

**EGYNYELVŰ
MINTAFELADATSOR**

**GAZDASÁGI
ANGOL**

B2
KÖZÉPFOK

2016

KIADJA: BME NYELVVIZSGAKÖZPONT

WWW.BMENYELVVIZSGA.BME.HU

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Előszó

A BME gazdasági nyelvvizsgarendszerének mintafeladatsorát tartod kezédben. A kötetben mind a szóbeli mind pedig az írásbeli részvizsga összes megoldandó feladattípusából találsz mintát, amelyek segítségével pontos képet kaphatsz arról, hogy a vizsgán milyen feladatok várnak Rád.

A kötet első része táblázatos formában mutatja be a vizsga felépítését, az azzal kapcsolatos legfontosabb tudnivalókat és közli a szóbeli feladatok témaköreit. Ezt követően egy teljes beszédkésztség feladatsor következik, amit a beszédértés, a nyelvismeret, az olvasáskészség és az íráskészség feladatok követnek. A kötet végén közöljük a beszédértés, a nyelvismeret, és az olvasáskészség feladatok megoldásait, valamint a beszédértés feladatokhoz tartozó hanganyagok írott változatát. A feladatok mellett a válaszlapok is a kiadvány részét képezik.

A beszédértés feladatokhoz tartozó hanganyag kétféleképpen tölthető le az internetről:

1. Az alábbi linkről:

<http://bit.ly/2eJvJ5t>

2. Az alábbi QR kódról:



A felkészüléshez kitartást, a vizsgához pedig sok sikert kívánunk.

BME Nyelvvizsgaközpont

Budapest, 2016. szeptember 30.

A gazdasági egynyelvű vizsga felépítése B2 (középfok)

B2	Mért készség	Feladattípus, szövegtípus	Ítemek száma	Pontszám feladatonként	Pontszám készségenként	Teljesítési minimum 40%	A vizsga sikerese 60%- tól	Szótár	Idő
Szóbeli részvizsga	Beszéd- készség	személyes szakmai jellegű beszélgetés	6-7 kérdés	60 pont	60/1,5=40 pont	16 pont	48 pont	nem	25 perc
		szakmai témakifejtés meghatározott témakörök alapján	4-6 kifejtendő pont alapján						
		problémamegoldó szituáció	egy szituáció						
	Beszéd- értés	jegyzetkészítés	10 ítem	20 pont	40 pont	16 pont			kb 30 perc
igaz-hamis		10 ítem	20 pont						
Írásbeli részvizsga	Írás- készség	grafikai stimulusból önálló szövegalkotás		25 pont	40 pont	16 pont	57 pont	igen	180 perc
		üzleti levél (email) írása		15 pont					
	Olvasás- készség	hiányos szövegbe mondatok / részmondatok visszahelyezése	10 ítem	20 pont	40 pont	16 pont			
		idegen nyelvű kérdésekre idegen nyelvű válaszadás	10 ítem	20 pont					
	Nyelv- ismeret	szöveg kiegészítése menü nélkül	15 ítem	15 pont	15 pont	-			

A vizsga során mindig a
kérdésekre válaszolj,
igyekezz világosan és
természetes módon beszélni.
Ha valamit nem értesz,
nyugodtan kérdezz vissza,
de ezt idegen nyelven tedd!



Oral exam topics

1. Employment / Labour market

Full employment - unemployment / supply and demand of labour / efficiency and employment / structural changes in the labour market / technological advance and the rate of employment / globalization and employment / emerging and disappearing jobs, etc.

2. Banking

Banking systems / banking services / banking operations / Hungarian banking system

3. Economics and ecology

Environmental acceptability (eco-efficiency) of manufacturing / sustainable mobility / sustainable economic growth / feasible legislation to reduce industrial emission, etc.

4. Economic policy

Money supply and demand / monetary policy / fiscal policy / anti-inflation measures, exchange rate, central bank, Ministry of Finance, etc.

