

# General Training Reading and Writing Test B

## READING

### SECTION 1 Questions 1–14

Read the text below and answer Questions 1–7.

#### **The Young Person's Railcard**

A Young Person's Railcard gives young people the opportunity to purchase discounted rail tickets across Britain. Just imagine where it could take you – to festivals, to see distant friends or to London for a weekend break.

##### **Who can apply?**

Absolutely anybody between 16 and 25 can apply. You will need to provide proof that you are under 26 years of age. For this, only your birth certificate, driving licence, passport or medical card will be acceptable. Alternatively, if you are a mature student over this age but in full-time education, you can also apply. In order to prove your eligibility, you will need to get your headteacher, tutor, or head of department to sign the application form as well as one of your photos, the latter also needing to be officially stamped. 'Full-time education' is defined as over 15 hours per week for at least 20 weeks a year.

Then go along to any major railway station, rail-appointed travel agent or authorised student travel office with your completed application form from this leaflet, together with £28, two passport-sized photos and proof of eligibility.

##### **Using your railcard**

You can use it at any time – weekends, Bank Holidays or during the week. But if you travel before 10 am Monday to Friday (except during July and August) minimum fares will apply. For full details of these, please ask at your local station or contact a rail-appointed travel agent.

##### **Conditions**

In cases where a railcard does not bear the user's signature, it will be treated as invalid. Neither your railcard nor any tickets bought with it may be used by anybody else. Unless there are no purchase facilities available at the station where you began your journey, you will be required to pay the full fare if you are unable to produce a valid ticket for inspection during a journey.

Reduced rate tickets are not available for first-class travel or for Eurostar links to France and Belgium. Passengers will be charged the full rate if they want to use these services.

## Questions 1–7

Complete the sentences below.

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

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

- 1 Railcard applicants over 25 need to be involved in .....
- 2 For mature, full-time students, one of the photographs submitted must be signed and .....
- 3 At certain times of the year, there are no ..... for railcard holders at any time of day.
- 4 If your railcard doesn't have your ..... it will be impossible to use it for travel.
- 5 The benefits of a railcard are not transferable to .....
- 6 If you have no ticket but boarded a train at a station without any ..... you will still be eligible for a discounted ticket.
- 7 If railcard holders wish to use the Eurostar network they must pay the .....

Read the text below and answer Questions 8–14.

## TRAIN TRAVEL INFORMATION



We offer several distinct options for you to choose the ticket that suits you best.

| TICKET TYPE           | DISCOUNT*           | NOTES                                 |
|-----------------------|---------------------|---------------------------------------|
| standard returns      | 20%                 | return within 60 days of outward trip |
| same day returns      | 25%                 | ticket cannot be altered or refunded  |
| children              | 40%                 | children between 4 and 11             |
| students              | 25%                 | student card must be shown            |
| senior citizens       | 25%                 | seniors card must be shown            |
| groups (10–25 people) | 15%                 | discount on each section of the trip  |
| globe-trotter tickets | according to ticket | Railpass, Tourist Card, Econopass     |

\* Only one discount may apply to each fare.

### **CHANGES AND REFUNDS**

Tickets may be refunded not later than 5 minutes before the departure of the train for a charge of 15% of the ticket price, or the journey may be changed to another day for a charge of 10% of the ticket price. (Not applicable to same day returns.)

### **CHANGES FOR SAME DAY TRAVEL**

You may change your ticket once without charge for a journey on the same day as the original ticket.

### **INFORMATION OF INTEREST TO TRAVELLERS**

- When you buy your ticket it is up to you to check that the dates and times of the journey on it are exactly as you requested.
- Ticket control and access to each train platform will be open until 2 minutes before departure of the train.
- Each traveller may take one suitcase and one item of hand luggage. You may also check in 15kgs. of luggage not later than 30 minutes before departure, at no extra charge.
- If you would like to charter a train, or make reservations for over 25 passengers travelling together, call the Sales Department.

### **OUR TIMETABLE IS GUARANTEED**

*If the arrival of your train at your destination is delayed by more than 5 minutes according to the timetable, we will refund the full price of your ticket if the delay is caused by our company*

## Questions 8–14

Complete the summary below.

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

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

An elderly person who is also studying full-time receives a concession of **8** .....

