OLIMPIADA DE LIMBA ENGLEZĂ, ETAPA LOCALĂ

28 FEBRUARIE, 2026

CLASA a X-a, SECȚIUNEA B

Varianta 1

Notă: Toate subiectele sunt obligatorii. Se acordă 10 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.

When the first social media platforms emerged in the early 2000s, they were **heralded** as the ultimate tools for democratic liberation. We believed that by connecting the world, we would inevitably foster greater understanding and empathy. However, the initial **euphoria** has largely been eclipsed by a more cynical reality. Rather than a global village, the digital landscape has often felt more like a fragmented battlefield. The overriding sentiment among early adopters wasn't one of caution, but a naive "the more, the merrier" approach to digital connections. We didn't realise that these platforms were designed not just for connection, but for extraction—monetising our attention through carefully calibrated algorithms.

By the 2010s, the smartphone had become an anatomical extension of the human body. It was no longer a tool we used, but an environment we inhabited. I stayed away from the most intrusive apps for years, dismissing them as the preserve of the narcissistic or the bored. I sneered at the idea that I could ever be manipulated by a simple notification. Yet, I eventually succumbed when I realised that being "off-grid" was starting to look like a professional **liability**. I told myself it was for networking, but soon I found myself scrolling mindlessly at three in the morning, seeking a dopamine hit from strangers' approval.

The turning point came when I realised I had lost the capacity for "deep work." My attention span had been shredded into thousand-piece fragments. I grew to resent the device that sat like a silent taskmaster on my desk. I began to understand that true freedom in the modern age isn't the ability to stay connected, but the power to disconnect without anxiety. Without a conscious effort to reclaim our mental space, the technology that was supposed to empower us will continue to diminish us. We are currently on standby for a world that doesn't actually need us to be there 24/7.

A. Answer the following questions. (8 points)

1. According to the writer, how has the perception of social media changed since its inception?
2. What was the writer's original attitude toward people who used intrusive apps?
3. Why did the writer eventually feel forced to join these digital platforms?
4. What does the writer identify as the "turning point" in their relationship with technology?

B. Choose the right synonym. (6 points)

1. **heralded:** a. ignored b. criticised c. acclaimed d. delayed
2. **euphoria:** a. elation b. boredom c. suspicion d. clarity
3. **liability:** a. asset b. disadvantage c. requirement d. achievement

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

1. We didn't realise that these platforms were designed for extraction.

   Little……. that these platforms were designed for extraction.

2. Without a conscious effort to reclaim our mental space, the technology will continue to diminish us.

   The technology ..... if we were to make a conscious effort to reclaim our mental space.

3. These platforms are monetising our attention through carefully calibrated algorithms.

Through carefully calibrated algorithms, ... by these platforms.

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

The (1)…….. **AVAILABLE** of renewable energy sources has become a global priority. While many countries have made (2)…….. **CONSIDER** progress in wind and solar power, there is still a high level of (3)…….. **DEPEND** on fossil fuels. Experts argue that our current (4)…….. **CONSUME** patterns are simply (5)…….. **SUSTAIN** in the long term.

To combat this, (6)…….. **INVENT** are looking for ways to improve the (7)…….. **EFFICIENT** of electric car batteries. One of the main (8)…….. **ADVANTAGE** for many people is the (9)…….. **SCARCE** of charging stations in rural areas. However, with (10)…….. **SUBSTANCE** investment, we may see a revolution in how we power our lives.

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)

The city of Venice is famous (1)..... its beautiful canals and historic architecture. However, the city is currently facing a serious threat from rising sea levels. (2)..... to scientists, Venice could be underwater by the end of the century if nothing is done to stop the flooding. In an effort to save the city, engineers have designed a massive barrier system (3)..... is intended to hold back the tide. (4)..... the high cost of the project, many residents believe it is the only way to protect their homes. Only time will tell (5)..... the barriers will be enough to preserve the city for future generations.

SUBIECTUL B – INTEGRATED SKILLS (50 points)
Read the text below and do the tasks that follow.

THE SILENT ARCHITECTS OF FLAVOUR

The culinary world is often described as a creative sanctuary, where chefs follow their instincts to craft dishes that reflect local heritage and personal flair. Or so the myth suggests. While this artisanal approach may have defined kitchens in the past, much of the modern food industry is now governed by precise chemical formulas and logistical efficiency. The nutritional needs of consumers are still listed on every package, but processed foods are primarily engineered with a singular objective in mind—shelf-life. The result of this is that the dominant influences in food production are those of food scientists and marketing executives, for whom a product functions according to its ability to remain stable during long-distance shipping. Younger culinary students, however, are often dismissed as idealistic when they challenge these industrial standards.