5. Business organizations

Types (sole trader, partnerships, companies, joint ventures, etc.) - which-when? ways of integration (reorganization, liquidation, merger, takeover, buyout)

6. Stock exchange

Functions / kinds of securities / operation / BSE / BCE / virtual stock market, etc.

7. International finance and trade organizations

World Bank, IMF, ECB, FED, WTO(GATT) – function, structure, scope of activity Hungary and the above organizations, etc.

8. Marketing

Definition / functions / marketing mix / marketing strategies / promotional tools / international marketing, etc.

9. Finance

Corporate finance, public finance, consumer credit, money markets, commodity markets, securities markets, banking and insurance, etc.

10. Management

Functions of management / types of management (production, HR, information, quality, etc.) managerial skills / organizational theories, organization behaviour, motivational theories, management styles-cultural diversity, etc.

11. Economy and the EU

Common industrial policy, employment policy, immigration control and labour force mobility, common EU currency, economic and monetary union, consumer protection, cooperation in R&D, two-speed Europe, banks in the EU, etc.

12. Current issues in the Hungarian economy

Changes after the transition of 1989 in terms of ownership, effects of globalization on all sectors of economy, effects of global recession / state-of-the-art of labour market, unemployment, economic growth, GDP, inflation forecasts, budget cuts, etc.

13. Current issues in the economy of the target language country/ies

UK: effects of global recession, reforms of macro-economic policy, GDP, inflation forecasts, labour market, unemployment rate, reforms of public services, tax rises, etc.

USA: recession in the USA, the effects of 9/11 and current war on US economy, embezzlement scandals, budget issues, health care reforms, tax cuts, etc.

14. e-commerce

definition, electronic markets, benefits and limitations, impact on finance, manufacturing, marketing, traditional retailing systems, HR, training, etc.

15. Commerce

definition, functions , structure (internal, foreign, retail , wholesale) stakeholders, pricing policy, etc.

Speaking

Part 1

Studies / Research / Languages / Work / Future plans

In the first part of the exam you will be asked questions related to your professional background. Your examiner might ask you questions similar to the ones below.

1. Say a few words about yourself and your studies.
2. What were your reasons for choosing this particular field of studies?
3. Have you done any scientific research in this field? If so, tell us about your achievements.
4. How could more students be involved in research at the university?
5. Why do you find English useful in your studies?
6. Have you had a summer job yet? If so, what did you find different from life at university?
7. In what ways and to what extent did your university studies help you to solve your tasks at work?
8. What job opportunities do you think you will have when you graduate?

Part 2

In the second part of the exam you are expected to discuss a topic. You will find two topics below. Choose one and discuss it on your own. The examiner may also ask you some topic related questions.

Topics:

A: Marketing

1. Why is marketing so important in business life?
2. When would you consider a marketing strategy effective?
3. What are the 4 Ps?
4. Why should we research consumer behaviour?
5. What are the components of STP strategy?

B: Banks

1. What do you know about the Hungarian banking system?
2. Define the two-tier banking system.
3. How does it differ from the one-tier system?
4. What are the main functions of the central bank?
5. What are the traditional tasks of the central bank?
6. What banking risks do you know?

Part 3

Read the situation carefully and act it out with the help of the examiner.

Starting up business - convincing

You would like to start up a small business of your choice. The examiner is the small business adviser of the local bank considering your application for a loan. Be prepared to answer his/her questions on the following:

- **the planned product / service – description, name**
- **sales / profit potential**
- **target market – size, competition**
- **marketing approach**
- **his / her expertise , capacity to succeed**

Listening

Az első meghallgatás előtt
nagyon alaposan ismerkedj
meg a feladattal és próbálj
következtetni az elhangzó
szöveg tartalmára!



You will hear a text. Read the candidate copy beforehand. You will have 1 minute for that. Then listen to the text and make notes in English. You will hear the text twice. After the first listening you will have 1 minute to write your answers, after the second listening you will have 2 minutes to finalise them. Copy your answers in English onto the answer sheet.

Working mothers, unite!

Task

You are going to hear a conversation about women in Germany.

