

**OLIMPIADA DE LIMBA ENGLEZĂ
ETAPA JUDEȚEANĂ, 18 MARTIE 2017
CLASA a XII-a
SECȚIUNEA B**

SUBJECT I (25 points)

Reading Comprehension (2,5p X 10 = 25p)

You are going to read an article about employees who do some or all of their work from home. For questions 1-10, choose from the sections (A-D). The sections may be chosen more than once.

In which section are the following mentioned?

- the mistaken view that physical proximity at work automatically ensures good supervision 1.
- the fact that the proportion of home workers in the labour force has not matched expectations 2.
- the risk of an employer making an unreasonable demands on a home worker 3.
- the fact that staff retention increases in firms that encourage home working 4.
- the duty of firms not to dismiss requests to work at home out of hand 5.
- one of the main obstacles to home working in employers' minds being the fear of loss of direct control 6.
- personal circumstances increasing the likelihood of an individual being allowed to work at home 7.
- the wider benefits that home working brings to the community 8.
- the advisability of ensuring that home workers are not putting in excessive hours 9.
- a reduction in expenditure on premises as a result of home working 10.

The Rise of Home Working

- A.** Whether you call it working from home, telecommuting or home-working, it's a growing market. Banks, call centres, councils, software companies, law firms, PR agencies: all are increasingly allowing their staff to do it at least part-time. British Telecom, the pioneer of home working in Britain, now has 65,000 flexible workers, of whom 10,000 do not come into the office at all. However, we're still a long way from the dreams of 25 years ago, which imagined offices emptying of everyone who didn't operate a machine or wield a mop. So how do you get on the home-working bandwagon? In some countries, if you have a child under 16, or 18 if they are disabled, in a sense you have a head start. Employers in Britain are legally obliged at least to consider your case if you ask to work flexibly, and that could include working at home for at least part of the week. They must also consider an application if you are caring for a friend or a family member. But even if none of those apply, you are still likely to have a strongcase – if you can persuade your company to listen.
- B.** Not only do home workers cut down on the need for large offices, they are often vastly more productive. American studies show a 30-40% increase. Noel Hodson, a key proponent of home working, suggests that this is at least partly down to the removal of the daily

commute: 'What we found was that most of the time saved went back into work. These workers valued their new lifestyle and to protect it they did more work.' Companies that offer flexible working also find it easier to attract staff, and to hang on to them. At British Telecom, at least 97% of women who take maternity leave come back to work afterwards, against a national average of about half that. The downtime, the recruitment, the instruction of each person at a very moderate estimate would be around £10,000. So, not only are they creating a more socially integrated company in line with government guidelines, they're saving £5m-6m on skill losses.

- C. And there are bonuses for society, too. Home working encourages a more diverse labour force, introducing to the world of work, sometimes for the first time, not just careers but disabled people or those who live in remote locations. Then there's the reduction in pollution and greenhouse gases. So if home working is so great, why aren't we all doing it? 'The issues are human, not technological,' says Peter Thomson of the Telework Association. 'For the past 200 years we have been in an environment where people get together in the same place to work and a manager stands there and watches what they do.' So the last barriers are attitudinal, but it's a myth that someone is in total charge of what people do just because they are all working in the same location. Most managers who are worried about this kind of thing are actually holed up in their offices and rarely interact with their people. Merely turning up is a really poor performance indicator.
- D. Mark Thomas runs a PR consultancy whose employees work at home. 'We've come up with measures of performance that are more to do with what they produce than with desk time. This is the way forward,' he says. Some managers are concerned that their home workers might go shopping during the 'working day'. This goes against the idea of flexible working since hours shouldn't matter so long as the required productivity is there. The concern still remains whether some employees will abuse this, but the same technology that makes it possible to escape the office makes it harder to get away from your boss, which is surely true even if you work in an office. It's well known that some managers insist on interrupting their underlings' evenings and weekends with 'urgent' enquiries that could easily wait. So, many of us are already on call 24/7. However, the great thing about technology is that it has an 'off button'. The best employers will not just expect you to use it, but worry if you don't.

