormant |
| 67. A. perceived | B. dismissed | C. handled | D. substituted |
| 68. A. retain | B. detain | C. combat | D. dismiss |
| 69. A. catalyze | B. initiate | C. drive | D. commence |
| 70. A. perseverance | B. impression | C. instruction | D. privilege |

Your answers:

61.	62.	63.	64.	65.
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66.	67.	68.	69.	70.
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Part 2. For questions 71-80, fill each of the following numbered blanks with ONE suitable word and write your answers in the corresponding numbered boxes provided.

The Bermuda Triangle is an area of water located (71) _____ the islands of Bermuda and Puerto Rico and the coast of Florida at Melbourne. It (72) _____ by other names too; the Devil's Triangle and the Limbo of the Lost.

The legend, dating back to the mid-nineteenth century, says that this area of sea is notorious (73) _____ ships going missing, and since the invention of manned flights, planes too. In that time, over fifty ships and twenty planes have disappeared, and the strangest part is that not a trace of them, not even the smallest trace, has (74) _____ been found.

Perhaps the most famous example of this was on December 5th, 1945, (75) _____ five torpedo bombers left a Fort Lauderdale air base on a routine training mission in good weather conditions. Known as Flight 19, they headed out (76) _____ the blue and were never heard from again. (77) _____ distress signal or emergency call was made, and the seaplane sent out to search for them also vanished (78) _____ trace.

People attempting to explain away the (79) _____ rate of loss point out that it is a huge stretch of ocean and makes for every difficult sailing, but others darkly talk of giant squid, freak whirlpools and sea monsters 1,000 feet (80) _____ !

Your answers:

71.	72.	73.	74.	75.
76.	77.	78.	79.	80.

Part 3. For questions 81-90, read the passage and choose the answer A, B, C or D that fits best according to the text. Write your answers in the corresponding numbered boxes provided.

When people learn to play video games, they are learning a new literacy. Of course, this is not the way the word "literacy" is normally used. Traditionally, people think of literacy as the ability to read and write. Why should we think of literacy more broadly? There are two reasons.

First, language is not the only important communicational system nowadays. Images, symbols, graphs, diagrams, artifacts, and many other visual symbols are particularly significant. Thus, the idea of different types of "visual literacy" would seem to be an important one. For example, interior designs in homes, modernist art in museums, and videos on MTV are other forms of visual literacy.

Furthermore, today words and images of various sorts are juxtaposed and integrated in a variety of ways. In newspapers, magazines and textbooks, images take up more space. In fact, in modern high school and college textbooks, images not only take up more space but carry meanings independent of the words in the text. In such multimodal texts (texts that mix words and images), the images often communicate different things from the words. And the combination of the two modes communicates things that neither of the modes does separately. Thus, the idea of different sorts of multimodal literacy seems important. Both modes go far beyond images and words to include sounds, music, movement, bodily sensations, and smells.

We obviously live in a world awash with images. It is our first answer to the question why we should think of literacy more broadly. The second answer is this: Though reading and writing seem so central to what literacy means traditionally, reading and writing are not such general and obvious matters as they might at first seem. After all, we never just read or write; rather, we always read or write something in some way.

So there are different ways to read different types of texts. Literacy is multiple in the sense that the legal literacy needed for reading law books is not the same as for reading physics texts or superhero comic books. And we should never dismiss the latter form of literacy. Many a superhero comic is replete with post-Freudian irony of a sort that would make a modern literary critic's heart beat fast and confuse any otherwise normal adult. Literacy, then, even as traditionally conceived to involve only print, is not a unitary thing but a multiple matter. There are, even in regard to printed texts and even leaving aside images and multimodal texts, different "literacies."

Once we see this multiplicity of literacy (literacies), we realize that when we think about reading and writing, we have to think **beyond print**. Reading and writing in any domain, whether it is law, rap songs, academic essays, superhero comics, or whatever, are not just ways of decoding print, they are also caught up with and in social practices... Video games are a new form of art. They will not replace books but sit beside them, interact with them, and change them as they are already doing strongly with movies. (Many movies are based on video games and are influenced by them.) We have no idea yet how people "read" video games, what meanings they make from them. Still less do we know how they will "read" them in the future.

