

**INSPECTORATUL SCOLAR AL MUNICIPIULUI BUCURESTI  
TEST DE VERIFICARE A CUNOSTINTELOR DE LIMBA ENGLEZA PENTRU ADMITEREA IN  
CLASA A IX-A, ENGLEZA BILINGV, 2008  
PROBA ORALA**

**Vizat inspector de specialitate**

Bilet nr. 1

**Read the text below and answer the questions that follow:**

Mrs. Spears, an office cleaner from Chicago, arrived at work one cold, winter morning. The temperature was very low and it was beginning to snow. Hurrying to go inside and get warm, she was surprised to see something large and still outside the office door. She looked closer and was shocked to discover it was a cat frozen to the ground. "It gave me a real fright!" Mrs. Spears realized the cat was alive but unable to move so she wrapped him up in her coat. When the office workers came later, they too put their coats around the cat. Eventually he started to move and opened his eyes. They took him inside the office, put him near a heater, and gave him some warm milk to drink. Now he lives in the office and has a new name, "Lucky".

- 1. What is the text about?**
- 2. What was the cat doing when Mrs. Spears arrived at work?**
- 3. Why is the cat's name Lucky?**
- 4. Do you think pets are toys? Give arguments to support your opinion.**

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Bilet nr. 2

**Read the text below and answer the questions that follow:**

It was already late when we set out for the next town, which according to the map was about fifteen miles away on the other side of the hills. There we felt sure that we would find a bed for the night. Darkness fell soon after we left the village, but luckily we met no one as we drove swiftly along the narrow winding road that led to the hills. As we climbed higher, it became colder and the rain began to fall, making it difficult at times to see the road. I asked John, my companion, to drive more slowly.

After we had traveled for about twenty miles, there was still no sign of the town which was marked on the map. We were beginning to get worried. Then, without warning, the car stopped. A quick examination showed that we had run out of petrol. Although we had little food with us, only a few biscuits and some chocolate, we decided to spend the night in the car.

- 1. What is the text about?**
- 2. What did the travelers expect to find in the next town?**
- 3. Why did John ask his companion to drive more slowly?**
- 4. Do you think that the car is the ideal means of transport? Give arguments to support your opinion.**

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Bilet nr. 3

**Read the text below and answer the questions that follow:**

Some animals "hibernate" for part or all of the winter. This is a special, very deep sleep. The animal's body temperature drops, and its heartbeat and breathing slow down. It uses very little energy. In the fall, these animals get ready for winter by eating extra food and storing it as body fat. They use this fat for energy while hibernating. Some also store food like nuts or acorns to eat later in the winter. Bears, skunks, chipmunks, and some bats hibernate.

Insects look for winter shelter in holes in the ground, under the bark of trees, deep inside rotting logs or in any small crack they can find. One of the most interesting places is in a gall. A gall is a swelling on a plant. It is caused by certain insects, fungi or bacteria. They make a chemical that affects the plant's growth in a small area, forming a lump. The gall becomes its maker's home and food source.

- 1. What is the text about?**
- 2. What does the word "hibernate" mean?**
- 3. When animals hibernate, what changes take place in their bodies?**
- 4. Do you think protecting endangered species is an important issue?  
Give arguments to support your opinion.**

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Bilet nr. 4

**Read the text below and answer the questions that follow:**

For many people today it is difficult to imagine a life without a cell phone. Once the preserve of the rich, they have now become an indispensable part of modern day life. The technology for cellular phones was patented in 1975, but it wasn't until 1982 that the first commercial cell phone network was established in the United States. Since that time, the cell phone has changed from a bulky machine to something that can fit into the palm of your hand. The functions available in modern-day cell phones are increasing rapidly. Email access is now standard. Cell phone cameras now rival digital cameras in terms of quality. With third generation telephones, broadband access offers the possibility of video phones, television and full internet access. All this comes at a cost, however. Many people disagree with a society where people seem to be glued to their phone, but forget everything that is going on around them.

- 1. What is the text about?**
- 2. What were the first cell phones like?**
- 3. What are the advantages of third generation cell phones?**
- 4. What are the advantages and disadvantages of having a mobile phone? Give arguments to support both sides of the statement.**

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Bilet nr. 5

**Read the text below and answer the questions that follow:**

Ask anyone who's been through an extreme weather event and they will tell you that the tornado, hurricane, flash flood, blizzard or avalanche they experienced was indeed the worst kind of weather to live through.

But perhaps no one can testify to the shocking power of sudden severe weather as well as those who have had a bolt of white-hot lightning shoot through them. Lightning can strike with little or no warning in some parts of the world. Twenty percent of lightning victims are struck dead immediately.

Because lightning bolts strike Earth approximately 100 times a second, it stands to reason that lightning kills more people annually than hurricanes or tornadoes, according to a number of experts.

- 1. What is the text about?**
- 2. What form of severe weather do experts feel leads to most deaths annually?**
- 3. What percentage of those struck by lightning, live to tell about it?**
- 4. Do you think that people should risk their life to 'hunt tornadoes'? Give arguments to support your opinion.**

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Bilet nr. 6

**Read the text below and answer the questions that follow:**

In 1898, American author Morgan Robertson published a fictional novel called "Futility". It was a story about a ship, the largest liner ever built, carrying, on its first voyage, some of the richest people in the world. The ship weighed 70000 tons, could travel at a speed of about 25 knots and was considered 'unsinkable'. Crossing the North Atlantic at full speed one April night, it struck an iceberg and sank. Due to shortage of lifeboats, 66% of the passengers lost their lives in the icy waters. The ship was named "The Titan".

In 1912, fourteen years later, a huge ship, the largest liner ever built, was on its first voyage, carrying some of the richest people in the world. The ship weights 66000 tons, could travel at a speed of about 25 knots and was considered 'unsinkable'. Crossing the North Atlantic at full speed on the night of April 14<sup>th</sup>, it struck an iceberg and sank. Due to shortage of lifeboats, 66% of the passengers lost their lives in the icy waters. The ship was named "The Titanic".

Was it pure coincidence or was Robertson a visionary?

- 1. What is the text about?**
- 2. What were the similarities between the two ships?**
- 3. What kind of passengers were there on the Titanic?**
- 4. Do you think that boats/ships are the most dangerous means of transport? Give arguments to support your opinion.**

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Bilet nr. 7

**Read the text below and answer the questions that follow:**

“One year after the flood which damaged many old buildings in Caerwen, our historic town has a completely new face. Many of the important buildings, such as the castle and the town hall, have been repaired and are now more beautiful than ever, but the 18<sup>th</sup>-century school, which was very badly damaged, had to be pulled down. In its place there is a lovely new park with fabulous gardens. The old mill has also been replaced by a sports and leisure centre, and the entire riverfront has been turned into a place for peaceful walks by the water. A new car park has been built for the convenience of the visitors, and a modern shopping centre is being planned to fulfill all shopping needs. But don't take our word for it – come and see Caerwen, a historic town with a new face, for yourself.”

- 1. What is the text about?**
- 2. Talk about the things which have changed in Caerwen.**
- 3. What happened to the school?**
- 4. What could a tourist see in your capital city?**

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Bilet nr. 8

**Read the text below and answer the questions that follow:**

New York City isn't a city that can easily be ignored even by the most demanding visitor. Located on the east coast of the United States with a population of over ten million people, it is the destination of thousands of visitors who come every year to experience the excitement of one of the busiest cities in the world.

