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MINISTERUL
EDUCAȚIEI
NAȚIONALE

**PROBA ORALĂ DE VERIFICARE A CUNOȘTINȚELOR LA LIMBA ENGLEZĂ
pentru admiterea în clasa a IX-a cu program bilingv
28 MAI 2014**

BILET NR. 1

Read the text below and answer the questions.

Have you ever tried a strawberry pizza? If you went to Oxnard, the "Strawberry Capital of California," in May, you could! Oxnard is in Southern California and this part of the state takes its strawberries very seriously. At the two-day California Strawberry Festival you can sample strawberries prepared in all sorts of ways. In addition to traditional treats such as strawberry shortcake, strawberry jam, strawberry tarts and strawberries dipped in chocolate, there is strawberry pizza! This dessert pizza is topped with strawberries, sour cream, cream cheese and whipped cream on sweet bread baked like a pizza. Strawberry kabobs dipped in powdered sugar are another delicacy. And drinks such as a strawberry smoothie can wash it all down. Strawberries are big business in Oxnard. The annual strawberry revenues are \$100 million from Oxnard's bountiful 6,600 berry acres. Twenty-four companies harvest and cool nearly 16 million trays of berries, which are shipped throughout North America as well as to Germany and Japan. The festival, which attracts more than 85,000 visitors, features three stages with musical entertainment, 335 arts and crafts exhibits, strolling musicians, clowns, artists, face-painting, contests, and a "Strawberryland" for children with puppets, magicians, musicians, and a petting zoo.

(www.americaslibrary.gov)

1. What are the strawberry treats you can taste at California Strawberry Festival?
2. What are annual revenues from strawberries?
3. What can children do at "Strawberryland"?
4. How do you enjoy spending your free time?

Profesori examinatori

BILET NR. 2

Read the text below and answer the questions.

When you think about the things that attract millions of visitors to Washington, D.C., each year, you probably think about the monuments, the White House, the Capitol, the Library of Congress. But have you ever thought about the living things that are also a major tourist attraction? Many Americans and international tourists make a special visit to Washington, D.C., in the spring to see the blooming pink and white Japanese cherry trees that circle the Tidal Basin and the Jefferson Memorial. The trees were originally planted as a gift from the people of Tokyo, Japan, in 1912. In 1910, a previous donation of 2,000 cherry trees had to be destroyed after they were infested with insects. Each spring, the National Cherry Blossom Festival, a two-week-long celebration, attracts tens of thousands of visitors from around the world to see the magnificent trees in full bloom.

(www.americaslibrary.gov)

1. What are the main tourist attractions of Washington D.C.?
2. Why was the first tree donation destroyed?
3. How long does the National Cherry Blossom Festival last?
4. What are the tourist attractions of your town?

Profesori examinatori

Read the text below and answer the questions.

Did you know that Halloween has a capital? Anoka, Minnesota, calls itself the "Halloween Capital of the World," as it is one of the first cities in the United States to put on a Halloween celebration that discourages people from playing tricks or causing trouble. In 1920, a weeklong celebration was started in Anoka in an effort to take the trick out of trick-or-treat. The Grand Day Parade includes a Mass Band, made up of bands from four high schools. Another featured event is the Gray Ghost 5K Run, inspired by sightings of Bill Andberg, a marathon runner in his 70s whose gray-clad ghostly figure can often be seen running through a local cemetery. There are many competitions during the week, including a pumpkin bake-off and one for best Halloween house decorations. Most participants wear their Halloween costumes. Do you suppose people wear the same costumes all week long?

(www.americaslibrary.gov)

1. Why does Anoka call itself the "Halloween capital of the World"?
2. Who inspired the Gray Ghost 5K Run?
3. What kind of competitions are there during the celebration week?
4. What do you know about Halloween?

Profesori examinatori

Read the text below and answer the questions.

When you think of pancakes you might think of the kind served in America, hot with melted butter and maple syrup. But in reality, people around the world love pancakes. As a result, there are lots of different kinds. In America, pancakes are made with buttermilk and served for breakfast. In Russia, pancakes are called *blinis*, and are made from buckwheat flour and often served with caviar and sour cream. The Chinese use wheat flour and hot water to make pancakes in dozens of ways. In France, pancakes come in the form of a lacy crepe. In India, there's the *Gujarati* pancake. Crispy and wafer-thin, it comes stuffed with spicy potatoes and yogurt. Did you know there were so many ways to make and serve pancakes?

In 1986, an event that bills itself as the World's Largest Pancake Breakfast was revived for the 350th anniversary of Springfield, Massachusetts. The breakfast has been held every year since then. Hundreds of volunteers help with the event. In 1999, more than 71,233 servings of pancakes were served to more than 40,000 people. If you stacked up all those pancakes, they'd be more than 2 miles high!

