Etapa județeană / a sectoarelor municipiului București a olimpiadelor naționale școlare - 2026
Probă scrisă

Limba engleză

CLASA a XI-a - SECȚIUNEA B

- **Toate subiectele sunt obligatorii.**
- **Se acordă zece puncte din oficiu.**
- **Timpul efectiv de lucru este de 3 ore.**

SUBIECTUL A – USE OF ENGLISH (40 points)

I. Read the paragraph below and do the tasks that follow. **10 points**

It is widely acknowledged that no-one has mastered the English language better than William Shakespeare, whose words of wisdom have become proverbs in their own right, like these two lines from Romeo and Juliet:

What's in a name? That which we call a rose
By any other name would smell as sweet.

But did the Bard get it all wrong? Was he really just **unwittingly** expressing the domination of DWEM's (Dead, White, European Males) over language and culture?

In recent years, particularly in the USA, the spread of political correctness has been denounced as an attack on free speech. The idea behind "P.C." (political correctness) is that some words offend people, and should be avoided. While avoiding offensive vocabulary is an excellent principle, the excesses it has led to have been counterproductive, bringing the whole idea into **derision**.

When ordinary words such as deaf were outlawed (aurally challenged was invented as a euphemism), many people agreed that things had gone too far! Calling someone aurally challenged in no way reduces their handicap; on the contrary, as a longer expression than deaf, it draws attention to the disability and may sound deliberately **facetious**.

200 years ago, an Englishman called Thomas Bowdler rewrote Shakespeare's works, changing all the vocabulary which could not "with propriety be read aloud in a family". Bowdler gave his name to a new word in English: *to bowdlerize*. No-one today would dream of recommending the bowdlerized version of Shakespeare; yet in his way, Bowdler was only being politically correct, by the standards of his time.

A. Choose the right synonym for the words given below, according to their meaning in the text. **3 points**

1. **unwittingly**:	a. clearly	b. finally	c. inadvertently	d. unwisely
2. **derision**:	a. assertion	b. mockery	c. deference	d. ignorance
3. **facetious**:	a. mean	b. immoderate	c. flippant	d. hypocritical

B. Rephrase the following sentences so as to preserve the meaning. Use the word given WITHOUT changing it. **3 points**

1. It is widely acknowledged that no-one has mastered the English language better than William Shakespeare. **WHO**
It is widely acknowledged that it _____ the best.

2. While avoiding offensive vocabulary is an excellent principle, the excesses it has led to have been counterproductive. **A**
As excellent _____ vocabulary may be, the excesses it has led to have been counterproductive.

3. No-one today would dream of recommending the bowdlerized version of Shakespeare. **ANYONE**
On _____ recommend the bowdlerized version of Shakespeare.

C. Four words have been removed from the summary of the text. Choose the right words to fill in the summary. There are four extra words which you do not need to use. 4 points

limiting; cross-examine; question; widely; founded; ludicrous; commendable; mere

William Shakespeare is widely celebrated as the master of English, with many of his lines, such as those from Romeo and Juliet, becoming proverbial. However, some critics **(1)** ..... whether his works reflect the dominance of dead, white European males over language and culture. In recent years, especially in the USA, political correctness has been criticized as **(2)** ..... free speech. While avoiding offensive language is **(3)** ....., its excesses – like replacing "deaf" with "aurally challenged" – have often been counterproductive or even facetious. This mirrors earlier efforts, such as Thomas Bowdler's 19th-century family-friendly edits of Shakespeare, which were considered politically correct at the time but are now **(4)** ..... rejected.

II. For questions 1-5, think of one word only which can be used appropriately in all three sentences. Write only the missing word on your answer sheet. 10 points

1. The negotiations finally reached a _____ after weeks of intense debate.
   She stood at the _____ of the cliff, staring into the distance.
   His career is at a crucial _____, and one mistake could ruin everything.

2. He made a passing _____ about the weather before changing the subject.
   The professor asked the students to write a short _____ on the article.
   Her facial _____ suggested she was far from convinced.

3. The scandal caused a serious _____ in the company's reputation.
   There was a noticeable _____ in his voice when he spoke about the issue.
   The earthquake left a deep _____ running through the old building.

