BRAINIACS OLYMPIAD

3RD BRAINIACS OLYMPIAD

SHAPE DISCIPLINES - ENGLISH

CATEGORY 4 (GRADES 9–10)

PRELIMINARY ROUND

SAMPLE 3



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] She asked me _____ the report had been sent.

a) that b) whether c) did d) if that

2. [1] They succeeded _____ the meeting to a close.

a) to bring b) bringing c) in bringing d) for bringing

3. [1] If the contractor had warned us, the scheme _____ on time.

a) would have finished b) will finish c) had finished d) would finish

4. [1] There is little point _____ about it now.

a) of arguing b) to argue c) for argue d) in arguing

5. [2] She _____ the prize by the committee last year.

a) awarded b) was awarded c) has awarded d) was awarding

6. [2] Only after the third attempt _____ what was wrong.

a) we did see b) saw we c) we saw d) did we see

7. [2] The evidence is far from conclusive, _____ it is suggestive.

a) though b) despite c) however d) in spite

8. [3] Such _____ that the meeting was abandoned.

a) was the confusion b) was that the confusion c) the confusion was d) did the confusion

9. [3] The proposal, _____ merits, was rejected on cost.

a) whatever it b) whatever its c) whatever are its d) for whatever

Section A2.

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

> Nobody under thirty answers the telephone any more, and the usual explanations are not (10) _____ the real ones. A call arrives (11) _____ warning and demands an answer at once, (12) _____ a message can be answered when it suits. Older colleagues, (13) _____ grew up with one telephone in the hall, read the change as rudeness. What they observe is a preference for the medium that (14) _____ the receiver more control. The same colleagues will not answer an unknown number (15) _____.

10. [1] a) along b) within c) among d) between

11. [2] a) out of b) without c) except d) beside

12. [2] a) however b) despite c) whereas d) albeit

13. [3] a) who b) that they c) whom d) which

14. [3] a) give b) is given c) giving d) gives

15. [3] a) too b) also c) either d) neither

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

Section B1.

Choose the correct answer.

16. [1] Which word means the opposite of scarce?

a) occasional b) conventional c) plentiful d) approximate

17. [1] Which of these describes an argument with no real content?

a) empty b) elaborate c) exhaustive d) eloquent

18. [1] Which of these is a term from law?

a) variable b) vacancy c) tribunal d) margin

19. [1] Which word means to make something less severe?

a) evade b) extend c) erase d) ease

20. [2] The minister refused to _____ responsibility for the error.

a) collect b) receive c) obtain d) accept

21. [2] Which of these comes from a different subject?

a) sonnet b) isotope c) catalyst d) molecule

22. [2] The report _____ short of naming anybody.

a) leaves b) keeps c) falls d) holds

23. [2] Her objection was _____ dismissed, which was a mistake.

a) hastiness b) hasteful c) haste d) hastily

24. [3] Which two words are close to interchangeable?

a) prudent – rash b) candid – frank c) tenuous – firm d) opaque – clear

25. [3] The argument _____ on a distinction he never explains.

a) stands b) turns c) bends d) sits

26. [3] He has an unfortunate _____ for stating the obvious at length.

a) talent b) routine c) habit d) custom

Section B2.

Choose the correct meaning of each word.

27. [1] tentative

a) agreed by everybody involved

b) not certain, and open to change

c) repeated at regular intervals

d) carried out in complete secrecy

28. [2] concede

a) to admit something after resisting it

b) to refuse a request politely

c) to summarise an argument briefly

d) to withdraw an accusation without apology

29. [2] sporadic

a) happening in secret

b) happening at irregular intervals

c) happening very frequently indeed

d) happening in public

30. [3] provisional

a) agreed by every party involved

b) agreed in writing and nowhere else

c) agreed for now and open to revision

d) agreed against the clearest expert advice

31. [3] redundant

a) written in a very old style

b) difficult to understand at first

c) repeated only for emphasis

d) no longer needed, adding nothing

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

Read the text and answer the questions.

> In 2011 the parish council of a village in the Welsh borders was told that its river could not be monitored. The agency responsible had lost a third of its budget, and the village was small. A retired chemistry teacher named Gwen Prichard bought a testing kit for eleven pounds and began taking a sample from the same three points every Sunday. She recorded temperature, clarity and nitrate, in pencil, in a hardback notebook. For four years nobody asked to see the results. In 2015 a developer applied to build on the water meadow upstream, and stated in the application that the river's condition had been stable for a decade. Mrs Prichard's notebooks showed three sharp nitrate spikes, each in August, each following work on the same drainage ditch. The application was refused,

and the agency that had once declined to monitor the river now cites the village as an example of good practice. Mrs Prichard, who is eighty-one, says she would have preferred it if the agency had done the work itself. She has no intention of stopping.

