

BGE NYVK	C1	Reading Comprehension	
English for Business		60 minutes	20 marks
Sample			

WRITE ALL THE ANSWERS ON THE ANSWER SHEET.

Read the following texts and answer the questions.

Text 1

Carbon policy in Australia and Britain

Poles apart

- 1 When asked how he had persuaded Britain's senior doctors to withdraw their vociferous objections to a National Health Service in the 1940s, Aneurin Bevan, the NHS's founding minister, replied: 'I stuffed their mouths with gold.' Australia's prime minister, Julia Gillard, born like Bevan in south Wales (the old one), this week took a leaf out of his book with her proposal for a carbon price. It came groaning under the burden of generous golden giveaways to Australian consumers and businesses.
- 2 Unsurprisingly, this newspaper dislikes the amount of cash going to Australia's dirtier industries; the plan does nothing to limit emissions from coal exporters; and there is also a muddle-headed attempt to pick winning renewable schemes. Against that, some gold probably had to be offered to win support. And Ms Gillard deserves credit not just for putting a price on carbon – still the best way to discourage its use – but also for selling it as a way to shift taxation, not raise new revenues. Thus some of the cash which the plan generates will pay for tax cuts that will offset increases in electricity bills. It is better to tax pollution than work or saving.
- 3 The scheme is not particularly ambitious: quite a lot of the reductions it seeks, especially in the early years, will be bought from developing countries, using carbon permits generated by the United Nations' Clean Development Mechanism. All the same, governments in other places planning carbon pricing, such as South Korea and some Chinese provinces, will watch what unfolds in Australia with interest.
- 4 They may also watch what is going on in Britain, but as a cautionary tale. This week the government produced a white paper on its ideas for reforming the electricity market. The idea is to provide both security of supply and a reduction in carbon emissions, an area where Britain's ambitions go well beyond anything that might be expected from the carbon price provided by the European Union's emissions trading scheme. Unfortunately the enterprise is deformed by the government's over-ambitious promises on renewable energy.

Into the wind

- 5 Renewable energy is a means to many worthwhile ends. As a carbon-free resource immune to fuel-price increases and capable of being deployed in relatively small stages, it is a good thing, worthy of research and development spending, some targeted encouragement and the benefits of a carbon price. But too often it becomes an end in itself – as it has in Britain.

- 6 In the last months of his premiership, Tony Blair acceded to a European directive on renewables that requires Britain to generate 15% of its energy from renewables by 2020, an almost eightfold rise. It is hard to imagine the target being achieved; it is, alas, easy to imagine a lot being spent in failing to meet it. Offshore wind, many gigawatts of which the government wants to subsidise, is one of the costliest ways known to man of getting carbon out of the energy system. It will get cheaper; but not soon. If Britain wants to achieve its decarbonisation targets, it can do so – but by switching more of its energy generation from burning coal to burning gas. Trying to get there by a pell-mell fielding of the costliest renewables is pointless.
- 7 The supposedly left-wing Ms Gillard, even allowing for her handouts, is making price signals central to Australia's carbon plans. If only Britain's supposedly free-market government would do the same.

The Economist

I. ¹ Decide if the following statements refer to carbon policy in Australia (A) or in Britain (B).

1. The author thinks that the plans for cutting carbon emissions are imperfect but welcome.
2. The author thinks that the plans for cutting carbon emissions are fundamentally flawed.
3. The scheme heavily relies on government support for renewable energy.
4. Government support goes to polluting industries as well.
5. Carbon pricing will go together with changes in taxation.

II. ² What do the following expressions mean in the text? Choose the best solution A)-D).

6. 'poles apart' (*subtitle 1*)
 - A) the geographical distance is great
 - B) the approaches are totally different
 - C) the South Pole is becoming more polluted
 - D) the Arctic is involved in carbon emissions trade
7. 'took a leaf out of his book' (*par 1*)
 - A) carbon policy had been an issue in 1940s
 - B) both politicians were born in Wales UK
 - C) she put forward the same proposal as in 1940
 - D) she followed the same method to win support
8. the scheme is 'not particularly ambitious' (*par 3*), because it will not...
 - A) raise new revenues for government
 - B) offset increases in electricity bills
 - C) involve real cuts in carbon emissions
 - D) include renewable energy sources
9. 'over- ambitious promises' (*par 4*)
 - A) off-shore wind will be expensive for long
 - B) target figures for renewables will not be achieved
 - C) EU's emissions trading scheme was accepted
 - D) supply will be secured but short term only
10. 'into the wind' (*subtitle 2*)
 - A) money will be invested in windmills
 - B) investment in windmills will be a waste
 - C) switching from coal to gas is the driving force
 - D) a means to many ends will be adopted soon

