

ESOL International

English Reading Examination

Level C2 Proficient

Instructions to learners

Check that you have the correct paper.

Use black or blue ink. Do not use a pencil.

You may **NOT** use a dictionary.

There are 31 questions in this examination.

You must attempt all the questions.

Record your answers on the mark sheet.

Total marks available: **31**

You have **75 minutes** to finish the examination.

Text 1

Read the text. Answer the questions on your mark sheet.

The different regions of Oaxaca, Mexico	1
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Oaxaca, nestled in the southern part of Mexico, is celebrated for its rich tapestry of cultures and traditions, which vary dramatically across its diverse regions. The state is divided into eight principal regions: the Central Valleys, Sierra Norte, Sierra Sur, Mixteca, Cañada, Papaloapan, Istmo and Costa. Each of these areas presents a unique cultural landscape shaped by its indigenous roots and colonial history.	3
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In the Central Valleys, where the state capital resides, a vibrant festival takes place every July. This celebration showcases the distinct music, dance and costumes of various indigenous groups, primarily the Zapotecs and Mixtecs. Visitors gather to experience traditional foods, colourful parades and artisan crafts that reflect the rich cultural heritage of the region.	9
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Local markets' are a delight to witness, bustling with stalls selling colourful textiles, handwoven rugs and intricate black pottery. The Central Valleys also offers scenic landscapes and historic sites, making it a popular destination for visitors.	14
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The Sierra Norte is characterised by its mountainous terrain. A pivotal feature of this region is the celebration of the Day of the Dead when families honour their deceased relatives with elaborate altars. These altars, known as ofrendas, are adorned with marigolds, sugar skulls, traditional foods and candles, demonstrating a fusion of pre-Hispanic and Catholic beliefs. This tradition is a deeply meaningful time for communities, bringing family members together to remember and celebrate their ancestors.	18
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Further south is the Istmo de Tehuantepec, the cultural centre of the Tehuana people. The area is known for a colourful dance that narrates the historical events surrounding the Spanish conquest. This region's cuisine are famed for dishes such as a string cheese that is unique to Oaxaca, showcasing the area's culinary diversity.	25
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Each of Oaxaca's regions contributes to the state's overall identity, creating a profound sense of community and cultural resilience. The traditions of Oaxaca are not _____; they evolve, inviting both locals and visitors to participate in their rich heritage, thereby fostering a greater understanding of the complexities inherent to the Mexican cultural landscape.	30
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| <p>1. This text has been written to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">a. Promote tourism in Oaxaca.b. Provide an overview of Oaxaca's traditions.c. Compare the regions of Mexico. <p>2. Which type of food is associated with the Day of the Dead celebration?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">a. Only sugared food.b. Elaborate food.c. Traditional food. <p>3. The Central Valleys region is popular with tourists for its:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">a. Colourful dance and cheese dishes.b. Unique landscapes and mountainous terrain.c. Scenic landscapes and historic sites. <p>4. In which region does the writer highlight the mix of different faiths?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">a. Cañada.b. Sierra Norte.c. Papaloapan. <p>5. Which group of people is from Istmo?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">a. Tehuanas.b. Zapotecs.c. Mixtecs. | <p>6. There is a spelling error on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">a. Line 4.b. Line 10.c. Line 33. <p>7. There is a grammar error on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">a. Line 21.b. Line 27.c. Line 30. <p>8. There is a punctuation mistake on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">a. Line 5.b. Line 14.c. Line 15. <p>9. The best word to complete the sentence on line 31 is:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">a. Static.b. Ancient.c. Uncommon. <p>10. The best word to replace 'pivotal' on line 18 is:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">a. Profound.b. Trivial.c. Core. |
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Text 2

Read the text. Answer the questions on your mark sheet.