Indicate your answers on the separate answer sheet. Do not use more than 6 words!

Example:

The country where women's situation is to be improved:

0. ... *Germany* ...

1. Axel Springer's opinion on working mothers back in the 1960s:
2. Proportion of children in nurseries:
3. The time when German women drop out or go part time:
4. German women's attitude to having children:
5. The countries, besides Slovakia, which offer women considerably lower wages are:
6. The form of financial support given to families raising children:
7. The Change in the length of the period of paid parental leave since 2007:
8. The right guaranteed to parents with 1-year-olds:
9. The issue that divides older and younger generations of western Germans:
10. The kind of (usually female) abilities that modern project economy requires

(Total: 20)

You will hear a text. Read the 10 statements on the candidate copy beforehand. You will have 1 minute for that, then listen to the text. If you think the statement is correct, put a tick under T. If you think the statement is not correct, put a tick under F. You will hear the text twice. After the first listening you will have 1 minute to answer the questions, after the second listening you will have 1 minute to finalise your answers. Copy your answers on the answer sheet.

An aircraft pilot

The following text is about a pilot's career.

		TRUE	FALSE
1.	The speaker decided to become a pilot during his first flight.		
2.	Until he was 16, he didn't fly a plane alone.		
3.	He didn't have to pay to get his private pilot's licence.		
4.	He had to do a two-year course to get his commercial pilot's licence.		
5.	He got his first job with the British Airways.		
6.	In his first job he flew 60 passengers at a time.		
7.	He was happy to start flying a Boeing.		
8.	The first officer's job is very similar to the captain's job.		
9.	He always enjoys flying at night.		
10.	He will do a course to become captain.		

(Total: 20)

Sokat segít, ha átgondolod, milyen szófajú lehet a hiányzó elem. Ha nem tudsz egy-egy hiányzó elemet önállóan kiegészíteni, menj tovább, és amikor a szöveg végére értél, térj vissza a problematikus részekhez.



Use of English

Complete the text below by writing a suitable word in the space provided. The first one is done for you as an example. Indicate your answers on the Answer Sheet.

Lousy and lovely jobs

Technical progress has replaced many routine jobs. How much should we **all (0)** fear being replaced by machines?

The occupational structure of Britain's labour market ... **(1)** ... changed markedly in recent years. A rapid growth has ... **(2)** ... observed in the employment share of high-wage occupations **(3)** ... as managers, doctors, while low-wage occupations have seen only a ... **(4)** ... modest growth: just think of shop assistants or care workers. Ten years ago this phenomenon ... **(5)** ... called "job polarisation", and all evidence indicates that ... **(6)** ... has continued up to now. The most convincing explanation lies in ... **(7)** ... nature of technical progress: machines replace people in routine tasks ... **(8)** ... which a software program of manageable length and complexity ... **(9)** ... be written to perform the task well. But, as yet, it is not ... **(10)** ... easy to design a computer program that will manage and motivate people ... **(11)** ... management remains something in which people still have ... **(12)** ... comparative advantage over machines. But let's take another high-wage occupation: that ... **(13)** ... a doctor. If computers end up diagnosing patients not ... **(14)** ... effectively than a doctor, then the demand for human doctors ... **(15)** ... fall. So you'd better watch out: not only routine low-wage jobs but high-wage, high-prestige jobs may also fall victims of the technological advance.

(Total: 15)

Reading

Először próbáld meg szótár
nélkül megérteni a szövegeket és
csak ezután nézd meg a
legfontosabb szavak jelentését!
Ne feledd:
a nyomtatott szótár használatát is
be kell gyakorolni!



Read the article below from which 10 sentences have been removed. Match the list of sentences (A-K) with the gaps (1–10) and decide where they fit. Indicate your answers on the Answer Sheet. Remember there is *one extra sentence you do not need to use*.