The streets of New York are incredibly noisy, with the sounds of car horns beeping, people shouting and police car sirens wailing. Amazingly tall skyscrapers rise up everywhere.

The most exciting thing about New York is how much there is to see and do there. For sightseers there is the Statue of Liberty, the Brooklyn Bridge and Central Park, while lovers of culture can visit the theatres of Broadway or some of the city's hundreds of art galleries. Alternatively, if you are a sports fan you can even catch a game of baseball at Yankee Stadium. The night in New York is equally brilliant, with a wide variety of restaurants, bars and nightclubs to choose from.

New York is a lively and exciting city to visit with something for everyone, and is recommended to anyone seeking fun, variety and adventure.

- 1. What is the text about?**
- 2. What can visitors see there?**
- 3. What can visitors do in their free time?**
- 4. Do you think travelling is the best way of spending your holiday?  
Give arguments to support your opinion.**

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Bilet nr. 9

**Read the text below and answer the questions that follow:**

Disaster struck in the town of Redbrooke late last night when the recently built Palmer Court apartment block caught fire and was completely destroyed.

It was just after 2.00 am when many of the residents in the building were woken by the smell of smoke. The Fire Brigade was alerted and arrived promptly to evacuate the building and extinguish the fire.

The fire spread rapidly through the building and the rescue operation had to be carried out quickly in order to save the forty-three residents inside. Twenty-nine people were taken to Redbrooke General Hospital, suffering from smoke inhalation and minor burns, but it is expected that they will be discharged later today. The remaining fourteen people were evacuated safely with no injuries. The Fire Brigade battled with the fire until 7 o'clock this morning but were unable to save the building. The residents will be provided with temporary accommodation.

An investigation is being carried out to determine the cause of the fire. At present it is suspected that it was caused by a malfunction in the electrical wiring system, which would explain why so many flats were affected at the same time.

- 1. What is the text about?**
- 2. What may have been the cause of the fire?**
- 3. What happened to the residents?**
- 4. Being a fireman is a risky job. Give examples of risky jobs and talk about them.**

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Bilet nr. 10

**Read the text below and answer the questions that follow:**

Dr. Chen, a doctor living in Beijing, decided one morning to give her cat away. Dr. Chen thought that it was much better for the animal to live in the country. So she put Wei Wei in the car and drove 100 kilometres out of the city to her brother's house and left the cat with him. A month later she was shocked to hear that Wei Wei was no longer there! Then one night Dr. Chen heard a noise at her bedroom window. Unable to sleep she got out of bed and was surprised to see a thin cat looking in. She chased the cat away and went back to bed. Then, just as she was about to fall asleep, something landed on her bed. "It gave me a real fright and then I realized it was the cat and the cat was Wei Wei!" Now Dr. Chen says she will never give Wei Wei away again.

- 1. What is the text about?**
- 2. Why did Dr. Chen take the cat to the countryside?**
- 3. Why was Dr. Chen unable to recognize the cat in the first place?**
- 4. Do you think that keeping pets is the ideal hobby? Give arguments to support your opinion.**

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Bilet nr. 11

**Read the text below and answer the questions that follow:**

Mr. Ndobe left his house one morning and there, as usual , was his cat Zulu, sitting on his car. Mr. Ndobe, a South African businessman, chased the cat away and then got in his car and drove to work. Heavy traffic in the morning meant that Mr. Ndobe was unable to drive very fast so he was surprised to see a police car behind him flashing its lights. As Mr. Ndobe slowed down to pull over, he was surprised to see something large and grey slide down the windscreen. "It gave me a real fright and then I realized it was Zulu and was terrified." The policeman got out of his car and told the owner that he saw the cat and thought it was a toy being carried on the roof as a joke. Now Mr. Ndobe always checks Zulu is not near the car when he drives to work.

- 1. What is the text about?**
- 2. What happened when Mr. Ndobe stopped the car?**
- 3. Why did the policeman stop him?**
- 4. Do you think cats make perfect pets? Give arguments to support your opinion.**

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Bilet nr. 12

**Read the text below and answer the questions that follow:**

When most people hear the words ‘fast food’ they probably think of cheap, hot food sold in a place where they don’t have to wait more than a couple of minutes between ordering and taking their first bite, and where they can either ‘take away’ or ‘eat in’.

Perhaps the best example of traditional ‘British’ fast food is fish and chips, which means deep-fried white fish with chips.

Many foreigners could find some things a bit strange in a fish and chip shop, for example the fact that many customers put a lot of salt and vinegar on their fish and chips, or the ‘mushy peas’ some people eat as an accompaniment. In fact, they are one of those kinds of food that generate strong opinions – most people either love them or hate them.

- 1. What is this text about?**
- 2. What does ‘fish and chips’ mean?**
- 3. What do foreigners find strange about fish and chip shops in Britain?**
- 4. “Eating in a fast food is the best solution for busy people.” Give your opinion and support it with arguments.**

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Bilet nr. 13

**Read the text below and answer the questions that follow:**

Computers have had the ability to play chess for many years now, and their performance in games against the best players in the world has shown steady improvement. However, it will be years before the designers of computer games machines can beat their biggest challenge yet - the ancient board game called 'Go'. The playing area is considerably larger than in chess and there are far more pieces, so that the combination of moves is almost endless. The game involves planning so many moves ahead that even the impressive calculations of the fastest modern computers are insufficient to deal with the problems of the game. In a recent competition for computer 'Go' machines, the best machine beat all its rivals, but lost heavily to three young schoolchildren, so there is obviously still a lot of work to do.

- 1. What is the text about?**
- 2. What is the challenge raised by the game called "Go"?**
- 3. What has happened that proves that computers are not ready to play "Go" yet?**
- 4. Do you think computers will ever be able to think like humans? Give arguments to support your opinion.**

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Bilet nr. 14

**Read the text below and answer the questions that follow:**

The use of computers has meant students can study language programmes at their own speed when and for how long they want. What's more, in the virtual classrooms of the future the student will put on their headset, and be transported into an imaginary school, choose their class, take the books they need off the shelf and hold conversations with other computerised students. At the press of a button they would be transported to more realistic settings where they could practise their English. All this perhaps, at the computer, from the comfort of their home: no need to catch the bus to college or a plane to England. Exciting? Certainly, and an interesting alternative to traditional classroom lessons. But would it ever replace the classroom? Hopefully not. The need to relate to real people talking about real issues and generally learning a little more about others will always lead language learners to dedicate at least a little of their time to real people.

- 1. What is this text about?**
- 2. What options will the virtual classroom offer to students?**
- 3. Why will language learners always spend some time with real people?**
- 4. "Computers will replace teachers in the future." Give your opinion and support it with arguments.**

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Bilet nr. 15

**Read the text below and answer the questions that follow:**

Television has become, for most of us, as much a part of our lives as the electricity that comes into our homes or the air we breathe. It is now a central part of what makes us who we are. There is, however, a particular aspect of television which makes it unlike almost all other influences on our lives. It is not yet truly interactive. It speaks to us, but we do not speak back. The reality we get from television - we don't participate in it, we just watch it. In other words, we don't have to do any thinking for ourselves. We just get reality given to us by those who make the programmes. That's why it matters so much what they decide to show us. The television networks can present us with a picture of the world as it really is – complicated and interesting and full of variety. But equally they can appeal to the worst sides of our nature, or turn everything into light entertainment. If they do that, then that's how we will start to respond to the world too.

