

# READING TEST

## SECTION 1

### Questions 1–14

Read the text below and answer Questions 1–7.

## A CURE FOR THE COMMON COLD?

The average person comes down with three colds a year, each lasting for about nine days. There is still no cure but the following advice may help.

Take time off work, because your body will fight off the cold virus better if it is well rested. However, if you have to work, avoid close contact with your co-workers as the virus is contagious. Wash your hands frequently or use an alcohol-based disinfectant gel. Non-sedating allergy medications, which you can buy from a chemist, can decrease drowsiness and also alleviate the problems of a runny nose, watery eyes and blocked sinuses.

As soon as you feel a cold coming on, boost your fluid intake. Water or juice is ideal but hot herbal teas with lemon will help thin mucus and expel it from the body. A warm gargle with salt water will relieve a scratchy throat by reducing inflammation and clearing mucus and irritants. It also flushes out bacteria and viruses so it can be used as a preventative measure as well.

The warm moisture generated by a hot shower or bath will soothe and clear nasal passages. Inhaling steam over a bowl of hot water relieves congested sinuses, too. For a tickly cough, the latest research suggests that honey, either straight from the jar or dissolved in a hot drink, works as well if not better than costly lozenges and sprays.

A good diet is essential for a quick recovery, so start the day with a healthy breakfast including vitamin C in the form of fresh fruit or berries. For lunch, chicken soup is good, but be sure to add chunks of lean chicken meat, for protein helps build immune cells. Not only is this the perfect comfort food but it has been proven to be medicinally beneficial. For dinner, a spicy curry makes a good decongestant and some ingredients (ginger, garlic, chilli) are recognized as being anti-viral and anti-bacterial.

A little light exercise is beneficial, as this will enhance your emotional wellbeing, but don't attempt anything too strenuous. Finally, to recharge your body and regain your strength, you need a full eight hours' sleep.

## Questions 1-7

Complete the summary below.

Choose **NO MORE THAN TWO WORDS** from the text for each answer.

Write your answers in boxes 1-7 on your answer sheet.

People usually get three colds every year. When sick, it is good to stay away from work because you need rest and you could spread the illness to **1** ..... Reduce **2** ..... and cold symptoms by using medicines that you can buy from a pharmacy.

Drink a lot and gargle with salt water to help clear your throat. Gargling with salt water is a good **3** ..... to keep you safe from future illness, too. Steam helps clear the nose and **4** ....., instead of expensive medicine, is good for a cough.

Take lots of vitamin C. Chicken soup is healthy and it is ideal **5** ....., as well as having curative properties. In the evening, a meal of hot curry will clear the airways. This also has **6** ..... that can neutralise harmful bacteria and viruses. Some kind of **7** ..... is a good idea to improve your mood and sleep will help you to get better.

## Questions 8–14

Read the text and answer questions 8–14.

# CAR THEFT

Car theft is a constant problem, but if you own a newer model of car, there is less likelihood of it being stolen. Newer models incorporate security systems that help prevent theft. However, thieves often steal car keys to access newer vehicles so it is a good policy to know where your keys are at all times. Never leave them in your car, even if it is parked in your garage at home. You make life easy for the burglar if you leave keys in a receptacle just inside the door or hanging from a hook. Think of a less obvious place, hidden from view. Once a thief has access to your keys, everything you own is at risk, including your personal safety.

While older cars are a potential target, there are some simple precautions you should take. Definitely, lock your car before you leave it, even for the shortest time, even in the driveway of your house. Think of installing an alarm or a steering lock or consider a mechanical immobilizer that fits across the steering wheel. This is a relatively inexpensive item but it is a good deterrent for thieves. They generally go for the easiest and fastest option.

Obviously, it is in your own interest to make your vehicle as difficult to steal as possible – not only to avoid stress and inconvenience, but also because your insurance premiums will soar if you make a claim. If you are unfortunate enough to have your vehicle stolen, phone the police immediately. You will need to provide information relating to your vehicle including make, model, year, colour, registration number and VIN (vehicle identification number). You need all of this when you file a stolen vehicle report. Police will also log any personal items that were in the vehicle. If these items include identifying documents such as a registration certificate, this will make the illegal resale of the vehicle simpler for the thieves, so keep these documents in a separate place.