Top 4 Most Scandalous Insider Trading Debacles

During the 1920s, many Wall Street professionals knew Wall Street was a rigged game run by powerful investing pools. There was a lack of disclosure and manipulative rumors spread like an epidemic. ... **(1)** ... Unfortunately, many investors found that the coattails they were riding¹ were actually smokescreens for hidden sell orders that left them holding the bag². ... **(2)** ... Setbacks were seen as a small price to pay in order to get in on the big game later on. In October, 1929, the big game was revealed to be yet another smokescreen.

... **(3)** ... Albert H. Wiggin, the respected head of Chase National Bank, seemed an unlikely target until it was revealed that he shorted 40,000 shares of his own company. Using wholly-owned family corporations to hide the trades, Wiggin built up a position that gave him a vested interest in running his company into the ground. ... **(4)** ... Not only was this legal at the time, but Wiggin had also accepted a \$100,000 a year pension for life from the bank.

One of the most famous cases of insider trading made household names of Michael Milken, Dennis Levine, Martin Siegel and Ivan Boesky. It was actually Boesky who was the spider in the center of the web. He was an arbitrageur³ in the mid-1980s with an uncanny ability to pick out potential takeover targets and invest before an offer was made. ... **(5)** ... In this way Boesky would sell his shares for a profit. Obviously, Boesky's precognition turned out to be a fraud. The break for the Securities and Exchange Commission came when they were tipped off that someone in the firm was leaking info and, as a result, Levine's Swiss bank account was uncovered. ... **(6)** ... Finally they drew up a list of 98 charges worth 520 years in prison against the junk bond king.

The case of *Wall Street Journal* columnist R. Foster Winans is a landmark case for its curious outcome. Winans wrote the "Heard on the Street" column profiling a certain stock. The stocks featured in the column often went up or down according to Winans' opinion. Winans leaked the contents of his column to a group of stockbrokers. ... **(7)** ... The brokers made easy profits and allegedly gave some of their illicit gains to Winans.

¹ to use your connection with someone successful to achieve success yourself

² to allow someone to take all the blame

³ someone who purchases securities in one market for immediate resale in another in the hope of profiting from the price differential

In December 2001, the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) announced that it was rejecting ImClone's new cancer drug, Erbitux. The drug represented a major portion of ImClone's pipeline. ... **(8)** ... Many pharmaceutical investors were hurt by the drop, but the family and friends of CEO Samuel Waksal were not among them. Among those with a preternatural knack for guessing the FDA's decision days before the announcement was homemaking guru Martha Stewart. She sold 4,000 shares when the stock was still trading in the high \$50s and collected nearly \$250,000 on the sale. ... **(9)** ... Stewart claimed to have a pre-existing sell order with her broker, but her story continued to unravel and public shame eventually forced her to resign as the CEO of her own company,

Although the cases in this article are glaring examples, insider trading is often difficult for the SEC to spot. ... **(10)** ... Truth be told, the SEC has made mistakes and accused the innocent in cases that are borderline, at best. This is one of the prices we pay to guard against insiders trading on information that the public doesn't yet know.

- A. They used the tip to take up positions in the stock before the column was published.
- B. As a consequence, the company's stock took a sharp dive.
- C. There were no specific rules against shorting your own company.
- D. As a consequence, people believed coattail investing and momentum investing were the only viable strategies for getting in on the profits.
- E. The SEC rolled Levine and he gave up Boesky's name.
- F. Similar revelation of immoral conduct led to a revision of the 1933 Securities Act.
- G. The stock would plummet to just over \$10 in the following months.
- H. After the crash, the public was hurt, angry, and hungry for vengeance.
- I. Detecting it involves a lot of conjecture and consideration of probabilities.
- J. For a while the market kept going up and up.
- K. When the fated offer came, the target firm's stock would shoot up.

(Total: 20)

Read the text below and answer the questions in English. Indicate your answers on the Answer Sheet.

Happy 50th birthday, Singapore

The uptight island-state has much to celebrate. But to thrive in the future, it will have to loosen up.

