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

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

School Trip: All Grade 12 students are reminded that the trip to the Science Centre is on Wednesday, not Thursday as originally planned. Buses leave at 7.30 a.m. sharp. Please bring your permission slip and 2 rials for lunch. Sports clothes are recommended.

26. The trip is on the day first planned.

○ True ○ False

Dear Ms Huda, Thank you for your order. Unfortunately, the dictionary you requested is out of stock. New copies should arrive within ten days, and we will send yours immediately. As an apology, delivery will be free. Al-Noor Bookshop

27. The bookshop will send the dictionary later.

○ True ○ False

AL-SAFA GYM: New members welcome! Join this month and get two months for the price of one. Our facilities include a swimming pool, three tennis courts and a fully equipped fitness hall. Open daily from 6 a.m. to midnight. Call 2414 0000 for details.

28. The gym closes at twelve at night.

○ True ○ False

From: Oman Travel. Dear Passenger, flight WY 101 to Salalah tomorrow will depart at 9.45 a.m. instead of 8.30 a.m. due to weather conditions. Please arrive at the airport two hours before the new departure time. We apologise for any inconvenience.

29. The flight will leave earlier than planned.

○ True ○ False

READING 1 (continued)

Public Warning: The Consumer Protection Authority advises shoppers that fake smartphone chargers have been found in some local markets. These chargers can damage your phone or cause fires. Always buy from authorised dealers and keep your receipt.

30. Fake chargers can be dangerous.

○ True ○ False

The Art Society invites you to its annual exhibition at the Grand Mall Gallery on Friday at 5 pm. Works by forty local artists will be shown. Entry is free, and refreshments will follow the opening speech.

31. Visitors must pay to enter the exhibition.

○ True ○ False

BEACH SAFETY: Swimming is not permitted after sunset. Red flags mean dangerous currents: do not enter the water when they are flying. Lifeguards work from 8 am to 6 pm. Children under twelve must always be accompanied by an adult.

32. Lifeguards work for ten hours a day.

○ True ○ False

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

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

Dear Majid,
It was lovely to hear from you last week. Congratulations on your exam results - I knew you would do well! You asked me in your letter about our desert camping trip, so here is the whole story.
Three weeks ago, my uncle Saif invited me to join him and his two sons on a four-day camping trip to the Empty Quarter. At first, I was a little nervous because I had never slept in the desert before, but I packed my bag and joined them early on Thursday morning. We drove for six hours in my uncle's jeep, and by sunset we had reached a beautiful area of golden sand dunes, far away from any town.
That first night was the most amazing experience of my life. There was no electricity and no phone signal, so after dinner we simply sat around the fire and looked up at the sky. I have never seen so many stars! My uncle knows a lot about astronomy, and he showed us how to find the North Star and several constellations. His sons, Yousuf and Mazin, taught me how to read the old Bedouin signs in the sand - footprints of foxes, lizards and even a desert owl.

On the second day, we climbed the highest dune in the area. It took us almost two hours, and I was completely exhausted by the time we reached the top, but the view was worth every step. From up there, the dunes looked like golden waves stretching to the horizon. We took hundreds of photos, and then Yousuf showed us how to slide down the steep side of the dune on a piece of wood. It was terrifying at first, but after the second try I loved it!
We also visited a small Bedouin family who live in the area. They welcomed us with dates and camel milk, and the father told us stories about how his family has survived in the desert for generations. I was deeply impressed by their simple but happy way of life.
When we returned home on Sunday evening, I felt sad to leave. The desert taught me that we don't need phones and computers to be happy. I'm already planning our next trip - and this time, you must come with us! Write back soon and tell me you will.
Your friend,
Nabil

READING 2 (continued)

33. The camping trip lasted _____.

○ two days ○ four days ○ one week

34. At first, Nabil felt _____ about the trip.

○ nervous ○ bored ○ angry

35. On the first night, Nabil was amazed by _____.

○ the food ○ the stars ○ the silence

36. Nabil learned about astronomy from _____.

○ Yousuf ○ Mazin ○ his uncle

37. Climbing the highest dune took almost _____.

○ two hours ○ four hours ○ six hours

38. The Bedouin family welcomed the visitors with _____.

○ coffee and cake ○ dates and camel milk ○ tea and bread

39. Nabil was impressed by the family's _____.

○ modern house ○ way of life ○ expensive cars

40. At the end of the letter, Nabil invites Majid to _____.

○ join the next trip ○ visit his house ○ meet his uncle

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

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

THE AFLAJ OF OMAN

For more than two thousand years, the people of Oman have depended on a remarkable system of water channels called aflaj - the plural of the Arabic word 'falaj'. These channels carry water from underground springs and mountain streams to farms and villages, often over distances of many kilometres. In a country where rain is scarce, the aflaj have made agriculture - and therefore life itself - possible in the desert.

Engineers divide the aflaj of Oman into three main types. The first type, 'ghaili' aflaj, collect water from wadis after rainfall. The second, 'aini' aflaj, take water from natural springs. The third and most impressive type, 'daoudi' aflaj, run through underground tunnels - called 'qanats' - which are dug by hand into the earth, sometimes to a depth of forty metres or more. These tunnels gently slope downwards, allowing gravity alone to move the water for distances that can reach twenty kilometres.

Building an underground falaj was an extraordinary achievement. Workers dug a line of vertical wells first, then connected their bottoms with a tunnel - all without modern equipment. The knowledge was passed from father to son, and expert diggers were highly respected members of their communities. Historical records show that some of the oldest aflaj were built more than 1,500 years ago, and a few are believed to be even older than that. Amazingly, the techniques used by those ancient engineers are still taught and used in Oman today.

Water from the falaj is shared fairly among the farmers according to a traditional system. Each farmer has the right to use the water for a fixed number of hours each week, depending on the size of his farm. A special official, chosen by the community, supervises the distribution and makes sure nobody takes more than his share. This system has worked peacefully for hundreds of years, and many people consider it one of the world's oldest examples of fair water management.

In 2006, UNESCO recognised the importance of this heritage by adding five of Oman's aflaj to the World Heritage List. Today, there are more than three thousand aflaj still in use across the country, irrigating date palms, banana plantations and vegetable farms. However, many old channels are now threatened by falling groundwater levels, caused partly by modern pumps. The Omani government is working to restore and protect the aflaj, so that this ancient gift of water will continue to flow for future generations.

READING 3 (continued)

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

41. What is the singular of the word "aflaj"?

_____

42. When were the aflaj added to the World Heritage List? (year)

_____

43. How many aflaj are still in use today?

_____

44. Who supervises the distribution of the water?

_____

45. What kind of aflaj run through underground tunnels? (type)

_____

46. How deep can the underground tunnels be?

_____

Task Two: Shade the correct option.

47. "Ghaili" aflaj collect water from _____.

○ natural springs ○ wadis after rain ○ deep wells

48. Water moves through the tunnels by _____.

○ pumps ○ gravity ○ wind power

49. Each farmer's share of water depends on _____.

○ his farm's size ○ his family's size ○ the season of the year

50. Today, the aflaj are threatened by _____.

○ heavy rainfall ○ new building projects ○ falling groundwater levels

READING SCORE: _____ / 25

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