4. It can be very _____ for young graduates to find stable employment in the current economic climate.
   The witness provided the police with _____ evidence that ultimately led to the suspect's conviction.
   My grandfather is getting a bit _____ of hearing, so you might need to speak up when talking to him.

5. He got the job because he had a useful_____ in the company who arranged an interview for him.
   We used to phone each other regularly, but I haven't been in _____with her for some time.
   In my job I have personal_____with members of the public every day.

III. For questions 1-10, read the text below and look carefully at each line. Some of the lines are correct and some have a word that should not be there. If a line is correct, put a tick (□) by the number on your answer sheet. If a line has a word which should not be there, write the word down next to the number on your answer sheet. 10 points

Many teenagers today feel that under pressure to maintain a strong online presence.	0 _that_
Social media platforms offer spaces where young people can express themselves creatively.	00_✓_
Online profiles often become a carefully constructed version of the self, rather than	1 _____
a reflection of everyday in reality. Influencers, who appear confident and successful, can	2 _____
unintentionally to set unrealistic standards. As a consequence, some users begin to measure	3 _____
by their own worth against likes and views. This constant exposure may result in anxiety,	4 _____
especially among younger adolescents. Many teens report feeling anxious about this posting	5 _____
content that might be judged negatively. While social media can encourage connection, it can	6 _____
also amplify feelings of isolation as well. Experts argue that digital education should focus on	7 _____
how to evaluate online content critically. Without guidance, users may internalise distorted	8 _____
images of success as though normal. Learning to disconnect occasionally is therefore an	9 _____
essential skill in the digital age. Ultimately, social media can be empowering even if used	10 ____
with awareness and balance.	

IV. Translate the following text into English. **10 points**

Deci și ea era o cetate care trebuia cucerită, am gândit, dar una mai grea, căci îmi sugera legătura ei strânsă cu moartea. Atât, alte ziduri nu avea, dar ăsta, singurul, cum să-l escaladezi? Am început să ieșim, să ne plimbăm împreună prin oraș. Nineta era bine îmbrăcată, chiar elegantă și strada o schimba, devenea gravă, aproape străină, plăcută și veselia îi pierea de pe chip. Avea chiar un ochi cercetător, imobil când se uita la ceva. Se uita cu o lăcomie pe care n-o descifram, oricum strada o schimba, aveam chiar impresia că nu mai era cu mine și nu știam încotro îi zburau gândurile și ce fel de gânduri. Apoi acasă la ea devenea altă ființă... Aceste plimbări au adus ruptura, neașteptată pentru mine, incredibilă. Ieșirea în lume e plină de surprize, da, e bine între noi doi, dar împreună cu alții privirea ei nu-ți mai aparține, surâsul ei nu-i mai înflorește pe chip când o privești, râde pe neașteptate de ceea ce spune altul și ești stupefiat să descoperi că deși e aceeași nu-ți mai aparține, aici e drama, e aceeași... Dar asta avea să mă chinuie mult mai târziu. Ruptura mea cu Nineta a fost mai simplă, dar nu inexplicabilă, fiindcă fusesem avertizat.

(Marin Preda, *Cel mai iubit dintre pământeni*)

SUBIECTUL B – INTEGRATED SKILLS (50 points)

I. Five paragraphs have been removed from the following text. Choose from the paragraphs A-F the one which fits each gap 1-5. There is one extra paragraph which you do not need to use. Write your answer on your answer sheet. **10 points**

Banning phones in schools is not linked to pupils getting higher grades or having better mental wellbeing, the first study of its kind suggests. Students' sleep, classroom behaviour, exercise or how long they spend on their phones overall also seems to be no different for schools with phone bans and those without, the academics found. However, they did find that spending longer on smartphones and social media in general was linked with worse results for all of those measures.

