

OLIMPIADA NAȚIONALĂ DE LIMBA ENGLEZĂ
Clasa a XI-a / Secțiunea B
Varianta nr. 1
ETAPA LOCALĂ – 7 februarie 2026

- Toate subiectele sunt obligatorii.
- Se acordă 10 puncte din oficiu.
- Timpul efectiv de lucru este de 180 minute.

SUBIECTUL A – USE OF ENGLISH (40 points)

I. Read the paragraph below and do the tasks that follow.

10 points

Being a hostage

(This extract is from a book called *Bel Canto* by Ann Patchett. In the story so far, kidnappers in a Spanish-speaking country in Latin America have taken a number of people hostage. One of these is Mr Hosokawa, the Chief Executive Officer of a big Japanese company, Nansei. Mr Hosokawa loves opera, which has inspired him to try to learn Italian in the past. Another hostage, Gen, is Mr Hosokawa's translator.)

But in this vast ocean of time Mr Hosokawa could not seem to startle up any **concern** for Nansei. While he stared at the weather he never wondered if his **abduction** had affected stock prices. He did not care who was making his decisions, sitting at his desk. The company that had been his life, his son, had fallen away from him as thoughtlessly as a coin is dropped from the pocket of his tuxedo jacket. He took a small spiral notebook and, after inquiring as to the correct spelling from Gen, added the word *garúa*, mist, to his list. **Incentive** was key. No matter how many times Mr Hosokawa had listened to his Italian tapes in Japan he could remember nothing that was on them. No sooner had he heard the beautiful words, *dimora*, *patrono*, than they vanished from memory. But after only one week of captivity look at all the Spanish he had learned! *Ahora* was now; *sentarse*, sit; *ponerse de pie*, stand up; *sueño*, sleep, and *reguete buno* was very good, but it was always spoken with a certain coarseness and condescension that told the listener not that he had done well but that he was too stupid to merit high expectations. And it wasn't just the language that had to be overcome, there were all the names to learn as well, those of the hostages, those of the captors when you could get one of them to tell you his name. The people were from so many different countries that there were no easy tricks of association, no familiar toehold from which to pull oneself up. The room was full of men he did not know and should know, though they all smiled and nodded to one another. He would have to work harder to introduce himself. At Nansei he had made a point of learning the names of as many of his employees as was possible. He remembered the names of the businessmen he entertained and the names of their wives whom he inquired after and never met.

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

3 points

- | | | | | |
|---------------------|---------------|--------------|--------------|-------------------|
| 1. concern | a) worry | b) interest | c) care | d) responsibility |
| 2. abduction | a) ransom | b) snatch | c) hijacking | d) kidnapping |
| 3. incentive | a) motivation | b) sweetener | c) deterrent | d) improvement |

B. Rephrase the following sentences so as to preserve the meaning.

Use the word given WITHOUT changing it.

3 points

1. No sooner had he heard the beautiful words than they vanished from memory. **HARDLY**
He had they vanished from memory.
2. He was too stupid to merit high expectations. **THAT**
Such didn't merit high expectations.
3. He did not care who was making his decisions. **CARE**
Little was making his decisions.

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

captor, communal, help, survival, useful, hostage, dead, forgetful

Taken ____ (1), Mr Hosokawa becomes detached from his business life and focuses on learning language. Once ____ (2) with Italian, he quickly absorbs Spanish words, names and commands. Memory becomes ____ (3), replacing corporate concerns, as captivity forces him to relearn attentiveness, humility and effort among strangers while adapting to ____ (4) life.

II. For questions 1-5, think of one word which can be used appropriately in all three sentences. Write only the missing word on your answer sheet.

