SmartCo English Olympiad

Category 4 (Grades 9–11)

Duration: 60 Minutes | Total Questions:50

Section A: Reading Comprehension (25 Questions)

Text 1: *Read the following report and answer questions **1–13.***

The Paradox of Progress

In the contemporary era, the relentless pursuit of digitalization and automation is often heralded as the quintessential achievement of human innovation. We are told that these advancements will facilitate a life of leisure, yet the reality appears far more ambiguous. While productivity has soared, the implication for the global workforce is a growing sense of existential dread.

Critics argue that automation does not merely supplement human labor; it threatens to subvert the very infrastructure of the modern middle class. Furthermore, the prevalence of artificial intelligence has birthed a new paradox: we are more connected than ever through a vast digital network, yet studies show a substantial rise in reported loneliness. This phenomenon suggests that digital interaction is often a superficial substitute for the nuance of face-to-face communication. To mitigate these effects, we must move beyond a pragmatic focus on efficiency and consider the ethical consequences of a world where algorithms replace human intuition.

1. What is the primary argument of the author?

A) Technology is the only way to solve climate change.

B) Automation is purely beneficial for the middle class.

C) Technological progress has unintended social and psychological costs.

D) Human intuition is less reliable than computer algorithms.

2. The word "" in the first paragraph most nearly means:

A) The most expensive.

B) The most perfect or typical example.

C) The most controversial.

D) The least understood.

3. What "paradox" does the author identify regarding the digital network?

A) It is too expensive for most people to use.

B) It increases connectivity but also increases loneliness.

C) It is faster than older technology but uses more power.

D) It was designed for leisure but creates more work.

4. According to the text, how does automation affect the middle class?

A) It strengthens their financial stability.

B) It provides them with more leisure time.

C) It threatens to undermine their professional structure.

D) It has no significant impact on them.

5. What does the author suggest we should prioritize over "efficiency"?

A) Globalized trade.   C) Higher salaries.

B) Ethical consequences.   D) Faster digitalization.

6. The tone of the passage can best be described as:

A) Enthusiastic and celebratory.   C) Analytical and cautionary.

B) Cynical and hopeless.   D) Indifferent and bored.

7. What is the "existential dread" mentioned in the text likely caused by?

A) A lack of high-speed internet.

B) Fear regarding the future of human work.

C) The complexity of new software.

D) Global environmental change.

8. Based on the text, face-to-face communication is seen as:

A) Redundant in the modern age.

B) Lacking in nuance.

C) Superior to digital interaction.

D) An obstacle to efficiency.

9. Which word is a synonym for "mitigate" as used in the second paragraph?

A) Exacerbate

C) Alleviate

B) Understand

D) Ignore

10. The author's intention is likely to:

A) Encourage people to delete their social media.

B) Promote a new software framework.

C) Provoke critical thought about technological integration.

D) Defend the actions of corporate tech leaders.

11. What is *implied* by the focus on ethics regarding "algorithmic bias"?

A) The speed at which computers process data.

B) Hidden prejudices within automated systems.

C) The cost of upgrading hardware.

D) A type of computer virus.

12. The term "subvert" suggests that automation is:

A) Supporting the current system.

B) Overturning or weakening the current system.

C) Building a new system from scratch.

D) Improving the speed of the system.

13. Which statement would the author most likely agree with?

A) Progress is always linear and positive.

B) Technology should be regulated with human values in mind.

C) Automation is a minor issue that will solve itself.

D) Logic and efficiency are the only goals of a civilization.

Text 2: *Read the semi-academic report and answer questions 14–25.*

The Evolving Legal Landscape

The sovereignty of a nation is increasingly challenged by international treaties and the rise of globalized corporate entities. Legislation that once seemed robust is now struggling to keep pace with the transparency demanded by a digital citizenry. Furthermore, the jurisdiction of local courts is often vague when dealing with cybersecurity breaches that occur across borders. Advocacy groups are calling for a consensus on a universal framework for data privacy to protect the civil liberties of individuals against state oppression and corporate manipulation.

14. What is the main focus of this report?

A) The history of the court system.

B) Challenges to national sovereignty and data privacy.

C) The benefits of corporate globalization.

D) The cost of cybersecurity software.

15. Why is current legislation struggling?

A) It is too transparent.

B) It cannot keep up with digital demands.

C) There are too many lawyers.

D) Nations have too much sovereignty.

16. The word "robust" in the text suggests the legislation was:

A) Weak and old.   C) Flexible and changing.

B) Strong and healthy.   D) Expensive and complex.

17. What makes cyber security jurisdiction "vague"?

A) The high cost of technology.

B) The international nature of the crimes.

C) A lack of interest from the public.

D) The speed of the internet.

18. Advocacy groups are seeking a "consensus." This means they want:

A) More money for their cause.

B) A general agreement among nations.

C) A new election.

D) To ban all data collection.