- 1. What is the main feature of television as compared to other influences on our lives?**
- 2. What is the picture of the world presented by television networks?**
- 3. What could be the “worst sides of our nature” that television could appeal to?**
- 4. Express your opinion on the following: “It's better to watch a movie than to read a book”. Give arguments to support your opinion.**

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Bilet nr. 16

**Read the text below and answer the questions that follow:**

Madison carried her box over to her easel. It had a pad of paper clipped to it. She filled up her water cup, dipped the paintbrush into it, and wondered what she should paint. She decided to paint a tree. She dipped the brush into the green paint and drew some leaves, and then carefully washed the brush off. She dabbed it into the brown paint next and painted a tree trunk. She didn't think it was colourful enough so she added some red apples. Some hung from the branches and others lay on the ground around the bottom of the tree. When she was finished, she stood back and took a look. Her painting was beautiful. "I'm thankful we have apple trees," she smiled.

- 1. What is the text about?**
- 2. What was Madison painting?**
- 3. What colours did she use for her painting?**
- 4. "A picture is worth a thousand words." Give arguments to support your opinion.**

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Bilet nr. 17

**Read the text below and answer the questions that follow:**

We reached the Tower at ten o'clock in the morning. The first thing we saw was the large queue already stretching a good way along the path. But the Tower looked so big that we were sure there must be room for us all inside. We joined the queue and waited. British people are better at this queuing business than us as I have learned from living here. Finally the doors opened, we paid our money, went in and began finding our way round the Tower. I was surprised to see so much armour – the metal worn by fighting men. And I was very frightened when I saw where so many people had had their heads cut off by the man with the axe. Altogether I found the Tower rather frightening but I liked the uniforms worn by the "Beefeaters", as they call them, and I also liked the large black birds which are part of the tradition of the Tower. But I am very glad that I was never sent there for doing something wrong. I would have been too frightened to survive.

- 1. What is the text about?**
- 2. What did they see when they reached the Tower?**
- 3. What did she/he like best?**
- 4. Describe an exhibition/a museum you once visited. Say what about it impressed you in particular. Give as many details as possible.**

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Bilet nr. 18

**Read the text below and answer the questions that follow:**

Fashion designers have finally realised that working women are their main customers. Well-made clothes for the office rather than high glamour are now top priority. This season's designs show that the working woman has become very important to a wide range of fashion designers, with garments being made to fit not only the body but the lifestyle as well. For years, plain-coloured basic suits were the only thing business women used to wear, but today's woman isn't happy wearing what is no more than a version of a man's business suit. She wants her clothes to be elegant, modern and dynamic – and good value for money. While few big names in fashion have turned their attention to the office, a new group of designers is emerging, whose main goal is to dress city women in style. Collections are now designed with the aim of providing easy, comfortable, all-purpose clothes that will free women from thinking only in terms of the usual blouse, jacket and skirt.

- 1. What is the text about?**
- 2. What is the designers' priority today?**
- 3. What kind of clothes does the modern woman want?**
- 4. Do you think it is important to follow fashion? Give arguments to support your opinion.**

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Bilet nr. 19

**Read the text below and answer the questions that follow:**

Many people have discovered the healing power of martial arts, as they strive to control emotional issues that may have followed them for years. Often, what holds people back in life is fear. People are afraid of failing, as well as succeeding - afraid of speaking up, and at the same time, remaining silent. But learning martial arts is a powerful antidote to all that fear. The first time someone hits you or throws you to the ground, you're probably going to be afraid of getting hurt. The first time that you hit or throw someone else, you're probably going to be afraid of hurting him. But soon you realize that people aren't that fragile. You learn that you're strong, you can defend yourself, and even that you're worth defending. As you learn the skills, you also develop the self-confidence to face your fears and to live your life the way you always wanted to. You begin to learn that you're a competent person and that you can take care of yourself (and others if you need to).

- 1. What is the text about?**
- 2. What is the obstacle that many people face in life?**
- 3. In what ways can martial arts have healing powers?**
- 4. Do you think that practising sports can improve a person's emotional life as well? Give reasons to support your opinion.**

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Bilet nr. 20

**Read the text below and answer the questions that follow:**

Drawing can bring extraordinary and unexpected dimensions to your life. By adding drawing to your everyday experiences, you can change how you, and others, see the world. The joy and personal satisfaction of creating a drawing is both your motivation and your reward. Your drawings illustrate your personal perceptions. Drawing allows you to speak without words. It adds a new and exciting activity to your life. With only a few supplies and some basic skills, you soon find yourself taking pride in your new achievements. You can decorate your room with a personal touch. Have some of your drawings framed and hang them in your home. Family and friends may become quite fascinated by your drawings. Don't be surprised if they soon ask for some of your work for their own homes. Or you may choose to only share them with family and friends. You also have the option of keeping them all for yourself. Your drawings serve as a journal of your artistic journey.

- 1. What is the text about?**
- 2. What is the reward drawing brings?**
- 3. What are some of the things you can achieve through drawing?**
- 4. Do you consider drawing a way of communicating with the ones around you? Give reasons to support your opinion.**

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Bilet nr. 21

**Read the text below and answer the questions that follow:**

It's not always easy to decide which sport to take up. When choosing, it is important to remember that excellence in sports results from a number of factors. For some sports, the body shape and structure with which you are born are important. Top runners are typical examples of individuals who have selected a sport because of their natural body type. Many other sports are more dependent on training and technique, and anyone following a well-structured and appropriate training programme should do well.

The aim of all sports training is to improve fitness and skills, and to develop training programmes that are both safe and effective. To do this properly, an understanding of the physical demands of sport is needed. All sports require a combination of strength, speed, endurance, agility and flexibility to varying degrees. What is important is how these elements are combined to build up the skills of the sport in question.

- 1. What is the text about?**
- 2. What is the aim of sports training?**
- 3. What do all sports require?**
- 4. What do you do to keep fit?**

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Bilet nr. 22

**Read the text below and answer the questions that follow:**

When the famous explorer Columbus claimed Florida for Spain in 1492, he had never laid eyes on it. The area's most important early visitor thus set a pattern that has continued for centuries. There is a general belief amongst people, apparently quite unconnected with whether or not they've been there themselves, that Florida is a good place to go.

In fact, it is almost impossible not to enjoy yourself in Florida today, given the wonderful selection of facilities available to tourists. Some of the world's most popular tourist attractions are located in the state whose sandy beaches welcome 40 million people each year. These days it seems pointless to describe Florida's geography and climate. After all, few people would have difficulty in finding it on a map and most would know what weather to expect there.

