OLIMPIADA DE LIMBA ENGLEZĂ, ETAPA LOCALĂ
08 FEBRUARIE, 2025
CLASA a X-a, SECȚIUNEA B

Varianta 1

- 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 paragraph below and do the tasks that follow. 20 points

A friend of mine was a penniless student at university in1985 when she started to go out with a man who lived in an oil-rich eastern state. He gave her a mobile phone so that he could contact her at any point of her day directly from his home country. Although none of us had seen a mobile phone before, the **overriding** reaction was, "What a waste of money ringing all that way" as opposed to, "Wow that's brilliant". These telephones have never had the capacity to thrill us in the way that other bits of technology can. Sighs of contempt, rather than envy, would be breathed in all the first-class carriages where mobiles started ringing in the late 1980s.
By the mid 1990s, the mobile was no longer the **preserve** of image- conscious businessmen. Suddenly, it seemed every petty criminal could be seen organizing their dodgy deals as they shouted into stolen ones in the street. It was at this point that I bought a mobile phone. I had been **sneering** for years, but I reasoned that as everyone now had one, surely no one would be offended or irritated by mine.
But I grew to depend on it and constantly checked that I had it, in the way some say habitual smokers keep checking for their cigarettes. And it affected my behaviour. Without the means of ringing before to say that I was going to be late, for example, Would I have set off for my business with so little time to spare? I began to understand how those inexperienced walkers come to call out The Mountain Rescue Team from the top of some perilous peak. Without the false sense of security, the phone in their pocket provided, they wouldn't have gone up there in the first place.
What's more, after a while, I realized that once it has got hold on you, all telephone calls are urgent in exact proportion to the availability of a mobile to announce them. Because our modern lives have so much capacity for urgency, the mobile is turning into an enemy rather than a helpmate. It is enabling us to dash from one activity to another in the mistaken belief that we can still be in touch – with work, with other family members. Yet, although we a re constantly on standby, we are not in a position to be fully engaged with anything else. No mental commitment to the task in hand is possible when the mobile can ring at any moment with another demand for our attention. In this way I began to feel persecuted rather than liberated.

A. Answer the following questions: 8 points

1.According to the writer how did people react when the first telephones were introduced in 1980s?
2.Why did the writer eventually decide to buy a mobile phone?
3. What immediate change did the mobile phone make to her life?
4.Why did she eventually come to resent her mobile phone?

B. Choose the right synonym: 6 points

1. overriding: a. sanctioning b. predominant c. slight d paranoid
2. preserve: a. power b. consent c. entitlement d. prerogative
3. sneer: a. smile contemptuously b. gossip c. hiss d. smile enviously

C. Rephrase the following sentences so as to preserve the meaning: 6 points

1. Some say habitual smokers keep checking for their cigarettes.
Habitual smokers……..…for their cigarettes.
2. He gave her a mobile phone so that he could contact her at any point of her day directly from his home country.
If he …… contacted her at any point of her day directly from his home country.
3. These telephones have never had the capacity to thrill us in the way that other bits of technology can.
Never……..thrill us in the way that other bits of technology can.

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

An unusual hobby for some, mudlarking – looking for rare objects next to a tidal river – is becoming **(1)….INCREASE** popular. The number of people requesting **(2)….PERMIT** from the Port Authority of London to do this reached new highs last year. A recent survey has shown that **(3)….ENTHUSE** are seeing their hobby as a way to **(4)….USE** and recycle old treasures, but, recently, many mudlarkers have seen a **(5)…WORRY** great number of plastic bottles, wet wipes, and plastic bags on the river banks; the **(6)… MISTAKE** signature of today's throwaway society. When the tide goes out, the top layer of shingle appears through a patch of mud. Often, a **(7)…VARY** of washed-up artefacts are revealed. Some may be of historical **(8)..…SIGNIFY** but most are simply bits of **(9) …USE** old junk. However, some of the more valuable items recently discovered on the banks of the River Thames include Victorian china, 16thcentury clay pipe bowls, Medieval pots and Roman roof tiles. From these items, mudlarkers believe they can find out more about their city and raise **(10)…. AWARE** of the issues that many of our rivers are facing – waste and plastic pollution.

III. Read the text below and think of the word which best fits in each gap. Use only one word in each gap. 10 points

Carol La Plant is a San Francisco lawyer. She has suffered stress fractures in both legs and ruptured discs in her lower back which (1.)..... her in bed for two months. She says, "I'm a real kamikaze and run (2)..... the pain. One doctor told me I have the nervous system of a slug." In (3)..... to the physical challenge, Mrs La Plant has problems with her legal colleagues who figure she should be in legal briefs rather than running briefs. Ultrarunners form a closed society. (4)..... the society there is an elite club called the Flatlanders with a membership of about 80 from half-a-dozen different countries. Flatlanders (5).....to run 100 miles in less than 24 hours and re-qualify every year for membership.