Large groups people who want to reserve seats should get in touch with the **9** .....

If travellers cancel their trip, they will usually receive back the ticket price less **10** ....., or they may change the date of their trip by paying **11** ..... of the original value. These concessions do not apply in the case of **12** ..... It is the passenger's responsibility to make sure the **13** ..... and ..... are correct.

Travellers should ensure they are ready to board the train with at least **14** ..... to spare. They may take a suitcase with them in the carriage as well as hand luggage. A traveller may check in 15 kilos maximum weight of luggage but this must be done at least 30 minutes before the train leaves.

## SECTION 2      **Questions 15–27**

*Read the text below and answer Questions 15–20.*

### **Professional Credentials: Advice for Immigrants**

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As an immigrant to North America, you will need to ensure that employers and organisations such as colleges and universities properly recognise your international credentials. These may be trade certificates, but also educational qualifications such as degrees or diplomas, that you have completed or partially-completed.

It is common for hiring personnel to have little or no training in evaluating an academic background earned outside of North America. But at the same time, employers see formal education as very important when hiring. Education is a hiring requirement for 60% of employment opportunities, but 40% of human resources staff say that if they do not know a lot about the value of documents attained elsewhere, they will not recognise them.

Research has shown that sometimes immigrants start with a lower salary level than people who have completed their training in North America. You may want to apply for employment opportunities with companies whose staff understands your situation or, more importantly, who know where to send you to get your North American qualifications. If you need to complete your training in North America, apprenticeships leading to skilled trades are in high demand. Apprenticeship training is a hands-on program where about 10% is in a classroom setting at community colleges, and 90% of the training is on-the-job. The training involves working for an employer and earning income during the training period. Sometimes there is a limit of 5 years for training. You may be able to use this training toward college or university credits or education. There is a good potential for long-term job security after completion of apprenticeship training.

If you earned your papers outside of North America, you will need to get them translated if you want to work or study. It is important for you that your education is assessed by an accredited assessment service when you are applying for jobs, and particularly if the job posting has an education requirement. As well, it is recommended that you include a copy of the report with your cover letter. It is suggested that you provide this information early and do not wait until the time you actually meet with the employer. Getting job interviews is more than 50% of the whole process of securing employment; and with an evaluation report, you want to make sure that employers are screening you 'in' rather than 'out'.

Establishing yourself in North America is a difficult process, but companies do consider integrating immigrants into the workforce important to the workplace mosaic. Employers are making significant progress in improving diversity at work.

## Questions 15–20

Complete the sentences below.

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

Write your answers in boxes 15–20 on your answer sheet.

- 15 New arrivals to North America need to make sure that their academic qualifications or their ..... are accepted.
- 16 A significant number of companies view ..... as a major requirement.
- 17 People educated in North America may initially be offered a higher ..... than immigrants.
- 18 ..... courses often provide more job stability.
- 19 Most of the effort to find work is spent trying to obtain ..... .
- 20 As more newcomers enter the workforce, ..... increases.

Read the text below and answer Questions 21–27.

## How to Prepare for a Presentation

The first time your boss suggests that you formally present something to your department or a client, your reaction may be to panic. But remember that being asked to present is a compliment. Someone believes that you have valuable information to share with the group, and wants to listen to your ideas.

You need to decide exactly what you will say during the allotted time. Condense your topic into one sentence. What do you want your audience to remember or learn from your talk? This is your 'big idea'. Remember that you are dealing with the short attention spans of individuals who tend to have many things on their minds.

Think of three main points you want to make to support your overall topic. Develop a story to demonstrate each of those concepts. This could be something that happened to you or someone you know, or something you read in a newspaper or magazine.

We have all heard the saying *A picture is worth a thousand words*. Think about how your presentation can be more interesting to watch. Props are a wonderful way to make your talk come alive. You could do something as simple as holding up a toy phone receiver when talking about customer service or putting on a hat to signal a different part of your talk.

Think of a dynamic and unusual way to start your presentation. This might involve telling anecdotes that relate to your topic. Never begin with, 'Thank you for inviting me here to talk with you today.' You will put your audience to sleep right away. Start off enthusiastically so they will listen with curiosity and interest. After your energetic introduction, identify yourself briefly and thank the audience for taking the time to listen to you.

