

EFL STATE COMPETITIONS FOR VIII GRADE STUDENTS

April 2005

Reading Comprehension (time: 35 minutes)

CODE: _____

Read the following article and do the exercise below.

WHEN A COMPUTER EROR IS A FATAL MISTAKE

Our lives depend on computers. They control our money, transport, our exam results. Yet their programs are now so complex that no one can get rid of all the mistakes.

(0 6)

Life without computers has become unimaginable. They are designed to look after so many boring but essential tasks - from microwave cooking to flying across the Atlantic - that we have become dependent on them.

(1 ___)

But as the demands placed on computers grow, so have the number of incidents involving computer errors. Now computer experts are warning that the traditional ways of building computer systems are just not good enough to deal with complex tasks like flying planes or maintaining nuclear power stations. It is only a matter of time before a computer-made catastrophe happens.

(2 ___)

As early as 1889, a word entered the language that was to become all too familiar to computer scientists: a "bug", meaning a mistake. For decades bugs and "de-bugging" were taken to be part of every computer engineer's job. Everyone accepted that there would always be some mistakes in any new system. But "safety critical" systems that fly planes, drive trains or control nuclear power stations can have bugs that could kill. This is obviously unacceptable.

(3 ___)

One way to stop bugs in computer systems is to get different teams of programmers to work in isolation from each other. That way, runs the theory, they won't all make the same type of mistake when designing and writing computer codes. In fact research shows that programmers think alike, have the same type of training - and make similar mistakes. So even if they work separately, mistakes can still occur. Another technique is to produce back up systems that start to operate when the first system fails. This has been used on everything from space shuttle to the A320 air bus, but unfortunately problems that cause one computer to fail can make all the others fail, too.

(4 ___)

A growing number of computer safety experts believe the time has come to stop trying to "patch up" computer systems. They say programmers have to learn to think clearly and to be able to demonstrate through mathematical symbols that

the program cannot go seriously wrong. Until programmers learn to do this, we will probably just have to live with the results of computer bugs.

(5 ___)

Of course, more often than not the errors are just annoying, but sometimes they can come close to causing tragedies. On the Piccadilly line in London's Underground a driver who was going south along a track got confused while moving his empty train through a cross-over point. He started to head north straight at a south-bound train full of people. The computerised signalling system failed to warn him of a certain disaster and it was only his quick human reactions that prevented a crash.

I. Read the article, choose a suitable heading (subtitle) for each paragraph from the list below and write the appropriate letter in the gaps. There is one extra heading which you do not need to use. The first one has been done for you.

- A. An old problem with serious consequences
- B. Two new approaches, but can they solve the problem?
- C. A potentially tragic error
- D. But are they here to stay?
- E. Experts say "Bring back maths!"
- F. Old methods are no longer satisfactory.
- G. We couldn't live without them.

(2 points for each correct answer)

(10 points)

II. Find words or phrases in the text with the following meanings:

- 1. Impossible to imagine (paragraph 0) _____
- 2. needing support from (para. 0) _____
- 3. long-established, conventional (para. 1) _____
- 4. sudden great disaster (para. 1) _____
- 5. often seen or heard (para. 2) _____
- 6. not good enough (para. 2) _____
- 7. separately (para. 3) _____
- 8. support (para. 3) _____
- 9. terrible events that cause great sadness (para. 5) _____
- 10. very likely to happen (para. 5) _____

(2 points for each correct answer)

(20 points)

III. Write two words from with the same meaning as the one given below.

mistake - _____ - _____ (computer term)

(1 for each correct answer)

(2 points)

IV. Choose the best answer for each question.

1. Why do computer mistakes happen?

- a. because computers are stupid.
- b. because computers have to do more and more things.
- c. because people can't use them properly.

2. Which computer systems must never have a mistake?

- a. school computers.
- b. computers used for entertainment.
- c. computers that run and control the safety of many activities and buildings.

3. What is one possible solution for computer errors according to the text?

- a. programmers have to learn to think clearly and use maths in the systems properly
- b. not to use computers at all.
- c. have different teams of programmers to work in isolation from each other.

4. How useful are back up systems?

- a. very useful, because they operate when other systems fail.
- b. useful, although the reason why one system has failed can be a reason for the back up system to fail.
- c. not useful at all.

(2 points for each correct answer)

(8 points)

Total: 40 points

EFL State Competition for 8th Grade Students

April 2005

Use of English (time: 60 minutes)

CODE: _____

1. Put in the following words and phrases to complete questions.
HOW FAR, HOW LONG, HOW OFTEN, HOW MANY, WHAT, WHAT COLOUR, WHAT KIND, WHEN, WHERE, WHO.

- a) _____ is the Greek flag? Blue and white.
- b) _____ centimeters are there in a kilometer? 100 000
- c) _____ is Melbourne? In Australia.
- d) _____ did Romeo love? Juliet.
- e) _____ did the Second World War end? In 1945.
- f) _____ is Sirius? It's a star.
- g) _____ is it from Los Angeles to San Francisco?
About 400 miles.
- h) _____ are the Olympic Games held? Every four years.
- i) _____ of food is Cheddar? It's cheese.
- j) _____ is a game of rugby? Eighty minutes.

1 point for each correct answer

/10

2. Complete these sentences about pollution and the environment. Put in A/AN or THE.

- a) There was _____ programme on television about dangers to _____ environment.
- b) There was also _____ article about pollution in _____ paper.
- c) _____ ozone layer will continue to disappear if we don't find _____ way to stop it.
- d) _____ world's weather is changing. Pollution is having _____ effect on our climate.
- e) Last week _____ oil tanker spilled oil into _____ sea, damaging wildlife.
- f) Some professors have signed _____ letter of protest and have sent it to _____ government.
- g) If _____ earth was _____ human being, it would be in hospital.