Next, contact your insurance company. If your wallet was in the car and it contained credit cards, you will need to notify your bank. If your house keys were in the car, call a locksmith and have your locks changed, and if you are still making payments on the car, you will need to inform the finance company. Both your insurance company and the finance company will ask you for copies of the police report so it is best to obtain one in the first instance.

## Questions 8-14

Complete the notes below.

Choose NO MORE THAN THREE WORDS from the text for each answer.

Write your answers in boxes 8–14 on your answer sheet.

### Car theft

- modern cars are more difficult to steal because of their **8** .....
- If they have your keys, burglars could steal your car or even threaten your **9** .....
- older models are easier to steal, so get an alarm or steering lock or use an immobilizer (cheap but effective **10** .....) )
- the loss of your car is stressful and also makes your **11** ..... more expensive
- if your car is taken:
  - call the police
  - supply all identifying information for vehicle – fill out a **12** .....
  - NB: the **13** ..... of the vehicle will be easier for the thieves if you leave official papers inside
  - call the insurance company, bank (if necessary), and the **14** ..... if you owe money on the car

## **SECTION 2**

### **Questions 15-27**

Read the text and answer questions 15-20.

## **HOW TO WRITE A JOB TRANSFER REQUEST**

If you want to transfer to a division of the company in another city, you should write a job transfer application letter to your Departmental Head or Human Resources expressing your reasons.

Employees may seek a transfer:

- to undertake professional development (e.g. learn new skills or a new line of business)
- to confront new challenges (e.g. you have mastered all the duties related to your current position which has now become routine and you feel the need for a change)
- to break away from unrelenting tension or conflict within a team
- to cope with a change in life's circumstances (e.g. family illness, marriage, divorce, birth of a child)
- to recover from illness or manage the aging process (e.g. physical pain, fatigue) – in this instance, you may want to request reduced working hours or lighter duties
- to change the nature of your job (e.g. from on-the-road to a non-travelling role)
- to repatriate (i.e. return to country of origin)

A job transfer request made for personal reasons should state those reasons clearly and succinctly. However, you should also highlight your achievements, strengths and abilities, draw attention to your familiarity with the organization's values and practices, and demonstrate how the company will benefit from the transfer. If appropriate, include a transition plan, which includes training a new person for your current job.

The job transfer request letter should be written in formal business format with a polite and respectful tone. The employee should keep copies of all communications concerning the transfer request.

Note that, if you want to apply for an existing, advertised vacancy within the company, you should fill in the application document, write a cover letter, and treat it as you would an external application.

## Questions 15–20

Complete the notes below.

Complete the summary using the list of words, A–L, below.

Write the correct letter, A–L, in boxes 15–20 on your answer sheet.

### How to request a transfer

To get a job with a different **15** ..... of the firm, write a formal letter stating your reasons.

These may include professional development; adjusting to a different family **16** .....

leaving a stressful work environment; ill health or old age; desire for a different type

of **17** .....; or repatriation.

Apart from personal reasons, you should focus on your **18** .....: what advantages there are for the firm, and your knowledge and understanding of company

**19** ..... . You may need to attach a transition plan.

If the job you would like has been advertised, you need to complete the appropriate

**20** .....

**A** employment

**B** company

**C** change

**D** talents

**E** situation

**F** letters

**G** hardships

**H** evidence

**I** form

**J** culture

**K** conflict

**L** branch

## Questions 21-27

Read the text below and answer Questions 21–27.

# REDUNDANCY

## WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW

Getting laid off can be distressing and demoralizing for the employee. Two features differentiate redundancy from other grounds for termination. Firstly, the position must be justifiably superfluous to the employer's requirements and, secondly, the employee must not be at fault. Redundancy cannot be used as a means of dispensing with a poorly performing employee, or one who has been guilty of misconduct in the workplace.

