BRAINIACS OLYMPIAD

# 3RD BRAINIACS OLYMPIAD

SHAPE DISCIPLINES - ENGLISH

CATEGORY 4 (GRADES 9–10)

**PRELIMINARY ROUND**

**SAMPLE 2**



**50 questions; 75 minutes; 100 points; no negative marking.**

All questions are multiple-choice or multiple-response questions and are automatically marked. The number in square brackets after each question number indicates the point value of the question: [1] Easy, [2] Normal, [3] Difficult.

**Part A: Grammar in Context (Questions 1–15) — 30 points**

Section A1.

Choose the correct answer.

**1.** [1] Not until the following morning _____ that the keys were missing.

a) we did realise  b) we realised  c) did we realise  d) had we realise

**2.** [1] _____ in 1890, the bridge still carries heavy traffic.

a) To build  b) It built  c) Built  d) Building

**3.** [1] I remember _____ the letter, but I cannot find it now.

a) posting  b) to post  c) post  d) posted

**4.** [1] The candidate _____ to have worked abroad for a decade.

a) is saying  b) says  c) has said  d) is said

**5.** [2] If she had taken the earlier train, she _____ here by now.

a) is  b) would be  c) will be  d) had been

**6.** [2] He is the only one of the applicants who _____ the language fluently.

a) speaks  b) are speaking  c) speak  d) have spoken

**7.** [2] The council denied _____ the residents about the closure.

a) to inform  b) having informed  c) that informing  d) informed

**8.** [3] Little _____ that the decision would be reversed within a week.

a) had they suspect  b) did they suspect  c) they suspected  d) they did suspect

**9.** [3] The scheme is far from perfect; _____, it is better than nothing.

a) despite  b) whereas  c) that said  d) even so far

Section A2.

Read the text and choose the correct answer for each gap.

The last video rental shop in our city closed in March. It had survived on customers (10) _____ wanted what streaming did not carry. Mr Okonkwo kept a card index, (11) _____ he insisted beat any database. (12) _____ the shelves were emptied, he gave it to the library, (13) _____ it sits in a case. Had he been asked ten years earlier, he (14) _____ have refused. He does not miss the shop, but he misses (15) _____ asked for advice.

**10.** [1] a) who  b) whose  c) whom  d) which

**11.** [2] a) that  b) what  c) who  d) which

**12.** [2] a) Unless  b) Once  c) Whereas  d) Until

**13.** [3] a) which  b) in that  c) there  d) where

**14.** [3] a) would  b) should  c) had  d) will

**15.** [3] a) to be  b) been  c) be  d) being

**Part B: Vocabulary and Collocation (Questions 16–31) — 32 points**

Section B1.

Choose the correct answer.

**16.** [1] What is the opposite of deliberate?

a) considerable  b) reluctant  c) accidental  d) occasional

**17.** [1] Which word describes an argument with no weak points?

a) one-sided  b) far-fetched  c) long-winded  d) watertight

**18.** [1] Which of these is a stage in a legal process?

a) invoice  b) appeal  c) deposit  d) premises

**19.** [1] Which word means the money set aside for a project?

a) fine  b) budget  c) profit  d) wage

**20.** [2] The two accounts of the evening simply do not _____ up.

a) make  b) put  c) add  d) keep

**21.** [2] Which word is out of place in this group?

a) drought  b) hurricane  c) blizzard  d) verdict

**22.** [2] The minister was forced to _____ down after the report was published.

a) hold  b) step  c) put  d) take

**23.** [2] Her objection was _____ a misunderstanding of the figures.

a) founded of  b) grounded to  c) based on  d) built from

**24.** [3] The two studies reached _____ different conclusions.

a) markedly  b) heavily  c) deeply  d) sharply enough

**25.** [3] Which two words could replace each other?

a) tentative – provisional  b) candid – evasive  c) lucrative – costly  d) prudent – reckless

**26.** [3] The evidence is suggestive, but it falls short of being _____.

a) consecutive  b) considerate  c) conclusive  d) conducive

Section B2.

Choose the correct meaning of each word.