(www.americaslibrary.gov)

1. How many ways to serve pancakes does the text mention?
2. What are the main ingredients of American pancakes?
3. Why was the World`s largest Pancake Breakfast revived in 1986?
4. What kind of food do you eat for breakfast?

Profesori examinatori

Read the text below and answer the questions.

What do you need to have a book festival? Authors, readers, and, of course, books! One component of books is paper, and, at the Arizona Book Festival, kids learn how paper is made. The Arizona Book Festival started in 1998 when the Arizona Humanities Council decided to feature the many good writers from the South and West and to sponsor book-related events that take place in libraries, bookstores, community centres and other educational and cultural spaces. The authors invited to the Arizona Book Festival represent different cultures, literary styles, and subject matter. Barbara Kingsolver is one of the authors from the Southwest who is honored at the festival. Born in Kentucky, Kingsolver moved to Arizona, and her first novel, *The Bean Trees*, is about a young woman who leaves rural Kentucky and finds herself living in Tucson, Arizona. Many of her other novels also take place in Kentucky and Arizona. Other events at the festival include characters from books, who make special appearances, like Clifford the Big Red Dog.

(adapted from www.americaslibrary.gov)

1. What did the Arizona Humanities Council decide to do in 1998?
2. What do the writers invited to the Arizona Book Festival represent?
3. What is the topic of Barbara Kingsolver's first novel?
4. What types of books do you enjoy reading?

Profesori examinatori

Read the text below and answer the questions.

Do you love hamburgers? Do you know how they were created? The first hamburgers in U.S. history were served in New Haven, Connecticut, at Louis' Lunch sandwich shop in 1895. Louis Lassen, founder of Louis' Lunch, ran a small lunch wagon selling steak sandwiches to local factory workers. Because he didn't like to waste the excess beef from his daily lunch rush, he ground it up, grilled it, and served it between two slices of bread -- and America's first hamburger was created. The small Crown Street luncheonette is still owned and operated by third and fourth generations of the Lassen family. Hamburgers are still the specialty of the house, where steak is ground fresh each day and hand moulded, slow cooked, broiled vertically, and served between two slices of toast with your choice of only three "acceptable" garnishes: cheese, tomato, and onion. Want ketchup or mustard? Forget it. You will be told "no" in no uncertain terms. This is the home of the greatest hamburger in the world, claim the owners, who are perhaps best known for allowing their customers to have a burger the Lassen way or not at all.

(www.americaslibrary.gov)

1. Where were the first hamburgers in the U.S. history served?
2. Why did Louis Lassen start making hamburgers?
3. Which garnish is not available for customers to choose from at Louis' Lunch?
4. What do you think of fast food?

Profesori examinatori

Read the text below and answer the questions.

Kansas is known for many things - wheat, sunflowers ... and tornadoes! *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz*, by L. Frank Baum, tells the story of Dorothy, who gets caught in a Kansas tornado and lands in the imaginary Land of Oz. This story has been dramatized on stage and film. You might have seen the movie version, which stars Judy Garland as Dorothy. Tornadoes are storms with rapidly rotating winds that form a funnel cloud. Also known as "twisters," they extend downward from the huge clouds of a severe thunderstorm. The winds that rotate within a tornado usually reach a speed of almost 300 miles per hour! A tornado often sweeps through an area quickly, but it can cause considerable destruction. There have been a number of remarkable reports of tornadoes. In one instance, a schoolhouse was demolished while the 85 students originally inside it were carried more than 400 feet with none killed. There was also a case of five railway coaches, each weighing 70 tons, lifted from their tracks.

(www.americaslibrary.gov)

1. What is Kansas famous for?
2. What famous story set in Kansas features a tornado?
3. How fast do the winds rotate within a tornado?
4. What other natural disasters are people sometimes confronted with?

Profesori examinatori

Read the text below and answer the questions.

Benjamin Banneker was a self-educated scientist at a time when most African Americans were slaves. Born a free black man in the British Colony of Maryland in 1731, he received some formal education, but he mostly borrowed books and taught himself science and mathematics. At 22, he borrowed a pocket watch, and without any training, figured out how to carve a working wooden clock that chimed each hour. Because of this clock, he became well known and people would visit him just to see his creation. Banneker ran his family farm for many years, but when he was in his late 50s, a neighbour's son lent him a telescope. He became interested in astronomy, the study of the planets and stars, and again taught himself a new science. He made calculations of tides, sunrises and sunsets, and even predicted an eclipse. For several years he published an almanac of these calculations. Today, he is best known for publishing six almanacs, called "Benjamin Banneker's Almanac," between 1792 and 1797. In the 1790s, Banneker also helped survey and lay out the land for Washington, D.C., which became the nation's capital. For a look at Banneker's amazing life, visit the Benjamin Banneker Historical Park & Museum in Ellicott City, Maryland.

(www.americaslibrary.gov)

1. Who was Benjamin Banneker?
2. What subjects did he teach himself?
3. What is he famous for?
4. Who is the personality you admire the most?