- 1. What is the text about?**
- 2. Why is Florida a popular tourist attraction?**
- 3. How many people visit Florida each year ?**
- 4. What country would you like to visit? Why?**

**INSPECTORATUL SCOLAR AL MUNICIPIULUI BUCURESTI**  
**TEST DE VERIFICARE A CUNOSTINTELOR DE LIMBA ENGLEZA PENTRU ADMITEREA IN**  
**CLASA A IX-A, ENGLEZA BILINGV, 2008**  
**PROBA ORALA**

**Vizat inspector de specialitate**

Bilet nr. 23

**Read the text below and answer the questions that follow:**

Thirty-five years ago, Malcolm Burwell was a very successful young actor appearing in a number of series on British television. He was lucky, he'd made it to the top quite quickly and had plenty of work. Hollywood directors had even begun to suggest that he might like to think of making his fortune across the Atlantic. But two things made Malcolm think twice about these offers. He didn't want to move his young family to the USA, and a mystery illness was beginning to throw his whole future into doubt.

Malcolm had a problem with his voice. It began to grow steadily weaker and weaker until hospital treatment became necessary. Before this finally took effect, however, he found he could hardly talk. As he remembers, 'When you are in danger of losing something central to your career, it makes you think very hard. I have to say I learnt a lot from the experience'.

- 1. What is the text about?**
- 2. Why did Malcolm not go to the USA thirty-five years ago?**
- 3. What problem did he have to face?**
- 4. Speak about a life experience that has taught you a lesson.**

**INSPECTORATUL SCOLAR AL MUNICIPIULUI BUCURESTI**  
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**Vizat inspector de specialitate**

Bilet nr. 24

**Read the text below and answer the questions that follow:**

Curiosity about the origins and development of human society is a distinctive feature of our species that can be traced back thousands of years. Even in ancient times, people kept collections of antiquities from even earlier periods. In search of the human past, archaeology is the only source of information, as written records are a comparatively recent invention.

Our knowledge of the period stretching back from the present day to the emergence of the first tool-making hominids some 2.5 million years ago is based predominantly on the remains of settlements, burials and artefacts. It is the study of these traces that is the domain of archaeology. From it we learn of the gradual but steady mastery of the environment, beginning with the first tools, the building of shelters and the knowledge of fire.

From archaeology, we also learn of the change from hunting and gathering food to keeping animals and planting crops and to the increasing social complexity which accompanied these developments, eventually leading to the formation of states and empires. The archaeological record of events is enriched by the survival of lavishly furnished tombs, temples and palaces which are great human cultural and artistic achievements. Archaeology is not only the study of the grandiose and spectacular, but also provides evidence of the everyday circumstances of the people.

- 1. What is the text about?**
- 2. How can we learn about our past ?**
- 3. What do we learn from archaeology?**
- 4. Do you think it is important to preserve historical sites? Give arguments to support your opinion.**

**INSPECTORATUL SCOLAR AL MUNICIPIULUI BUCURESTI**  
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**Vizat inspector de specialitate**

Bilet nr. 25

**Read the text below and answer the questions that follow:**

Although the great detective Sherlock Holmes is read in almost every language, his first appearance in print was a less than auspicious occasion. His creator, Conan Doyle, was a practising doctor when he wrote his first Sherlock Holmes story, *A Study in Scarlet*, which was rejected three times before a publisher agreed to pay the author £25 for the copyright. The story appeared in 1887 but neither it nor its follow-up *The Sign of Four* got very much attention in the literary world. Then, in 1891, Conan Doyle sent *A Scandal in Bohemia* to *The Strand* magazine. The story was published in the July issue and Sherlock Holmes achieved fame at once. This fame, however, grew to such an extent that Doyle is reported to have said '*he takes my mind from better things*'.

After becoming famous, Doyle complained that he would like to spend his time writing more worthy historical novels. At one time he 'killed' Holmes but was forced by public outcry to restore him to life for a new series of adventures. It is over a century since the most enduring detective of all time first took residence at 221b Baker Street, which never existed. His fame lives on and many admirers of his ingenious methods of deduction still write to him at that address.

- 1. What is the text about?**
- 2. What does Doyle mean by '*he takes my mind from better things*'?**
- 3. Why do you think admirers of the famous detective send him letters at 221b Baker Street ?**
- 4. Do you think reading books is more exciting than watching movies? Give arguments to support your opinion.**

**INSPECTORATUL SCOLAR AL MUNICIPIULUI BUCURESTI**  
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**Vizat inspector de specialitate**

Bilet nr. 26

**Read the text below and answer the questions that follow:**

In summer, each lifeguard watches about 300 to 400 meters of the beach. Lifeguards must always watch the sea. They can only talk to somebody for a very short time, and they always look at the water, never at the person's face.

Lifeguards have telephones and radios, and they can talk to other lifeguards, or ask for help.

Lifeguards must be careful in the sea. People are often very afraid, and then it is difficult to save them. The sea can be very strong sometimes and it is important not to lose anybody. The lifeguard must be very careful of the children on the beach and watch them when they go into the sea.

A good lifeguard knows all of his beach very well. He knows how many people are on the beach, he knows the weak people and the strong people; he knows the weather that day, and he knows that the water is warm or cold.

Sometimes there are problems on the beach. Some surfers do not want other people to surf on their beach and they have fights. Also, some people without homes want to live on the beach. A lifeguard will try to help with these problems, but sometimes he must call the police.

- 1. What is the text about?**
- 2. What is a lifeguard supposed to know?**
- 3. When must a lifeguard call the police?**
- 4. A lifeguard's job is very exciting. Give arguments to support your ideas.**

**INSPECTORATUL SCOLAR AL MUNICIPIULUI BUCURESTI**  
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**Vizat inspector de specialitate**

Bilet nr. 27

**Read the text below and answer the questions that follow:**

One sunny afternoon last May, my mother and I decided to have tea in the garden. We live near a small military air base and we like to watch the planes fly over. My mother brought out some delicious biscuits, a cake and a pot of tea. She poured me some tea and asked me, "Would you like some sugar?" Before I could answer, we heard a loud cry: "Watch out!" Then, suddenly, a soldier landed on the table. Mum and I fell off our chairs in surprise. When I looked up, the soldier was on the broken table with a parachute over his head! "I'm so sorry!" he said. "My parachute did not open on time!" Mum and I both looked at him strangely, and then we all began to laugh. "I am afraid there is not any tea for you!" Mum said cheerfully. Fortunately, we were all okay. The next day, the soldier came back with a huge box of cakes for us. We all had tea together, but this time we sat in the dining room!

- 1. What is the text about?**
- 2. Where does the story take place?**
- 3. Why did the soldier land on their table?**
- 4. Narrate a funny event that has happened to you or that you have read about.**

**INSPECTORATUL SCOLAR AL MUNICIPIULUI BUCURESTI**  
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**Vizat inspector de specialitate**

Bilet nr. 28

**Read the text below and answer the questions that follow:**

The polar bear is under threat because its hunting season at the North Pole is being shortened by thinning Arctic ice. Data gathering by US Navy submarines using sonar technology shows the depth of Arctic sea ice is now an average of 1.3 metres less than it was in the 1970s. According to the Canadian Wildlife Service, the sea ice season in western Hudson Bay has been reduced by three weeks in the last 20 years. This has serious implications for wildlife in the region, since Arctic mammals use the sea ice as an extension of the land. Polar bears, for example, roam the frozen water in a constant search for seals, their main food. But with sea ice breaking up earlier, the seals are becoming harder to find. So far, the polar bear population has not declined significantly, but female bears are already giving birth to fewer cubs.