10 points

1. Sometimes it is better not to tell the truth if someone is likely to be ... unnecessarily.
Considering how many vehicles were involved, it seems miraculous that no one was ... in the accident.
It won't ... if you don't have time to iron the sheets after they've been washed.
2. The judge had a very ... sense of humour, which often surprised people as he looked so serious.
Don't walk on the path until the concrete is
If you wash your hair too frequently, it may become very ... and lose all its shine.
3. The President's 70th birthday was ... by a parade followed by a gala dinner in the evening.
I've ... the places we should visit on the map.
At the weekend, the teacher ... over 50 essays and prepared his lessons for the following week.
4. These tiny reptiles can shoot poison into your ... from up to three metres away.
Never before has the ascent of this formidable mountain been attempted from the north ... in winter.
The history lecturer didn't want to lose ... by admitting he didn't know the answer.
5. I'm not sure if I can park the car in that small space but I'll have a ... at it.
A great roar went up from the crowd as the champion played a magnificent ... and won the tennis match.
All news photographers dream of taking the perfect ... that will make them famous.

III. Translate the following text into English.

20 points

Când a auzit ușa de la baie închizându-se, Pavel sări din pat și răsuflă adânc, liber, ca și cum s-ar fi temut până atunci să respire în voie. De aproape zece minute se preface că doarme, acoperindu-și fața cu brațul și respirând lent, ritmat, ferindu-se să atragă atenția femeii. Cum a simțit că se coboară din pat, inima începu să îi bată: va putea rămâne câteva minute singur? În după amiezele acestea de dragoste, dorea și aștepta singurătatea cu o neliniște bolnăvicioasă; un minut de libertate i se părea neprețuită fericire; încerca atunci să se regăsească, să viseze. Nu știa ce să facă mai întâi; să se întindă grotesc, copilărește, să-și rezeme picioarele de perete visând în voie, să privească prin perdelele albe în stradă și dincolo, în casa cu ziduri înalte. Minutele acestea nu se asemănau cu nicio altă singurătate; erau parcă o oază într-un deșert de pasiune, de plăcută oboseală și inutilă ardere. Avea, altădată, ceasuri și nopți întregi de libertate, era atunci singur și putea face orice; dar singurătatea aceea adesea îl deprimea, îl chinuia cu golurile ei, era o libertate de care nu-și dădea seama, pe care nu o putea prețui.

(Mircea Eliade – *Întoarcerea din rai*)

SUBIECTUL B – INTEGRATED SKILLS (50 points)

I. Five paragraphs have been removed from the following text. Choose from the paragraphs A-F the one which fits each gap 1-5. There is one extra paragraph which you do not need to use. Write your answer on your answer sheet.

25 points

The Modern Adventurer

A real adventure is hard to find these days, says Ed Douglas. It seems that the only things left to explore are marketing opportunities.

I have never met Kevin Foster and know virtually nothing about him, but he has my admiration. Not because he's visited the summit of the highest mountain in each of the fifty states in the US bar one. Not even because he did it on a bicycle.

... (1)

Such candour is rare in the increasingly narcissistic world of the modern adventurer. In a desperate need to find new 'firsts' to tempt sponsors to part with their cash, the idea of what constitutes a worthwhile achievement has been stretched beyond reason.

... (2)

Paying for it, on the other hand, is a mountain in itself. That's why the folk who do these things spend more time thinking about marketing strategies and making their websites attractive than they do thinking about tundra and icebergs. An ascent of Everest can cost up to US\$70,000; a trip to Antarctica even more. So it's not surprising that they needed to find some new angle to tempt sponsors into handing over the dough.

... (3)

The adventurer's grand slam, as he termed it, involved climbing the highest mountain on each of the seven continents, taking in both Poles, North and South, on the way. Children the world over had the chance to watch his progress on television or the internet, while he criticized other famous adventurers for being 'too professional'. Climbing those summits, first done in 1986 by Texan oil magnate Dick Bass, is now considered no great challenge by itself. Most of the peaks involve little more than a stiff walk. But few people understand that, least of all the television people who allow the self-publicists seemingly endless airtime in which to promote their sponsors.

Apart from the micro-distinctions, there are other tricks the adventurers use to get our attention. For decades, explorers have been reliving the journeys of the past in a sort of adventure heritage experience, and now we even have re-creations of re-creations.