SUBJECT II(50 points)

Express your opinion on the topic of paper books vs e-books, starting from the views presented in the text below. (400 words)

A new study which found that readers using a e-books were "significantly" worse than paperback readers at recalling when events occurred in a mystery story is part of major new Europe-wide research looking at the impact of digitisation on the reading experience.

The study, presented in Italy at a conference last month and set to be published as a paper, gave 50 readers the same short story by Elizabeth George to read. Half read the 28-page story on the net,

and half in a paperback, with readers then tested on aspects of the story including objects, characters and settings.

Anne Mangen of Norway's Stavanger University, a lead researcher on the study, thought academics might "find differences in the immersion facilitated by the device, in emotional responses" to the story. Her predictions were based on an earlier study comparing reading an upsetting short story on paper and on iPad. "In this study, we found that paper readers did report higher on measures having to do with empathy and transportation and immersion, and narrative coherence, than book readers," said Mangen. Mangen also pointed to a paper published last year, which gave 72 Norwegian 10th-graders texts to read in print, or in PDF on a computer screen, followed by comprehension tests. She and her fellow researchers found that "students who read texts in print scored significantly better on the reading comprehension test than students who read the texts digitally".

"We need to provide research and evidence-based knowledge to publishers on what kind of devices (E-books, print) should be used for what kind of content; what kinds of texts are likely to be less hampered by being read digitally, and which might require the support of paper," said Mangen. "I'm thinking it might make a difference if a novel is a page-turner or light read, when you don't necessarily have to pay attention to every word, compared to a 500-page, more complex literary novel, something like Ulysses, which is challenging reading that really requires sustained focus. That will be very interesting to explore."

(the guardian.com)

SUBJECT III (25p)

You have been asked to write an editorial for a teen's magazine as a reply to the article below on drug advertisements. (220-250 words)

'This is your brain on drugs' advert from the 1980s does more harm than good say drug campaigners

The Partnership for Drug-Free Kids said it wants to give parents more information on how to talk about drugs with their children, while campaigners say the advert stigmatizes drug users.

"This is your brain. This is drugs. This is your brain on drugs. Any questions?"

The infamous advert, targeted at children from the 1980s, has been revamped three decades later, but it still risks "demonising" and "discriminating" against drug users, campaigners argued. The message that "drugs are dangerous" was new enough to have a serious impact on people watching the 30-second television advert 30 years ago, said Rebecca Shaw, director of advertising and production at the Partnership for Drug-Free Kids. She told *Ad Week* that the issue of drugs had since become "so much more complicated". "At the time it used to be enough to say drugs are dangerous because that was actually new information at the time. 'Any questions?' posed at the end of the spot could be rhetorical but today teens do have questions and they're not easy ones to answer," she said.

The new advert, repackaged for the non-profit organisation, points to drugfree.org, so parents can inform themselves on how to answer those questions. But Matt Curtis, policy director of campaign group Vocal New York, told *The Independent* that anti-drug adverts have wider implications for public health, criminal justice and racism. He also said this advert specifically was "harmful". "We all agree that we want people to be well and happy and not die from an overdose,

but these adverts currently stigmatize people who are using drugs and it can contribute to discrimination in health care and crummy drug health treatment," he said. Mr Curtis added that boiling down the message of the advert was a disservice to a very complex issue. "We have replaced an old system of apartheid and slavery with a sort of massive economic and criminal justice system of control. I say this without any hyperbole - it reinforces a system of white supremacy in the US," he said. The non-profit previously teamed up with actress Rachael Leigh Cook, also using an egg and a skillet, to show how the brain was "crushed" by taking heroin.

Ethan Nadelmann, the founder and executive director from the Drug Policy Alliance, said the advert was "great" but the link that the advert directs parents to is "seriously lacking" in information. "They are missing a major opportunity to provide accurate information to young people," he said. „The bottom line with young people is to ensure their safety, not just discouraging them from drugs, but also providing accurate information for kids both doing drugs and considering doing it," he added.

The Partnership for Drug-Free Kids could not be immediately reached for comment.

Notă: Toate subiectele sunt obligatorii.

Nu se acordă puncte din oficiu.

Timp de lucru: 3 ore.