Whether a position is truly redundant is a matter of business judgment for the employer. Whereas minimal modifications to a job role do not amount to grounds for redundancy, a worker who has an obsolete skill set because of the introduction of new technology, for example, can be made redundant. Sometimes the reason for redundancy is obvious to employees, such as the relocation of the business to another city or province, closing down, or selling the business; but sometimes it is less obvious, such as a takeover by another firm. A company can also make redundancies in order to operate more efficiently and cost effectively, if there are financial issues leading to downsizing or if it is no longer using a certain department, for example. In some situations, a company may decide to lay off part of its workforce because it can no longer sustain some in-house services and it wants to outsource certain business functions.

The employer must consult 'in good faith' (sincerely and honestly) with the affected workers before making the ultimate decision. Reasons for the reorganisation must be presented and workers must have an opportunity to have their say. The employer must take into account any feedback that employees provide. Where possible, the employer should weigh up the alternatives, such as transfer within the company or a reduction in hours. The final decision, however, rests with the employer. The notice period for redundancy will usually be stipulated in the original employment contract. If not, then 'reasonable notice' is required and this will depend on the circumstances, such as seniority and length of service.

In some situations, employees may wish to challenge their redundancy in court, and this must be done within 90 days of the decision. The employer must show that the redundancy was genuinely decided on commercial grounds and that there was a frank and honest consultation with the employee before the final decision was made. The business must give evidence to show that the grounds for redundancy were objective, reasonable and fair. The court will then perform its own assessment of whether the restructure was necessary.

## Questions 21–24

Choose FOUR letters, A–H.

Write the correct letters in boxes 21–24 on your answer sheet.

Which FOUR of the following are genuine reasons for redundancy?

- A the company moves to a new place
- B the company wants to hire a younger workforce
- C the company has recently taken on other people
- D the company no longer requires as many employees
- E the company wants to get rid of badly behaved employees
- F the employer contracts another firm to perform the work
- G the employer has no need of underperforming employees
- H the employer's need for a particular type of work has ceased

## Questions 25–27

Complete the sentences below.

Choose NO MORE THAN TWO WORDS from the text for each answer.

Write your answers in boxes 25–27 on your answer sheet.

- 25 The company has to consult with workers before making the final redundancy decision; it must provide reasons and consider the workers' .....
- 26 A period of ..... of redundancy is needed, where this is not stated in the contract.
- 27 If employees contest their redundancy, employers must provide ..... for the redundancy decision.



## SECTION 3

### Questions 28–40

Read the text below and answer Questions 28–40.

#### **A BOOK REVIEW – *DOG WILL HAVE HIS DAY* BY FRED VARGAS (TRANSLATED BY SIAN REYNOLDS)**

This is another crime thriller from the prize-winning novelist Fred Vargas. Despite the misleading first name and Spanish surname, the author is actually a French woman – Frédérique Audoin-Rouzeau. She adopted her nom de plume from the Ava Gardner character, the Spanish dancer Maria Vargas, in the 1954 film *The Barefoot Contessa*. Although a writer of crime fiction, Frederique Audoin-Rouzeau is primarily a medieval historian and archaeologist.

Her detective books are immensely popular: over 10 million copies have been sold worldwide and they have been translated into 45 languages. She is a little mystified by her success – after all, it is just a hobby – and finds it quite amusing. As an archaeologist specialising in epidemiology, she produced the definitive study on the transmission of the bubonic plague – a book that she says “after seven years of intensive work trying to find the real vector of the plague” sold only a thousand copies. It is even more paradoxical to learn that she wrote each of her novels in three weeks flat, during her annual summer holidays. Even when she took a break from archaeology to work full-time on her fiction, the first draft was still finished within the same time frame. She uses the ensuing months to polish and tidy the prose.

Perhaps by virtue of Vargas’ archaeological background, *Dog Will Have His Day* starts with a bone. It turns out to be the top joint of a woman’s big toe, found by chance in Paris by Louis Kehlweiler, a former special investigator for the Ministry of Justice. He presents his find to the local police, who decline to do anything about it. However, Louis, convinced that a murder has taken place, decides to focus on finding the body to which the toe belongs.