Profesori examinatori

Read the text below and answer the questions.

Think about all the emotions expressed in the music you listen to: joy, happiness, loneliness, nervousness, and, of course, sadness. Music with sad themes is often called the "blues". Blues music developed in the United States among Southern blacks after the Civil War. When slaves were brought to America from Africa, they brought their musical traditions with them. Blended with folk and popular music of whites, these African musical traditions developed into the blues. The blues is believed to have originated in the Mississippi Delta, a wedge-shaped region in northern Mississippi between the Mississippi and Yazoo rivers. This is a rural area where the poorest and most disadvantaged black people lived - this lifestyle created a need for the expression of sadness that is so often sung in the blues. The conditions in this area - poverty, racism, and inhumane working situations - led many blacks to go north, to cities such as Memphis, Chicago, St. Louis and Detroit. The blues did not vanish from the Mississippi countryside, however, and in 1978, the Mississippi Delta Blues and Heritage Festival was founded to celebrate and promote the blues and the culture of the Mississippi Delta people. What started out on the back of a flatbed truck is now the oldest and largest blues festival in the South, with 20,000 visitors and performances on three festival stages.

(www.americaslibrary.gov)

1. Whose musical traditions formed the foundations for blues?
2. Where is the blues believed to have its origins?
3. What were the conditions in the place where the blues originated?
4. What is your favourite type of music?

Profesori examinatori

Read the text below and answer the questions.

Many American cities have rodeos but Greeley, Colorado, has the "Worlds' Largest Fourth of July Rodeo." The city was named after Horace Greeley, a well-known newspaperman for the *New York Tribune*. One of his famous sayings was "Go west, Young Man, go west." In 1869, he sent one of his reporters west to Colorado to write a story about farming. The reporter, Nathan C. Meeker, liked the area so much he stayed and started a town named after his boss. It was Meeker's vision that helped establish a successful community based on, among other qualities, cooperation, agriculture, irrigation, and education. Every year the people of Greeley celebrate Independence Day with a rodeo. In the early days, the rodeo was a small local event, but it grew more and more popular. In 1922, more than 10,000 people came to the rodeo, and the town officially named the event the "Greeley Fourth of July Celebration and the Spud Rodeo and Horseshow." They called it the spud rodeo because spuds (another name for potatoes) are an important crop grown around Greeley. A few years later, even more people came to the rodeo, when famous cowboys started competing with the local ranch hands. Today, the rodeo lasts for two weeks and is called the Greeley Independence Stampede.

(www.americaslibrary.gov)

1. Who was Horace Greeley?
2. How do the people in Greeley celebrate the 4th of July?
3. How long does the Greeley rodeo last nowadays?
4. How do people in your country celebrate their National Day?

Profesori examinatori

Read the text below and answer the questions.

Learning parkour as an alternative, fun form of exercise is an attractive prospect but there is some confusion over what parkour actually means, especially compared to the more recent craze of free-running. Parkour is a sport of French origin that started in the 1980s. The initial purpose was for people to develop the safest and fastest way to propel themselves around an obstacle course using natural movements like vaults, jumps, climbing and running. These days these obstacle courses are everyday urban landscapes. Parkour is an evolving discipline and, by the turn of the century, it had spawned the very similar art of free-running. Despite the clear similarities in movements, they are not exactly the same. The main difference is mental not physical; there is a different attitude and philosophy to free-running which sees the form as a means of self-expression and allows for the competition and showmanship that parkour discourages. If you see somebody vault a wall, only to disappear in the blink of an eye, they are probably using parkour but if they finish with an extravagant back flip off the top then they are more likely to be free-runners. It all comes down to the differences of visual arts vs physical skills, competitive running vs personal improvement and obstacles vs apparatus.

(adapted from: <http://parkourworldwide.net/>)

1. Where and when was parkour invented?
2. What was the original aim of parkour?
3. What is the difference between parkour and free running?
4. Are you or any of the people you know fans/practitioners of parkour? If not, what other sports are you keen on?

Profesori examinatori:

Read the text below and answer the questions.

What do Paris, Tokyo, and Las Vegas have in common?

All boast a replica of the Eiffel Tower, Paris's landmark building that has long been a symbol of the city and of France itself. The imposing iron tower is probably the most copied monument in the world, but even SETE, the company that runs the structure, says it is impossible to know exactly how many other versions there are across the world.

Some of these faux-Eiffels have become famous in their own right. Inaugurated in 1999, the replica Eiffel Tower at Paris Las Vegas was initially supposed to be even taller than the original, which soars 324 metres (1,063 feet) into the sky - including the antenna at the top. But architects had to trim their ambitions in half because of its proximity to the city's airport. Tokyo's tower, built in 1958 and painted red and white, is one of the few copies to exceed the original in height, reaching 333 metres.

