

9. The new version of the anthem proposed in 2000 was not fully supported by the nation.

A. True

B. False

10. Nowadays, the Russian anthem has no references to the Soviet symbolism.

A. True

B. False

Task 2

For items **11-15** listen to a conversation between two friends standing in the line to buy concert tickets and answer the questions. Choose the correct answer (**A, B** or **C**) to answer questions **11-15**. You will hear the text **only ONCE**.

11. At the beginning of the conversation, Alice DOESN'T

A. sound pessimistic.

B. blame Gerard.

C. feel satisfied.

12. Gerard offers Alice to

A. have a rest.

B. go home.

C. queue-jump.

13. Gerard's offer makes Alice

A. defeatist.

B. optimistic

C. annoyed.

14. Gerard wishes they

A. had eaten out at the restaurant.

B. were not quarrelling.

C. had gone to the cinema.

15. At the end of the conversation, Gerard

A. sounds optimistic.

B. drives back home.

C. wants a short rest.

INTEGRATED LISTENING AND READING

Task 3

Read an excerpt from the essay by James Marriott, a writer at *The Times*, then listen to an interview with him. You will notice that some ideas coincide and some differ in the text and the interview. Answer questions **16-25** by choosing **A** if the idea is expressed in **both** materials, **B** if it can be found **only in the reading text**, **C** if it can be found **only in the audio-recording**, and **D** if **neither** of the materials expresses the idea.

Now you have 10 minutes to read the text.

The dawn of the post-literate society And the end of civilisation

Now, more than three hundred years after the reading revolution ushered in a new era of human knowledge, books are dying. Numerous studies show that reading is in free-fall. Even the most pessimistic twentieth-century critics of the screen-age would have struggled to predict the scale of the present crisis. In the UK, a third of adults say they have given up reading at all and prefer listening to podcasts. The National Literacy Trust reports “shocking and dispiriting” falls in children’s reading for pleasure, which is now at its lowest level on record. The publishing industry is in crisis: as the author Alexander Larman writes, “books that once would have sold in the tens, even hundreds, of thousands are now lucky to sell in the mid-four figures.” Most remarkably, in late 2024 the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development published a report which found that literacy levels were declining in most developed countries. Once upon a time a social scientist confronted with statistics like these might have guessed the cause was a societal crisis like a war or the collapse of the education system.

What happened was the smartphone, which was widely adopted in developed countries in the mid-2010s. Those years will be remembered as a watershed in human history. Never before has there been a technology like the smartphone. Where previous entertainment technologies like cinema or television were intended to capture their audience’s attention for a period, the smartphone demands your entire life. Phones are designed to be hyper-addictive, hooking users on a diet of pointless notifications, inane short-form videos and social media rage bait.

If the reading revolution represented the greatest transfer of knowledge to ordinary men and women in history, the screen revolution represents the greatest theft of knowledge from ordinary people in history.

Our universities are at the front line of this crisis. They are now teaching their

first truly “post-literate” cohorts of students, who have grown up almost entirely in the world of short-form video, computer games, addictive algorithms (and, increasingly, AI).

Because ubiquitous mobile internet has destroyed these students’ attention spans and restricted the growth of their vocabularies, the rich and detailed knowledge stored in books is becoming inaccessible to many of them. A study of English literature students at American universities found that they were unable to understand the first paragraph of Charles Dickens’s novel *Bleak House* — a book that was once regularly read by children.

The transmission of knowledge — the most ancient function of the university — is breaking down in front of our eyes. Writers like Shakespeare, Milton and Jane Austen whose works have been handed on for centuries can no longer reach the next generation of readers. They are losing the ability to understand them.

The collapse of reading is driving declines in various measures of cognitive ability. Reading is associated with a number of cognitive benefits including improved memory and attention span, better analytical thinking, improved verbal fluency, and lower rates of cognitive decline in later life.

Now listen to an interview with James Marriott and then do the tasks (questions 16-25), comparing the text above and the interview. You will hear the interview TWICE.

16. Extensive research indicates that reading is rapidly losing its value.
17. A third of adults in Great Britain do not read for pleasure anymore.
18. Children’s unassigned reading is at an all time low.
19. People in rich countries are losing ability to read and write.
20. The main reason for the literacy crisis is the collapse of the education system.
21. Smartphone has caused a revolutionary societal change.
22. James ardently considers his essay to be his most important piece.
23. James’s mobile phone doesn’t have a habit-forming effect on him.
24. The omnipresent world wide web has disastrous consequences for students.
25. Reading has multiple benefits for human feelings.

READING

Task 4

Read the text and answer questions **26-40 below**.

Lies, Gossip, and People You Thought You Knew

When were you last lied to? To your knowledge, obviously. Was the lie something that mattered? Was the liar convincing? And how did you react? Perhaps with anger, **(26)** ... or contempt – like my grandmother, who had a stock retort for anyone who tried to pull the wool over her eyes: “I hate liars. They’re worse than thieves.”

Did you feel afterwards that you’d been easy to fool? If so, you’d be in good company. We tend to assume communication is honest except when verified as incorrect. And that is something to be thankful for; otherwise we’d live in a suspicious world. Less helpfully, many of us believe that dishonesty reveals itself through body language. In popular imagination, liars look **(27)** ... , they fidget, cough or avoid eye contact. Unfortunately, these cues are unreliable.

People who convince themselves of their own truthfulness while lying may behave no differently from anyone else. Empirical research shows it is difficult to identify even deliberate liars from their behaviour. A meta-analysis examining more than 200 studies found that people’s ability to distinguish truth from lies is barely better than chance. A more recent review reinforced this conclusion: we are generally poor judges of deception. However, who we believe – and why – becomes more complex within certain relationships.