Next month Singapore will be throwing the biggest party in its short history, to mark the 50th anniversary of its independence. The tiny island-state has every reason to celebrate. In 1965, when it was expelled from a federation with Malaysia, its very survival seemed uncertain. Now it is one of the world's richest countries, admired for its clean government, orderliness and efficiency. It combines low taxes with good public services, and regularly leads global rankings of the ease of doing business. Yet it also faces problems, such as a rapidly ageing population that is insufficiently creative and startlingly reluctant to have babies. To address them, it will need fresh thinking.

Singapore's success came despite long odds. This month an interviewer reminded the prime minister, Lee Hsien Loong, that his father, Singapore's founding leader, Lee Kuan Yew, had once called the notion of an independent Singapore "a political, economic and geographic absurdity". It had no resources—not even enough water—no hinterland and a population made up of a combustible mix of Chinese (about three-quarters), Malays and Indians. It had parted brass rags with a neighbour five times more populous (Malaysia) and faced a campaign of "confrontation" from one 50 times bigger (Indonesia).

Singapore's leaders still feel vulnerable, and this fact explains many of the country's oddities: the secrecy that enshrouds its national finances, the requirement that all men serve two years in the armed forces, the government's dogged support for manufacturing and its tight restrictions on speech and assembly. Yet Singapore is far more secure than its rulers imagine. Relations with Indonesia and Malaysia are excellent. Singapore's territorial integrity is not under threat.

So nothing can justify the way the state curtails its citizens' freedom. A combination of a tame press, strict electoral rules and the frequent resort to defamation laws have stunted the growth of a credible opposition. Granted, even without one, government has remained clean, nimble, pragmatic and imaginative in its policymaking. For this, much of the credit goes to Lee Kuan Yew, who set high standards that have outlasted him (he died in March). But Singapore cannot assume that the leaders of the ruling People's Action Party (PAP), the only political party in the rich world never to have been out of power, will always be wise. In the long run the country needs stronger institutional checks and its voters need a real choice.

In the most recent election, in 2011, the PAP recorded its worst post-1965 performance. To its credit, the party reacted not by shrugging off the result but by acknowledging it as a rebuke and changing policies. It has become less stingy in dispensing benefits, especially to the elderly. Less creditably, it has curbed immigration, which was a cause of disgruntlement.

1. Give two factors that make Singapore a model island-state. (a., b.)
2. What safeguards its economic success? (a., b.)
3. What is one of the biggest concerns in the country?
4. Why is it a miracle that Singapore became an independent state?
5. Why is Singapore unconventional in many respects?
6. What is Singapore's relationship like with its neighbours?
7. What prevents the opposition to play an active role? (a., b.)
8. What is a remarkable achievement of Lee Kuan Yew?
9. What is a special feature of the state's ruling party?
10. How did the PAP change its policies after the most recent election? (a., b.)

