

General Training Reading and Writing Test

READING

SECTION 1 Questions 1–14

Read the text below and answer Questions 1–8.

Some places to visit

- A Beautiful **Kingsley House** was built in the 18th century, and all the rooms are decorated and furnished in the style of the time. They include the dining room, study and dressing room, which contains a display of 18th-century ladies' clothing. Our volunteer guides in each room bring the house to life with stories of the past.
- B The **Africa Museum** was founded 50 years ago, and to commemorate the event, we have chosen 50 treasures from the permanent collection and put them together to tell the fascinating story of that continent. This exhibition continues until the end of the year. The Folk Art Gallery opens to the public next month, exhibiting traditional paintings and other objects from all over Africa.
- C From the outside, **17 Mansfield Street** may not look particularly exciting, but come inside, and you'll find yourself in a historic building that started life as a theatre, before becoming a bank and then a restaurant, which is still in operation. On Sundays and Mondays, when the restaurant is closed, a guide is available to show you round the building and its fascinating architectural features.
- D The **Industrial Heritage Centre** tells the fascinating story of a local family firm. Mr John Carroll started his engineering business in this building exactly 150 years ago. The firm closed in 1969, but the factory has been re-created, with machines like those that Mr Carroll was familiar with. See what working life could be like in the 19th century, a life far removed from the elegance of the wealthy.
- E The **Fashion Museum** has only just opened. It is home to an outstanding collection of more than 30,000 objects worn by men, women and children, dating from the 17th century to the present day. You'll see how people used to dress! As well as the permanent exhibits, you can currently see *Dressing the Stars*, which displays original costumes worn by the stars of many popular films.
- F Having spent the best part of two years being refurbished, the **Mason Museum** has recently opened its doors again. It provides a magnificent setting for its art collection and for the beautiful 18th-century furniture for which the Mason is famous. Open Mondays to Fridays 10–4, and weekends 10–6.

Questions 1–8

The text above has six descriptions of places to visit in the same city, **A–F**.

Which description mentions the following information?

*Write the correct letter, **A–F**, in boxes 1–8 on your answer sheet.*

NB *You may use any letter more than once.*

- 1 clothes that well-known people have worn
- 2 a display that cannot be seen yet
- 3 people who talk in an entertaining way
- 4 the museum having just reopened
- 5 a building that has changed its function several times
- 6 furniture of the same kind that was used when the building was new
- 7 being open for tours on certain days of the week
- 8 a special event to mark an anniversary

Read the text below and answer Questions 9–14.

LearnWithUs courses

LearnWithUs courses are a great way to learn, because they're so flexible. All our courses are taken online using a computer, so you can work through the course at your own speed, and go back to any session whenever you want to. For some courses there are workbooks, in addition to the computer course, to provide extra written practice.

We offer hundreds of courses in a whole range of subjects from reading, writing and maths to business and management. Many of these are specially designed for people whose first language isn't English.

Step one: have a chat with a friendly member of staff in one of our 1,500 LearnWithUs centres around the country. They can advise you on the most suitable course. They'll also work out whether you qualify for funding, so that you won't have to pay the full fee for the course.

You might want to try a taster lesson first. This is a single computer session in any subject of your choice, and it will show you what learning with LearnWithUs is like.

When you've made your final decision, step two is to register on your course. Once you've done this, a staff member will show you how to get started, whether you're using a computer at home, at work or at a LearnWithUs centre.

That's all you need to do! When you start your course, you can contact your LearnWithUs centre by phone (we're open during normal office hours) or email if you need help.

Questions 9–14

Do the following statements agree with the information given in the text above?

In boxes 9–14 on your answer sheet, write

TRUE	<i>if the statement agrees with the information</i>
FALSE	<i>if the statement contradicts the information</i>
NOT GIVEN	<i>if there is no information on this</i>

- 9 You can work through parts of a course more than once.
- 10 The number of courses offered by LearnWithUs has increased enormously.
- 11 Many staff members have worked through a LearnWithUs course themselves.
- 12 You may have to pay to take a LearnWithUs course.
- 13 Everybody takes the same taster lesson.
- 14 LearnWithUs centres are open seven days a week.

SECTION 2 Questions 15–27

Read the text below and answer Questions 15–20.

The benefits of having a business mentor

Introduction

If you're starting your own business, you probably need a mentor. This is a business person who volunteers to give their time to help somebody else with their work – particularly somebody who is new to business. They have a wealth of experience they are willing to share, perhaps from setting up and running their own company. The mentor's role is to support, develop, stimulate and challenge. However, business mentors won't solve your problems for you or tell you what to do: they will talk things over with you, rather than acting as consultants. Many people setting up their first business have found that a mentor can have a very positive effect on its success.