The Gastronomy Collective, a research institute, is seeking to overhaul this system. Its director, Dr. Aris Thorne, argues that the future of food must prioritise "sensory biodiversity" rather than just caloric output. "My family moved between rural farming communities and massive industrial cities when I was a child," he explains. He recalls that whenever he tasted a mass-produced version of a local fruit years later, he was frustrated by how industrial farming failed to preserve the complex flavour profiles of the original. For example, there was an increased focus on the durability of the fruit's skin to prevent bruising during transport, but whom does this really benefit? Generally, these traits serve the retailers and distributors, neither of whom prioritise the actual taste experience of the person eating it.

Thorne was determined to integrate traditional farming wisdom into modern food technology. Initially, he found inspiration in *Seed Savers*, a global network that allows amateur gardeners to document and trade rare plant species via a digital database. He noticed the way in which teenagers were able to cultivate, categorise, and cross-breed forgotten varieties of vegetables in their own backyards, visualising a more colourful food future without being deterred by the high costs of commercial farming. This is in sharp contrast to the way in which industrial agriculturists operate—bound by patent laws, monoculture requirements, and predicted profit margins.

Once Thorne began interviewing young agricultural students, he realised how revolutionary their perspectives could be. He asked them what flaws they saw in the current food system and what innovations they would propose. There were some common requests, such as increasing the availability of vertical indoor farms. But they also raised some sophisticated points that even he had overlooked. For instance, many companies have spent millions developing meat alternatives, but the goal is often to mimic the exact texture of beef to appease traditional meat-eaters—and here lies the flaw. As his interviewees explained, this often leads to a reliance on highly processed binders and additives, which, in their view, defeats the purpose of moving toward a more natural, plant-based diet.

Thorne also noted that the young researchers he spoke to prioritised the restoration of "soil health" over chemical fertilisation. Sometimes, they would provide him with intricate plans for "closed-loop" farms where waste is recycled into energy. At other times, their suggestions

were based on the work of Maria-Helena Semedo, the leading advocate for sustainable soil management whose research many of the students had utilised in their university projects. After Thorne conducted his own investigation into Semedo's findings, he was completely persuaded that the students' focus on the "ground-up" health of the planet was the only viable path forward.

The "industrial" approach to food occurs when corporate boards dictate the global diet, whereas the "regenerative" approach requires the active participation of local producers. There is a strong argument that, as Thorne puts it, "you have to get your hands dirty, understand the biology of the land, and force the giants of the industry to listen." While it would be unwise to ignore the logistical capabilities of large corporations, this type of grassroots passion is an equally essential tool. He is now presenting his data to international food summits, hoping to convince them that his findings are the most critical factor in the long-term physical health of the global population.

I. For each question choose the correct letter A, B, C or D (5 x 1p= 5p)

1. How did Thorne feel when tasting mass-produced food from his childhood?
A. impressed by the consistency of the flavours across different regions.
B. annoyed that the physical durability of the food was prioritised over its taste.
C. worried that the fruit was becoming too expensive for local families.
D. confused by the new technology used to grow the produce.
2. In the third paragraph, what is Thorne's main observation about the young gardeners?
A. their ability to use digital databases to track commercial profits.
B. their talent for following complex patent laws in agriculture.
C. their imaginative and unrestricted approach to plant cultivation.
D. their preference for traditional farming over modern technology.
3. In the fourth paragraph, the writer suggests that Thorne
A. believes meat alternatives are the only solution to the food crisis.
B. was surprised by the young students' critique of processed ingredients.
C. thought the students were focused too much on the texture of food.
D. felt that large companies were spending their money effectively.
4. In the fifth paragraph, the writer shows that Thorne felt
A. validated in his beliefs after researching the work of an expert.
B. disappointed that the students relied so heavily on university projects.
C. concerned about the high costs of building closed-loop farms.
D. inspired to teach the students more about chemical fertilisation.
5. The writer makes the point that the future of food should
A. be managed exclusively by the corporate boards of large companies.
B. combine the logistical power of corporations with grassroots insights.
C. ignore the technical expertise of traditional food scientists.
D. focus primarily on the speed of international shipping.

II. Starting from the text above, write a *report* on the following topic:

You are a member of the school's **Green Club**. Following several complaints from students, you have been asked by the Headmaster to write a **report** on the quality of food in the school cafeteria and its effects on the student body.

Your report should address the following points:

- The current state of the food served.
- The impact of these dietary options on students' physical health and concentration.
- Recommendations for involving local producers and improving meal quality.

Write your report in 200-220 words in an appropriate style. (45 points)