Most of Vargas’ characters are eccentrics in some way and Louis is no exception. He carries a toad named Bufo around in his pocket and consults it on matters of importance, although Louis says: “You have to keep it simple with Bufo, just basic ideas ... He can’t cope with anything else. Sometimes I try a bit harder, a bit of philosophy even, to improve his mind ... He was much more stupid when I first got him.” Louis recruits the assistance of Marc Vandoosler, one of the ‘evangelists’ of a previous novel *The Three Evangelists*. The evangelists, actually unemployed historians, share a rundown house and Marc is the medieval researcher among them. Later, another of the evangelists, Mathias, the hunt-er-gatherer (a prehistoric specialist), joins the undertaking.

As the bone fragment had obviously passed through a dog’s digestive system, Louis’ first mission is to track down the dog in question. Ringo, a pit bull, is eventually identified as the culprit and his owner is tracked to a tiny Breton fishing village. There, Marc and Louis establish that the corpse of an old woman missing her big toe had been discovered on the beach a few days earlier. The investigation takes in some interesting characters, including a collector of antique typewriters. Although initially suspecting just one murder, Louis, with the help of Marc and Mathias, manages to solve three homicides and un-mask a would-be mayoral candidate who is in fact wanted for crimes against humanity dating from the Second World War.

As an aficionado of crime fiction, I find Vargas’ prose far from conventional. It is original, enthralling and witty, occasionally whimsical and surreal, but always with a delightful simplicity. The main characters have their little catchphrases such as “I could do with a beer” (Louis) which makes them endearingly human. She has a cast of quirky provincial characters expertly portrayed; far removed from the darkly humorous, brutally violent, hard-edged Scandinavian realism which is so widely admired these days. Vargas definitely swims against the tide of realism – there is a lack of elaborate

description – no de-tailed depictions of the meals eaten, clothes worn, music listened to or cars driven. This is enormously refreshing: frankly, how essential is it to know the make of a vehicle or the brand of beer? Unless, of course, it is inextricably linked to the unravelling of the plot.

Comparatively speaking, the plot of this book appears at first to be a little on the light side although her bizarre characters and inventiveness keep the reader well entertained. However, the story suddenly becomes convoluted towards the end and the denouement rapidly ensues, leaving the reader feeling short-changed. It is not as ingenious or inspired as *The Three Evangelists* – one of her finest novels and a hard act to follow – but the well-judged inclusion of Marc leaves the reader wanting to see more of the other two evangelists. Despite some shortcomings, it is still a brilliant read and I remain a stead-fast fan.

## Questions 28–36

Complete the summary below.

Choose NO MORE THAN THREE WORDS AND/OR A NUMBER from the text for each answer.

Write your answers in boxes 28–36 on your answer sheet.

Fred Vargas is the **28** ..... of Frédérique Audoin-Rouzeau. She has two main professions, and writing crime novels is her **29** ..... . She thinks it is funny that her fiction is so popular, in contrast to her academic writing, which does not sell so well. It took many years of research before she published her book about the **30** ..... whereas she can write the first draft of a detective story in just **31** ....., although it takes quite a bit longer to correct and change the **32** .....

*Dog Will Have His Day* is a story about a piece of human bone, and Louis Kehlweiler's attempts to solve a murder mystery. Kehlweiler is a typical example of Vargas' heroes, many of whom are **33** .....; in his case, he has a pet toad who he chats to regularly. He enlists the help of Marc and Mathias, both **34** ..... who had featured as evangelists in an earlier Vargas novel. They end up in a small **35** ..... where they learn that a woman's body had recently been found on the beach. In the course of their investigation, they uncover more murders and **36** ..... a war criminal.

## Questions 37–40

Do the following statements agree with the views of the writer in SECTION 3?

In boxes 37–40 on your answer sheet, write

- YES**                    if the statement agrees with the views of the writer
- NO**                     if the statement contradicts the views of the writer
- NOT GIVEN**        if it is impossible to say what the writer thinks about this

- 37**    Vargas' style of writing is typical of crime fiction.
- 38**    The style has much in common with Scandinavian crime novels.
- 39**    Detailed descriptions are only useful to the reader when they develop the storyline.
- 40**    The Three Evangelists is Vargas' best selling novel.