- 1. What is the text about?**
- 2. Why is the polar bear under threat?**
- 3. What do the data collected by US Navy submarines show?**
- 4. Do you think people are responsible for saving endangered species?  
Give arguments to support your opinion.**

**INSPECTORATUL SCOLAR AL MUNICIPIULUI BUCURESTI**  
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**Vizat inspector de specialitate**

Bilet nr. 29

**Read the text below and answer the questions that follow:**

Agatha Mary Clarissa Christie is possibly the world's most famous detective story writer. She wrote 79 novels and several plays. Her sales outnumber those of William Shakespeare. However, behind her 4,680,000 words was a painfully shy woman whose life was often lonely and unhappy.

She was born in 1890 in Devon, the third child of Clarissa and Frederick Miller, and grew into a beautiful and sensitive girl with waist-length golden hair. She didn't go to school but was educated at home by her mother. Her father died when she was 11 and both she and her mother were grief-stricken.

During World War I, while she was working in a hospital dispensary, she learned about chemicals and poisons, which proved to be very useful to her in her later career. She wrote her first detective novel, *The Mysterious Affair at Styles*, in 1920. In it she introduced Hercule Poirot, the Belgian detective who appeared in many subsequent novels. Her other main detective was an elderly spinster called Miss Marple

- 1. What is the text about?**
- 2. How many books did Agatha Christie sell as compared to Shakespeare?**
- 3. How did her experience of working in the hospital help her in her career as a writer?**
- 4. Do you think reading books is more exciting than watching movies? Give arguments to support your opinion.**

**INSPECTORATUL SCOLAR AL MUNICIPIULUI BUCURESTI**  
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**Vizat inspector de specialitate**

Bilet nr. 30

**Read the text below and answer the questions that follow:**

Recently, more and more students have started to take up full-time paid work while they are still studying. This means that some of them end up actually leaving their degree courses because they see the advantages of having a stable income and feel that this is more useful than getting a degree. Earning a reasonable wage means that they are able to begin to pay the debts they have run up while they were at college or university.

Why do they have these debts? Sometimes it is because they are not good at managing their money and overspend on entertainment and clothes. Sometimes it is not their fault. Banks are keen to offer students credit cards and it's very easy to get carried away. It's almost impossible for students to cover all the costs of accommodation and other necessary expenses.

It can be depressing to start working life in debt but that is the way it is for many students. Universities can charge high fees and the price of a university education is rising all the time. Nowadays, it seems, not everyone is willing to spend that amount of money and in future there may be fewer graduates coming into the workplace. Perhaps instead of investing in stocks and shares we should all put money into subsidizing education.

- 1. What is the text about?**
- 2. What are the main reasons why students take up work while studying?**
- 3. What risks are involved in fewer students going for higher education?**
- 4. Do you think students should take part-time jobs? Give arguments to support your opinion.**

**INSPECTORATUL SCOLAR AL MUNICIPIULUI BUCURESTI**  
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**Vizat inspector de specialitate**

Bilet nr. 31

**Read the text below and answer the questions that follow:**

The first question to ask yourself is why you want to research your family tree. Genealogy is not about discovering that you are the heir to the throne of an unknown country. It's about finding out more about yourself. For most people the important question is "why am I like I am?". You might not look like other members of your immediate family and you want to know where your green eyes or curly hair come from. You may be curious about why you have such a quick temper or are utterly hopeless at mathematics. Another common motive for researching your family tree is that you plan to visit the place that your ancestors came from and you secretly hope that you will find some long lost cousins with whom you can share your memories. But you should also bear in mind that they may not necessarily want to have anything to do with you. Sometimes there are skeletons in the closet that you and your branch of the family are unaware of, but which are still fresh in the minds of your more distant relatives. This brings up another important aspect of this kind of research that some people do not anticipate. Of course you want to find out about yourself and what makes you "you", but you may not be so keen on discovering some unpleasant facts about your relatives.

- 1. What is the text about?**
- 2. According to the text, what are the main reasons why people research their family tree?**
- 3. What are the risks involved in researching your past?**
- 4. Do you think that going back into the family history helps one have a better life? Give arguments to support your opinion.**

**INSPECTORATUL SCOLAR AL MUNICIPIULUI BUCURESTI**  
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**Vizat inspector de specialitate**

Bilet nr. 32

**Read the text below and answer the questions that follow:**

Modern technology has brought about enormous improvements in communications and yet many people are still very worried about using the latest computer technology. I am often surprised to meet colleagues who still don't know what the 'e' in e-mail stands for and they are too embarrassed to ask. They assume you have to be skilled in computers to send a message via e-mail but in fact it is the easiest thing in the world. It is also easier to send an e-mail message than to send an ordinary letter, or 'snail' message, which also takes much longer. An e-mail message is only a bit more expensive than a local telephone call to send; on top of the call itself you also have to pay a fee to your 'server'. If you send a letter by regular mail it will take a couple of days to get there whereas an e-mail will not take longer than a few seconds. Once you become acquainted to using the system, you will be amazed at how much more efficient it is than other means of communication. Of course, before you have access to e-mail, you will need a good computer, which can be quite expensive.

- 1. What is the text about?**
- 2. What is a 'snail' message?**
- 3. According to the text, what are the advantages of sending e-mails rather than letters?**
- 4. Do you think that the Internet has changed our way of life? Give arguments to support your opinion.**

**INSPECTORATUL SCOLAR AL MUNICIPIULUI BUCURESTI**  
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**Vizat inspector de specialitate**

Bilet nr. 33

**Read the text below and answer the questions that follow:**

We had planned to spend a month on the West Coast of America with some Americans we had met in Scotland. Unfortunately things didn't work out. We didn't know the people we were staying with well and we discovered that we didn't have the same lifestyles as them. They lived in a magnificent house overlooking the sea and employed people who did everything for them. We felt very uncomfortable. Luckily for us, after the first week there was an earthquake, which made the house, which was on the top of a cliff, dangerous to live in.

So we had to say good-bye to our hosts, who didn't look at all sad to see us go and we went camping instead. It was certainly the most disappointing holiday I've had for ages.

- 1. What is the text about?**
- 2. What particular event does the text refer to?**
- 3. What were, according to the text, the main reasons for the unpleasant situation?**
- 4. Do you think camping is the ideal way of spending your holiday? Give arguments to support your opinion.**

**INSPECTORATUL SCOLAR AL MUNICIPIULUI BUCURESTI**  
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**Vizat inspector de specialitate**

Bilet nr. 34

**Read the text below and answer the questions that follow:**

When you are skiing and you have to fall, there's a right and a wrong way to do it. The right way is to fall – or sit – sideways. Into the slope. Your body will act as a brake and stop you sliding. Your aim is to keep your knees out of the snow. The worst way is to fall forward. The next worse is to fall straight backwards and sit on the tails of your skis. That way you'll just carry on sliding. Try not to fall on your hands. That's how sprained wrists happen. Besides, you're going to need both hands to help yourself up. Above all – relax when you fall. And remember: the steeper the slope, the more harmless the fall. How can that possibly be? The answer is that you will usually fall backwards or sideways into the slope, and on a steep slope the snow is that much closer to you. For the first 30 seconds after the fall – relax! Get your breath – the air is thin at these alpine heights. Spend your time locating your skis, poles, sunglasses and hat. Check that your skis are still on. If 30 seconds are not up, admire the view. Then it's time to get up.