Billie Eilish: Redefining Pop and Inspiring a New Generation	1
	2
Billie Eilish, born in Los Angeles in 2001, has quickly risen to become one of the most influential figures in contemporary music. With a unique blend of pop, electronic and indie sounds, Eilish stands out, not only for her innovative musical style, but also for her bold approach to self-expression, which deeply resonates with young audiences. Her authenticity and willingness to _____ difficult subjects, ranging from mental health to environmental issues, have made her a significant role model for today's youth.	3
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Eilish's breakthrough came in 2015, when she uploaded the haunting single <i>Ocean Eyes</i> to SoundCloud. Co-written and produced by her older brother, Finneas O'Connell, the track soon went viral, catching the attention of major music labels. Her 2019 debut album, <i>When We All Fall Asleep, Where Do We Go?</i> , featuring the Grammy-winning singles <i>Bad Guy</i> and <i>When the Party's Over</i> , propelled her to international stardom. The album's innovative production and Eilish's genre-defying vocals earned her widespread acclaim, while the lyrics, often reflective and confessional, touched on issues familiar to many young listeners, such as depression, self-doubt and societal pressures.	10
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What makes Eilish particularly inspiring to young people is her rejection of conventional beauty standards and her openness about mental health struggles. In a world dominated by carefully curated social media personas, Eilish's honesty is refreshing. Her public discussions of body image, self-acceptance and dealing with fame has encouraged countless fans to embrace their authentic selves and prioritise their mental well-being. Additionally, Eilish uses her platform to advocate for environmental conservation, urging her followers to make sustainable choices and take action against climate change.	19
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Eilish's influence extends beyond music; she embodies a cultural shift toward greater openness, vulnerability and social responsibility. Her career serves as a powerful example of how young artists can remain true to their values, while achieving mainstream success. For a generation navigating the challenges of modern life, Billie Eilish is more than just a musician: She is a voice for authenticity and change, inspiring young people worldwide to express themselves and make a difference.	27
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11. What is the focus of this text?

- a. To analyse Eilish's musical techniques.
- b. To examine the music industry's impact on young people.
- c. To discuss Eilish's role as a cultural inspiration.

12. In which year did Billie Eilish release her first album?

- a. 2001.
- b. 2015.
- c. 2019.

13. What does Eilish encourage her fans to do?

- a. Make ecological choices and fight against climate change.
- b. Avoid social media to reduce societal pressure.
- c. Focus on beauty standards and achieving success.

14. Which of Eilish's tracks went viral?

- a. Bad Guy.
- b. Ocean Eyes.
- c. When the Party's Over.

15. Which topic does Eilish often address to inspire her fans?

- a. Fashion trends.
- b. Curating social media.
- c. Mental health.

16. There is a spelling mistake on:

- a. Line 24.
- b. Line 27.
- c. Line 29.

17. There is a grammar mistake on:

- a. Line 15.
- b. Line 19.
- c. Line 22.

18. There is a punctuation mistake on:

- a. Line 4.
- b. Line 11.
- c. Line 31.

19. The best word to complete the sentence on line 7 is:

- a. Tackle.
- b. Evade.
- c. Challenge.

20. The best word to replace the word 'reflective' on line 16 is:

- a. Impulsive.
- b. Contemplative.
- c. Impressive.

Text 3

Read the text. Answer the questions on your mark sheet.

Veganism

Veganism is a lifestyle that excludes all animal products including meat, dairy, eggs and honey. People adopt this way of living for a variety of reasons including ethical beliefs, environmental awareness and personal well-being.

From an ethical perspective, many vegans believe animals should not be used for human benefit. They avoid consuming meat and animal by-products such as gelatine, lanolin, beeswax, rennet and lard. Vegans also steer clear of products like leather, wool and cosmetics that are tested on animals. Vegans see this choice as a commitment to sustainability and responsible consumption.

Environmental reasons are a major influence too. Animal agriculture is responsible for roughly 14.5% of global greenhouse gas emissions. It also contributes to deforestation, water shortages and loss of biodiversity. Choosing a plant-based diet can reduce an individual's food-related carbon footprint by up to 73%, help preserve natural habitats and significantly cut water use.

Health is another motivating factor. Well-planned vegan diets are typically rich in fibre, vitamins and antioxidants. Vegan alternatives include nut milks, meat substitutes made from soya and mushrooms and plant-based margarines. Nowadays, these alternatives are commonly found in all diets. People following vegan diets often report feeling more energised, sleeping better and having improved digestion. For example, plant-based diets tend to be lower in saturated fat, which can support heart health and weight management.