Plan your ending, and finish in a memorable way. Your listeners remember best what they hear at the beginning and end of a speech, so conclude with a game in which they can participate, or tell a humorous story and your audience will leave laughing.

Don't try to memorise your talk or read it word-for-word. It will sound stilted and boring. Instead, practise your dynamic introduction and conclusion until you can deliver them effortlessly. If you do this you'll feel a burst of confidence that will help you sail through the whole of the speech.

## Questions 21–27

Complete the sentences below.

Choose **ONE WORD ONLY** from the text for each answer.

Write your answers in boxes 21–27 on your answer sheet.

### How to Prepare for a Presentation

- You should regard an invitation to speak as a **21** .....
- Express your main idea in a **22** .....
- Try using a ..... **23** to support the major points you are making.
- Add visual excitement to your talk by using **24** .....
- Express appreciation to your listeners for their **25** .....
- A **26** ..... will get the audience to interact.
- It is important to prepare well as this will increase your **27** .....



## SECTION 3      Questions 28–40

Read the text below and answer Questions 28–40.

# The Birdmen

*Will people finally be able to fly long distances without a plane?*

**John Andres** investigates

People have dreamt of flying since written history began. In the 1400s, Leonardo da Vinci drew detailed plans for human flying machines. You might have thought the invention of mechanised flight would have put an end to such ideas. Far from it. For many enthusiasts, the ultimate flight fantasy is the jet pack, a small piece of equipment on your back which enables you to climb vertically into the air and fly forwards, backwards and turn. Eric Scott was a stuntman in Hollywood for about a decade and has strapped jet packs to his back more than 600 times and propelled himself hundreds of metres into the air. Now he works for an energy-drink company that pays him to travel around the world with his jet pack. As Scott says: 'I get to do what I love and wherever I go I advertise Go Fast drinks. Existing packs work for little more than 30 seconds, but people are working on designs which let you fly around for 20 minutes. That would be amazing,' says Scott.

Paramotoring is another way of getting into the air. It combines the sort of parachute used in paragliding with a small engine and propeller and is now becoming popular. Chris Clarke has been flying a paramotor for five years. 'Getting about is roughly comparable with driving a petrol-powered car in terms of expense. The trouble is that paramotoring is ill-suited to commuting because of the impossibility of taking off in strong winds,' says Clarke.

Another keen paramotorist recently experienced a close call when in the air. 'I started to get a warm feeling in my back,' says Patrick Vandenbulcke. 'I thought I was just sweating. But then I started to feel burning and I realized I had to get to the ground fast. After an inspection of the engine later, I noticed that the exhaust pipe had moved during the flight and the harness had started melting.' This hasn't put Vandenbulcke off, however, and he is enthusiastic about persuading others to take up paramotoring. However he warns: 'Although it seems cheaper to try to teach yourself, you will regret it later as you won't have a good technique.' A training course will cost over £1,000, while the equipment costs a few thousand pounds. You may pick up cheaper equipment secondhand, however. There was one pre-used kit advertised on a website, with a bit of damage to the cage and tips of the propellers due to a rough landing. 'Scared myself to death,' the seller reported, 'hence the reason for this sale.'

Fun though it is, paramotoring is not in the same league as the acrobatics demonstrated by Yves Rossy. He has always enjoyed being a daredevil showman. He once parachuted from a plane above Lake Geneva and, intentionally skimming the top of a fountain as he landed, he descended to the lake where he grabbed some water ski equipment and started waterskiing while the crowd watched open-mouthed.

Rossy, who has been labelled 'the Birdman', was born in 1959 in Switzerland. After flying planes for the air force from the ages of 20 to 28, he went on to do a job as a pilot with a commercial airline from 1988 to 2000. 'The cockpit of a plane is the most beautiful office in the world,' he says, 'but I didn't have any contact with the air around me. It was a bit like being in a box or a submarine under water.' From then on, he therefore concentrated on becoming the first jet-powered flying man.