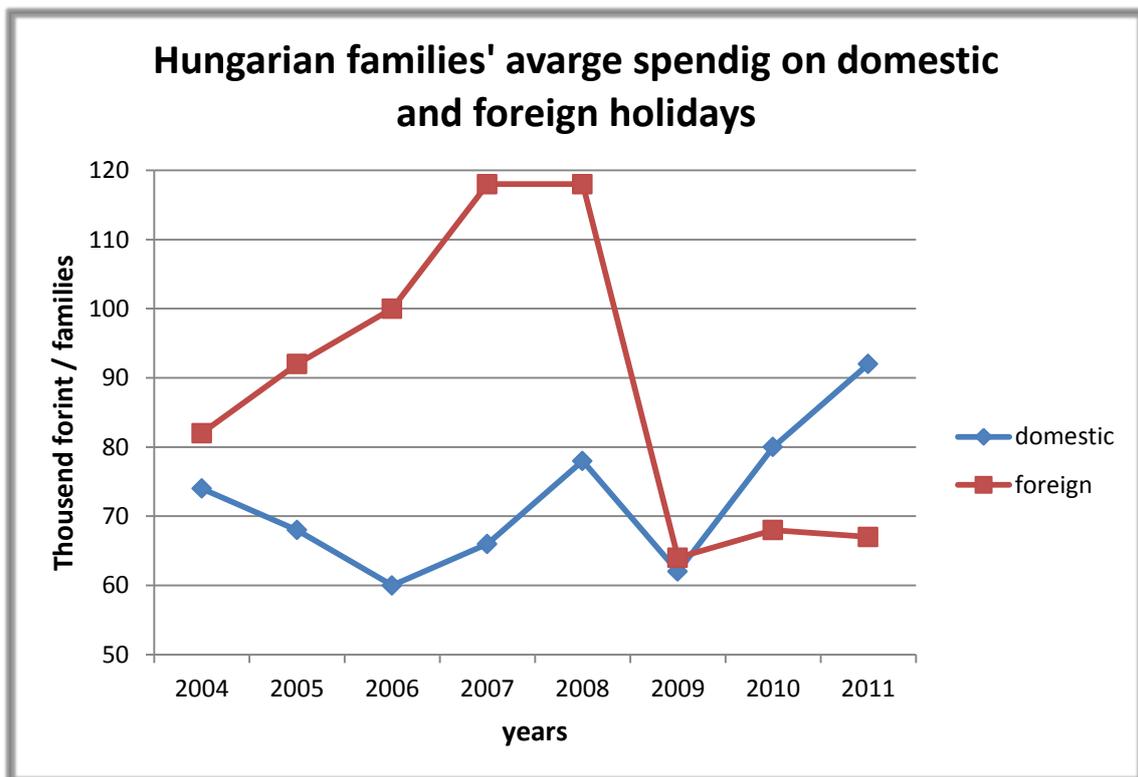
(Total: 20)

Tervezd meg a szöveg tartalmát és szerkezetét, gondolataidat tagold, és ügyelj a logikai összefüggések megteremtésére! Írj minden tartalmi szempontról! Próbálj nyelvileg változatos szerkezeteket használni! Ne feledd, mindkét feladatot meg kell oldanod!



Writing

As part of a short report you are writing to your boss *describe* and *analyze* the chart below focusing on the tendencies in the two fields. *Give reasons* to explain the changes and the differences.
Write in about 150-200 words.



(Total: 25)

You are the Export Manager of Tiny Dolls Toy Co. Answer the complaint provided below. Include the following points:

- **Thank for the letter and express your apology**
- **Give reason for your mistake**
- **Promise to send them the missing parts and instructions**
- **Offer compensation (replacements, 10% discount)**

Use the layout and the usual conventions of a business letter and write 100-120 words.

Dollhouse Toys
121 Penny Road
Bristol
England
May 16, 2015

Tiny Dolls Toy Co.
154 Pyramid Street
College Park
FL 331
Chicago
USA

Dear Sir/Madam,

This morning we took delivery of the 50 kits of Barbie kitchens as per our order (No. WW-A11). After viewing the components received we discovered that 3 of the parts of the fitted kitchens were missing from 5 of the kits. Also, the instructions that came with the consignment were in Spanish and Russian but not in English or Hungarian, the two languages we had ordered.

These two problems have resulted 5 kits remaining unassembled and unacceptable as toys available for sale.

We are writing to request replacements for the missing parts and 50 copies of the full set of assembly instructions in English and Hungarian within 10 business days or else we will return the whole consignment to you and expect a full refund. To assist you in processing our request we are including the list of the missing parts.

We have purchased other toys from you in the past, and have always been satisfied with the quality and selection provided. Therefore we sincerely hope that any future purchases we make will live up to the standard we have come to expect from your company.

Yours faithfully

Clive Winters
Manager

(Total: 15)

Answer sheets

Ne maradjon üres hely a
válaszlapon, próbálj meg
minden kérdésre válaszolni!



Name: _____ No.

--	--	--	--	--	--

Date of birth: _____ Date: _____

Mother's maiden name: _____

Part 1

	Answers in English	
1.		
2.		
3.		
4.		
5.		
6.		
7.		
8.		
9.		
10.		

