**READING 1 (Items 26-35)** **(10 marks)**

***Read the text. Then, complete the tasks.***

The rain started on a Tuesday afternoon in the small village where Maryam lived with her family. At first, everyone was happy, because the farms needed water. But the rain did not stop. By Thursday, the wadi was full, and brown water was moving quickly towards the houses. Maryam's father told the family to carry their most important things upstairs: documents, photo albums, and some warm clothes. Her little brother Salim cried because he could not find his favourite toy, a small wooden camel his grandfather had made for him. In the evening, the electricity went off, and the family sat together in the dark, listening to the water outside. Suddenly, they heard a knock at the door. It was their elderly neighbour, Mr Said. Water was coming into his small house, and he could not climb the stairs alone. Maryam's father and older brother helped him immediately and brought him to their house. He was wet and cold, but safe. That night, nobody slept much. In the morning, the rain finally stopped. When the family went outside, they saw that the whole street was covered in mud. Some shops had lost everything. But then something wonderful happened. Young people from the village and from the nearby town arrived with brooms, bags and bottles of water.

**READING 1 (continued)**

Maryam joined them with her friends from school. They cleaned houses, carried broken furniture outside, and collected clothes and blankets for families who had lost things. A team from the local charity cooked hot meals every day for a week. Even Salim helped, carrying small bags of bread to the workers. Two weeks later, the village school organised a special day to thank the volunteers. The head teacher gave each helper a certificate. Mr Said stood up and said, 'The water took many things, but it showed us something important: we are one family.' That evening, Maryam found her brother's wooden camel under some wet magazines. Salim smiled for the first time in days. Maryam kept the newspaper article about the volunteers on her bedroom wall for many years, to remember what people can do when they work together.

***Task One:*** *for each item, shade in the bubble ⬭ next to the correct option.*

**26. How did Maryam's family feel when the rain started?**

⬭ **happy** ⬭ **afraid** ⬭ **angry**

**27. What did Salim lose?**

⬭ **his photo album** ⬭ **his wooden camel** ⬭ **his warm clothes**

**28. Who knocked at the door in the evening?**

⬭ a police officer ⬭ the head teacher ⬭ the elderly neighbour

**29. What did the volunteers bring with them?**

⬭ brooms and bags ⬭ cars and trucks ⬭ food and money only

**30. What did the charity team cook?**

⬭ bread ⬭ hot meals ⬭ cake

**31. What did Maryam keep on her wall?**

⬭ the certificate ⬭ the newspaper article ⬭ a photo of the flood

**READING 1 (continued)**

**Task Two:** *For each item, complete the missing words* ***(not more than TWO WORDS).***

**32. The heavy rain started in the month of _____.**

**33. Salim cried because he could not find his _____.**

**34. The volunteers collected clothes and _____ for poor families.**

**35. Maryam kept a printed newspaper _____ on her wall.**

## READING 2 (Items 36-45) (10 marks)

*Read the text. Then, complete the tasks.*

Should young people spend so much time on their smartphones? It is a question that divides families, teachers and even experts around the world. In Oman, as in many countries, this debate happens at almost every dinner table. Critics of smartphones make strong points that are difficult to ignore. They say that teenagers now spend four to six hours a day on their phones, and that this time comes directly from sleep, sport and face-to-face conversation. Many parents feel they compete with a small screen for their children's attention. Studies also connect heavy phone use with poor sleep and lower school marks. Some social media apps, critics add, are designed to keep users scrolling for as long as possible, which is not healthy for young minds. However, supporters of this technology see a completely different picture, and their arguments are also strong. They point out that phones give students instant access to information, free courses and educational videos. During the pandemic, smartphones allowed millions of students to continue learning when schools were closed. Phones also help young people stay in contact with family members who live far away, and they give shy teenagers a way to express themselves and find friends with the same interests.

**READING 2 (continued)**

Supporters add that every generation worries about new technology: parents once said the same things about television, and even about books! So who is right? Perhaps both sides. The smartphone itself is neither good nor bad; it is a tool, like a knife that can cut bread or cause harm. The real question is how we use it. Experts suggest some simple rules that both sides can accept: no phones during family meals, no phones for an hour before sleep, and no phones while doing homework. They also advise parents to be good role models in their own daily phone use, because children always copy what they see at home. A father who checks his phone every five minutes cannot expect his daughter to behave differently. In the end, balance is the answer. Used wisely, a smartphone is a library, a classroom and a window to the world. Used badly, it becomes a wall between people who sit in the same room. The choice belongs to each family, and to each one of us. What is clear is that the conversation should happen together, with parents and children listening to each other, not shouting from opposite sides.

***Task One*:** *For each item, write a short answer (**not more than FOUR WORDS**).*

**36. According to critics, what do parents compete with for their children's attention?**

_____

**37. What is heavy phone use linked to, besides poor sleep?**

_____

**38. Name one thing students use phones for, from the text.**

_____

**39. How did smartphones help education during the pandemic?**

_____

**40. What does the writer compare the smartphone to?**

_____

**41. Who should agree on clear phone rules?**

_____

## READING 2 (continued)

***Task Two:*** *For each item, shade in the bubble ⬭ to indicate whether the statement is* ***True/False****.*

| | Statements | True | False |
|---|---|---|---|
| **42.** | **Critics say friends meet face-to-face more because of phones.** | ⬭ | ⬭ |
| **43.** | **Supporters say teenagers can find friends with the same interests online.** | ⬭ | ⬭ |
| **44.** | **The writer believes phones are completely bad for young people.** | ⬭ | ⬭ |
| **45.** | **The writer advises no phones for an hour before sleep.** | ⬭ | ⬭ |

| | |
|---|---|
| **READING SCORE** | **20** |