81. According to the first paragraph, the broadest definition of "literacy" is _____.

- A. the ability to analyze literature
- B. the ability comprehend basic cultural cues
- C. the ability to read and write
- D. the ability to compose poetry

82. All are mentioned as being types of "visual literacy" EXCEPT _____.

A. Musical tones B. Interior Design C. Diagrams D. Modern Art

83. An example from a science textbook of the phenomenon the author describes in the third paragraph could be_____.

- A. a genetic tree that coincides with the discussion of specific mammal classes in the text
- B. a diagram of a specific chemical reaction that is used to explain a broad definition in the text
- C. an illustration of a plant cycle that accompanies a chapter on photosynthesis
- D. a cartoon that references the same methods discussed in the text about laboratory safety

84. What is an example of a "multimodal" text?

- A. A dictionary with only word definitions
- B. A script containing dialogue only
- C. A photo album with no written text
- D. An art book with both text and images

85. The phrase "**beyond print**" in paragraph 6 is closest in meaning to_____.

- A. reading to understand the underlying meanings and themes of the author's words-not just a literal interpretation
- B. reading text that defines different types of wheat and grains
- C. to read the text from right to left rather than left to right
- D. to read books that use recycled paper and other green alternatives

86. In the fifth paragraph, the author suggests that literacy is multiple, meaning that_____.

- A. to be "literate" can mean participating in any form of expression
- B. one's literacy increases exponentially as greater mastery of reading and writing is achieved
- C. different genres and modes of expression require different background knowledge and perspectives to understand them
- D. literacy can only be gained by exploring every type of media and expression

87. Why does the author give the example of superhero comics to explain multiple literacies?

- A. To explain that comic books are written for children and purely for entertainment. They require only a basic knowledge of the action that occurs in the story
- B. To once again refer to his earlier points about "multimodal" texts
- C. To insist that even when an author may intend multiple meanings and interpretations, they are rarely successful in conveying those to readers

D. Things that may seem on the surface to be only meant for a particular group of people can actually have very profound meanings to those who possess other types of literacy

88. The author suggests that all of the following require different types of literacy and the ability to decode meaning EXCEPT_____.

- A. Rap music
- B. Comic books
- C. Academic papers
- D. Symphonies

89. The author says that video games_____.

- A. are not yet entirely understood in terms of literacy, but are already impacting other forms of expression such as filmmaking
- B. are unrealistic and should not fall into the same categories as the other texts he describes
- C. are too violent to risk experimenting with for the purposes of understanding literacy
- D. are irrelevant in academic discussion because no one has yet determined how to explain the ways that people understand them

90. What would be the most logical information for the next paragraph to contain if the article continued?

- A. A technological definition of video games, how they are made, and how they are played
- B. A historical explanation of the very first video game and its evolution
- C. Examples of the way that some people currently interpret video games and what they mean to them
- D. A price comparison of video game consoles and whether or not quality has a direct impact on literacy

Your answers:

81.	82.	83.	84.	85.
86.	87.	88.	89.	90.

Part 4. For questions 91-100, read the following passage and do the tasks that follow. Write your answers in the corresponding numbered boxes provided.

Assessing the risk

As a title for a supposedly unprejudiced debate on scientific progress, “Panic attack: interrogating our obsession with risk” did not bode well. Held last week at the Royal Institution in London, the event brought together scientists from across the world to ask why society is so obsessed with risk and to call for a “more rational” approach. “We seem to be organising society around the grandmotherly maxim of ‘better safe than

sorry’,” exclaimed Spiked, the online publication that organised the event. “What are the consequences of this overbearing concern with risks?”

The debate was preceded by a survey of 40 scientists who were invited to describe how awful our lives would be if the “precautionary principle” had been allowed to prevail in the past. Their response was: no heart surgery or antibiotics, and hardly any drugs at all; no aeroplanes, bicycles or high-voltage power grids; no pasteurisation, pesticides or biotechnology; no quantum mechanics; no wheel; no “discovery” of America. In short, their message was: no risk, no gain.

They have absolutely missed the point. The precautionary principle is a subtle idea. It has various forms, but all of them generally include some notion of cost-effectiveness. Thus the point is not simply to ban things that are not known to be absolutely safe. Rather, it says: “Of course you can make no progress without risk. But if there is no obvious gain from taking the risk, don’t take it.”

Clearly, all the technologies listed by the 40 well-chosen savants were innately risky at their inception, as all technologies are. But all of them would have received the green light under the precautionary principle because they all had the potential to offer tremendous benefits – the solutions to very big problems – if only the snags could be overcome.

If the precautionary principle had been in place, the scientists tell us, we would not have antibiotics. But of course, we would – if the version of the principle that sensible people now understand had been applied. When penicillin was discovered in the 1920s, infective bacteria were laying waste to the world. Children died from diphtheria and whooping cough, every open-drain brought the threat of typhoid, and any wound could lead to septicaemia and even gangrene.

Penicillin was turned into a practical drug during the Second World War when the many pestilences that result from were threatened to kill more people than the bombs. Of course antibiotics were a priority. Of course, the risks, such as they could be perceived, were worth taking.

And so with the other items on the scientists’ list: electric light bulbs, blood transfusions. CAT scans, knives, the measles vaccine – the precautionary principle would have prevented all of them, they tell us. But this is just plain wrong. If the precautionary principle had been applied properly, all these creations would have passed muster, because all offered incomparable advantages compared to the risks perceived at the time.