... (4)

Then there are those who go on adventures to raise money for charity, people who, unlike Kevin Foster, don't accept the idea that what they are doing is ridiculous. These heroes raise money for good causes to give their exotic holiday moral legitimacy. Some people walk across South America for children's charities, others without nearby mountains to climb settle for abseiling off the highest building in their town for the local hospital's scanner appeal. No exploit is quite so outlandish, however, as that of the team from Idaho who were desperate to bring attention to the plight of the sockeye salmon, a fish whose numbers have fallen dramatically in recent years. They slithered 739 km down the Snake River, imitating the journey of the juvenile salmon, which has become, according to their human champions, more hazardous than it used to be.

With a similar commitment to environmental causes, there is a growing band of adventurers who have a genuine concern for the future of the planet. Scores of do-gooders, for example, have trudged up to the foot of Everest, intent on clearing the mountain of the tons of garbage left behind by previous expeditions.

... (5)

In the same way, the sight of a minor celebrity climbing aboard a hot-air balloon for another abbreviated flight does make a welcome change from reading about all the usual unpleasant wars and disasters. And I, for one, plan to become part of this new wave of optimism. As far as I'm aware, no one has crossed the Sahara on a pogo stick. This could be a real opportunity. Anyone want to sponsor me?

A The maestro of this new strategy is David Hempleman-Adams, who made a fortune from glue and then used his millions to stick together old challenges done years ago to make a new, big one – which he sold to national newspapers and a broadcasting company.

B Somewhat at odds with this, they then go on to write the inevitable book based on the trip's hairier moments. There's quite a living to be made, I'm told, ghost writing for those amongst the intrepid who find their stamina flagging a little when faced with a blank page and a tight deadline.

C In 1947, for example, Thor Heyerhahl sailed the Pacific Ocean in his balsawood boat, the Kon-Tiki, to repeat the voyage of South American Incas centuries before. Some fifty years later, the Spanish explorer Kitin Munoz made a number of attempts to repeat that same crossing.

D Their efforts are widely publicized by press releases and photo calls, but usually end up generating more stuff than they remove. Nevertheless, such an enterprise allows not only the participants, but also those back home to feel much better about themselves.

E The Americans have a word for it – 'micro-distinction'. Everest may have been climbed a thousand times, but not by a pensioner without oxygen walking backwards and wearing a bobble hat. That challenge remains. The uncomfortable truth for latter-day explorers is that getting to the world's more remote corners is no longer that difficult.

F He gets my vote as, unlike most modern 'explorers', he understood the value of his achievement. 'It was ridiculous,' he later said. 'That's why I did it, and I wanted the publicity.'

II. Starting from the text above, write an article in which to explain how excessive publicity has influenced people's lives nowadays. Write your *article* in 220-260 words. 25 points

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BAREM DE CORECTARE

SUBIECTUL A – USE OF ENGLISH (40 points)

I.A 1b 2d 3a **3 items * 1 point = 3 points**

I.B 1 hardly heard the beautiful words when
2 was his stupidity **that** he
3 did he **care** who **3 items * 1 point = 3 points**

I.C 1 hostage 2 forgetful 3 survival 4 communal **4 items * 1 point = 4 points**

II. 1 hurt 2 dry 3 marked 4 face 5 shot **5 items * 2 points = 10 points**

III. Suggested answer: **20 points**

When he heard the bathroom door close, Pavel sprang out of bed and drew a deep, unrestrained breath, as though until that moment he had been afraid to breathe freely. For nearly ten minutes he feigned sleep, his arm draped over his face, his breathing slow and measured, careful not to attract the woman's attention. When he sensed her slipping out of bed, his heart began to race: would he be granted a few minutes alone? In these love-filled afternoons, he longed for solitude and awaited it with a kind of morbid restlessness. A single minute of freedom seemed an incomparable joy. In those moments he tried to return to himself, to drift into dreams. He did not know what to do first: to stretch out awkwardly, childlike, to brace his feet against the wall and abandon himself to idle reverie, to peer through the white curtains into the street and beyond, toward the house with its tall walls. These moments were unlike any other solitude. They were an oasis in a desert of passion, of sweet exhaustion and futile burning. Once, he had known entire hours and nights of freedom; he had been alone then, able to do anything. Yet that solitude often weighed on him, tormenting him with its emptiness—it was a freedom he scarcely recognized, one he could not appreciate.