What do those who run the Eiffel Tower think of all these imitations? "We're delighted," says Jean-Bernard Bros, the president of the SETE company in charge. "That's just the price you pay for success. The Eiffel Tower is imitated, copied, reproduced but never equalled. Our Eiffel Tower is something no one else can ever take from us, it is Paris."

(adapted from: <http://www.huffingtonpost.ca>)/

1. What is the name of the company which runs the Eiffel Tower?
2. How tall is the Eiffel Tower?
3. Name two replicas of the Eiffel Tower.
4. What famous structure/ building/ monument would you like to visit? Why??

Profesori examinatori:

Read the text below and answer the questions.

Today, millions of people want to learn or improve their English but it is difficult to find the best method. Is it better to study in Britain or America or to study in your own country? The advantages of going to Britain seem obvious. Firstly, you will be able to listen to the language all the time you are in the country. You will be surrounded completely by the language wherever you go. Another advantage is that you have to speak the language if you are with other people. In Italy, it is always possible, in the class, to speak Italian if you want to and the learning is slower. On the other hand, there are also advantages to staying at home to study. You don't have to make big changes to your life. As well as this, it is also a lot cheaper than going to Britain but it is never possible to achieve the results of living in the UK. If you have a good teacher in Italy, I think you can learn in a more concentrated way than being in Britain without going to a school.

So, in conclusion, I think that if you have enough time and enough money, the best choice is to spend some time in the UK. This is simply not possible for most people, so being here in Italy is the only viable option. The most important thing to do in this situation is to maximize your opportunities: to speak only English in class and to try to use English whenever possible outside the class.

- 1) What is the text about?
- 2) What are the advantages of going to the U.K. to learn English ?
- 3) What are the advantages of staying in your country to learn English ?
- 4) Explain your own method of learning foreign languages.

Profesori examinatori

Read the text below and answer the questions.

The Little Boy Bitten by a Snake

Three-year-old Teddy Lasry was napping yesterday in his cowboy outfit yesterday at his family's Fifth Ave. apartment when he shot up in bed screaming. A 3-foot-long black-and-white snake was coiled around his left arm and had just bitten his arm. His horrified nanny called 911 and the building's doorman. The doorman and two cable TV workers helped pry the snake off the boy's arm and stow it in a garbage bag. Police rushed Teddy to Mount Sinai Medical Center, where his parents said he spent two hours attached to a heart monitor as a precaution in case the snake was poisonous. Experts at the snakebite treatment center at Jacobi Medical Center in the Bronx, where cops took the critter, determined it was a non-venomous California king snake. But how did it end up in Teddy's bed?

A little sleuthing determined that the serpent had escaped two weeks ago from its cage in the flat of a doctor whose family lives four floors below the Lasry's. The apologetic owner said his son's pet snake likely travelled up the radiator pipes and into his neighbour's flat. Teddy's mother, Evelyn Lasry, 37, said her son seems to have gotten over his fright by thinking of himself as a hero cowboy as he rode in the back of the police cruiser to the hospital.

"I told Teddy he's a pretty snake, a nice pet snake that got out of his cage," Evelyn Lasry said. "But he asked, 'Why did he bite my finger, Mamma?' And I said, 'Because he saw that you are a big boy, Teddy, in your cowboy outfit and he got scared.'"

- 1) Estimate the moment of the day when the boy was bitten by the snake.
- 2) How did the doctors know the snake was not poisonous?
- 3) What does Teddy think about the snake attack?
- 4) What is your opinion about unusual pets like snakes, crocodiles or even pigs?

Profesori examinatori

Read the text below and answer the questions.

Martin Luther King

On the third Monday of every January since 1986, schools, federal offices and banks across the United States are closed so that Americans can celebrate the birth and life of Martin Luther King, Jr. Reverend King was the dynamic civil rights leader who focused the world's attention on the problem of racial segregation in the American South. He is remembered for his strategy of nonviolent resistance, his opposition to racism and his famous "I Have a Dream" speech delivered in 1963 in Washington, D.C. On the day he was assassinated, Martin Luther King was in Memphis, Tennessee, supporting a strike that had been launched by sanitation workers there. Just moments before he died, he had been writing a sermon titled *Why America May Go to Hell*. Two years earlier, he called attention to urban poverty and to the fact that the South was the only region that had a problem with race. Reverend King also became an outspoken critic of the war in Vietnam, calling the United States "the greatest purveyor of violence in the world today" during a sermon he delivered in New York in 1967. His legacy calls attention to America's problematic history with race and go-it-alone attitudes that he criticized so forcefully.

- 1) When is Martin Luther King celebrated?
- 2) What was he doing on the day he was assassinated?
- 3) What was his attitude towards the war in Vietnam?
- 4) What is his famous speech remembered like?

Profesori examinatori

Read the text below and answer the questions.