1 point for each correct answer

/14

3. Some of these sentences are correct, and some have a word which should not be there. If a sentence is correct, put a plus +. If it is incorrect, cross out the unnecessary word out of the sentence.

- a) London is more bigger than Birmingham.
- b) Indian food is the nicer than Chinese, I think.
- c) The telephone is one of the most useful inventions ever.
- d) Who is the cleverest student in of the class?
- e) The piano is heavier than the sofa.
- f) I've got the least powerful computer in the world.

1 point for each correct answer

/6

4. Read the conversation and circle the correct forms.

Rachel: Have you heard about the pop festival?

Vicky: Yes, it's / it'll be good if Express are playing. They're a great band.

Rachel: Will you be able to go, Nick?

Nick: If I ask / I'll ask my boss, he'll give me some time off work, I expect.

Vicky: How are we going to get there?

Rachel: Well, if there are / there'll be enough people, we can hire a minibus.

Vicky: I won't be going if it's / it'll be too expensive.

Rachel: It isn't costing / won't cost much if we all share/ will share the cost.

Nick: If I see / 'll see the others later on tonight, I ask / 'll ask them if they want to go.

1 point for each correct answer

/8

5. Write the questions to which the underlined words are the answers. (You need to use appropriate question words.)

a) The Smiths have got three cars.

b) Janet works at the supermarket.

c) Andrea is learning English because she will need it in her job.

d) The film was really romantic.

e) The meeting will take place next Tuesday.

f) Tessa switched off the computer.

g) Mr. Johnson's burglar alarm was ringing.

h) Anna went to the dance with Martin.

1 point for each correct answer

/8

6. Read Tessa's postcard to Angela and put the verbs in brackets into the Present Simple or Present Continuous Tense.

We _____ (have) a great time here! It's beautiful, and the sun _____ (shine). Yesterday I went waterskiing! What _____ you _____ (think) of that? I _____ (sit) at a table in our hotel room and writing a few postcards. The room is fine, but we _____ (not like) the food very much. But it _____ (not matter) because we _____ (go) out to a restaurant every evening. We _____ both _____ (be) very lazy at the moment. I _____ (get) up quite late in the morning, and Nigel _____ (get) up even later. You know of course how much Nigel's work _____ (mean) to him and how he _____ (always talk) about it. Well, the holiday is so good that he's forgotten all about work. So it's the perfect holiday. The only problem is that it _____ (cost) us a lot of money. But we'll worry about that later.

1 point for each correct answer

/13

7. Complete the sentences. Put in the correct form of each verb. Use the Past Continuous or Past Simple.

- a) When Martin _____ (arrive) home, Ann _____ (talk) to someone on the phone.
- b) It _____ (be) cold when we _____ (leave) the house that day, and a light snow _____ (fall)
- c) When I _____ (see) the man, he _____ (stand) outside the bank. He _____ (have) a black baseball cap on.
- d) I _____ (walk) along the street when I suddenly _____ (feel) something hit me in the back

1 point for each correct answer

/10

8. Put in the Present Perfect or Past Simple of the verbs in brackets.

- a) The last time I _____ (go) to Brighton was in August.
- b) And the race is over! And Micky Simpson _____ (win) in a record time.
- c) _____ (you / see) the news today? No, not yet.
- d) Marilyn Monroe _____ (be) in about thirty films.
- e) Of course I can ride a bike. But I _____ (not ride) one for years.
- f) I _____ (work) for a computer company for a year. That was after college.

1 point for each correct answer

/6

9. Choose the correct forms.

1. Have you got a ticket for the play?
Yes, *I'm going to / will see* it on Thursday.
2. Would you like tea or coffee?
Oh, *I will / am going to have* coffee, please.
3. Did you buy this book?
No, Emma did. She *is going to / will read* it on holiday.
4. The alarms' going. It's making an awful noise.
OK, *I am going to / will switch* it off.

2 points for each correct answer

/8

10. Complete this paragraph from a travel book. Put in *MANY, FEW, MUCH, LITTLE*.

The main town on the island is very small and does not have _____ important buildings. The islanders do not have _____ money, and they have _____ contact with the outside world. There is not _____ chance of the place attracting large numbers of tourists. The roads are not very good. There are lots of bicycles but not _____ cars. And there are hardly any of the modern facilities which visitors expect. There are _____ shops, and there is _____ entertainment.

1 point for each correct answer

/7

TOTAL: 90

SCORED:

KEY TO THE READING SECTION

- I. 1. F
2. A
3. B
4. E
5. C
- III. mistake - error - bug
- II. 1. unimaginable
2. dependant
3. traditional
4. catastrophe
5. familiar
6. unacceptable
7. (in) isolation
8. back up
9. tragedies
10. certain
- IV. 1. b
2. c
3. a
4. b

KEY TO THE USE OF ENGLISH SECTION

2. what colour – how many – where – who – when – what – how far – how often – what kind – how long
3. a-the-an-the-the-a-the-an-an-the-a-the-the-a
4. more-the - + - of - + - +
5. it'll – ask – there are – 's – won't cost – share – I see – 'll ask
6. How many cars have the Smiths got / do the Smiths have?
Where does Janet work?
Why is Andrea learning English?
What was the film like?
When will the meeting take place?
Who switched off the computer?
Whose (burglar) alarm was ringing?
Who did Anna go to the dance with?
7. 're having – is shining – do you think – 'm sitting -don't like – doesn't matter – go -are being – get – gets – means – is always talking – is costing
8. arrived – was talking – was – left – was falling –saw – was standing – had – was walking – hit
9. went – has won – have you seen – was – haven't ridden – worked
10. am going to / 'll have – is going to – 'll switch
11. many – much – little – much – many – few - little