READING 1 (Items 26-30) (5 marks)

*Read the texts. Are the statements which follow each text **True** or **False**?*
For each item, shade in the bubble ⬭ under the correct option.

26. Visitors to Mutrah Souq are asked to dress respectfully and ask permission before photographing people. Haggling over prices is normal and friendly - start at half the asking price and smile! The souq is busiest in the evening and closed on Friday mornings.

Statement	True	False
The souq is busiest on Friday mornings.	⬭	⬭

27. Al Baleed Archaeological Park - Opening hours: Sunday to Thursday, 8 am to 8 pm. Entry: 3 rials for adults, free for children under 12. Your ticket includes the Museum of the Frankincense Land. Guided tours in English start at 10 am and 4 pm.

Statement	True	False
Children under twelve can enter for free.	⬭	⬭

28. Dear Ms Hana, Thank you for asking about our weaving workshop. The course runs for four Saturdays in November, from 9 am to 1 pm. Materials are provided. Participants keep their rugs. The fee is 25 rials. Salalah Crafts Centre

Statement	True	False
Participants must bring their own materials.	⬭	⬭

29. The khanjar, Oman's curved dagger, is more than a weapon - it is a symbol of honour and manhood. Each khanjar is handmade, and its decoration shows the region it comes from. A fine khanjar can take a craftsman up to four months to complete.

Statement	True	False
A khanjar can take months to make.	⬭	⬭

30. During Ramadan, Omani families traditionally gather before sunset to break their fast together. Dates and water come first, followed by soup and sambousek. After prayers, families visit relatives and neighbours, and children receive small gifts of money. These visits strengthen the bonds of the community.

Statement	True	False
Families eat the main meal before the dates.	⬭	⬭

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READING 2 (Items 31-37) (7 marks)

Read the text. Then, for each item, shade in the bubble ⬭ next to the correct option.

On the mountains of Jabal Akhdar, the 'Green Mountain' of Oman, spring arrives with a sweet smell. For three weeks every year, usually in April, thousands of Damask roses open their pink flowers, and the villages begin one of the country's oldest traditions: making rose water.

The work starts before sunrise, when the flowers are coolest and their oil is strongest. Families walk through the terraces picking the roses by hand and filling large baskets. A skilled picker can collect twenty kilograms of flowers in one morning. Speed matters, because roses picked in the afternoon heat lose much of their precious oil.

At the village distillery, the roses go into large copper pots with water. The pots are heated gently for hours, and the steam that rises carries the rose oil. When the steam cools in long metal pipes, it becomes liquid again - pure rose water, with the oil floating on top. From one hundred kilograms of petals, a village gets only about thirty millilitres of pure oil. That is why real Omani rose oil is one of the most expensive in the world.

Rose water has always been part of Omani life. It is sprinkled on guests' hands as a welcome, added to coffee and sweets like halwa, and used in traditional medicine for skin and stomach problems. At weddings, the bride's family prepares special rose-water mixtures weeks before the celebration.

Today, the rose harvest brings new opportunities. Tourists climb Jabal Akhdar every April to watch the distillation and walk through the pink terraces. The Rose Water Festival, held in the village of Al Ayn, attracted fifteen thousand visitors last year. Young Omanis from the mountain villages have started selling rose products online - soaps, oils and sweets - reaching customers as far away as Japan.

"The rose season is short, but it carries our whole year," says one distiller, whose family has made rose water for five generations. "When the roses open, the mountain wakes up."

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READING 2 (continued)

31. When does the rose season happen?

⬭ in spring ⬭ in summer ⬭ in winter

32. Why is the picking done before sunrise?

⬭ the workers finish earlier ⬭ the flowers have more oil then ⬭ the tourists come later

33. How much oil comes from 100 kg of petals?

⬭ about 30 millilitres ⬭ about 30 litres ⬭ about 100 millilitres

34. What happens to the steam in the pipes?

⬭ it escapes outside ⬭ it heats the pots ⬭ it becomes liquid

35. How is rose water used with guests?

⬭ it is sprinkled on their hands ⬭ it is served as a drink ⬭ it is given as a gift

36. How many visitors came to the festival last year?

⬭ 1,500 ⬭ 15,000 ⬭ 150,000

37. Where are rose products sold now?

⬭ only in the souq ⬭ only at the festival ⬭ online to distant countries

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READING 3 (Items 38-45) (8 marks)

Read the text. Then complete the tasks.

When I met Noura at the book fair, I expected a formal interview. Instead, she smiled and began telling me her story.

In the age of smartphones and social media, one might expect poetry to be a dying art. In Oman, the opposite is true. Poetry is everywhere: in wedding celebrations, on television competitions, in school morning assemblies, and now - in viral video clips watched by millions.

Omani poetry has ancient roots. For centuries, Bedouin poets travelled between camps, carrying news and stories in verse. A skilled poet was the newspaper and the library of the desert. Poems recorded history, settled arguments, praised brave deeds and expressed love for the land. Many of these poems were never written down; they lived in the memories of the people who recited them around evening fires.

The most beloved form of Omani folk poetry is the 'razha', where two groups of men answer each other in verse, accompanied by drums and sword dances. The poets must invent their lines on the spot - a competition of wit as much as art. At national celebrations, razha performances can last for hours, and the best poets become household names.

Today's young poets are finding new stages. On social media, short video poems in the Omani dialect attract hundreds of thousands of views. Noura Al Amri, a 22-year-old university student, began posting one-minute poems about student life during the pandemic. Her honest, funny verses about exams, friendship and homesickness struck a chord. She now has half a million followers and has published a printed collection that is in its third printing.

Schools are playing their part too. The annual School Poetry Competition receives entries from every governorate, and winners recite their poems at the Muscat International Book Fair. Teachers report that students who write poetry show stronger vocabulary and more confidence in public speaking.

"Poetry is how Omanis have always spoken about what matters," says one competition judge. "The phone in your pocket is just the newest fire to gather around."

After our conversation, Noura stepped onto the stage and read her newest poem. I recognised the nervous student in its opening lines. By the end, the audience was laughing, and she looked entirely at home. I left the fair thinking about a poem of my own.

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READING 3 (continued)

Task 1: *For each item, write a short answer (**NOT MORE THAN FOUR WORDS OR A NUMBER**).*

38. Who carried news between desert camps?

_____

39. What accompanies the razha poetry?

_____

40. How many followers does Noura have?

_____

41. Where do competition winners recite?

_____

Task 2: *For each item, shade in the bubble ⬭ next to the correct option.*

42. How did old poems survive without writing?

⬭ people memorised them ⬭ they were carved on stones ⬭ travellers wrote them down

43. What must razha poets do?

⬭ sing without drums ⬭ invent lines immediately ⬭ dance with swords

44. What are Noura's poems about?

⬭ desert history ⬭ student life ⬭ traditional crafts

45. What do students gain from writing poetry?

⬭ better exam marks ⬭ stronger vocabulary and confidence ⬭ prize money

READING SCORE	20

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