Why business mentoring is important

If you have a gap in your knowledge or experience, then mentoring could work very well for you. For example, you may have a great concept for a business but need a bit of assistance to turn it into a successful venture.

A mentor can provide you with a number of benefits, such as:

- guidance on developing and improving your business
- help with decisions – particularly difficult ones
- ideas for new products or services, or for working practices that will improve your efficiency
- tips for your business that are gained from practical experience
- access to a network of contacts with other business people

A business mentor can also help you to:

- develop key business skills
- improve your problem-solving abilities
- build confidence
- work on your personal development

Face-to-face business mentoring

If you decide that face-to-face business mentoring is right for you, mentor and mentee should decide in advance on the nature of the relationship.

You will need to agree on the degree of involvement that suits you both. Some mentors and mentees work extremely closely, keeping in touch with each other most weeks or even most days. In the majority of cases, however, a mentor will provide help every few weeks or months. In either case, they might meet, speak on the phone, or exchange emails.

You should also agree on a level of structure to suit you both. Mentoring can be a very formal process with regular meetings which follow a specific agenda and work towards a specific set of goals. It can also be quite a casual arrangement, where the mentee calls on the mentor as and when problems or questions arise.

Questions 15–20

Complete the notes below.

Choose **ONE WORD ONLY** from the text for each answer.

Write your answers in boxes 15–20 on your answer sheet.

How can a mentor help somebody setting up a business?

A mentor **15** to help a new business person.

Mentors have a different role from **16**

A mentor can:

- help you turn your idea into a successful business
- assist when you need to make **17**
- suggest how your business can increase its **18**
- introduce you to a business network
- help you to develop your skills, abilities and provide you with more

19

To be agreed:

- how much **20** the mentor should have
- how much structure the mentoring process should have

Read the text below and answer **Questions 21–27**.

A Planning Process for Middle-Sized Projects

Any business project – such as reducing energy costs, or improving efficiency – needs to be planned, and time spent planning will save far more time later on. The typical stages in this planning process are explained below.

- Your first task is to spot what needs to be done. Examine your firm's current position, perhaps making a formal analysis of its strengths and weaknesses. Then think about how you might improve that position: what opportunities are there for achieving this?
- The next step is to decide precisely what the aim of your plan is. This is best expressed in a simple single sentence, to ensure that it is clear and sharp in your mind. Doing this helps you to avoid wasting effort on irrelevant side issues.
- Next you should work out how to do it. It is tempting just to grasp the first idea that comes to mind, but it is better to consider a wide range of options: this way, you may come up with less obvious but better solutions.
- Once you have explored the options available to you, the selection of which option to use is the next step. If you have the time and resources, you might decide to evaluate all options, carrying out some planning, such as costing, for each. Normally you will not have this luxury.
- You already have a broad idea of what your project will consist of. Now is the time to work out the full details, identifying the most efficient and effective method of carrying it out, including answering the questions of 'who', 'what' and 'when'.
- The next stage is to review your plan and decide whether it will work satisfactorily. This evaluation enables you to change to another option that might be more successful, or to accept that no plan is needed.
- Once you have finished your plan and decided that it will work satisfactorily, it is time for implementation. Your plan will cover how this is to be done.
- Once you have achieved a plan, you can close the project. At this point it is often worth assessing the project to see whether there are any lessons that you can learn.

