READING 1 (Items 26-32) (7 marks)

Read each text, then shade True or False for the statement.

City Library Notice: Please note that the library will close at 1 p.m. on Friday for staff training. Normal opening hours (8 a.m. - 8 p.m.) will continue on all other days. We apologise for any inconvenience.

26. The library will open late on Friday.

○ True ○ False

Hi Salim, I'm really sorry, but I can't come to your house on Thursday as we planned. My grandmother is visiting us from Nizwa, and my mother wants the whole family to be at home. How about Saturday afternoon instead? Let me know. Yours, Hamed

27. Hamed suggests meeting on a different day.

○ True ○ False

Learn Spanish this summer! The International Language Centre offers a four-week course for beginners, starting 1st July. Classes are held three times a week, from 5 to 7 p.m. Special price for students who register before 15th June: only 45 rials.

28. The course is cheaper if you register early.

○ True ○ False

URGENT: Tonight's football match between Al-Nahda and Dhofar has been moved to Sultan Qaboos Stadium because of maintenance work at the usual ground. The kick-off time has not changed. Gates open at 6 p.m. All tickets remain valid.

29. The match will start at a different time.

○ True ○ False

READING 1 (continued)

Weather Warning: The Meteorology Office warns that heavy rain and strong winds are expected in the northern governorates tomorrow afternoon. Drivers are advised to avoid wadis, and fishermen should not go out to sea until Friday morning.

30. Fishermen are advised to stay on land.

○ True ○ False

Mr and Mrs Al-Harthy request the pleasure of your company at the graduation ceremony of their daughter Maryam, who will receive her Bachelor's degree in Engineering. The ceremony will be held at the Grand Hall on Tuesday, 20th October, at 7 p.m. Dinner will follow.

31. Maryam has studied medicine.

○ True ○ False

Welcome to the Natural History Museum. Visitors are kindly requested not to take photographs in the main exhibition hall. Cameras may be used in all other areas of the museum. Please keep your voice low and do not touch the displays.

32. Photography is not allowed anywhere in the museum.

○ True ○ False

READING 2 (Items 33-40) (8 marks)

Read the email, then answer the questions on the next page.

Dear Ahmed,
Thank you for your last e-mail. I'm sorry I haven't written for a while, but life here has been really busy since I started my course at the university.
I arrived in Manchester three months ago, and at first I found everything very strange. The weather was the biggest shock - it rained almost every day during my first month, and I really missed the Omani sunshine! Luckily, I have made some good friends in my dormitory, so I never feel lonely. Two of them are from Malaysia and one is from Brazil. We often cook dinner together in the shared kitchen, and last week I taught them how to make shuwa. It wasn't as good as my father's, but my friends loved it!
My course is going well, although it is harder than I expected. I have lectures every morning from nine to twelve, and in the afternoon I usually work in the library. The lecturers are very helpful, but they give us a lot of reading. My English is improving day by day, but I still find it difficult to understand some of the local accents.

At the weekend, I try to explore the city. Manchester is famous for its music and its two football teams, and last Saturday my friends and I watched a match at the stadium. The atmosphere was unbelievable - fifty thousand people singing together! I have also joined the university photography club, which reminds me of you and your wonderful pictures of the wadis.
Next month, I am planning a short trip to London with some classmates. We are going to stay in a small hotel near the city centre for three nights. I have already made a list of the museums I want to visit, and of course I will buy presents for all the family.
I must tell you my good news: last week I received the results of my first exams, and I passed them all with excellent grades. My parents were so happy when I called them.
Well, that's all my news for now. Please write soon and tell me everything about your new job. Say hello to your family for me.
Your friend,
Faisal

READING 2 (continued)

33. Faisal has been in Manchester for _____.

○ one month ○ three months ○ six months

34. At first, Faisal was shocked by _____.

○ the food ○ the people ○ the weather

35. Faisal taught his friends how to _____.

○ cook an Omani dish ○ speak Arabic ○ take photographs

36. In the afternoons, Faisal usually _____.

○ attends lectures ○ works in the library ○ meets his friends

37. Last Saturday, Faisal _____.

○ played football ○ visited a museum ○ watched a match

38. Faisal joined a club for _____.

○ cooking ○ music ○ photography

39. In London, Faisal and his classmates will stay for _____.

○ three nights ○ one week ○ two weeks

40. Faisal passed his first exams with _____.

○ average grades ○ excellent grades ○ no grades

READING 3 (Items 41-50) (10 marks)

Read the text, then complete the tasks on the next page.

THE FRANKINCENSE TREES OF DHOFAR

For more than five thousand years, the frankincense trees of Dhofar, in the south of Oman, have produced one of the most valuable natural products in history. Frankincense is a kind of resin - a sticky substance that comes from the trunk of the tree. When it dries, it can be burned to produce a beautiful smell, and in ancient times it was worth more than gold. Kings and queens in Egypt, Rome and China all wanted it for their palaces and temples.

The frankincense tree, known by its scientific name Boswellia sacra, grows only in a few places in the world: southern Oman, Yemen and Somalia. The trees of Dhofar are famous for producing the finest quality frankincense of all. The tree is surprisingly small and grows in dry, rocky soil where almost nothing else can survive.

The harvest begins in April each year. Workers make a small cut in the bark of each tree, and the white resin slowly comes out and dries in the sun. About two weeks later, the workers return to collect the dried resin. Each tree can be harvested two or three times every season, but only by skilled workers who know exactly how deep to cut. If the cut is too deep, the tree can die.

In ancient times, frankincense was carried by camel caravans along the famous Incense Road, which connected Dhofar with the great cities of the ancient world. From the port of Sumhuram, near modern Salalah, ships also carried the resin across the sea to India and beyond. The trade made southern Oman rich, and the Queen of Sheba is said to have given frankincense from this region to King Solomon.

Today, frankincense is still important to Oman. It is used in perfumes, in traditional medicine and in religious ceremonies around the world. Visitors can buy the best quality resin, called 'hojari', in the souqs of Salalah.

In the year 2000, UNESCO added the 'Land of Frankincense' - four sites in Dhofar, including the remains of ancient ports and caravan oases - to its World Heritage List. This means these places are now protected for future generations. However, experts warn that the number of frankincense trees is falling because of climate change and over-harvesting. A recent study found that many old trees no longer produce seeds that can grow. To save this precious heritage, the Omani government has started a programme to plant thousands of new trees in the mountains of Dhofar, and local schools are teaching children about the importance of these remarkable trees.

READING 3 (continued)

Task One: Write not more than FOUR WORDS OR A NUMBER.

41. What is frankincense? (a substance)

_____

42. When does the frankincense harvest begin? (month)

_____

43. How many times can each tree be harvested every season?

_____

44. Who gave frankincense to King Solomon?

_____

45. What kind of frankincense is called "hojari"? (quality)

_____

46. How many sites in Dhofar are on the World Heritage List?

_____

Task Two: Shade the correct option.

47. Frankincense trees grow best in _____ soil.

- ○ wet
- ○ dry and rocky
- ○ rich and black

48. Workers collect the dried resin about _____ after cutting the tree.

- ○ two days
- ○ two weeks
- ○ two months

49. Ships carried frankincense from Sumhuram to _____.

- ○ India
- ○ Egypt
- ○ Rome

50. The Omani government is protecting frankincense by _____.

- ○ building new souqs
- ○ stopping all harvesting
- ○ planting new trees

READING SCORE: _____ / 25

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