In May 2008, he stepped out of an aircraft at about 3000 metres. Within seconds he was soaring and diving at over 290 kph, at one point reaching 300 kph, about 104 kph faster than the typical falling skydiver. His speed was monitored by a plane flying alongside. Rossy started his flight with a free fall, then he powered four jet turbines to keep him in the air before releasing a parachute which enabled him to float to the ground. The jet turbines are attached to special wings which he can unfold. The wings were manufactured by a German firm called JCT Composites. Initially he had approached a company called Jet-Kit which specialised in miniature planes, but the wings they made for him weren't rigid enough to support the weight of the engines. Rossy says he has become 'the first person to maintain a stable horizontal flight, thanks to aerodynamic carbon foldable wings.' Without these special wings, it is doubtful he would have managed to do this.

Rossy's ambitions include flying down the Grand Canyon. To do this, he will have to fit his wings with bigger, more powerful jets. The engines he currently uses already provide enough thrust to allow him to climb through the air, but then he needs the power to stay there. In terms of the physical strength involved, Rossy insists it's no more difficult than riding a motorbike. 'But even the slightest change in position can cause problems. I have to focus hard on relaxing in the air, because if you put tension in your body, you start to swing round.' If he makes it, other fliers will want to know whether they too will some day be able to soar. The answer is yes, possibly, but it is unlikely to be more than an expensive hobby.

Questions 28–30

Choose the correct letter, **A**, **B**, **C** or **D**.

Write the correct letter in boxes 28–30 on your answer sheet.

- 28** What information is given about Vandenbulcke in paragraph 3?
- A** He narrowly avoided a dangerous situation.
  - B** He did not understand the equipment he was using.
  - C** He did not react fast enough to the situation.
  - D** He was fortunate to get the help he needed.
- 29** When the writer refers to some second-hand paramotoring equipment which was for sale, he is emphasising that
- A** paramotoring equipment is in short supply.
  - B** paramotoring equipment needs to be carefully tested.
  - C** paramotoring is a very expensive hobby.
  - D** paramotoring can be a dangerous pastime.
- 30** The description of what happened at Lake Geneva is given to suggest that Rossy
- A** frequently changes his plans.
  - B** likes to do what appears impossible.
  - C** is an excellent overall sportsman.
  - D** knows the area very thoroughly.

## Questions 31–35

Complete the summary below.

Choose **ONE WORD AND/OR A NUMBER** from the text for each answer.

Write your answers in boxes 31–35 on your answer sheet.

## Yves Rossy

Yves Rossy was born in 1959. He worked as both a military and **31** ..... pilot before focusing on his ambition of becoming a jet-powered flying man. First he asked a firm which made **32** ..... planes to construct some **33** ..... for him, but these proved unsuitable. The second company he approached was able to help him, however. On a flight in May 2008, he managed to achieve a top speed of **34** ..... easily exceeding the speed achieved by the average **35** ..... . He had engines to keep him in the air and then used a parachute when it was time to come down.

## Questions 36–40

Look at the following statements (Questions 36–40) and the list of people below.

Match each statement with the correct person, **A, B, C** or **D**.

Write the correct letter, **A, B, C** or **D**, in boxes 36–40 on your answer sheet.

- 36** He acknowledges the role of his equipment in enabling him to set a flying record.
- 37** He explains how he uses his flying expertise to promote a product.
- 38** He explains what led him to experiment with different ways of flying.
- 39** He describes a mistake some beginners might make.
- 40** He mentions circumstances which prevent you from leaving the ground.

### People

- A** Eric Scott
- B** Chris Clarke
- C** Patrick Vandembulcke
- D** Yves Rossy

## WRITING

### WRITING TASK 1

You should spend about 20 minutes on this task.

***On a recent holiday you lost a valuable item. Fortunately you have travel insurance to cover the cost of anything lost.***

***Write a letter to the manager of your insurance company. In your letter***

- ***describe the item you lost***
- ***explain how you lost it***
- ***tell the insurance company what you would like them to do***

Write at least 150 words.

You do **NOT** need to write any addresses.

Begin your letter as follows:

Dear Sir or Madam,

### WRITING TASK 2

You should spend about 40 minutes on this task.

Write about the following topic:

***Some people think that the teenage years are the happiest times of most people's lives. Others think that adult life brings more happiness, in spite of greater responsibilities.***

***Discuss both these views and give your own opinion.***

Give reasons for your answer and include any relevant examples from your own knowledge or experience.

Write at least 250 words.