Text 2

Egypt: Buoyant domestic demand helps drive growth

- A** Egypt may have weathered the global downturn better than others in its neighbourhood, but officials and analysts say there is no room for complacency. More reform is needed if the country is serious about achieving the sustained high levels of growth needed to address poverty and unemployment.
- B** Reforms since 2004, coupled with buoyant domestic demand in this nation of 80m people, have helped drive growth to 5.3 per cent in the financial year to June, up from 4.7 per cent the year before. Forecasts for growth next year are between 5.7 and 6 per cent.
- C** Exports and private investment have been recovering. Remittances and tourism, both big external drivers, have also risen by about 12 per cent in the year which ended in June.
- D** Despite the improving economic performance, many Egyptians remain locked out of the benefits of growth, which has yet to make a serious dent in the ranks of the poor. Nor has it spread significantly to areas where poverty is entrenched, such as rural Upper Egypt. In addition, food price inflation, which touched 22 per cent in August, has placed additional strains on millions of families.
- E** Soaring prices provoked hundreds of protests by poorly-paid workers and civil servants, mostly demanding improved salaries. In the majority of cases, the government has tried to satisfy demands, at least partly to prevent anger focused on economic conditions from feeding into political discontent.
- F** Egypt needs sustained growth at rates of at least 6 to 7 per cent to create jobs for 650,000 new entrants to the labour market every year and to lift 40 per cent of the population out of poverty. Businessmen and officials also say it needs a radical improvement to its education system to raise low productivity and empower more of its citizens to take advantage of the opportunities provided by growth.
- G** Reforms needed to improve the business environment include a bankruptcy law – which is in the works – and legislation, expected soon, to clear up a morass of conflicting regulations complicating investors’ access to state land. But other measures to tackle the 8.1 per cent deficit, such as imposing a value added tax – scheduled for the end of next year– could prove unpopular.
- H** Also on the agenda, but with an uncertain time frame, is a reduction of food and energy subsidies that add up to 7 per cent of gross domestic product.
- I** The authorities have been talking for years about reducing subsidies, replacing them with combinations of smart cards and cash transfers to the poor to cut leakage and ensure that support is limited to those who need it most.
- J** To reduce pressure on the state budget, the government this year adopted a new pensions law and public private partnership (PPP) legislation aimed at raising finance for a long list of big ticket infrastructure projects.
- K** But more broadly, obtaining ‘the right support from the community for the private sector’ remains a challenge.
- L** Although it dominates economic activity, the private sector continues to be viewed askance by a large section of Egyptian opinion, partly the result of lingering influence of the socialist state of the 1960s. More recent criticism has focused on the increasingly tight relationship between businessmen and the ruling party.

M November's controversial election and the allegations of rigging that surrounded it can only further fuel misgivings about the role of business in a political system with weak checks and balances.

III. ¹¹⁻¹⁵ **Fill in the gaps in the following sentences with expressions from the text. Do not use more than three words each.**

11. The Egyptian government has been trying to make changes in the economy
12. Beside government measures, has been a big driver of growth.
13. Next year growth is expected to reach a maximum of
14. Egyptians working abroad have also contributed to the growth in the form of
15. The government's aim to introduce smart cards and cash transfers is to

IV. ¹⁶⁻²⁰ **Using the information in the text, answer the following questions in not more than four words each.**

16. Compared to what has Egypt performed better in the past couple of years?
17. What were the signs of discontent caused by increasing prices?
18. What needs to be changed to allow Egyptians to increase productivity?
19. What does the Egyptian government want to raise funds for with the help of its PPP legislation?
20. What problems make a lot of people mistrust business in Egypt?

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KEY

Text 1	
1.	A
2.	B
3.	B
4.	A
5.	A
6.	B
7.	D
8.	C
9.	B
10.	B
Text 2	
11.	since 2004 (Par B)
12.	(buoyant) domestic demand (Par B)
13.	6 per cent (Par B)
14.	remittances (Par C)
15.	cut leakage (Par I)/reduce subsidies
16.	Others in the neighbourhood (Par A)
17.	(Hundreds of) protests (Par E)/demanding improved salaries
18.	Its education system (Par F)
19.	(Big ticket) infrastructure projects (Par J)/bigger investments
20.	Weak checks and balances (Par M) / relationship between businessmen and the ruling party, vagy hasonló