Correct answers

--	--

 x 2 =

--	--

Part 2

	T	F
1.		
2.		
3.		
4.		
5.		

	T	F
6.		
7.		
8.		
9.		
10.		

Correct answers

--	--

 x 2 =

--	--

--	--	--	--	--

1st examiner

--	--	--	--	--

2nd examiner

Date: _____

No.

--	--	--	--	--	--

Lousy and Lovely Jobs

	Answers	Score
1.		
2.		
3.		
4.		
5.		
6.		
7.		
8.		
9.		
10.		
11.		
12.		
13.		
14.		
15.		

Correct answers

--	--

--	--	--	--	--

1st examiner

--	--	--	--	--

2nd examiner

Date: _____

No.

--	--	--	--	--	--

Part 1

Top 4 Most Scandalous Insider Trading Debacles

	Answers	Score
1.		
2.		
3.		
4.		
5.		
6.		
7.		
8.		
9.		
10.		

Correct answers

--	--

 x2 =

--	--

--	--	--	--	--

1st examiner

--	--	--	--	--

2nd examiner

Date: _____

No.

--	--	--	--	--	--

Part 2

Happy 50th birthday, Singapore

	Answers in English		Score
1.			
2.	a.	b.	
3.			
4.			
5.			
6.			
7.			
8.			
9.			
10.	a.	b.	

Correct answers

--	--

 x2 =

--	--

--	--	--	--	--

1st examiner

--	--	--	--	--

2nd examiner

For examiner's use only:

Communicative value	5	
Expressiveness	5	
Grammatical accuracy	5	

--	--	--	--	--

1st examiner

--	--	--	--	--

2nd examiner

Keys

Hozd magaddal a
nyelvvizsgára a
személyi
igazolványodat!



Part 1

WORKING MOTHERS, UNITE!

Answers in English	
1.	<i>no friend of liberation movement / don't agree with the system</i>
2.	<i>1/6, one sixth</i>
3.	<i>when they become mothers</i>
4.	<i>more reluctant, more hesitant, do not want children / work or children</i>
5.	<i>Estonia and Cyprus</i>
6.	<i>(improve) parents' pay / parents pay</i>
7.	<i>cut/reduced/changed from 2 years to one</i>
8.	<i>a right to day-care / day care</i>
9.	<i>issue of mothers staying at home / should mothers stay at home</i>
10.	<i>soft skills</i>

Part 2

AN AIRCRAFT PILOT

	T	F
1.		√
2.	√	
3.	√	
4.	√	
5.		√

	T	F
6.		√
7.	√	
8.	√	
9.		√
10.		√

	Answers
1.	<i>has</i>
2.	<i>been</i>
3.	<i>such</i>
4.	<i>more, very</i>
5.	<i>was</i>
6.	<i>it</i>
7.	<i>the</i>
8.	<i>for</i>
9.	<i>can, could</i>
10.	<i>too, that, so, really, very</i>
11.	<i>so</i>
12.	<i>a</i>
13.	<i>of</i>
14.	<i>less</i>
15.	<i>will</i>

Part 1 Top 4 Most Scandalous Insider Trading Debacles

	Answers
1.	D
2.	J
3.	H
4.	C
5.	K
6.	E
7.	A
8.	B
9.	G
10.	I

Part 2 Happy 50th birthday, Singapore

Answers in English	
1.	<i>clean government / orderliness / efficiency (any two are needed for a full point)</i>
2.	a. <i>low taxes</i> b. <i>good public services (both are needed)</i>
3.	<i>A rapidly ageing population / reluctant to have babies (any one)</i>
4.	<i>It had no resources—not even enough water</i>
5.	<i>Because Singapore’s leaders still feel vulnerable / Singapore is very successful despite its mixed population and the fact that it has no resources and hinterland</i>
6.	<i>Excellent</i>
7.	<i>A combination of a tame press / strict electoral rules / frequent resort to defamation laws (any two are needed for a full point)</i>
8.	<i>Government has remained clean, nimble, pragmatic and imaginative in its policymaking</i>
9.	<i>The only political party in the rich world never to have been out of power</i>
10.	a. <i>It has become less stingy in dispensing benefits;</i> b. <i>it has curbed immigration (both are needed)</i>

Tapescripts

Tapescript 1

Women in Germany Working mothers, unite!