Another issue is at stake here. Statistics are not the only concept people use when weighing up risk. Human beings, subtle and evolved creatures that we are, do not survive to three-score years and ten simply by thinking like pocket calculators. A

crucial issue is the consumer's choice. In deciding whether to pursue the development of new technology, the consumer's right to choose should be considered alongside considerations of risk and benefit. Clearly, skiing is more dangerous than genetically modified tomatoes. But people who ski choose to do so; they do not have skiing thrust upon them by portentous experts of the kind who now feel they have the right to reconstruct our crops. Even with skiing, there is the matter of cost-effectiveness to consider: skiing, I am told, is exhilarating. Where is the exhilaration in GM soya?

Indeed, in contrast to all the other items on Spiked's list, GM crops stand out as an example of a technology whose benefits are far from clear. Some of the risks can at least be defined. But in the present economic climate, the benefits that might accrue from them seem dubious. Promoters of GM crops believe that the future population of the world cannot be fed without them. That is untrue. The crops that really matter are wheat and rice, and there is no GM research in the pipeline that will seriously affect the yield of either. GM is used to make production cheaper and hence more profitable, which is an extremely questionable ambition.

The precautionary principle provides the world with a very important safeguard. If it had been in place in the past it might, for example, have prevented insouciant miners from polluting major rivers with mercury. We have come to a sorry pass when scientists, who should above all be dispassionate scholars, feel they should misrepresent such a principle for the purposes of commercial and political propaganda. People at large continue to mistrust science and the high technologies it produces partly because they doubt the wisdom of scientists. On such evidence as this, these doubts are fully justified.

For questions 91 – 95, decide whether the following statements are True (T), False (F) or Not Given (NG). Write your answers in the corresponding numbered boxes.

91. The debate's title lacks impartiality.

92. The entirety of the scientists summoned for the debate originated from the medical realm.

93. The underlying message conveyed by the scientists who orchestrated the survey was a social discouragement of risk-taking behaviors.

94. All forty technologies enumerated pose a greater risk compared to their counterparts.

95. The invention of antibiotics justified the associated risks.

For questions 96 – 100, complete the following note using NO MORE THAN THREE WORDS taken from the passage for each blank. Write your answers in the numbered boxes.

When applying the precautionary principle to decide whether to invent a new technology, people should also show the consideration of the (96) _____, along with

the usual consideration of (97) _____. For example, though risky and dangerous enough, people still enjoy (98) _____ for the excitement it provides. On the other hand, experts believe that the future population desperately needs (99) _____ in spite of their undefined risks. However, the researchers conducted so far have not been directed towards increasing the yield of (100) _____, but to reduce the cost of production and to bring more profit out of it. In the end, such selfish use of the precautionary principle for business and political gain has often led people to mistrust science for they believe scientists are not to be trusted.

Your answers:

91.	92.	93.	94.	95.
96.	97.	98.	99.	100.

Part 5. There are five passages marked A, B, C, D, and E. For questions 101-110, read the passages and do the task that follows. Write your answers in the corresponding numbered boxes provided.

Fame and Fortune

Imogen Edwards-Johns interviews some of the new British talent, from poet to pop star, heading for the top.

A Nick Grosso, in his early 30s, is the author of three critically acclaimed plays. He is currently adapting his first play, *Peaches*, into a screenplay. "It's low budget, but we don't know how low", he explains. "It certainly won't be over £30 million, but then it could be 30 quid."

Although obviously gifted, the most extraordinary thing about Nick is that before he wrote *Peaches* he had never been to or read a play in his life. "When I wrote the play, I never even imagined it would get put on", he says. "It's set in a car. I probably wouldn't do that now because I know the logistical problems. I knew absolutely nothing then".

He left school at 16, only to return a year later. After A-levels, he enrolled at the Young People's Theatre. "I realised I wanted to write for actors. I wanted my writing to be heard rather than read because of the rhythm and rhyme," he says. "Suddenly I was surrounded by like-minded people. It was the first time I'd been in an educational environment and actually enjoyed myself. It was very stimulating."

B Comedian Simon Pegg, 28, has come a long way in his career since studying drama at Bristol University. He is currently writing a television comedy series, and has just finished a punishing tour around the country with comedy star Steve Coogan.

He's always worked hard. Even as far back as Bristol, he was honing his art in comedy clubs. "It was very theoretical at university," remembers Simon. "It made me realise I didn't want to be a straight actor and that I'd always been more interested in comedy. People think that comedy is the hardest job in the world and it really isn't. If you've got the courage and you've got good material, it's a wonderful thing to make people laugh."