**27.** [1] obsolete

a) produced in very small numbers only

b) no longer used, having been replaced

c) difficult for beginners to operate

d) extremely expensive to repair or replace

**28.** [2] mitigate

a) to make something bad less severe

b) to divide a cost between parties

c) to delay a decision deliberately

d) to prove that something is entirely false

**29.** [2] unprecedented

a) never having happened before

b) agreed on by everybody

c) impossible to measure accurately

d) repeated at regular intervals

**30.** [3] back up

a) to punish somebody for a mistake

b) to explain something in detail

c) to withdraw an earlier offer

d) to show that somebody was right

**31.** [3] arbitrary

a) impossible to change once it is made

b) settled by a vote of everybody involved

c) based on long experience of the work

d) decided by personal choice, not by rule

**Part C: Reading — Locating Detail (Questions 32–40) — 16 points**

Read the text and answer the questions.

> Between 1911 and 1958, the keepers of a rock lighthouse off the Atlantic coast kept a daily logbook, and every volume survives. The entries are not what a modern reader expects. Weather and shipping occupy a line each; the rest of the page is taken up with the ordinary business of the rock — a broken hinge, a delivery of paraffin, the number of eggs the hens produced. Historians ignored the volumes for decades, on the reasonable grounds that nothing of importance had happened there. Then, in 2011, a marine biologist looking for something else noticed that the keepers had recorded, without being asked to, the date each spring when the first swifts appeared over the rock. There are forty-two such dates, in eleven different handwritings. Nobody had instructed the keepers to write them down and nobody, until 2011, had read them. Put on a graph, the

dates move earlier by roughly nine days across the half-century the logbooks cover, which matches what has since been found elsewhere. The biologist's paper is careful about what this does and does not prove. What interests her more, she has said, is the question of what else is sitting unread in the drawers of small museums.

**32.** [1] Over what period were the logbooks kept?

a) 1958 to 2011  b) 1890 to 1958  c) 1911 to 1958  d) 1911 to 2011

**33.** [1] How much space do weather and shipping take in an entry?

a) half the page  b) a page each  c) a line each  d) no space at all

**34.** [1] Who noticed the swift dates?

a) a librarian  b) a marine biologist  c) a historian  d) one of the keepers

**35.** [2] Why had historians ignored the volumes?

a) Earlier researchers had already used them all.

b) The volumes were not publicly available.

c) The handwriting was impossible to read.

d) They assumed nothing important happened there.

**36.** [2] How many swift dates are recorded?

a) forty-two  b) nine  c) eleven  d) fifty-eight

**37.** [2] What can reasonably be inferred from "in eleven different handwritings"?

a) Only eleven of the recorded dates are legible.

b) Eleven people were on the rock at once.

c) A succession of keepers continued the record.

d) The entries were copied out eleven times.

**38.** [2] What did the graph of the dates show?

a) The dates vary randomly from year to year.

b) The dates moved earlier by about nine days.

c) The number of swifts has fallen by nine per cent.

d) The keepers recorded the dates for nine years only.

**39.** [2] How does the biologist describe her own findings?

a) cautiously  b) as conclusive proof  c) as a minor curiosity  d) with disappointment

**40.** [3] What is the point of her closing question?

a) Historians were wrong to trust the keepers.

b) Small museums should be given more funding.

c) The logbooks should be returned to the lighthouse.

d) Other unexamined records may hold similar evidence.

**Part D: Reading — Main Idea and Inference (Questions 41–50) — 22 points**

Read the text and answer the questions.

Multiple Response: Select all correct choices. Points are awarded only if all correct answers and no incorrect answers are selected.

