

## Task Type – True / False / Not given

### UN warns over impact of rapidly ageing populations

The world needs to do more to prepare for the impact of a rapidly ageing population, the UN has warned, particularly in developing countries. Within 10 years the number of people aged over 60 will pass one billion, a report by the UN Population Fund said. The demographic shift will present huge challenges to countries' welfare, pension and healthcare systems. The UN agency also said more had to be done to tackle "abuse, neglect and violence against older persons".

The number of older people worldwide is growing faster than any other age group. The report, *Ageing in the 21st Century: A Celebration and a Challenge*, estimates that one in nine people around the world are older than 60. The elderly population is expected to swell by 200 million in the next decade to surpass one billion, and reach two billion by 2050. This rising proportion of older people is a consequence of success - improved nutrition, sanitation, healthcare, education and economic well-being are contributing factors, the report says.

But the UN and a charity that also contributed to the report, HelpAge International, say the ageing population is being widely mismanaged. "In many developing countries with large populations of young people, the challenge is that governments have not put policies and practices in place to support their current older populations or made enough preparations for 2050," the agencies said in a joint statement.

The report warns that the skills and experience of older people are being wasted, with many under-employed and vulnerable to discrimination. HelpAge said more countries needed to introduce pension schemes to ensure economic independence and reduce poverty in old age. It stressed that it was not enough to simply pass legislation - the new schemes needed to be funded properly.

The UN report used India as an example, saying it needed to take urgent steps in this area. Almost two-thirds of India's population is under 30. But it also has 100 million elderly people - a figure that is expected to increase threefold by 2050. Traditionally, people in India live in large, extended families and elderly people have been well looked after. But the trend now is to have smaller, nuclear families and many of the country's elderly are finding themselves cast out, says the BBC's Sanjoy Majumder in Delhi.

There are more and more cases of physical and mental abuse, including neglect, suffered by the elderly at the hands of their families. It is slowly becoming a widespread social problem, particularly in urban areas, one which India still has not got to grips with, our correspondent says.

By contrast, the UN report cited the case of Bolivia as an example of good practice in the developing world. All Bolivians over the age of 60 get a pension that is the equivalent of about \$30 (£19) a month. Bolivia suffers from frequent flooding and landslides, and older people there have been organised into "Brigadas Blancas" - White Haired Brigades. They help with preparations for emergencies, and accessing humanitarian aid.

**Do the following statements agree with the information given in Reading Passage?**

**Write:**

- TRUE**            *if the statement agrees with the information.*  
**FALSE**           *if the statement contradicts the information.*  
**NOT GIVEN**    *if there is no information on this.*

- 1) The growth of the elderly population is going to make it extremely difficult to provide adequate social service provision.
  - True
  - False
  - Not Given
  
- 2) Approximately thirty per cent of the population are over 60 years old.
  - True
  - False
  - Not Given
  
- 3) Developed countries are much better prepared than developing countries for 2050.
  - True
  - False
  - Not Given
  
- 4) More financing is necessary to ensure new pension schemes are successful.
  - True
  - False
  - Not Given
  
- 5) Elderly people in India are not always being looked after as well as they were in the past.
  - True
  - False
  - Not Given
  
- 6) India is starting to deal with the neglect of its elderly population.
  - True
  - False
  - Not Given
  
- 7) Bolivian Families tend to look after their elderly relatives better than many other countries.
  - True
  - False
  - Not Given

## Task Type – Multiple Choice

### **Australian Agricultural Innovations: 1850 – 1900**

During this period, there was a wide spread expansion of agriculture in Australia. The selection system was begun; whereby small sections of land were parceled out by lot. Particularly in New South Wales, this led to conflicts between small holders and the emerging squatter class, whose abuse of the system often allowed them to take vast tracts of fertile land.

There were also many positive advances in farming technology as the farmers adapted agricultural methods to the harsh Australian conditions. One of the most important was “dry farming”. This was the discovery that repeated ploughing of fallow, unproductive land could preserve nitrates and moisture, allowing the land to eventually be cultivated. This, along with the extension of the railways allowed the development of what are now great inland wheat lands.

The inland areas of Australia are less fertile than most other wheat producing countries and yields per acre are lower. This slowed their development, but also led to the development of several labour saving devices. In 1843 John Ridley, a South Australian farmer, invented “the stripper”, a basic harvesting machine. By the 1860s its use was widespread. H. V. McKay, then only nineteen, modified the machine so that it was a complete harvester: cutting, collecting and sorting. McKay developed this early innovation into a large harvester manufacturing industry centred near Melbourne and exporting worldwide. Robert Bowyer Smith invented the “stump jump plough”, which let a farmer plough land which still had tree stumps on it. It did this by replacing the traditional plough shear with a set of wheels that could go over stumps, if necessary.