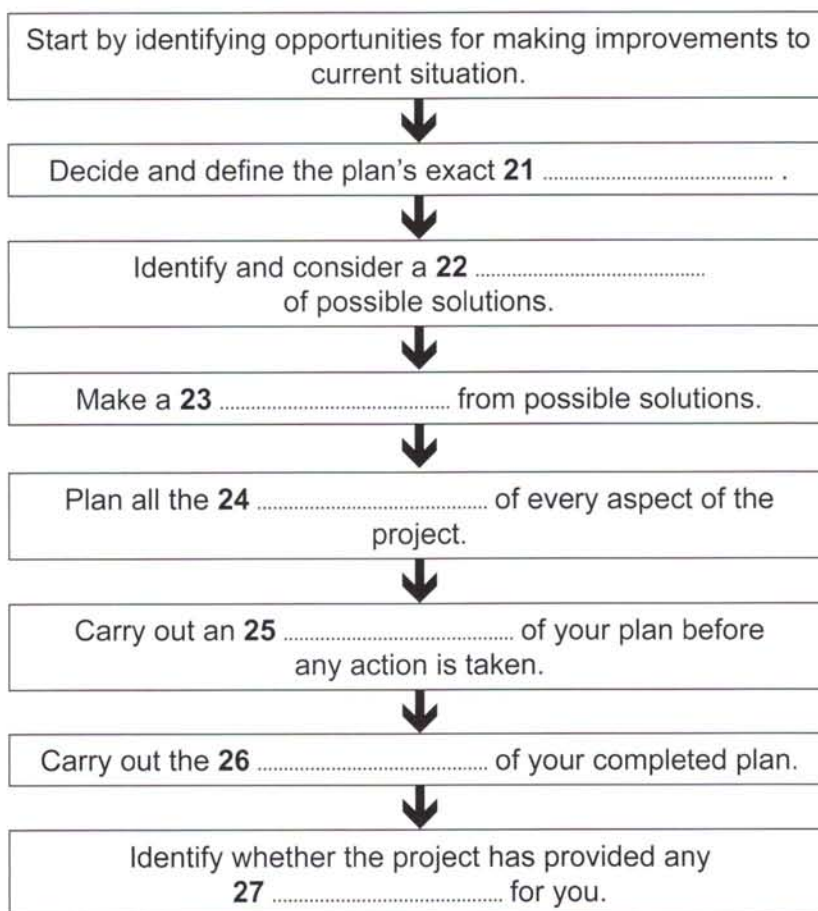
Questions 21–27

Complete the flow-chart below.

Choose **ONE WORD ONLY** from the text for each answer.

Write your answers in boxes 21–27 on your answer sheet.

Suggested stages in a planning process



SECTION 3 Questions 28–40

Read the text below and answer Questions 28–40.

The Penny Black

It might not have looked very impressive, but the Penny Black, now 170 years old, was the first stamp to be created and it launched the modern postal system in Britain.

Before 1840 and the arrival of the Penny Black, you had to be rich and patient to use the Royal Mail. Delivery was charged according to the miles travelled and the number of sheets of paper used; a 2-page letter sent from Edinburgh to London, for example, would have cost 2 shillings, or more than £7 in today's money. And when the top-hatted letter carrier came to deliver it, it was the recipient who had to pay for the postage. Letter writers employed various ruses to reduce the cost, doing everything possible to cram more words onto a page. Nobody bothered with heavy envelopes; instead, letters would be folded and sealed with wax. You then had to find a post office – there were no pillar boxes – and hope your addressee didn't live in one of the several rural areas which were not served by the system. If you were lucky, your letter would arrive (it could take days) without being read or censored.

The state of mail had been causing concern throughout the 1830s, but it was Rowland Hill, an inventor, teacher and social reformer from Kidderminster, who proposed a workable plan for change. Worried that a dysfunctional, costly service would stifle communication just as Britain was in the swing of its second industrial revolution, he believed reform would ease the distribution of ideas and stimulate trade and business, delivering the same promise as the new railways.

Hill's proposal for the penny post, which meant any letter weighing less than half an ounce (14 grams) could be sent anywhere in Britain for about 30p in today's money, was so radical that the Postmaster General, Lord Lichfield, said, 'Of all the wild and visionary schemes which I ever heard of, it is the most extravagant.' Lord Lichfield spoke for an establishment not convinced of the need for poor people to post anything. But merchants and reformers backed Hill. Soon the government told him to make his scheme work. And that meant inventing a new type of currency.

Hill quickly settled on 'a bit of paper covered at the back with a glutinous wash which the user might, by applying a little moisture, attach to the back of a letter'. Stamps would be printed in sheets of 240 that could be cut using scissors or a knife. Perforations would not arrive until 1854. The idea stuck, and in August 1839 the Treasury launched a design competition open to 'all artists, men of science and the public in general'. The new stamp would need to be resistant to forgery, and so it was a submission by one Mr Cheverton that Hill used as the basis for one of the most striking designs in history. Cheverton, who worked as a sculptor and an engineer, determined that a portrait of Queen Victoria, engraved for a commemorative coin when she was a 15-year-old princess, was detailed enough to make copying difficult, and recognisable enough to make fakes easy to spot. The words 'Postage' and 'One Penny' were added alongside flourishes and ornamental stars. Nobody thought to add the word 'Britain', as it was assumed that the stamps would solely be put to domestic use.