19. "Civil liberties" in this context refers to:

A) The right to free internet.

B) Individual rights and freedoms.

C) The ability to work for a corporation.

D) The rules of a courtroom.

20. The author mentions "corporate manipulation" as a:

A) Positive marketing strategy.

B) Necessary part of the economy.

C) Potential threat to individuals.

D) Method for improving transparency.

21. Which of the following is an "opinion" rather than a "fact" in the text?

A) Sovereignty is being challenged by treaties.

B) Cyber security breaches occur across borders.

C) A universal framework is necessary for protection.

D) Digitalization has increased.

22. The word "sovereignty" refers to:

A) A country's wealth.

B) A country's independent power.

C) A country's weather patterns.

D) A country's population.

23. What is the "framework" mentioned in the text?

A) A physical building for the courts.

B) A structure of rules or laws.

C) A computer program for privacy.

D) A group of judges.

24. "Notwithstanding" the benefits of trade, the author seems concerned about:

A) The loss of cultural identity.

B) The erosion of individual rights.

C) The price of consumer goods.

D) The speed of the legal process.

25. What is the intended audience for this text?

A) Young children.

B) Tech hobbyists.

C) Students of law or political science.

D) Professional athletes.

Section B: English Usage (25 MCQs)

26. Hardly _____ the contract when he realized the hidden liability.

A) he had signed   C) he signed

B) had he signed   D) did he signed

27. The board suggested that the new policy _____ implemented immediately.
(Subjunctive)

A) is   C) was

B) be   D) being

28. If the recession _____ so severe, the company wouldn't be struggling right now.
(Mixed Conditional)

A) isn't   C) hadn't been

B) wouldn't be   D) wasn't

29. The suspect is believed _____ the country before the warrant was issued.

A) to leave   C) leaving

B) to have left   D) having left

30. Choose the correct causative form: "The manager _____ the report _____ by the end of the day."

A) had / finished   C) had / finish

B) got / finish   D) got / finishing

31. Which sentence uses an "Inversion" for emphasis?

A) I have never seen such blatant bias.

B) Never have I seen such blatant bias.

C) Never I have seen such blatant bias.

D) Such blatant bias I have never seen.

32. The negotiator was praised for her _____ approach to the crisis.

A) pragmatic

C) pragmatism

B) pragmatically

D) pragmatist

33. They had to _____ the meeting because the CEO was feeling ill.

A) put off

C) put out

B) put up with

D) put through

34. It is essential that every citizen _____ with the new regulations.

A) comply

C) complied

B) complies

D) complying

35. The more sophisticated the AI becomes, _____ it is to predict its decisions.

A) the harder

C) harder

B) the hardest

D) more hard

36. Despite _____ for hours, the committee could not reach a consensus.

A) deliberate   C) deliberating

B) deliberated   D) to deliberate

37. "I will finish the report by tomorrow," she promised. (Reported Speech)

A) She promised that she will finish the report by the next day.

B) She promised that she would finish the report by the next day.

C) She promised she finishes the report by tomorrow.

D) She promised to finished the report.

38. Identify the incorrect word in the sentence: "<u>The criteria</u> (A) for the <u>promotion</u> (B) <u>was</u> (C) <u>unusually</u> (D) strict. "

A) The criteria   C) was

B) promotion   D) unusually

39. The lawyer's argument was so _____ that the jury was immediately convinced.

A) eloquent   C) eloquently

B) eloquence   D) elocution

40. Were I _____ you, I would consult a professional before investing.

A) am   C) to be

B) was   D)been

41. The infrastructure project, _____ was funded by the state, is now complete.

A) which   C) whose

B) who   D) that

42. Choose the correct collocation: "The scientist decided to _____ a series of experiments."

A) make   C) conduct

B) do   D) produce

43. The CEO's decision was based on a _____ of market research and intuition.

A) synthesize   C) synthesis

B) synthetic   D) synthesized

44. Which word functions as a discourse marker for contrast?

A) Furthermore   C) Conversely

B) Consequently   D) Simultaneously

45. He is _____ known for his research into genetic disorders.

A) wide   C) width

B) widely   D) widen

46. "If only I _____ the job offer when I had the chance!"

A) accept   C) had accepted

B) would accept   D) have accepted

47. The data, _____ accurately, provides deep insight into consumer behavior.

A) analyze   C) analyzing

B) analyzed   D) to analyze

48. Which of the following describes a "Paradox"?

A) A simple truth.

B) A statement that seems self-contradictory but may be true.

C) A mathematical equation.

D) A historical event.

49. Sentence Transformation: "It is possible that he forgot."

A) He must have forgotten.   C) He should have forgotten.

B) He might have forgotten.   D) He will have forgotten.

50. Identify the register: "Notwithstanding the aforementioned caveats, the proposal is viable."

A) Informal   C) Formal/Academic

B) Slang   D) Humorous