- 1. What is the text about?**
- 2. Why is it best to fall sideways?**
- 3. What should you do after you fall?**
- 4. Do you think anyone can practise any kind of sport? Give arguments to support your opinion.**

**INSPECTORATUL SCOLAR AL MUNICIPIULUI BUCURESTI**  
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**Vizat inspector de specialitate**

Bilet nr. 35

**Read the text below and answer the questions that follow:**

Nowadays it seems that not everybody wants to go on holiday to relax. Although most of us are quite happy to go somewhere warm and lie on a beach all day, there are some people who can't sit still for more than an hour without getting bored. These are the kind of people who are now choosing to go on an adventure holiday, where there are almost too many things to do! Activities on offer include horse-riding, rock-climbing, windsurfing and scuba-diving, depending on where the holiday centre is. The price for a holiday of this kind is usually about the same as that of a "normal" holiday, but be warned – adventure holidays are only recommended for those who want to return from their holiday more exhausted than they left.

- 1. What is the text about?**
- 2. What kind of people choose to go on adventure holidays?**
- 3. What are the disadvantages of going on an adventure holiday?**
- 4. The best ways of spending your holiday is relaxing and doing nothing. Give your opinion on this statement and support it with arguments.**

**INSPECTORATUL SCOLAR AL MUNICIPIULUI BUCURESTI**  
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**Vizat inspector de specialitate**

Bilet nr. 36

**Read the text below and answer the questions that follow:**

The superstition that if you break a mirror, you will have seven years' bad luck comes from the belief in ancient times that a person's reflection was part of their soul. As a result, people used to think that if you broke anything with this reflection on it, such as a mirror, you would harm the soul.

In some Mediterranean countries, the "evil eye" refers to the fact that if you say something bad about someone, you might bring them bad luck. This probably began when people believed that if you praise someone a lot and give them pleasure, the devil becomes envious and finds ways of spoiling that pleasure. Saying a baby is beautiful may bring bad luck, so superstitious people pretend to be spitting and say to the child "Let me not give you the evil eye". People also think they can protect themselves from the evil eye by not boasting about their success.

- 1. What is the text about?**
- 2. What is the common topic of the two paragraphs?**
- 3. Why is it not advisable to be too happy about your success?**
- 4. Do you think keeping to superstitions guarantees a better life? Give arguments to support your opinion.**

**INSPECTORATUL SCOLAR AL MUNICIPIULUI BUCURESTI**  
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**Vizat inspector de specialitate**

Bilet nr. 37

**Read the text below and answer the questions that follow:**

Antarctica is becoming a popular tourist destination and in the last decade there has been a dramatic increase in visitors to the sea. Some tourists simply want to see the last unspoiled continent, while others have more active pursuits such as adventure sports in mind. And of course, there are also adventurous souls who want to follow in the footsteps of the great polar explorers. However, environmentalists are concerned that booming tourist industry may be endangering the Antarctic environment and sowing the seeds of its own destruction. Careless visitors throw rubbish into the sea, not realising how harmful this can be to wildlife. Another danger is oil spills. In the freezing waters, oil does not disperse effectively.

- 1. What is the text about?**
- 2. What kind of people choose to go on adventure holidays?**
- 3. Why are environmentalists concerned?**
- 4. The best holiday is an adventure holiday. Give your opinion on this statement and support it with arguments.**

**INSPECTORATUL SCOLAR AL MUNICIPIULUI BUCURESTI**  
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**Vizat inspector de specialitate**

Bilet nr. 38

**Read the text below and answer the questions that follow:**

I have just come home after viewing some astonishing works of art that were recently discovered in Church Hole cave in Nottinghamshire. They are not drawings, as one would expect, but engravings, and they depict a huge range of wild animals. The artists who created them lived around 13,000 years ago, and the images are remarkable on a variety of accounts. First of all, their number is amazing: there are ninety all told. Moreover, fifty-eight of them are on the ceiling. This is extremely rare in cave art. But more importantly, the Church Hole engravings are an incredible artistic achievement. They can be compared with the best found in continental Europe.

In fact, it is the wider significance of the engravings that is likely to attract most attention in academic circles, since they radically change our view of life in Britain during this epoch. It had previously been thought that hunters in this country were isolated from people in more central areas of Europe, but the Church Hole images prove that ancient Britons were part of a culture that had spread across the continent. And they were as sophisticated culturally as their counterparts on the continent.

- 1. What is the text about?**
- 2. What do we know about the artists that created the engravings?**
- 3. What do Church Hole images prove?**
- 4. Do you think it is important to preserve historical sites? Give arguments to support your opinion.**

**INSPECTORATUL SCOLAR AL MUNICIPIULUI BUCURESTI**  
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**Vizat inspector de specialitate**

Bilet nr. 39

**Read the text below and answer the questions that follow:**

What is the world's most intelligent animal? Television producer Mike Beynon and his team of animal experts have searched the world for the new TV series *Clever Claws*, which will be broadcast this autumn. Mike points out that the brainiest creatures are often those that we think as pests. "Rats, foxes and pigeons are pretty intelligent" he says. "We only call them pests because they have learnt to exploit us, instead of being frightened". Just like humans, animals use their intelligence to their own advantage. Sometimes they even use man's inventions to get ahead of the competition. Big cats such as cheetahs and leopards have been spotted standing on safari vehicles, ready and waiting to leap out at their prey. Clever, but worrying, says Mike. "If a cheetah uses a man-made object to gain an advantage over an antelope in an attack, then that is very dangerous, because it puts nature out of balance".

- 1. How does the author define "pests"?**
- 2. What do humans and animals have in common?**
- 3. How do cheetahs use safari vehicles?**
- 4. Express your opinion on the following: "The best solution for wild animals is to keep them in zoos." Give arguments to support your opinion.**

**INSPECTORATUL SCOLAR AL MUNICIPIULUI BUCURESTI**  
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Bilet nr. 40

**Read the text below and answer the questions that follow:**

For some people, leisure means relaxing and getting away from it all, for example by visiting natural beauty spots in the country or places for outdoor recreation. Of course, such natural attractions are affected by the people who visit them, but the things that make them attractive then not to alter greatly through time.

Many museums, for example, have seen quite dramatic changes becoming more interesting and entertaining places to visit, while still maintaining their role of informing visitors about the past. Some have been converted into “living museums” where actors and actresses in costumes meet the public and play the roles of characters from the past, in attempts to make the exhibits come alive.

Amusement parks, however, illustrate another trend entirely. The concept of amusement park grew out of the travelling funfairs of a century ago. Over the years, these developed thrilling rides such as roller coasters alongside a range of things to do and see. As the equipment became more sophisticated, however, the larger funfairs tended to become fixed in one place, creating wholly artificial worlds, completely devoted to the pursuit of fun and entertainment.