He has performed with the comic team Funny Business, but it is his relationship with Steve Coogan that has proved the most fruitful. "He saw my show and, as I was a huge fan of his, he could probably see me mimicking him," admits Simon. "It was terrifying the first time I met him but we've become good mates. We have a great rapport. We make each other laugh and it's a really creative atmosphere."

- C** Ciaran McMenamin, 24, came to the public's attention when he disco-danced into their living rooms as the lead in the series *The Young Person's Guide To Becoming A Rock Star*. The critical reaction was extremely positive and his subsequent rise has been meteoric. "It's been a really good showcase for me", he says with a smile. "I'm now in a situation where I can pick and choose what I do, which is what I've always wanted". It is an unusually comfortable position to be in, especially when you consider that he has only just graduated. But glance at Ciaran's early career, and it's obvious such recognition was always on the cards. Encouraged by his mother, he went from playing lead roles at school to the Ulster Youth Theatre, where he stayed for four years. "Basically I was using acting as an excuse not to do homework," laughs Ciaran. "But I suddenly decided I wanted to make a go of it because I had a knack for it, and a passion for it."

Now he is more and less sitting back and waiting for the plaudits to roll in – but ask him what he thinks of the fame game and he suddenly becomes pensive. "When you're 18, you think you'll love the photos and the interviews but you soon realise it's not what you're acting for. It's not about that. It's about getting respect for doing good work."

- D** Neil Taylor, 25, is the lead singer in the pop band Matrix, which has just signed a three-album deal with Domino Records. Neil and the other half of Matrix, Rich Brown, are already tipped to be huge when their single, *Chimera*, is released shortly. "The record company's idea of good sales is very different to mine," he says. "They're talking about smash hit, but I've no idea. For me, if two people buy it, I'll be happy."

Unlike so many new pop sensations, Neil has actually worked very hard for his success. He left school at 16 and has been trying to break into the music business

ever since. “It’s funny how things happen,” he says. “I’d been slogging away doing student gigs for eight years and I was starting to get a bit jaded. I was just about to give up when this happened.” By “this”, he means meeting Rick Brown, who already had contacts at Domino, and forming the Matrix. It couldn’t have happened at a better time. “There were times when I was thoroughly depressed – and I’ve been in some atrocious bands. But hopefully it will all have been worth it.”

E Poet and author Stephen Richards is 27 years old and has won more prizes, awards and academic honours than anyone twice his age. He is already well known on the poetry circuit, where he has been touring and giving several readings a week for the past six years. Now his first novel, *Hidden*, will be published in March. “It’s a story of obsessive love. It was a very strong idea that I couldn’t do as a poem.”

Stephen was a huge fan of creative writing at school, but became disenchanted with education later on. “I decided not to go to university but it wasn’t until I became very bored with stuffing envelopes at a theatre that I decided I should.” After university, he published his first work, a children’s book, in 1992. “I don’t think my parents expected me to be a writer – they always thought I’d be a reader because that’s all I did as a child.” With his poetry receiving such critical acclaim, his move into novels is indeed brave. “There’s a framework with my poetry and less scope for me to do something hideously wrong,” he explains. “Because a novel can be any length of words, there are more words that could be bad words. My main ambition is not to get into a pattern where I’m just churning stuff out without worrying about the quality.”

Which person?

Your answers:

- | | |
|---|------------|
| • says he is keen to avoid producing uninspired work | 101. _____ |
| • admits to making technical errors in his work that he is unlikely to repeat | 102. _____ |
| • disagrees with a commonly held view about the kind of work he does | 103. _____ |
| • surprised the interviewer by his lack of experience at the start of career | 104. _____ |
| • had been trying for a long time to achieve recognition | 105. _____ |
| • is no longer motivated by the same things as when he was younger | 106. _____ |
| • mentions the respect he has for a fellow performer | 107. _____ |
| • is uncertain about the funding he will get for his current work | 108. _____ |

- says he only became committed to his work when he 109. _____
recognised his talents
- was about to abandon his career ambitions at one point 110. _____

Your answers:

101.	102.	103.	104.	105.
106.	107.	108.	109.	110.

IV. WRITING (50 points)

Part 1. The table below shows the distribution of English scores in the National High School Exam in Vietnam from 2023 to 2025.

Summarize the information by selecting and reporting the main features, and make comparisons where relevant.

You should write about 150 words.

Score Range	2023	2024	2025
0 – 1,9 point	0,26%	0,07%	0,07%
2,0 – 4,9 point	62,85%	49,12%	40,97%
5,0 – 6,9 point	15,37%	19,62%	22,16%
7,0 – 10 point	21,52%	31,19%	36,8%
Average Score	3,91	4,36	4,57

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Part 2. Write an essay of 250 words on the following topic:

Ignorance of history and other cultures, together with a lack of critical thinking skills, makes it easier for others to control us.

[illegible]