



<b>SURNAME:</b>
<b>NAME:</b>

R	/10
Gr	/10
W	/10

**Instructions:** Write your answer to Part 1 on a separate sheet. Remember to write your name on the sheet. Answer the rest of the exam on this sheet.

### **PART 1. LISTENING/WRITING (20 marks)**

Listen to the recording twice and answer the question below. You may take notes as you listen. Your notes will not be taken into account.

In English, answer the following question (approx. 200 words).

- Do you think this dilemma is common in your society or culture today? Discuss the reasons why or why not.

### **PART 2. READING COMPREHENSION. Read the text and answer the questions that follow (10 marks)**

#### **How to become an elastic thinker and problem solver**

**Every day at the Alliance Rubber Company's factory in Hot Springs, Arkansas, a lot of ping-pong takes place.**

By Dhruvi Shah. BBC News, 16 May 2018 (adapted)

The family-owned company has known for years that elastic is big business. In 1923, founder William H. Spencer realised he'd **hit upon** a novel commercial idea when he created rubber bands by cutting up the inner tubes of Goodyear tyres before using them to wrap up newspaper bundles. Since then, the company has diversified what it produces and now services industries including healthcare, shipping, fitness and the military.

This constant reinvention of their simple product is essential if Alliance wants to continue to succeed, especially as they face rising competition from Thailand and China. The company needs to hire people who are willing to experiment and come up with innovations, generating ideas that have never been seen before. This means a lot of brain activity from these workers – the reason for all the ping-pong at the company's headquarters. It isn't just the snap of rubber, but also of minds coming up with creative ways to make their company stand out. For Alliance, hiring people who think in a flexible way is integral to their business model.

Unlike analytical thinkers who are driven by logic and sequence, flexible thinkers prosper in situations which involve breaking boundaries and trying new things. The idea of flexible thinking has, of course, been around for aeons but for author, physicist and screenwriter Leonard Mlodinow, it's now prime time for people to harness the power of 'elastic thinking' to navigate an unstable world.

Mlodinow's book, *Elastic: Flexible Thinking in a Constantly Changing World*, focuses on the tools required to take advantage of processes that he believes we can all access. Elastic thinking is about stretching your mind and using 'bottom up' processing in the brain rather than the top down executive functions that drive



analytical thinking. It **encompasses** a range of processes including an enthusiasm for novelty, imagination, idea generation and divergent thinking.

He says human thinking can be set out on a spectrum. “Logical analytical thinking is really good when you are trying to solve a problem you’ve seen before. You can use known methods and techniques to approach whatever issue you are dealing with. Elastic thinking is what you need when the circumstances change and you are dealing with something new. It’s not about following rules.”

He describes Uber and Google as strong examples where elastic thinking underpins their creation and adaptability. And what do Leonardo da Vinci and the inventors of *Pokemon Go* have in common? They are also credited as elastic thinkers. It’s all about connecting the unconnected, trying new things and not being afraid of failure.

Mlodinow observes in his book that the Pokemon Go developers ignored widely held beliefs that all gamers wanted to do was “sit and play” and instead, by “exploiting existing technologies in a novel way, they changed the way game developers think.”

“You’ll see the new companies – often tech start-ups – that have sofas for people to lay around and stare up at the ceiling,” adds Mlodinow. “The workers don’t have managers who are going to come and **berate** them for that because they know that incubation time is very useful for coming up with and processing ideas.”

For those wishing to **tap into** elastic thinking, Mlodinow suggests making time for daydreaming, talking to strangers who are not in your usual social circles, absorbing art out of your comfort zone, and listening to ideas or concepts that you actively disagree with before considering the arguments of the supporters of those ideas and what motivated them.

**Circle the letter corresponding to the correct answer:**

**A. UNDERSTANDING**

1. The Alliance Rubber Company believes that if you don’t have a creative approach to business
  - a) you can’t diversify.
  - b) you can’t solve problems.
  - c) you can’t survive in a competitive market.
  - d) your original product will become obsolete.
2. Flexible thinking
  - a) Leads to unusual ideas that respond to changing circumstances.
  - b) is similar to analytical thinking.
  - c) has been tried before.
  - d) is a fixed character trait.
3. ‘Bottom-up’ processing
  - a) refers to modern technology.
  - b) is related to analytical thinking.
  - c) is the same as ‘executive function’.
  - d) can be learned by anyone through training.



4. *Pokemon Go* is an example of
- a new way of thinking about gaming.
  - not being afraid of failure.
  - a successful game design.
  - combining sitting and playing with moving around.

## B. INTERPRETING

5. The Alliance Rubber Company
- is a small family business.
  - has become a model for other businesses to follow.
  - is an example of a successful company cited in Mlodinow's book
  - has grown into a huge international enterprise because of its ability to adapt to new markets.
6. Mlodinow thinks that elastic thinking
- means you will be successful if you follow the rules.
  - is an unusual personal characteristic that not many people have.
  - is essential for solving problems.
  - is the key to innovation.

## C. INFERRING

7. 'hit upon' means
- discovered
  - written
  - made violent contact with
  - seen
8. 'encompasses' means
- takes a direction
  - originates with
  - takes in
  - happens at the same time as
9. 'berate' means
- encourage
  - tell off
  - praise
  - hire
10. 'tap into' means
- use
  - find out more about
  - spread the word about
  - understand



**PART 3. USE OF ENGLISH (10 marks)**

**Complete the sentences using the correct tense of the verb in brackets.**

1. He ..... (must get) there by now. Try phoning him again.
2. I'm sorry you ..... (wait). If I ..... (hear) the doorbell, I ..... (come) straight away.
3. The smell of wet grass reminds me of my childhood when I ..... (ride) my bicycle along the country lanes.
4. After ..... (agree) to stay for another year, she realised that by the end of the contract she ..... (live) in Madrid for three years longer than she ..... (plan).

**Complete the sentence with the correct preposition.**

5. The statistics show that inflation this month is ..... (upon/above/over) the average for the rest of the year.
6. If you are ..... (less/less than/under) 18, you cannot vote in most countries.
7. I bought a new computer ..... (the last/at/last) weekend.
8. The person sitting next to me in the cinema snored ..... (along/since/throughout) the whole film.

**Add the correct articles (a/an/Ø/the) to the text. (Leaving a blank space is the equivalent of not answering the question).**

..... fact that your hair turns grey because of ..... stress is nothing more than ..... old wives' tale. It's true that too much stress isn't good for you, but it is not responsible for turning your hair grey. In fact, ..... answer comes from the pigments in ..... cells in your hair. This is what determines ..... colour and, eventually, the fade to grey.

Most of us start to notice our first grey hairs by the time we hit our thirties. A general rule to go by is that by ..... age of 50, half of the population will have lost the colour in ..... 50% of their hair.