S4 English Language Practice Paper: Reading Skills, Grammar (Tenses, Conditionals, Passive Voice), Vocabulary and Collocation, Summary and Note-taking, Long Task Writing, Integrated Listening

S4 | English Language | Time: 75 minutes | Total: 100 marks | 24 questions

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Part A - Reading Skills: Skimming and Scanning (18 marks)

Show all working and units in calculations; answer in full sentences where required.

1. A reading passage contains 240 words. If your reading speed is 200 words per minute, calculate the number of seconds needed to read the whole passage. Give the answer in minutes and seconds. [5]

Answer: Time = 240 / 200 x 60 = 72 seconds = 1 minute(s) 12 second(s).

2. In a 100-mark paper with a 90-minute time limit, how many minutes should be spent on a 5-mark question if time is allocated in proportion to marks? [4]

Answer: Time = 90 x 5 / 100 = 4.5 minutes (4 minutes 30 seconds).

3. Identify the text type of each extract: (i) "We apologise that our company was unable to issue the refund within seven days." (ii) "Step 3: Press the Save key." (iii) "The study randomly sampled 500 students." [4]

Answer: (i) letter replying to a complaint / apology letter; (ii) instruction manual or procedure; (iii) research report.

4. You must locate every mention of "2019" in a six-paragraph text and also decide the main idea of the whole text. State which technique (skimming or scanning) you would use for each task and give one reason for each. [5]

Answer: Locating "2019" = scanning (the target is specific, only the keyword must be found); deciding the main idea = skimming (read headings and first or last sentences quickly to grasp the overall meaning).

Part B - Grammar: Tenses and Conditionals (17 marks)

Rewrite each sentence once, keeping the original meaning.

5. Rewrite as a third conditional sentence (contrary to past fact): "I did not revise, so I failed the test." [5]

Answer: If I had revised, I would not have failed the test. (Inversion is also accepted: Had I revised, I would not have failed the test.)

6. Change "The committee will announce the results tomorrow." into the passive voice, keeping the same tense. [4]

Answer: The results will be announced (by the committee) tomorrow.

7. Fill in the correct tense of the verbs in brackets: "I _____ (live) in Hong Kong since 2018, but I _____ (move) here from Macau." [4]

Answer: have lived; moved. "Since 2018" marks an action continuing to the present, so the present perfect is used; "move" happened at a finished time in the past, so the past simple is used.

8. Report the following: She said, "I am finishing the report now." [4]

Answer: She said (that) she was finishing the report then.

Part C - Vocabulary and Collocation (16 marks)

Write ONE most suitable English word or phrase for each item.

9. Complete the collocations with make, do or take: _____ a decision, _____ a mistake, _____ responsibility, _____ progress. [4]

Answer: make a decision; make a mistake; take responsibility; make progress.

10. Write the correct form of the word in brackets: "The company reported a sharp _____ (reduce) in cost." [4]

Answer: reduction. A noun is needed after the adjective; the noun form of "reduce" is "reduction".

11. Choose the correct word: "The heavy rain _____ (affected / effected) the schedule." [4]

Answer: affected. "Affect" is a verb meaning to influence; "effect" is usually a noun meaning a result.

12. Match the phrasal verbs with their meanings: give up, look into, turn down. Meanings: (a) to refuse (b) to stop trying (c) to investigate. [4]

Answer: give up = (b) to stop trying; look into = (c) to investigate; turn down = (a) to refuse.

Part D - Summary and Note-taking (17 marks)

Write the summary in your own words; do not copy whole sentences from the passage.

13. A passage is 240 words long and the summary must not exceed 50% of the original length. Find the maximum number of words allowed. If a student writes 132 words, by how many words does the summary exceed the limit? [5]

Answer: Limit = 240 x 50% = 120 words; excess = 132 - 120 = 12 words.

14. State the function of a topic sentence in a paragraph, and explain the difference when it appears at the beginning and at the end of the paragraph. [4]

Answer: A topic sentence states the controlling idea of the paragraph and limits the other sentences; at the beginning it gives the general point first for quick reading, while at the end it follows the evidence and stresses the conclusion.

15. Paraphrase the sentence without copying it: "Many students fail because they do not manage their time well." [4]

Answer: Model answer: A large number of learners do badly since they are poor at planning their study time. (Change wording and structure while keeping the meaning.)

16. Abbreviations save time in notes. Give the meaning of: e.g., i.e., w/, and the arrow symbol. [4]

Answer: e.g. = for example; i.e. = that is; w/ = with; the arrow = leads to or then.

Part E - Long Task Writing (16 marks)

Plan before writing; pay attention to paragraph structure and register.

17. The task asks for about 400 words, with a tolerance of plus or minus 10%. Find the minimum and maximum word counts allowed. [4]

Answer: Minimum = 400 x (100 - 10)% = 360 words; maximum = 400 x (100 + 10)% = 440 words.

18. The long task carries 16 marks: content 6, language 6 and organisation 4. Find the percentage of the total mark for each criterion (1 decimal place). [4]

Answer: Content = 6/16 x 100 = 37.5%; language = 6/16 x 100 = 37.5%; organisation = 4/16 x 100 = 25.0%; total 100%.

19. Name the four components of a well-developed paragraph and write one example sentence for each on the topic "installing more water dispensers on campus". [4]

Answer: Four components: topic sentence, supporting sentences, example or data, and a concluding or linking sentence. Example: "More water dispensers should be installed to cut single-use plastic bottles." / "There is only one dispenser on each floor at present." / "A survey showed that 70% of students bought bottled water because dispensers were too far away." / "Installing more dispensers therefore saves money and reduces waste."

20. Rewrite the informal sentence in a formal register suitable for a school composition: "So I was like, the trip was super cool and we had a lot of fun." [4]

Answer: Model answer: The trip was highly enjoyable and we gained a great deal from it. (Remove "so", "like", "super" and "a lot of"; use formal adjectives and noun phrases.)

Part F - Listening and Integrated Skills (16 marks)

Answer after one listening section; keep answers short and accurate.

21. An integrated task asks you to write an activity proposal for the Students' Association. The data file contains: (1) last year's activity report (2) a venue fee schedule (3) student survey results (4) an extract of school rules. State which TWO documents you should cite when writing the paragraph on the activity format, and explain why. [4]

Answer: Cite (3) the survey results (to show students' preferences and needs) and (1) last year's report (to review past experience and results). (2) belongs to the cost section and (4) to the constraints section.

22. Rewrite the sentence in note form (no more than six words per point): "The activity will be held in the school hall on 15 March from 3 pm to 5 pm." [4]

Answer: Date: 15 Mar; Venue: school hall; Time: 3-5 pm.

23. Put the five steps of an integrated task into the correct order: (A) check word count and format (B) read the task instructions (C) transfer the data into the answer (D) select the relevant documents (E) plan the paragraphs [4]

Answer: Correct order: B - D - E - C - A. Read the instructions, select documents, plan, write, then check.

24. Find and correct the four errors: "She have been working here since three years and she is responsible of the report which written last week." [4]

Answer: Corrected: "She has been working here for three years and she is responsible for the report which was written last week." (has / for / responsible for / which was written)