Using a foreign language

A friend of mine once told me of his first efforts to speak Japanese. He was a brilliant engineer working for an American company in Tokyo. He had no knowledge of Japanese, nor did he feel any desire to learn it, as, lucky him, all communication in the workplace was conducted in English, so he had no pressing need to learn the language. His wife, however, who was working for the same company, was taking Japanese lessons and passed on to him what she had learnt. You can imagine it was not an easy task for her, but little by little he was able to acquire a tolerable amount of words and useful expressions.

The first few times he aired his Japanese in public, his efforts were met with politeness but he nevertheless got the impression he was doing something wrong. Yet nobody told him anything and his self esteem grew higher and higher.

Quite some time went by before one of his Japanese colleagues plucked up the courage to tell him he spoke Japanese 'like a woman' and explained that often different vocabulary is used for the same objects depending on whether a man or a woman is speaking.

Japanese is not the only language which makes such distinctions, and, although the vocabulary doesn't change, research shows that gender can affect speech patterns in English too.

- 1) How did the man learn Japanese?
- 2) Was he satisfied with his Japanese?
- 3) What was wrong in his using of Japanese?
- 4) Is it only useful to learn the language of the foreign country you live in, or are there other reasons, too?

Profesori examinatori

Read the text below and answer the questions.

Agatha Christie

Dame Agatha Mary Clarissa Christie, DBE (September 15, 1890–January 12, 1976), was a British crime fiction writer. She also wrote romances under the name Mary Westmacott. Agatha Christie is the world's best-known mystery writer and all-time best selling author of any genre other than William Shakespeare. Her books have sold over a billion copies in the English language and another billion in over 45 foreign languages (as of 2003). As an example of her broad appeal, she is the all-time best-selling author in France, with over 40 million copies sold in French (as of 2003) versus 22 million for Émile Zola, the nearest contender. Christie published over eighty novels and stageplays, mainly whodunnits and locked room mysteries, many of these featuring one of her series characters, Hercule Poirot or Miss Marple. She is a major figure in detective fiction for both her commercial success and her innovations in the genre.

Although she delighted in twisting the established form, she was scrupulous in "playing fair" with the reader by making sure all necessary information for solving the puzzle was given. One of her early books, *The Murder of Roger Ackroyd*, is renowned for its surprise denouement. Most of her books and short stories have been filmed, some many times over (*Murder on the Orient Express*, *Death on the Nile*, *4.50 from Paddington*). The BBC has produced television and radio versions of most of the Poirot and Marple stories. A later series of Poirot dramatizations starring David Suchet was made by Granada Television. In 2004, the Japanese broadcasting company Nippon Housou Kyoukai turned Poirot and Marple into animated characters in the anime series *Agatha Christie's Great Detectives Poirot and Marple*, introducing Mabel West (daughter of Miss Marple's mystery-writer nephew Raymond West, a canonical Christie character) and her duck Oliver as new characters.

1. Who was Agatha Christie?
2. How many copies of her books have been sold in France?
3. How many novels and stageplays did she write?
4. Do you think that movies based on books are better than books?

Profesori examinatori

Read the text below and answer the questions.

Fish and chips

"Fish and chips" is deep-fried fish in batter with deep-fried potatoes, and a popular take-away food. Fish and chips is originally from the United Kingdom, but also very popular in Australia, Canada, Ireland, New Zealand, South Africa and some coastal towns of the Netherlands and Norway; and also increasingly so in the United States and elsewhere. For decades it was the dominant (if not the only) take-away food in the United Kingdom

The fried potatoes are called chips in British and international usage; and while American English calls them french fries, the combination is still called "fish and chips". (Potato chips, an American innovation, are a different potato-derived food, and are known as crisps in the United Kingdom.)

Fish and chips have separately been eaten for many years – though the potato was not introduced to Europe until the 17th century. The originally Sephardi dish Pescado frito, or deep-fried fish, came to Netherlands and England with the Spanish and Portuguese Jews in the 17th and 18th centuries.

The dish became popular in more widespread circles in London and the south-east in the middle of the 19th century (Charles Dickens mentions a "fried fish warehouse" in *Oliver Twist*) whilst in the north of England a trade in deep-fried "chipped" potatoes developed.

It is unclear when and where these two trades were merged to become the fish and chip shop industry we know today. The first combined fish and chip shop was probably the one opened in London by Joseph Malin in 1860.

During World War II, fish and chips were one of the few foods that were not rationed in the UK.

1. How are fried potatoes called in British and American English?
2. When was the potato introduced to Europe ?
3. When was the first fish and chips shop opened?
4. Which is your favourite dish?

Profesori examinatori

Read the text below and answer the questions.