- 1. Which are the types of leisure activities mentioned in the text?**
- 2. What is a “living museum” ?**
- 3. What is the origin of the modern amusement park?**
- 4. Which is your favourite leisure activity? Give reasons for your choice.**

**INSPECTORATUL SCOLAR AL MUNICIPIULUI BUCURESTI**  
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Bilet nr. 41

**Read the text below and answer the questions that follow:**

In most hotels all over the world, you will not find a room with the number thirteen, and if the hotel is a skyscraper, it will go from floor twelve to floor fourteen. The superstition that thirteen is unlucky can be traced back to a Scandinavian myth. There were originally only twelve gods and then along came the god Loki to make thirteen. Loki was a mischievous god who brought suffering to people. Nowadays, people avoid planning important events on Friday 13<sup>th</sup> (or Tuesday 13<sup>th</sup> in some cultures), and if things go wrong on that day, like the loss of a wallet or a key, they blame it on the date.

Cats have always been surrounded by superstitions. In ancient Egypt cats were considered sacred, but in medieval Europe many people believed cats were witches in disguise. A popular superstition about cats is that a black cat, crossing your path from left to right, will bring you bad luck. However, in some cultures, a black cat is thought to be a good omen rather than a bad one.

- 1. What is the text about?**
- 2. What is the common topic of the two paragraphs?**
- 3. What are the origins of the bad reputation of number thirteen and cats?**
- 4. Do you think superstitions are relevant to modern day life? Give arguments to support your opinion.**

**INSPECTORATUL SCOLAR AL MUNICIPIULUI BUCURESTI**  
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Bilet nr. 42

**Read the text below and answer the questions that follow:**

Sian Evans is 22. Until last year, she lived a quiet life, playing the cello and studying music at university. Then one day, she was given a challenge. She agreed to take part in a television programme called *Faking It*. She had just four weeks to learn completely new skills and become a nightclub DJ. At the end of her training, she had to perform and compete against three professional DJs. She had to convince the judges that she wasn't a fake. To make her look right, she had new clothes, a new haircut and even dancing lessons. It wasn't only lessons, however. She also practiced. She practised everything, but mostly the "mixing". She was on the decks for at least five hours a day.

At the end of the month, Sian and three other professional DJs performed in front of the judges. Their job was to pick the "fake". None of them picked Sian. In fact, they couldn't believe it when they were told. She was professional and confident, due mostly to enormous amounts of dedicated practice. Immediately after the programme, she was offered a job as a professional DJ in a top nightclub. So, perhaps, it's true that "practice makes perfect".

- 1. What did Sian study before being chosen for the TV programme?**
- 2. What is the TV programme "Faking It" about ?**
- 3. What were the judges supposed to do?**
- 4. Do you agree that "practice makes perfect "? Give arguments to support your opinion.**

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**Vizat inspector de specialitate**

Bilet nr. 43

**Read the text below and answer the questions that follow:**

You are getting ready to play a football match and you want to win. What colour should you wear to help you win? You are getting ready to go to an interview and want to succeed. What colour should you wear to help you succeed? Strange questions, perhaps, but colour could be the key to your success. Read on and find out how.

The most popular colour in Britain is black. Wearing black makes people feel more confident, but can often make you look reserved. This may be why people sometimes think that British people don't want to make a strong impression. Although black is common in Britain, most people agree that in fact blue is the world's favourite colour. School uniforms and business suits are often blue. Wearing blue will show that you are an efficient and hard-working person.

Sometimes people mistakenly think that red makes you look strong, assertive and successful. Often, however, you will be seen as aggressive if you choose red clothes. New information now says that yellow, not red, is the colour of winning. So, next time you have an important event in your life – a race, a match, an exam or an interview – think about your clothes. The colour of your clothes can change your life!

- 1. What is the significance of the colour black according to the text?**
- 2. Why is blue the favourite colour for business suits?**
- 3. According to the text, will you be successful if you wear red?**
- 4. Express your opinion on the following: "School uniforms should be compulsory". Give arguments to support your opinion.**

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**Vizat inspector de specialitate**

Bilet nr. 44

**Read the text below and answer the questions that follow:**

To become a serious Olympic competitor means taking your sport seriously from a very early age. But what does that do to a young person's life? Is it a positive or a negative thing? We sent Emma Deacon out to find the views of a number of young people.

**Tara** – I definitely think that going for your dreams is worth the pain and sacrifice. I'm a gymnast and I have to train 20 hours a week but I love it. I don't know what I would do without gymnastics – probably sit in front of the TV the whole time! Even if I never make it to the Olympics, I've had fun and that's what counts. I've also made some really good friends. I'm in great physical condition. I can do any sport I want.

**Thomas** – I think training for the Olympics from childhood is a really bad idea. If you're going to make it, you'll have to sacrifice your education, time, friendship and many other things. In the end, it will make you miserable. As well as that, there's always the chance of getting injured when you're training or competing.

- 1. How many hours a week does Tara train?**
- 2. What advantages does Tara find in training for gymnastics?**
- 3. Why does Thomas consider training for the Olympics a bad idea?**
- 4. Express your opinion on the following: "Going for your dreams is worth the pain and sacrifice." Give arguments to support your opinion.**

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Bilet nr. 45

**Read the text below and answer the questions that follow:**

Philip had not been to this part of the library before. He walked around the room almost on tiptoe, afraid of disturbing the industrious readers with his heavy shoes. The shelves were filled with thick volumes: dictionaries in many languages, encyclopaedias, atlases, biographies and other works of reference. He found nothing that was likely to interest him, until he came to a small section on photography, which was one of his hobbies. The books in this section were on a high shelf out of his reach, so had to fetch a small ladder in order to get one down. Unfortunately, as he was climbing down the ladder, the book he had chosen slipped from his grasp and fell to the floor with a loud crash. Twenty pairs of eyes looked up at him simultaneously. Philip felt himself go red as he picked up his book which did not seem to have been damaged by its fall.

- 1. What is the text about?**
- 2. What is the general atmosphere of the place Philip finds himself in?**
- 3. Why does Philip need a ladder?**
- 4. Do you think reading books is becoming old-fashioned? Give arguments to support your opinion.**

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Bilet nr. 46

**Read the text below and answer the questions that follow:**

A 10-year-old girl, Ann Waxman, rescued her big brother from certain death last night, when a fire broke out in their house in Manchester. Ann's parents were out of town for the weekend when the fire started in the middle of the night. The young girl was awakened by the family's dog, Danny. Ann smelled something burning and immediately ran through the smoke-filled house to wake her older brother, Frank

When Frank would not wake up, Ann got some help from the family dog. Frank's unconscious body was far too heavy for the little girl to move alone, but the clever girl brought the dog inside and tied the dog's lead to Frank's left ankle. She then grabbed her brother's right ankle, and together, girl and dog pulled Frank to safety.

The little heroine is quite modest about the whole thing. "I couldn't have done it without Danny, our dog. I'm glad we are alright."

- 1. What is the text about?**
- 2. How did the girl manage to save her brother?**
- 3. What was her attitude towards what had happened? Why?**
- 4. Do you think dogs make perfect pets? Give arguments to support your opinion.**

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Bilet nr. 47

**Read the text below and answer the questions that follow:**

One day, Andrew Truman was on a sailing holiday with his family in the Mediterranean. They were relaxing on their yacht when a nearby fishing boat began pulling in its nets. Looking closer, Andrew noticed that a dolphin's fins were trapped in the nets. Without hesitating, he dived overboard, swam to the other boat and cut through the net to release the dolphin.