> In 2003 a Dutch town redesigned its busiest junction. The traffic lights went, and so did the road markings, most of the kerbs and most of the signs. The idea, which its designer called shared space, was that drivers who are given no instructions have to negotiate with the people around them, and that negotiation is safer than obedience.
> The results were widely reported and widely misreported. Traffic through the junction moved more quickly, because vehicles no longer queued at a red light with nothing coming the other way. Serious injuries fell. What did not happen was the collapse into chaos that opponents had predicted, and this was the part that travelled: for a decade afterwards, shared space was presented in the press as a solution looking for a town.
> The complications took longer to emerge, and they were not about cars. Blind and partially sighted people rely on the kerb to know where the pavement ends, and on a controlled crossing to know when it is safe to step out. A junction that works through eye contact does not work for somebody who cannot make it. Campaigners in Britain took the argument to government and to the courts, and several schemes were altered or abandoned.
> Both things are true, which is the awkward part. The evidence that removing instructions can calm traffic is real, and so is the evidence that it transfers the cost of that calm onto the people least able to carry it. The town itself has kept its junction and added a signalled crossing beside it — a compromise that nobody designed and everybody, in the end, could live with.

**41.** [1] What is the writer's main purpose?

a) to argue that traffic lights should be removed everywhere

b) to describe how a Dutch town rebuilt its main junction

c) to show that a known success story is more complicated

d) to criticise the press for inventing the whole story

**42.** [1] What did the town remove in 2003?

a) the junction itself and the road running beside it

b) only the traffic lights at the junction

c) the pavements and the crossings nearby

d) the lights, markings and most kerbs and signs

**43.** [2] Why did traffic move more quickly?

a) The junction was widened at the same time as well.

b) Fewer drivers used the junction afterwards.

c) Vehicles no longer waited at empty red lights.

d) The speed limit was raised for that street.

**44.** [2] What does the writer mean by “a solution looking for a town”?

a) The idea was sold before anyone asked where it fitted.

b) The designer travelled abroad to sell it.

c) No town was willing to try it at first.

d) Several towns competed with each other to adopt the scheme.

**45.** [2] Which part of the story “travelled”?

a) that campaigners went to court in Britain

b) that the predicted disaster did not occur

c) that serious injuries fell sharply

d) that the kerbs were all removed

**46.** [2] Multiple Response — Choose ALL the objections raised by blind and partially sighted people.

a) Vehicles travel faster than the law permits.

b) A crossing that depends on eye contact excludes them.

c) The junction is noisier than it was before.

d) Without kerbs, the edge of the pavement cannot be felt.

**47.** [3] What does the writer mean by “transfers the cost of that calm”?

a) The scheme was more expensive than the council admitted.

b) Drivers pay for the changes through higher taxes.

c) Other towns had to abandon their own plans.

d) The benefit is shared but the cost falls on one group.

**48.** [3] What is implied by “a compromise that nobody designed”?

a) The town copied the solution from Britain.

b) The arrangement came out of argument, not a plan.

c) The crossing was built without official permission.

d) The designer refused to be involved in it at all.

**49.** [3] Multiple Response — Choose ALL the claims the text supports.

a) Some British schemes were changed after legal action.

b) Shared space works equally well for every road user.

c) The town did not reverse the change at the junction.

d) The press reported the scheme accurately throughout.

e) Removing instructions can reduce serious injuries.

**50.** [3] Multiple Response — Choose ALL the ways the writer keeps the account balanced.

a) The objection is attributed to the group affected.

b) The designer’s own words are quoted at length.

c) Every claim is supported by a named source.

d) Both the benefits and the costs are given evidence.

e) The ending records what the town actually did.

**Answer Key – Preliminary Round**

Preliminary Round — Questions 1–50

| Questions | Answer | Questions | Answer |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | c | 26 | c |
| 2 | c | 27 | b |
| 3 | a | 28 | a |
| 4 | d | 29 | a |
| 5 | b | 30 | d |
| 6 | a | 31 | d |
| 7 | b | 32 | c |
| 8 | b | 33 | c |
| 9 | c | 34 | b |
| 10 | a | 35 | d |
| 11 | d | 36 | a |
| 12 | b | 37 | c |
| 13 | d | 38 | b |
| 14 | a | 39 | a |
| 15 | d | 40 | d |
| 16 | c | 41 | c |
| 17 | d | 42 | d |
| 18 | b | 43 | c |
| 19 | b | 44 | a |
| 20 | c | 45 | b |
| 21 | d | 46 | b d |
| 22 | b | 47 | d |
| 23 | c | 48 | b |
| 24 | a | 49 | a c e |
| 25 | a | 50 | a d e |