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

Read the text. Then, complete the tasks.

The idea came to Maryam during the long, hot afternoon when the electricity went off in the whole neighbourhood. With no television and no internet, she walked to her grandmother's house and found the old woman reading under the window. 'How can you read the same book three times?' Maryam asked. Her grandmother smiled. 'Every time I read it, I am a different person, so it is a different book.'

That sentence stayed in Maryam's head for days. Her friends spent every evening on their phones, sending each other videos they forgot the next morning. Maryam wondered if she could offer them something better. She wrote a message to her five closest friends: 'Book club. My house. Thursdays. Bring one book you love and some dates to share.'

The first Thursday, only two friends came - Asma with a poetry book and Laila with a detective story. Maryam's mother made karak tea, and the three girls talked for two hours about their books. It was, Asma said later, the best Thursday of the year. They decided that each of them would invite two more friends. The next week there were five girls, then eight, then twelve. By the end of the month, Maryam's sitting room was too small, and the club moved to the neighbourhood's public library every Thursday evening. The library opened its doors for them for free.

The rules grew naturally, like a garden. Each member chose one book a month. Nobody laughed at anybody's choice. Mobile phones stayed in a basket by the door. And every meeting ended with 'one beautiful sentence' - each girl read aloud the sentence she loved most that month. The librarian, an old man named Salim, started joining the meetings, and he taught the girls about Omani writers they had never heard of.

Three months later, the electricity company sent a letter apologising for the old cables and promising repairs. Maryam laughed when she read it. 'They fixed the electricity,' she told her grandmother, 'but nobody wants to switch it back on.' Her grandmother held up her old book and said, 'I told you. The right book finds the right person. Sometimes it just needs a little darkness first.'

READING 1 (continued)

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

26. Why did Maryam walk to her grandmother's house?

⬭ **the electricity went off** ⬭ **she was hungry** ⬭ **it was raining**

27. How many friends came to the first meeting?

⬭ **two** ⬭ **five** ⬭ **eight**

28. What did Maryam's mother make?

⬭ **cake** ⬭ **karak tea** ⬭ **coffee**

29. Where did the club move after a month?

⬭ **to the school** ⬭ **to the public library** ⬭ **to a coffee shop**

30. What did every meeting end with?

⬭ **a song** ⬭ **one beautiful sentence** ⬭ **a quiz**

31. Who taught the girls about Omani writers?

⬭ **Maryam's grandmother** ⬭ **the librarian Salim** ⬭ **Maryam's mother**

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

32. Her grandmother was reading under the _____.

33. Members had to bring one book and some _____ to share.

34. Mobile phones stayed in a _____ by the door.

35. The electricity company apologised for the old _____.

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

Read the text. Then, complete the tasks.

Are paper books better than e-books? Book lovers have fought this friendly war for twenty years, and both armies have real victories to report.

The e-book side talks about convenience. One small device can carry five thousand books - a whole library in a school bag. E-books are usually cheaper, they never go out of print, and a student can download a book at midnight without leaving home. Readers can change the letter size, look up any word with one touch, and read in the dark. For travellers and for people who live far from bookshops, the e-reader is a miracle. Public libraries now lend e-books for free, which means a village student can reach the same library as a city student. And for schools with small budgets, one set of tablets can replace shelves of worn-out textbooks that cost a fortune to replace.

READING 2 (continued)

The paper side answers with the brain. Studies keep finding that people understand and remember more when they read on paper, especially long and difficult texts. Something about turning real pages and seeing how far you have come helps the mind build a map of the book. Paper books do not run out of battery, do not break when dropped, and do not send notifications to pull your eyes away. There is also the feeling: the smell of paper, the weight in the hand, the beautiful cover on the shelf. A book you loved at fifteen sits on your shelf for life, like an old friend. Teachers also say that the small reward of closing a finished paper book builds the habit of finishing things. Doctors add one more point: long hours on bright screens tire the eyes, while paper never shines into your face.

Perhaps the wisest readers refuse to choose. They use e-books for travel, for search and for quick reference, and paper for the books that matter - the ones they will read slowly, mark with a pencil and keep forever. Schools can do the same: digital texts for research, paper novels for literature lessons. The enemy of reading is not the screen or the page; it is not reading at all. In the end, the best book is simply the one you actually read.

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

36. How many books can one device carry?

_____

37. Name one thing a reader can change in an e-book.

_____

38. What helps the mind build a map of the book?

_____

39. What do notifications do to your eyes?

_____

40. Which texts should schools use for research?

_____

41. What is the best book, in the end?

_____

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

	Statements	True	False
42.	**E-books never go out of print.**	⬭	⬭
43.	**People remember less when they read on paper.**	⬭	⬭
44.	**Paper books can be read without batteries.**	⬭	⬭
45.	**The writer says screens are the enemy of reading.**	⬭	⬭

READING SCORE	
	20