SOCRATES

Module G — Full Practice Exam · 105 minutes · 100 points

WRITTEN RECEPTION (60 points)

(ACCESS TO INFORMATION FROM WRITTEN TEXTS)

Read the text and then answer questions 1–8. In the multiple-choice questions, circle the number of the correct answer. In the other questions, follow the instructions.

THE VANISHING NIGHT

I For almost the entire history of our species, human beings looked up at a night sky crowded with thousands of stars. Today, however, more than eighty per cent of the world's population lives under skies so brightened by artificial light that the Milky Way has become invisible to them. This gradual disappearance of genuine darkness, known as light pollution, is one of the most widespread yet least discussed environmental changes of the modern age. Unlike other forms of pollution, it leaves no lasting residue: the moment the lights are switched off, the darkness returns. Precisely because the damage seems so easily reversible, few governments have treated it as a serious concern.

II The consequences, nevertheless, extend far beyond a spoiled view of the heavens. Countless species have evolved to depend on the natural rhythm of light and dark, and the flood of artificial illumination disrupts their behaviour in ways scientists are only beginning to understand. Newly hatched sea turtles, which instinctively crawl towards the brightest horizon, are lured away from the ocean by the glow of coastal towns. Migrating birds, navigating by the stars, become disoriented above illuminated cities and collide with buildings in enormous numbers. Even the flowering of certain plants, triggered by the length of the night, is thrown into confusion.

III Human health, too, appears to be affected. Our bodies regulate sleep through an internal clock that relies on the contrast between bright days and dark nights. Exposure to artificial light after sunset, particularly the blue light emitted by screens and modern street lamps, suppresses the hormone that prepares the body for rest. Researchers have linked chronic exposure to poorer sleep, and some studies suggest connections to more serious long-term conditions, although the evidence in these cases remains far from conclusive.

IV What makes light pollution unusual among environmental problems is that solutions are remarkably straightforward and inexpensive. Shielding street lamps so that they direct light downwards, rather than uselessly into the sky, immediately reduces the glow above a city. Replacing harsh white bulbs with warmer tones, dimming lights during the small hours, and simply switching off unnecessary illumination all make an immediate difference. Several communities that have adopted such measures report not only darker skies but also lower electricity bills, since much of the wasted light served no purpose in the first place.

V A growing movement now campaigns to protect what remains of the natural night. Around the world, regions with exceptionally dark skies are being designated as protected reserves, attracting tourists eager to see the stars as their ancestors once did. For campaigners, the goal is not to abolish artificial light, which has transformed human life for the better, but to use it thoughtfully. The night sky, they argue, is a shared heritage, and preserving our access to it need not mean returning to the darkness of the past.

QUESTIONS — PART I (60 points)

1. Why does the writer say light pollution is rarely treated as a serious concern?

i. Because the damage disappears as soon as the lights are turned off.
ii. Because it affects only a small part of the population.
iii. Because it produces harmful residue that is hard to remove.
iv. Because most governments have already solved it.

(6 points)

2. How does artificial light endanger newly hatched sea turtles? (paragraph II)

ANSWER:

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(7 points)

3. What does paragraph II mainly show about artificial light?

i. It has no effect on animals that migrate.
ii. It helps birds navigate more accurately at night.
iii. It only affects plants, not animals.
iv. It disrupts the natural behaviour of many different species.

(7 points)

4. Artificial light after sunset harms sleep because it suppresses a hormone. COMPLETE: The hormone it suppresses is the one that

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(7 points)

5. The writer is careful not to overstate the health risks. COMPLETE: The evidence linking artificial light to more serious conditions is described as

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(7 points)

6. According to paragraph IV, shielding street lamps helps because it makes the light point in a particular direction. COMPLETE: Instead of shining uselessly into the sky, the light is directed

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(7 points)

7. Why do communities that reduce light pollution often pay less for electricity? (paragraph IV)

ANSWER:

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(7 points)

8. Mark the TWO statements that are true according to the text.

- ☐ Campaigners want to ban all artificial light completely.
- ☐ Some regions with very dark skies are now protected as reserves.
- ☐ The Milky Way is visible to most people in the world today.
- ☐ Dark-sky reserves attract tourists who want to see the stars.
- ☐ Solutions to light pollution are expensive and complicated.
- ☐ Artificial light has made no difference to human life.

(2×6=12 points)

PART II — WRITTEN PRODUCTION (40 points)

9. *(40 points)*

Some people believe that towns and cities should switch off unnecessary lights at night to protect the natural darkness. Do you agree or disagree with this view? Write a composition stating and explaining your opinion. Write 120–140 words in English.

DRAFT / טיוטה

FINAL VERSION / גרסה סופית (words 140–120)

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