With the introduction of the new postal system, the Penny Black was an instant hit, and printers struggled to meet demand. By the end of 1840, more than 160 million letters had

been sent – more than double the previous year. It created more work for the post office, whose reform continued with the introduction of red letter boxes, new branches and more frequent deliveries, even to the remotest address, but its lasting impact on society was more remarkable.

Hill and his supporters rightly predicted that cheaper post would improve the ‘diffusion of knowledge’. Suddenly, someone in Scotland could be reached by someone in London within a day or two. And as literacy improved, sections of society that had been disenfranchised found a voice.

Tristram Hunt, an historian, values the ‘flourishing of correspondence’ that followed the arrival of stamps. ‘While I was writing my biography of Friedrich Engels I could read the letters he and Marx sent between Manchester and London,’ he says. ‘They wrote to each other three times a day, ping-pong ideas back and forth so that you can almost follow a real-time correspondence.’

The penny post also changed the nature of the letter. Weight-saving tricks such as cross-writing began to die out, while the arrival of envelopes built confidence among correspondents that mail would not be stolen or read. And so people wrote more private things – politically or commercially sensitive information or love letters. ‘In the early days of the penny post, there was still concern about theft,’ Hunt says. ‘Engels would still send Marx money by ripping up five-pound notes and sending the pieces in different letters.’ But the probity of the postal system became a great thing and it came to be expected that your mail would not be tampered with.

For all its brilliance, the Penny Black was technically a failure. At first, post offices used red ink to cancel stamps so that they could not be used again. But the ink could be removed. When in 1842, it was determined that black ink would be more robust, the colour of the Penny Black became a sort of brownish red, but Hill’s brainchild had made its mark.

Questions 28–30

Choose the correct letter, **A**, **B**, **C** or **D**.

Write the correct letter in boxes 28–30 on your answer sheet.

- 28** One of the characteristics of the postal service before the 1840s was that
- A** postmen were employed by various organisations.
 - B** letters were restricted to a certain length.
 - C** distance affected the price of postage.
 - D** the price of delivery kept going up.
- 29** Letter writers in the 1830s
- A** were not responsible for the cost of delivery.
 - B** tried to fit more than one letter into an envelope.
 - C** could only send letters to people living in cities.
 - D** knew all letters were automatically read by postal staff.
- 30** What does the text say about Hill in the 1830s?
- A** He was the first person to express concern about the postal system.
 - B** He considered it would be more efficient for mail to be delivered by rail.
 - C** He felt that postal service reform was necessary for commercial development.
 - D** His plan received support from all the important figures of the day.

Questions 31–34

Look at the following statements (Questions 31–34) and the list of people below.

Match each statement with the correct person, **A**, **B**, **C** or **D**.

Write the correct letter, **A**, **B**, **C** or **D**, in boxes 31–34 on your answer sheet.

NB You may use any letter more than once.

- 31 His inspiration came from a particular picture.
- 32 He claimed that the postal system would lead to the spread of information.
- 33 He organised the creation of the first stamp.
- 34 He expressed doubts about the plans to change the postal service.

List of People

- A** Rowland Hill
- B** Lord Lichfield
- C** Cheverton
- D** Tristram Hunt

Questions 35–40

Complete the notes below.

Choose **NO MORE THAN TWO WORDS** from the passage for each answer.

Write your answers in boxes 35–40 on your answer sheet.

The Penny Black

- Design came about as a result of a competition organised by the **35**
- Based on an engraving of Queen Victoria featured on a **36**
- Apart from the Queen's face, the stamp had just three words and pictures of **37** as decoration
- No mention of **38** , as plan was for stamps to be for domestic use only
- The **39** , which was applied to indicate that the stamp had been used, proved to be ineffective
- In 1842, the **40** of the stamp was changed

WRITING**TASK 1**

You should spend about 20 minutes on this task.

Your local hospital has advertised for people to do unpaid work helping at the hospital. You would like to do some work at the hospital in your free time.

Write a letter to the hospital. In your letter

- ***explain why you would like to do unpaid work at the hospital***
- ***say what type of unpaid work you would be able to do***
- ***give details of when you would be available for this work***

Write at least 150 words.

You do **NOT** need to write any addresses.

Begin your letter as follows:

Dear Sir or Madam,

TASK 2

You should spend about 40 minutes on this task.

It is sometimes said that people should be encouraged to get married before they are 30, as this is best both for the individual and for society.

Do you agree or disagree?

Give reasons for your answer and include any relevant examples from your own knowledge or experience.

Write at least 250 words.