BRAINIACS OLYMPIAD

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SHAPE DISCIPLINES

BRAINIACS ENGLISH SYLLABUS

CATEGORY I | GRADES 9–10

Category 4 (Grade 9-10)- B2

Texts are about ideas rather than events — society, science, work, the media, psychology. Questions ask what the writer thinks and how the argument is built, not only what the passage says.

1. Grammar and Sentence Structure

- The full tense system, including future and perfect forms
- Conditionals across all types, including mixed
- The passive, including after modal verbs and with reporting verbs
- Reported speech and reported questions
- Relative and participle clauses
- Verb patterns where -ing and to change the meaning
- Modal and semi-modal verbs, including their perfect forms
- Emphasis and word order, including inversion
- Dependent prepositions and multi-word verbs inside continuous text
- Agreement and reference across long sentences
- and other structures within B2, reaching C1 in the hardest questions

2. Vocabulary Development

- Topic vocabulary — society, science and technology, work and careers, the media, psychology and the arts
- The vocabulary of argument — conceding a point, qualifying a claim, drawing a conclusion
- Word building across the full range, including choosing correctly between the negative prefixes
- Collocation in more formal registers
- Multi-word verbs used inside continuous text rather than in isolation
- Near-synonyms separated by context rather than by meaning
- Idiomatic language in ordinary use
- and other vocabulary within B2, reaching C1 in the hardest questions

3. Reading Comprehension

- Read argued and expository texts, and a formal notice
- Finding the writer's position, the evidence offered for it, and where a point is conceded
- Reading tone and purpose, and what a passage implies
- Following an argument from one paragraph into the next
- Separating fact, opinion and inference
- Matching a heading to each paragraph, and restoring removed sentences by the links either side
- Deciding which of four people a statement belongs to
- and other reading at this level

4. Listening Comprehension

- Understand extended talks and discussions on unfamiliar and abstract subjects
- Hear implied meaning, attitude and purpose rather than what is stated

- Follow a line of reasoning across a long turn
- Recognise where a speaker concedes a point or shifts position
- Complete notes while listening, writing one word, a number or a time
- Hold detail across a recording played only once
- and other listening within B2, reaching C1 in the hardest questions

5. Written Expression

- Write a formal email or letter that covers four content points you are given
- Write a discursive piece that weighs two positions against each other
- State a position, support it, and reach a conclusion that follows from it
- Carry an argument with the words that signal its turns
- Sustain a consistent formal register
- Keep to the length you are given
- and other writing within B2, reaching C1 in the hardest questions

6. Question Types in the Olympiad

- Multiple choice — four options, one of them right
- Multiple response — you choose every right answer. Two of four options are right in a 2-point question, three of five in a 3-point question
- Multiple-choice cloze — a passage with gaps, four words offered at each gap
- Open cloze — a passage with gaps and no options at all. You type one word
- Word formation — a word is printed in capitals beside the gap and you type the form the sentence needs
- Multiple matching — headings against paragraphs, and statements against the people who said them
- Gapped text — sentences have been lifted out of a passage and you put them back
- Note-taking gap-fill — you complete a set of notes while the recording plays, one word, number or time per gap
- Two writing tasks — the first sets you content points to cover, the second leaves the shape to you
- Every multiple-choice question at this category offers four answers to choose from

7. Recommended Focus Areas

- Read editorials and long-form journalism. The hardest reading and listening questions ask what the writer or speaker thinks, not what they said
- Learn a word together with the preposition it takes and the rest of its family
- Practise note-taking — two of the listening parts are played only once
- Practise a formal email that solves a problem, and an essay that weighs two sides