32. [1] What was the parish council told in 2011?

a) that a developer had applied to build

b) that the river could not be monitored

c) that the village must pay

d) that the river was polluted

33. [1] What did Mrs Prichard buy?

a) a water meadow b) a notebook c) a laboratory d) a testing kit

34. [1] How often did she take a sample?

a) every Sunday b) once a decade c) every August d) three times a year

35. [2] What did she record?

a) the names of visitors

b) the weather and the local wildlife

c) only nitrate

d) temperature, clarity and nitrate

36. [2] For how long did nobody ask to see her results?

a) a decade b) four years c) eleven years d) since 2015

37. [2] What did the developer claim in the application?

a) that the village supported the plan

b) that the river had improved recently

c) that no data existed at all

d) that the river had been stable

38. [2] What did the notebooks show?

a) no change at all

b) a steady decline over four years

c) three nitrate spikes, all in August

d) that the ditch had never been touched

39. [2] What happened to the application?

a) It was refused. b) It was approved. c) It was withdrawn. d) It is still undecided.

40. [3] What is the point of Mrs Prichard's closing remark?

a) She intends to hand the work to somebody else.

b) She is proud to have replaced the agency.

c) Her work filled a gap that should not exist.

d) She thinks the agency's praise is deserved.

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 2020 a mid-sized European city abolished fares on its buses, a decision taken for environmental reasons and reported almost everywhere as a transport story. Four years of data suggest it was something else.
>
> Ridership rose, as expected, by about a quarter, but what was not expected was where the increase came from. Studies of the first two years found that most new journeys were not people leaving their cars behind; they were people who had previously walked, or who had not travelled at all.
>
> That last group is the interesting one. Interviews suggested that a significant share were older residents and unemployed people making journeys they had wanted to make for years — to a clinic, a library, a relative — and had been quietly rationing. The fare had not been a barrier to commuting. It had been a barrier to everything else.
>
> This complicates the case both for and against. If the aim was to reduce car use, the policy performed poorly and cost a great deal. If the aim was to enlarge the number of journeys people are able to make at all, it worked better than almost any measure available, and was never assessed on that basis. The lesson is not about buses, but that a policy measured against the wrong objective will look like a failure whatever it achieves.

41. [1] What did the city do in 2020?

a) It made its buses free.

b) It raised bus fares.

c) It banned cars from the centre.

d) It built a new bus station.

42. [1] Why was the decision originally taken?

a) because the fare system had failed

b) to help older residents

c) to reduce the cost of running the buses

d) for environmental reasons

43. [2] By roughly how much did ridership rise?

a) about a quarter b) about a tenth c) about a half d) it did not rise

44. [2] Where did most of the new journeys come from?

a) people who had driven to work every day

b) people who had walked or not travelled

c) school students and their families

d) tourists visiting the city centre

45. [2] Which group does the writer find most interesting?

a) tourists staying in the city

b) people who used to drive to work

c) those not travelling at all before

d) commuters travelling at peak times

46. [2] Multiple Response — Choose ALL the destinations the interviews mention.

a) a public library

b) a place of work

c) a football stadium

d) a clinic appointment

47. [3] What does “quietly rationing” mean here?

a) travelling only at off-peak times

b) limiting journeys they wanted to make

c) complaining privately about the fares

d) sharing tickets with neighbours

48. [3] What does the writer say the fare had actually been a barrier to?

a) walking short distances

b) commuting to work above everything

c) everything other than commuting

d) private car ownership

49. [3] Multiple Response — Choose ALL the conclusions the writer draws.

a) The policy should be reversed at once.

b) Judged as a way to enable journeys, it did unusually well.

c) It was never assessed against the second objective.

d) The fare income was replaced by a new local tax.

e) Judged as a way to reduce car use, the policy did badly.

50. [3] Multiple Response — Choose ALL the statements the final paragraph supports.

a) Transport policy is the writer’s main subject.

b) The city plans to reintroduce fares next year.

c) The policy cost a great deal of money.

d) The wrong objective can make a success look like a failure.

e) The two possible aims point to different verdicts.

Answer Key – Preliminary Round

Preliminary Round — Questions 1–50

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