SUBIECTUL B – INTEGRATED SKILLS (60 points)

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

I have been asked what I think about the idea of 'Investing in People'. The best answer I can give is that I think that what it tries to achieve – basically making the link between business improvement and focusing on the needs of the people who work for an organisation – is great. My problem is with organisations who subscribe to it as a way to help them 'get better', when they don't bother to understand where they went wrong in the first place. They need to ask what explicit and implicit policies and procedures they have in place that prevent their people from being able to do the right thing for the right reasons.

I am sure that there are managers out there who don't know any better, and assume that to manage they simply need to put pressure on their people to perform. But people don't demonstrate high performance because they are told to. They do it because they see the need to do it, and make the choice to do so. They do it because they are connected to the business goals and they see how their contributions can help achieve them. Such managers may tell themselves they can put a 'tick' in the 'we care about people' box. But simply putting ticks in boxes is no good if it doesn't reflect reality.

I know of a company that was so concerned that its people were doing the 'right thing' that it put in place a series of metrics to measure their effectiveness. So far, so good. But one of the objectives – making successful sales calls – manifested itself in the metric 'Number of potential customers seen in one day'. The sales people obviously focused their efforts on going from one customer's office to another, and not on closing deals. Instead of the employees becoming more effective, they focused on getting the boxes ticked. Good intent; poor thinking.

Another company wanted to improve the speed with which it was able to introduce new products. Competition was beating it to the market place, and consequently the company was losing market share. Senior management sent out the message to reduce the time spent in getting products into customers' hands, with the explanation that they couldn't afford delays. This was a relatively easy task, especially since the time spent testing the products was cut in half to accomplish the time reduction. The result was new products were introduced in less time than those of the competition – but soon rejected by customers for poor quality. Good intent; reckless implementation.

A third company I know is trying hard to help employees see that they have some control over their future. The company instituted a programme with a title like 'Creating our own future' or something like that. A good idea; get the people involved in the future of the company. But instead of the employees becoming motivated to contribute, they saw it as a hollow exercise on the part of

senior management who, in the past, had paid little attention to anything other than getting the job done so they could report great earnings. Yes, the programme was a big 'tick the box' effort, but that was all it was in the minds of the people that it was designed for.

A final example is of a company that brought in one of these 'Investing in People' programmes to change the way the company was run. Assessors were running around like crazy, helping managers examine how they managed. They told managers how they could manage better. And when the programme was over, the company was able to say they had done it – it had invested in its people and life was now good. But the managers simply went back to business as usual. After all, the assessors were gone, and they had targets to hit.

All these examples are representative of senior management who see the need to improve things in their organisation, but don't see how to do it. For a start, a programme targeted at improving things is only as good as management's ability to motivate their people. And when the employees simply see the programme as a box-ticking exercise, then it's hopeless.

1 The writer thinks that putting the concept of 'Investing in People' into practice

A. frequently results in confusion among the people it is supposed to help.
B. involves more effort than some organisations are prepared to make.
C. may create problems where previously there had not been any problems.
D. is something that some organisations should not attempt to do.

2 The writer's main point in the second paragraph is that the performance of employees

A. may be very good even if management is poor.
B. cannot be accurately measured by any box-ticking exercise.
C. is related to their knowledge of the organisation as a whole.
D. is not as unpredictable as some managers believe it to be.

3 What point does the writer make about the first company he describes?

A. It was not really interested in measuring the effectiveness of employees.
B. The targets that it set for staff were unrealistic.
C. It failed to understand the real needs of its employees.
D. The data that it collected did not measure what it was supposed to measure.

4 What point does the writer make about the second company he describes?

A. It made what should have been an easy task into a complicated one.
B. It failed to foresee the consequences of an instruction.
C. It misunderstood why a new approach was required.
D. It refused to take into account the views of employees.

5 What does the writer say about the programme introduced by the third company he mentions?

A. Employees did not believe that it had been introduced for their benefit.
B. Employees felt that it was in fact a way of making their jobs even
C. The reason given for introducing it was not the real reason why it was introduced.
D. It was an inappropriate kind of programme for this particular organisation.

II You are part of a youth committee discussing facilities available for students in your school.

Your report should address the following questions:

- What issues are there in your school regarding classrooms?
- What places for spending school breaks do students have?
- How do these facilities impact the students?

Write your report in 200-220 words in an appropriate style. **50 points**