In summary, veganism is not just a diet but a lifestyle rooted in thoughtful choices. It supports animal welfare, benefits the environment and promotes personal health. Although less than 10% of the global population is currently vegan, interest continues to grow. For many, it offers a meaningful way to live with greater awareness, purpose and care for the world around them.

21. According to the text, vegan diets:

- a. Are low in fibre.
- b. Increase fat intake.
- c. Can improve digestion.

22. Which environmental concern is linked to animal agriculture?

- a. Greenhouse gas emissions.
- b. Use of gelatine and lanolin.
- c. Testing of cosmetics on animals.

23. According to the text, veganism promotes:

- a. Deforestation.
- b. Wool production.
- c. Personal health.

24. Which one of these statements is true?

- a. Plant-based diets produce 14.5% of greenhouse gas emissions.
- b. A plant-based diet could reduce your carbon footprint by up to 73%.
- c. More than 10% of the world population is vegan.

25. Which of these is a vegan alternative?

- a. Rennet.
- b. Honey.
- c. Soya.

Text 4

Read the text. Answer the questions on your mark sheet.

Istanbul's cats

Istanbul's cats sounds like an indie band, yet those who have wandered Turkey's vibrant streets will recognise these renowned felines instantly. Whether prowling through police stations, sauntering along cobbled avenues, or perched with regal indifference in museums and mosques, Istanbul's street cats, or *sokak kedileri* in Turkish, are an intrinsic element of the cityscape. Unlike stray animals in many other nations, these cats are cherished by the local population and safeguarded from harm.

Embedded in Istanbul's historical fabric for centuries, these ubiquitous felines are believed to trace their lineage back to Egypt, where they were among the first domesticated creatures and revered by ancient Egyptians as sacred beings. Scientific consensus suggests that these industrious guardians gradually spread across the globe from Egypt approximately 10,000 years ago, intertwining themselves with human civilization ever since.

Why, then, does Istanbul boast such an abundance of free-roaming cats? The phenomenon may be traced back to the Byzantine Empire which ruled the city, before the Ottomans, for over a thousand years. Like the Ottoman people who followed, the Byzantines lived amid wooden structures vulnerable to rodent infestations. Cats were welcomed as natural protectors of grain stores and homes, becoming woven into daily urban life. When the Ottoman Empire later took control, the tradition of caring for these animals continued and evolved.

Today, estimates suggest that over a million cats call Istanbul home. The city's reverence for its feline inhabitants was once formally institutionalised through the role of *mancaş*, or "cat sitter." Employed by charitable foundations, *mancaş* were responsible for the daily feeding of Istanbul's stray cats, while local veterinarians provided essential medical care. Shopkeepers and residents, contributed by maintaining the cats' environment and safety. This system of structured support remained in place until the 1970s.

26. Free roaming cats were first introduced to Istanbul by:

- a. Ottoman people.
- b. The Egyptians.
- c. Byzantine people.

27. According to the text, which of the following is true?

- a. Locals dislike stray cats.
- b. In Istanbul, cats can roam freely.
- c. Cats were not revered by ancient Egyptians.

28. *Sokak kedileri* in Turkish means:

- a. Stray animals.
- b. Street cats.
- c. Sacred beings.

29. Turkish streets are said to be:

- a. Vibrant.
- b. Industrious.
- c. Ubiquitous.

30. According to the text, stray cats were fed daily by:

- a. Veterinarians.
- b. Shopkeepers.
- c. *Mancaş*.

31. How many cats are estimated to live in Istanbul?

- a. Over 1,000.
- b. Over 10,000.
- c. Over a million.

End of Examination.

Reading Mark Scheme

TEXT	Question	Answer		TEXT	Question	Answer
1	1	b		3	21	c
1	2	c		3	22	a
1	3	c		3	23	c
1	4	b		3	24	b
1	5	a		3	25	c
1	6	b		4	26	c
1	7	b		4	27	b
1	8	b		4	28	b
1	9	a		4	29	a
1	10	c		4	30	c
2	11	c		4	31	c
2	12	c				
2	13	a				
2	14	b				
2	15	c				
2	16	a				
2	17	c				
2	18	c				
2	19	a				
2	20	b				
					Total	31