The first study in the world to look at school phone rules alongside measures of pupil health and education feeds into a fierce debate that has played out in homes and schools in recent years. Dr Victoria Goodyear, the study's lead author, told the BBC the findings were not "against" smartphone bans in schools, but "what we're suggesting is that those bans in isolation are not enough to tackle the negative impacts". **1.....**

The University of Birmingham's findings, peer-reviewed and published by the Lancet's journal for European health policy, compared 1,227 students and the rules their 30 different secondary schools had for smartphone use at break and lunchtimes. The schools were chosen from a sample of 1,341 mainstream state schools in England. The paper says schools restricting smartphone use did not seem to be seeing their intended improvements on health, wellbeing and focus in lessons. **2.....**

The study used the internationally recognised Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Wellbeing Scales to determine participants' wellbeing. It also looked at students' anxiety and depression levels. It asked form teachers about whether their students were on target, below or above target in English and maths. Joe Ryrie, director of the campaign group Smartphone Free Childhood, told BBC Radio 4's Today programme the results were "surprising", because teachers in their network had reported benefits of bringing in phone bans at their schools. **3.....**

Charlie got his first smartphone in Year 8 - but a strictly enforced ban meant he was not allowed to bring it with him until he started sixth form. Anyone caught with a smartphone in the lower school at Twyford School, west London, has it confiscated for the rest of the term, which senior staff say is such an "unpopular" punishment that it works as a strong deterrent. Charlie says the smartphone ban "forces you to hang out and chat with your friends". **4.....**

However, students at other schools where phones are banned have told BBC News they have seen benefits like less bullying and better social skills - factors not included in the University of Birmingham study. Its authors said more research was needed in this area to draw any links.

Ysgol Aberconwy, a school in Conwy, changed rules recently so that students' phones are locked inside magnetic pouches unless a teacher unlocks them for use during class. The school cites research suggesting rising loneliness at school, and the suggestion that time on social media is linked to lower life satisfaction for some children. Georgie, 15, says before the rule change, the atmosphere at school "was quite aggressive". Now, Georgie feels arguments do not escalate so much or as often. Head teacher Ian Gerrard says while bullying hasn't been "completely eradicated", the pouches have created "a safe space within school" where students "don't need to worry about those things".

Other schools have found parents wanting contact with children to be a sticking point when introducing new rules around phones. **5.....** One student recently got on a bus going in the wrong direction, and ended up at the other end of the line to his home neighbourhood - without a smartphone on him to check a map or call home.

In the UK, 96% of 12 to 15-year-olds have their own phone, according to the latest research by the online safety regulator, Ofcom. The study may intensify the debate around whether under-16s should be stopped from having smartphones altogether.

A. Now in Year 13, he said the ban in lower school had "probably" helped him to spend less time scrolling through social media and develop healthier habits around phone use. However, he added that despite these restrictions, many of his friends were still "on their phones all the time," particularly outside school hours.

B. She said the focus now needed to be on reducing the amount of time students spent on their phones, adding: "We need to do more than just ban phones in schools." She argued that without addressing young people's wider digital habits, restrictions limited to the school day were unlikely to have a lasting impact.

C. Despite the lack of clear-cut evidence, Georgie's mother Sarah says she "absolutely" supports Aberconwy's policy. She says she has found it tough not to be able to message her children during exam time. "It would be nice to be able to sometimes communicate with them to be able to say, 'has everything gone all right?'," she said.

D. Within a few weeks of The Fulham Boys School in west London bringing in a "brick"-phones-only policy in September, students were "over it", head teacher David Smith says - but "teething problems" came from parents worried about their children travelling across the capital without apps to help them.

E. However, the research did find a link between more time on phones and social media, and worse mental wellbeing and mental health, less physical activity, poorer sleep, lower grades and more disruptive classroom behaviour.

F. He also said the average time children in the study reported spending on their phones - four to six hours - was a "terrifying amount of time to spend scrolling or swiping". He said tougher regulations were needed to make social media platforms safer and non-addictive to children.

II. You have seen the following announcement on a website.

Send us an **article** about whether mobile phones should be banned in schools and how their use affects students' mental health.

- To what extent do smartphones influence concentration, anxiety levels, and social interaction among teenagers?
- Should schools introduce stricter rules, or is technology an essential part of modern education?
- What impact could banning phones have on students' wellbeing and academic performance?

Write your article starting from the text above. (250-280 words) **40 points**