Dolphins

Dolphins are regarded as the friendliest creatures in the sea and stories of them helping drowning sailors have been common since Roman times. The more we learn about dolphins, the more we realize that their society is more complex than people previously imagined. They look after other dolphins when they are ill, care for pregnant mothers and protect the weakest in the community, as we do. Some scientists have suggested that dolphins have a language but it is much more probable that they communicate with each other without needing words. Could any of these mammals be more intelligent than man? Certainly the most common argument in favour of man's superiority over them that we can kill them more easily than they can kill us is the least satisfactory. On the contrary, the more we discover about these remarkable creatures, the less we appear superior when we destroy them.

1. How do dolphins help each other ?
2. Do dolphins communicate to each other?
3. Which is the most common argument in favour of man's superiority over dolphins?
4. Do you think that people could communicate with animals? How?

Profesori examinatori

Read the text below and answer the questions.

Hip-hop started on the streets and in the clubs of New York City in the 1970s. Despite this, hip-hop's look and sound of today don't belong to the United States only, as many other countries have their own local hip-hop scenes. The music changes everywhere you go. Artists from different backgrounds rap about everything from cars to social issues. A Moroccan man living in Paris might rap about class and race differences. But another person (for example, a female musician from Los Angeles) could rap about something like designer clothes and gambling love.

The Palestinian group DAM raps in several languages, including English and Arabic. The group's music focuses on specific social issues. They sing about the problems that women and young people face nowadays, about the need for peace and tolerance. The members of DAM want to change people's attitudes, to help them think differently about certain things which most of us take for granted.

In the Czech Republic some Roma teenagers are using hip-hop to teach tolerance. They meet for a class called "Rap for Peace Hip-Hop" whose instructor, Shameema Williams, is a member of the all-female rap group Godessa, from South Africa. The teens learn not only to write rap music, but to use it to teach others about Roma culture and more importantly, to change their lives and other people's attitudes.

(from Reading Explorer *Hip-Hop Planet*)

1. Where did hip-hop start?
2. What do people rap about?
3. What do the two rap groups have in common?
4. Which issues do you consider important and why?

Profesori examinatori

Read the text below and answer the questions.

The tarantula is truly the ‘King of the Spiders.’ It’s a skilled hunter, which can jump incredibly quickly to catch smaller insects. Sometimes, it will even take on larger prey, including snakes. When hunting, tarantulas often wrap their hairy legs around their prey to hold it before injecting it with venom from their long fangs. These large spiders are also tough survivors and are able to do well in every climate and landscape. Tarantulas have existed for an extended period of time, so they have had time to evolve and improve their skills. They’re ancient hunters, the product of 25 million years of evolution, which has made them master predators, perfectly adapted to their habitat.

Of this incredible species of spider, the biggest and ‘baddest’ of them all is the Goliath tarantula. The Goliath can grow to over 30 centimeters wide, with fangs up to 5 centimeters long. This huge spider makes his home in the remote rain forests of French Guiana, and that’s where Rick West – a man fascinated by tarantulas who regularly travels to the jungles to seek them out – must go to find it.

(from National Geographic *The King of Spiders*)

1. What is Goliath?
2. How do tarantulas hunt?
3. Give some information about their habitat.
4. What about human habitat?

Profesori examinatori

BILET NR. 22

Read the text below and answer the questions.

Colin Fenton was lying on the bed in his hotel room, wishing that he was somewhere else. The window was open and he could hear the constant sound of traffic outside.

The hotel was in Brentwood, a small town in Essex, just beyond the eastern suburbs of London. Colin was in Brentwood to teach a computer software course to the administrative staff of a company called Sutton Chemicals. This kind of teaching was always dull, tedious work, and today – the first day of the course – it had been particularly dull and tedious. By the afternoon, Colin had been exhausted. Now it was good to lie on the bed in the semi-darkness.

The evening air was cool and damp. Slowly, Colin got up off the bed and went to close the window. He stared out over the hotel car-park towards the wide, busy street beyond, while he wondered where he could go to eat dinner.

(Richard Prescott *Officially Dead*)

1. What was Colin doing in the beginning of the text?
2. Is the hotel in London?
3. Give some information about Colin's job.
4. Where would you go to have dinner?

Profesori examinatori

Read the text below and answer the questions.

I envy people who can say who they are in a few simple words. For me, that's not easy. Nationality? Well... I have two passports. English and American, or the other way around – for I was born in Birmingham, Alabama, but have lived most of my life in England, near Cambridge.

Occupation? I'm an ex-everything. Director of a large advertising agency, theatre press officer, porter in a hospital, broadcaster, cookery writer. One summer I even worked as a cowboy. When things got really desperate, I sank to being a teacher of English to foreign students.

Since that was the job I actually liked best, let's say I'm an ex-teacher, now a freelance writer. I'm very sociable, but perhaps I'm the happiest alone, reading a book. I'm as tall as a basketball player, but I hate all sports except swimming. Now, if I've confused you, imagine what it's like being me!

(Ben Duncan in *Short Cuts*)

1. What does the author write about?
2. What is his job?
3. What kind of person is he?
4. What about yourself?

Profesori examinatori

Read the text below and answer the questions.