"Dolphins are intelligent, friendly creatures," said Andrew when asked about his experience. "Fishermen should be more careful when using their nets."

The owner of the fishing boat was arrested for using illegal nets and fishing in a prohibited area. Many similar cases have been reported recently and the government is thinking about taking stricter measures towards the protection of dolphins.

- 1. What is the text about?**
- 2. Why was that day special for Andrew Truman?**
- 3. How did he save the stranded dolphin?**
- 4. Do you think people should be severely punished by law for putting animals' lives in danger? Give arguments to support your opinion.**

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Bilet nr. 48

**Read the text below and answer the questions that follow:**

The history of writing and drawing on walls, nowadays known as graffiti, is much longer than most of us realise. People were painting on walls thousands of years ago. Although the paintings have been done for religious reasons, there is also the possibility that the artists wanted to express their individuality at the same time. These days graffiti can be seen almost everywhere, from the Paris Metro to the outside walls of houses in the Northern Ireland. It is often viewed as the work of vandals, but some people actually claim that it is a work of art. Certainly, there have been a number of models of graffiti which have been shown at art exhibitions. However, as most graffiti is not appreciated, there are continuous efforts to have it removed, which costs a great deal of money. For instance, London underground has to spend 5 million pounds a year on cleaning its stations. Unfortunately the stations do not stay clean for very long. But recent research has led to the development of a new type of paint. This is effective in the fight against graffiti because paint will not dry on it, so it is much easier to clean the walls.

- 1. What is the text about?**
- 2. Why did people paint on walls in the past?**
- 3. Why is graffiti negatively viewed nowadays?**
- 4. Do you think graffiti is an art? Give arguments to support your opinion.**

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Bilet nr. 49

**Read the text below and answer the questions that follow:**

Stonehenge is a prehistoric monument situated an area of land called Salisbury Plain – about seven miles north of the town of Salisbury in England. Stonehenge consists of a series of stone settings arranged in a circle and is considered one of the most complex stone circles in the world. Built as a religious temple, Stonehenge was first recorded by John Aubrey in the 17th century, although excavation of the site did not begin until 1919. Research has shown that there were three main periods of construction, beginning around 1800 BC. The fact that the monument is so large implies that many people must have worked together in a team to help build it. There has always been controversy on the exact function of Stonehenge. Although there is no doubt that it had religious importance, it was also known to have a special significance with regard to the sun. Records show that the site was used as a place of worship during the summer months especially on June 21<sup>st</sup>, the longest day of the year. Today, Stonehenge is a major tourist attraction and is still believed to have a spiritual force, even to this day.

- 1. What is the text about?**
- 2. What does Stonehenge look like?**
- 3. What was Stonehenge used for in the past?**
- 4. Do you think it is important to preserve historical sites? Give arguments to support your opinion.**

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Bilet nr. 50

**Read the text below and answer the questions that follow:**

Flying into Australia, I realized with a sigh that I had forgotten again who their prime minister is. I am forever doing this with the Australian prime minister—committing the name to memory, forgetting it (generally more or less instantly), then feeling terribly guilty. My thinking is that there ought to be one person outside Australia who knows. But then Australia is such a difficult country to keep track of. On my first visit, some years ago, I passed the time on the long flight reading a history of Australian politics in the twentieth century, in which I came across the startling fact that in 1967 the Prime Minister, Harold Holt, was walking along a beach in Victoria when he plunged into the surf and vanished. No trace of the poor man was ever seen again. This seemed doubly amazing to me—first that Australia could just lose a prime minister (I mean, come on) and second that news of this had never reached me.

- 1. What is the text about?**
- 2. What was the writer doing on his way to Australia?**
- 3. What had happened to the Australian Prime Minister?**
- 4. Do you think it is important to know some things about the history of the place you are traveling to? Give arguments to support your opinion.**

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Bilet nr. 51

**Read the text below and answer the questions that follow:**

Australia is full of unlikely life. It contains a fish that could climb trees; a fox that flies (it is actually a very large bat); crustaceans so large that a grown man can climb inside their shells. In short, there is no place in the world like it. Eighty percent of all that lives in Australia, plant and animal, exists nowhere else. More than this, it exists in an abundance that seems incompatible with the harshness of the environment. Australia is the driest, flattest, hottest, most infertile, and climatically aggressive of all the inhabited continents. (Only Antarctica is more hostile to life.) This is a place so inert that even the soil is, technically speaking, a fossil. And yet it is so full of life that people cannot even begin to count the species. For insects alone, scientists haven't the faintest idea whether the total number of species is 100,000 or more than twice that. As many as a third of those species remain entirely unknown to science. For spiders, the proportion rises to 80 percent.

- 1. What is the text about?**
- 2. What is special about Australia's life forms?**
- 3. What are the main obstacles scientists encounter in Australia?**
- 4. Do you think people are responsible for saving endangered species?  
Give arguments to support your opinion.**

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Bilet nr. 52

**Read the text below and answer the questions that follow:**

Most companies spend a large proportion of their budgets persuading us to buy their products, and it is their marketing executives who have to decide how to make consumers aware of new products. To do this, they usually set up an advertising campaign of some kind. Generally, launching a new product involves TV and radio commercials, and there may also be large advertisements on boards along motorways and major roads.

In the past, companies employed people to sell products in person, but nowadays there is a far more popular technique which uses the telephone. Staff in large call-centres telephone potential customers, tell them about the product and try to convince them that it is worth buying. Another technique is to promote the product by post. The company sends colourful catalogues to every house even though people haven't asked for them. They are so unpopular that people call them junk mail – and even though they may contain free samples or discount vouchers, many people just put them straight into the rubbish bin!

- 1. What is the text about?**
- 2. What is, according to the text, the primary goal of most companies?**
- 3. What are the modern techniques of advertising?**
- 4. Do you think advertising makes you want to buy things you don't actually need? Give arguments to support your opinion.**

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Bilet nr. 53

**Read the text below and answer the questions that follow:**

Tattoos have become so extraordinarily popular that it's hard to think of a pop, film or sports star who doesn't have at least one. Considering how very common tattoos are in Britain and many other countries today, it's surprising to discover that they were almost unknown in northern Europe for centuries. On many Pacific islands, however, over several millennia, tattooing became an important part of life. It was used as a means of decorating the body and of protecting the wearer from evil spirits. Then the practice was rediscovered for the West by Captain James Cook who reached the island of Tahiti in 1796. Joseph Banks, the great naturalist who accompanied Cook on his voyage was so enchanted with the Tahitians' tattoos that he wrote an elaborately illustrated book about them. Today more than 10 million people in the United States have at least one tattoo. They make statements of individuality, belonging and sometimes frustration and anger. The disadvantage of the whole thing is that tattoos are more or less permanent. Despite their rise in popularity, more than half the people who have tattoos eventually regret having them done.

- 1. What is the text about?**
- 2. What was the initial function of tattoos?**
- 3. Why are tattoos so popular today, according to the text?**
- 4. Do you think having a tattoo makes people getting the wrong impression of a person? Give arguments to support your opinion.**

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