I once knew a woman called Julia, who was attractive, charming and seemingly kind. She was generous with cake, hugs and praise, and appeared to be a sympathetic listener. I loved her for these qualities, yet I often felt guarded in her company for reasons I could not articulate. Her compliments were so warm one could feel dizzy. In this context, when she made improbable claims, people tended to take them at face value. I know I did. Her credibility was reinforced by a troubling pattern of behaviour. At times she persuaded me that I had said things I did not remember saying, or that I had imagined things she had said. She would advise me on a practical issue, only later to express dismay at my choices and question my reasoning. Over time, my trust in my own judgment eroded. If I was so forgetful, how could I rely on my perceptions? I could barely sense them through a mental fog. She had a similar effect on others.

Within this fog, Julia made extreme claims about people I knew: Cathy was mistreating a pet, Daniel was ripping off his mother, Pamela was taking Julia’s belongings. I privileged Julia’s perception over my own, gradually developing distorted views of these people.

Eventually, I learned that Julia had been discussing my health with others. Under the guise of concern, she claimed I suffered from a range of physical and mental illnesses that I had never had and did not meet criteria for. These included stigmatised conditions likely to provoke strong reactions. What she said was untrue. When I compared notes with some of her other contacts, we discovered she had set us against each other through an elaborate web of (28) Several relationships had broken down, extracting a painful toll from those involved. When Julia realised we were on to her, she cut ties. She never explained her behaviour, and I still do not know whether she believed her own contradictory accounts. What interests me more is how long she was believed, despite growing (29) ... of her actions.

Many people are now familiar with the idea of gaslighting: denying a shared reality to make someone question their senses. The most effective gaslighters I've met seemed more likely to be believed when they told everyday lies, with one strategy supporting the other. Who the liar is, rather than what they say, influences their success. Perceived credibility is shaped by cognitive bias, and can be gendered or racialised. It is also affected by halo errors: we expect people we like to be honest. Good looks, generosity and flattering behaviour can buy undeserved leeway.

The normal desire for connection can also cloud judgment. Consider gossip, often defined in psychology as unverified personal information rather than malicious intent. Research suggests gossip can benefit social groups if the information is true, and anthropologists argue it helps forge bonds. Sharing an inside story can signal trust or belonging. The downside of increased intimacy is lowered defences, and a compelling story from a friend can be hard to resist.

Overall, being lied to can damage trust in lasting ways. First, it can foster suspicion that others do not mean what they say. Although studies suggest most people tell one or two white lies a day, prolific liars are relatively rare. Second, there is the (30) ... and disconcerting knowledge that even good people struggle to detect lies. Third, confidence in one's own judgment may be lost and must be rebuilt. The best response, it seems to me, is to attend to any sense of inner division. Wordless unease should be examined rather than ignored.

A balance must be struck between the dignity my grandmother showed when confronting a liar and faith in humanity. Viewing everyone skeptically offers false comfort: no liar gets through, but neither does anyone else. What helps me is knowing how much better my life has been without Julia in it. Outside her influence, optimism

is easier – including the understanding that most people are honest, and deserve to be met as such.

Questions 26-30

In some of the paragraphs a word is missing. These words in a DIFFERENT WORD FORM are listed below:

false

muse

settle

shift

plausible

DERIVE NEW WORDS from the given words to fill in the gaps 26-30. Use the words in the appropriate grammar form.

Questions 31-35

Are the statements **31-35** true, false or not given? If a statement is true, circle A on your answer sheet. If it is false, circle B on your answer sheet. If it is not given, circle C on your answer sheet.

- 31.** The author believes most people are inherently untrustworthy.
- 32.** Being misled can weaken trust in one's own decision-making abilities.
- 33.** The author thinks that treating everyone with suspicion is an effective long-term strategy.
- 34.** The author turned for professional help to expose Julia's lies.
- 35.** Suspicions about a person's honesty should be openly communicated.

Questions 36-40

For questions **36-40** choose one answer A, B, C or D which best fits according to the text.

36. What expectation about everyday interaction does the author suggest most people naturally hold?
- A) Speakers usually manipulate information for personal gain.
 - B) Exchanges are generally sincere unless proven otherwise.
 - C) We tend to overreact to the lies we've been told.
 - D) People carefully verify what they hear from others.
37. What does the research indicate about humans' capacity to recognize deception?
- A) People can reliably identify lies if they are deliberate.
 - B) Judging truthfulness is highly dependent on prior experience.
 - C) Accuracy in detecting untruths slightly exceeds random guessing.
 - D) Ability to detect deception is straightforward but context-dependent.
38. What strategy did Julia use that undermined the narrator's confidence?
- A) She frequently contradicted herself in conversations.
 - B) She gradually isolated the narrator from all social contacts.
 - C) She used overt threats to control decision-making.
 - D) She manipulated the narrator's memory and perception of events.
39. Which factors can create undeserved trust in a manipulator or liar?
- A) The audience's unconscious expectations and preconceptions.
 - B) The logical consistency of their false statements.
 - C) The level of evidence they present to support their claims.
 - D) The rarity or unusualness of their statements.
40. Why are personal accounts from close contacts rarely questioned?
- A) Gossip from friends is motivated by good will.
 - B) Familiar sources are more accurate.
 - C) Questioning peers is socially unacceptable.
 - D) A sense of inclusion weakens suspicion.

TRANSFER ALL YOUR ANSWERS TO YOUR ANSWER SHEET