Women have long been held back in Germany, but that is now changing. Something radical is afoot at the crèche, on the sixth floor of a Berlin office block. Parents drop their children before going to work at Axel Springer, publisher of the tabloid *Bild*, and pick them up at 7:30 pm or later. Springer, no friend of liberation movements in the 1960s, helps pay for places at this nursery to tempt mothers back to work.

That would seem less daring if it were not so rare. Germany has day-care places for only a sixth of children of under three (and that includes traditionally higher provision in the ex-communist east). This is one reason why German women lag their sisters in other rich countries in combining motherhood and work. Female employment is above average. But when (and if) they become mothers, women tend to drop out or go part time. “So far in Germany, women had to make a choice (between children and career),” says Jeanne Fagnani, a researcher. French and Scandinavian women feel much less pressure.

That pressure has consequences. Because of it, German women are more reluctant than most in Europe to have children. When they do, they take prolonged leave from work, damaging their careers. Women’s average hourly wages are 22% lower than men’s, a gap exceeded in the European Union only by Slovakia, Estonia and Cyprus.

Worried about Germany’s low fertility rates, some radical changes have been made. First came “parents’ pay”, to encourage middle-class women to have children without wrecking their careers. Introduced in 2007, this increased the value of paid parental leave to a ceiling of €1,800 a month for high earners, although it cut the maximum duration from two years to one.

This year the government approved a law to provide enough day-care slots for 35% of children aged three or less by 2013, and to guarantee parents a right to day-care once their babies are a year old.

The government seems to be pushing in the direction that younger Germans want to go. Whereas 70% of western Germans aged 65 believe that mothers should stay at home, fewer than half of 18-30-years-olds agree. Business favours change, too. Girls gain better marks than boys in school and earn more than half of university degrees, which makes them attractive to employers struggling with skill shortages. A report by Deutsche Bank argues that firms are moving towards a collaborative “project economy” that demands more “soft skills” and flexible working practices.

Tapescript 2

AN AIRCRAFT PILOT

I'm John McMillan. I'm first pilot with Britannia where I mainly work on international flights.

I wanted to be a pilot ever since I was 10. I'd sit looking out of the classroom window, watching planes flying out of Liverpool and remember the excitement of my first flight at the age of six when we flew to Majorca.

I joined the Air Training Corps at 12, which was great because I got to learn about planes. I even got to do aerobatics in dual-control Chipmunk and went on various gliding courses until I was allowed to fly a gliding solo at the age of 16. A year later, the Air Training Corps awarded me a flying scholarship which paid for me to do my private pilot's licence.

I left school at 18 with 8 O-level and 4 A-level exams and went on to a two-year training course with British Airways to get my commercial pilot's licence.

When I finished in 1976, there was a glut of pilots so I didn't get a job with British Airways, like the majority on the course. I didn't have many job offers, finally I found work flying a six seater pleasure plane on the Isle of Wight. When a job as first officer came up with Britannia in 1987, I happily jumped at the chance to fly Boeings.

Suddenly I was piloting planes with 130 passengers instead of six.

As a first officer I copilot with the captain. He has final responsibility and authority in the plane, but otherwise our roles are the same.

I still find flying very thrilling. Sitting in the cockpit as you fly through the night still feels very romantic to me. I love seeing the stars and the setting sun.

The low spots are when you have to fly through the night when you'd much rather be asleep.

Also, there are always times when you suddenly have to cancel an outing with friends because flight plans have changed.

After 12 years, I'm about to be made captain after completing my training last year. It will mean a lot financially. As first officer I get around £ 22,000 a year, while a captain can earn more than £ 65,000. A pretty good pay, isn't it? All the same for me flying is not about making good money. Each time I line a plane up on the runway, it feels like the start of a great adventure.