Any other correct version is to be taken into consideration.

Grammar structures: 10 points

Vocabulary: 6 points

Fluency: 4 points

SUBIECTUL B – INTEGRATED SKILLS (50 points)

I. 1F 2E 3A 4C 5D **5 items * 5 points = 25 points**

II. Marking scheme **25 points**

The number of points will be divided by 2.

MARKING SCHEME - ARTICLE

Analytical criteria	Excellent 10p	Good 8p	Adequate 6p	Weak 4p	Inadequate 2p	Task not attempted 0p
Task achievement	The content of the article/ editorial is completely relevant to the task, fully responding to its requirements; the format of the article/ editorial is fully observed; a title, introduction and conclusion are present.	The article/ editorial covers the requirements of the task but the key ideas could be better substantiated; the format of the article/ editorial is observed; a title, introduction, and conclusion are present but not fully linked to the topic	The article/ editorial addresses the requirements of the task but not all key ideas are relevant; there is a title but the introduction or the conclusion may be missing	The article/ editorial does not cover the requirements of the task; the title/ introduction/ conclusion are missing or totally irrelevant; many irrelevant details are included	The article/ editorial does not relate to the task	
Organization and cohesion	There is a logical progression throughout; the paragraphs are well built, well extended; the topic sentence is clear; a wide range of cohesive devices is used effectively.	There is a logical progression although minor inconsistencies are possible; the paragraphs are well built but could be more extended or balanced; a range of cohesive devices is used effectively.	The text is generally coherent but the internal organization of some paragraphs may be faulty; the topic sentence is not always clear or may be missing; cohesive devices are present but sometimes they are not accurate.	There is serious inconsistency in the organization of the text; the sequencing of ideas can be followed with difficulty; paragraphing may be missing; cohesive devices are limited or most of them are faulty.	The text is not logically organized and does not convey a message; no control of cohesive devices.	
VOCABULARY	A wide range of vocabulary is used appropriately and accurately; precise meaning is conveyed; minor errors are rare; spelling is very well controlled; the register is appropriate throughout.	A range of vocabulary is used appropriately and accurately; occasional errors in word choice/ formation are possible; spelling is well controlled with occasional slips; the register is appropriate, although minor inconsistencies are possible	The range of vocabulary is adequate; errors in word choice/ formation are present when more sophisticated items of vocabulary are attempted; spelling can be faulty at times; there are inconsistencies in register.	A limited range of vocabulary is present; less common items of vocabulary are rare and may be often faulty; spelling errors can make text understanding difficult; there are major inconsistencies in register.	A very narrow range of vocabulary is present; errors in word choice/formation predominate; spelling errors make the text obscure at times.	
STRUCTURES	A wide range of grammatical structures is used accurately and flexibly; minor errors are rare; punctuation is very well controlled.	A range of grammatical structures is used accurately and with some flexibility; occasional errors are possible; punctuation is well controlled with occasional slips.	A mix of complex and simple grammatical structures is present; errors are present when complex language is attempted; punctuation can be faulty at times.	A limited range of grammatical structures is present; complex language is rare and may be often faulty; punctuation errors can make text understanding difficult.	A very narrow range of grammatical structures is present; errors predominate; punctuation errors make the text obscure at times.	
EFFECT ON TARGET READER	The interest of the reader is aroused and sustained throughout.	The text has a good effect on the reader.	The effect on the reader is satisfactory.	The text has not a relevant effect on the reader.	The text has a negative effect on the reader.	