In 2010, only 2000 American high school students made the bold decision to study abroad. In contrast to the nearly 30,000 international high school students who spent a year or semester studying abroad in the United States, American high school students are not heading overseas in large numbers. Spending a semester or year away from home, missing friends, and class credit are major hurdles that require a lot of courage, a fierce adventurous streak, and a fair amount of money.

Students who take this step are rewarded with an incredible cultural experience, an unique opportunity to study a second language, and a boost in the college admissions process. On the other hand, these students face a number of obstacles; from obtaining high school credit, to leaving their friends, studying abroad in high school can be challenging.

As a high school student considering studying abroad, you have a lot to think about. Is packing up and leaving high school for a year or a semester the right decision for you? Or maybe you would prefer a shorter summer session, in which you can take classes for college credit. Or perhaps a gap year is the right choice, an option that is becoming increasingly popular for students who need a little break from school.

(adapted from:<http://www.gooverseas.com/blog/high-school-study-abroad-pros-and-cons>)

1. How many high school students headed overseas to the United States in 2010?
2. According to this text, what do you need to have in order to study abroad?
3. What are the benefits of studying abroad, as underlined in the fragment above?
4. Would you consider attending high school abroad? Why (not)?/

Profesori examinatori

BILET NR. 25

Read the text below and answer the questions.

Autodidacticism is self-education or self-directed learning. An autodidact, also known as an automath, is a mostly self-taught person - typically someone who has an enthusiasm for self-education and a high degree of self-motivation. Indian mathematical genius Srinivasa Ramanujan and Newton's contemporary Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz were largely self-taught in mathematics. Occasionally, individuals have sought to excel in subjects outside the mainstream of conventional education. Jean Paul Sartre's *Nausea* depicts an autodidact who is a self-deluding dilettante. Other autodidacts have excelled within, and brought innovative perspectives to, their more mainstream disciplines. For example, physicist and Judo expert Moshe Feldenkrais developed an autodidactic method of self-improvement based on his own experience with self-directed learning in physiology and neurology. His was motivated by his own, crippling knee injury. In addition to Feldenkrais, Gerda Alexander, William Bates, Heinrich Jacoby and a number of other 20th-century European innovators worked out methods of self-development which stressed intelligent sensitivity and awareness.

(From: <http://curezone.com/blogs/fm.asp?i=976690>)

1. What is an automath?
2. Give the name of one of Newton's contemporaries, who was self taught in mathematics.
3. Give the name of a crippled person who was motivated by their own disability to develop an autodidactic method.
4. Is self teaching something you do? How much do you rely on teachers when it comes to your own education?

Profesori examinatori:

Read the text below and answer the questions.

YORKSVILLE

I grew up in a small town called Yorksville, just outside of Boston. It is one of those average places you sometimes see in the movies: a bit dull but quiet and peaceful at the same time. I clearly remember the people who lived in my street – the nicest folks you can imagine.

I had a lot of friends there and I enjoyed playing with them after school. With my best friend Tom, we would read comics all the time and secretly listen to CDs from my dad's collection.

I was never much of an athlete. I mean, I tried to do some exercise at least once a week to keep fit. I started jogging but I was too lazy and gave it up in the end. Besides, Yorksville can be very windy in winter, and jogging in this kind of weather is no pleasure at all, believe me.

We were living in a small flat when my brother was born. We all needed more space, so my parents decided to move to a detached house. My father found a great place in the suburbs, and decided to buy it even though it was in poor condition. He renovated the house with the help of his friends and made it look as good as new. I remember very well the day we moved in because I had broken up with Amy, my girlfriend, the day before.

My parents still live there – the town has got bigger and it is quite busy right now. A few modern housing estates have built over the years and a new shopping mall was opened last month, so Yorksville is no longer the quiet town it used to be.

1. What was the town like when the author was a kid?
2. What did the author use to do?
3. In what way is the town different now?
4. Where would you like to live?

Profesori examinatori:

Read the text below and answer the questions.

THE HELIOTROPE

Freiburg is a town of 200,000 inhabitants located in beautiful countryside on the edge of the Black Forest in southern Germany.

It's a university town, an important industrial and commercial centre, and a tourist resort. But today it is best known as the ecological capital of Germany. The old town is completely pedestrianized, recycling is a way of life and people use bicycles and public transport to commute. In one part of the town cars are forbidden: drivers must park on the edge of the suburbs in a special car park with solar panels on the roof. The result is that very few residents own cars.