The developments in farm machinery were supported by scientific research. During the late 19th century, South Australian wheat yields were going down. An agricultural scientist at the colony’s agricultural college, John Custance, found that this was due to a lack of phosphates and advised the use of soluble superphosphate fertilizer. The implementation of this scheme revitalised the industry.

From early days it had been obvious that English and European sheep breeds had to be adapted to Australian conditions, but only near the end of the century was the same applied to crops. Prior to this, English and South African strains had been used, with varying degrees of success. William Farrer, from Cambridge University, was the first to develop new wheat varieties that were better able to withstand dry Australian conditions. By 1914, Australia was no longer thought of as a land suitable only for sheep, but as a wheat growing nation.

**Choose the appropriate letter A, B or C. Write your answers in your answer sheets.**

1. What is dry farming?
  - A. Preserving nitrates and moisture.
  - B. Ploughing the land again and again.
  - C. Cultivating fallow land.
  
2. What did H. V. McKay do?
  - A. Export the stripper.
  - B. Improve the stripper.
  - C. Cut, collect and sort wheat.
  
3. What did the stump jump plough's innovation allow farmers to do?
  - A. Cut through tree stumps.
  - B. Change the wheels for a traditional plough.
  - C. Allow farmers to cultivate land that hadn't been fully cleared.
  
4. What did John Custance recommend?
  - A. Improving wheat yields.
  - B. Revitalising the industry.
  - C. Fertilizing the soil.
  
5. Why was William Farrer's wheat better?
  - A. It was drought resistant.
  - B. It wasn't from England or South Africa.
  - C. It was drier for Australian conditions.

## Task Type – Matching Sentence Endings

### **Talk your way into another language.**

**Need to learn another language for a job abroad? Textbooks and tutors may be the worst approach.**

Go into a coffee bar, sit down, relax and try to talk to someone. It may look to others as though you are wasting your time. It may even feel that way to you. But so long as you are doing this in a foreign country, where you speak the language badly or not at all, you are probably acquiring a new language better than you ever could by formal study with a teacher and a textbook.

The social situation, properly used, beats the classroom hollow. It is full of native speakers asking you questions, telling you to do things, urging you to take an active part in conversation, and using gestures freely to make their intentions clearer – just like your parents did when you were an infant. So plunge in. All you have to do is talk back.

The proposition that infants can acquire languages by prolonged exposure to them is self-evidently true: it is the only way available to them. Older children and teenagers who move to a different country can pick up a new language with a speed that baffles their parents. But in adulthood we find ourselves envying our rare contemporaries who can still acquire languages easily.

There may be biological reasons why the capacity to learn languages falls away with age, even more than the capacity to learn other things. The brain may be designed to do its best language-learning in infancy, and then to redeploy its resources at puberty. But psychological factors play a big part too. As we get older, we get more self-conscious, more inhibited, more dependent on other people's judgements. This process may undermine our capacity to acquire a new language, because language underpins our sense of personality and identity. We fear to make mistakes in it.

Stephen Krashen, an expert on second-language acquisition, makes a strong case for the dominance of psychological factors. According to Mr. Krashen, people with outgoing personalities do best at learning a new language because 'they have the ego to make the necessary mistakes involved in learning'.

When we want to learn a new language in mid-life for reasons of career or curiosity, we commonly but wrongly tackle it with the sense of doing something difficult and unnatural. We turn to grammar books and compact discs expecting a fight. We are going to 'struggle' with the language. We will 'master' it, unless it defeats us. And with that sort of attitude, it probably will.

All other things being equal, the best learner will be the person who is most relaxed in conversation, and the most self-confident.

**Complete each sentence with the correct ending A – H below.**

**Write the correct letter A – H in boxes 1 – 5 on your answer sheet.**

1. For adult language learners, an informal setting is better than
2. It is obviously the case that children learn languages as a result of
3. Adults who have a natural talent for new languages are generally
4. Confident people learn languages fast because they are not afraid of
5. Middle-aged language learners are often unaware that they are

***Sentence endings***

- A. Taking a negative approach.
- B. Demonstrating an unusual ability.
- C. Worrying about the views of others.
- D. Being in a classroom situation.
- E. Losing all sense of identity.
- F. Producing errors in front of others.
- G. Moving to another country.
- H. Living with other speakers of the language

## **ANSWER KEY**

True / False / Not Given

1. True
2. False
3. Not given
4. True
5. True
6. False
7. Not given

## **Multiple Choice**

1. C
2. B
3. C
4. C
5. A

## **Matching Sentence Endings**

1. D
2. H
3. B
4. F
5. A