On the outskirts of the town there is a special district where all the houses are solar-powered. Here there is a detached house which at first sight looks rather strange. It is an experimental eco-house called the Heliotrope. It looks like a smallish tower block sitting on a narrow platform. In the centre of the house there is a spiral staircase, and as you go upstairs, you see large bright rooms with triple-glazed windows and spacious balconies. Enormous solar panels provide energy for the heating, the cooker, the fridge, the light bulbs and all other domestic appliances. But the most amazing thing about the house is that it turns round. It follows the sun from morning to night to maximize the energy it produces. Although it rotates very slowly, the movement is noticeable. It feels a bit like being on a ship in a calm sea or in a house high up in a tree. The good news is that the technology works: the house produces five times more electricity than it consumes.

Freiburg is a window to the future which shows how urban life may change. Perhaps one day we'll all live in houses like the Heliotrope. If we do, we'll never have to worry about electricity bills again. And we'll never get bored with the view.

1. Where is Freiburg located?
2. What is special about this town?
3. What is the Heliotrope?
4. Would you like to live in such a place?

Profesori examinatori:

Read the text below and answer the questions.

THE LEAST SUCCESSFUL DAY TRIP

Few people have packed more into a day trip than Michael and Lilian Long from Kent who took the ferry from their home in England to Boulogne in France in 1987. On Ester Sunday this adventurous couple went for a short walk around the town. In no time they were spectacularly lost and showing all the qualities of born explorers.

‘We walked and walked’, Mrs. Long recalled, ‘and the further we walked to try to get back, the further we walked away from Boulogne’.

Unable to speak French, they felt embarrassed about asking the way, so they walked throughout the night until finally the next morning a driver gave them a lift to a small village they did not recognize. Here they caught a train to the wrong destination – Paris. In the French capital they spent all their remaining money on catching what they thought was the express train back to Boulogne. After an enjoyable trip they arrived in Luxembourg at midnight on Monday.

Two hours later police put them on the train back to Paris, but it divided and their half ended up in Basle, an attractive medieval town in the north of Switzerland.

Having no money, they tried to find work, but without success. The railway company offered them a free ticket back to Belfort, thinking that this was where they had come from. Once they got off the train, our heroes hiked forty-two miles to Vesoul, hitched a lift to Paris and then nearly boarded the train to Bonn in Germany.

Diverted just in time to the right platform, they finally reached Boulogne a week after they had set out on their walk. They had covered a distance of almost 1,700 km without luggage, maps or any idea of where they were. When he arrived at Dover harbour, Mr. Long said it was the first time they had travelled abroad and that they would not be leaving England again.

1. When Mr. and Mrs. Long first got lost, why didn't they ask the way?
2. Why did they go to Switzerland?
3. Why were they given tickets to Belfort?
4. What is your least-liked memory about a trip/journey?

Profesori examinatori:

Read the text below and answer the questions.

FASHION FOR KIDS

Last week, I bought my nine-year-old son a new pair of trainers that were reduced in a sale. They fit him fine and they looked good, but afterwards he didn't seem very happy with our bargain.

He was worried that some of the kids at his school would laugh at him because his new shoes didn't have a well-known brand name. I seriously thought about taking the shoes back to the shop to exchange them for a more expensive and fashionable make. But why should I pay money I can't afford, or get into debt just because of peer pressure?

I've seen children as young as six going round shoe shops and fashion boutiques looking for the latest styles, desperate for the expensive designer clothes they see on TV. What's wrong with these kids? Or is it their parents? Or our materialistic, consumer society?

If you're a parent, don't give your kids all the clothes and fashion accessories they ask for. Explain patiently why they can't get everything they want. Because one thing is sure: you won't make kids happy by spoiling them.

1. Why wasn't the boy happy with his new trainers?
2. Did his parent exchange them?
3. What is the author's advice?
4. Who do you think is responsible for young children's obsession with fashion? Why?

Profesori examinatori:

Read the text below and answer the questions.

LAST NIGHT I DREAMT

... of the future. There was a map of the world, but the countries looked different. The land had shrunk and the seas had grown. Britain was smaller, and so was France. And Holland had disappeared.

In my dream I could fly, and I saw that the land that had been green was now brown. The snow had melted long ago from the black mountain tops. A drought had left the earth dry and thirsty. The forests had become a desert.

Near a village, there was a man, thin and silent, trying to grow plants in the dead soil. The heat was tremendous. I could hardly breathe. Then suddenly, a tornado came. Raindrops hit my face, the air was humid and heavy. A flood rushed down the valley towards the man and his village.

The storm carried me across an angry ocean and I came to a strange city without streets. Canals ran between high buildings. There was a statue of a giant woman, a torch above her head, water up to her knees.

Needing to rest, I flew into a building, a library. A woman was reading. 'You want to know what happened,' she said. I nodded. Her voice was dry and quiet like dead leaves. 'You knew about global warming, you knew it was real. You knew about the greenhouse effect and acid rain and what air pollution was doing to the environment. But you didn't care'.

1. Is this a nice dream or a nightmare?
2. What happened to the man?
3. What statue could the author see in his/her dream?
4. What are the causes of global warming?

Profesori examinatori: