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 PSYCHOLOGY OF PROCRASTINATION

I Almost everyone knows the uncomfortable feeling of sitting down to begin an important task, only to find themselves suddenly cleaning the kitchen, checking messages, or watching one more video. Procrastination, the habit of delaying what we know we ought to do, is often dismissed as simple laziness. Psychologists, however, insist that this explanation is misleading. People who procrastinate are frequently hard-working and ambitious; what defeats them is not a lack of effort but something happening beneath the surface. Understanding why intelligent, motivated individuals repeatedly postpone their most important work has become a surprisingly active field of modern research.

II At its heart, procrastination appears to be a problem of emotion rather than time management. When a task feels boring, difficult, or threatening to our sense of competence, it stirs up unpleasant feelings such as anxiety or self-doubt. Delaying the task offers immediate relief, precisely because it removes those feelings for a while. Unfortunately, this relief is short-lived, and the underlying problem only grows larger as the deadline approaches. In other words, the procrastinator is not really choosing leisure over work; he or she is trading a small, immediate comfort for a much heavier burden later on.

III Modern brain research helps to explain why this trap is so difficult to escape. Human beings are naturally inclined to value rewards that are available now far more highly than rewards that lie in the future, a tendency scientists call present bias. A distant deadline feels abstract and unreal, whereas the temptation to relax exists right in front of us. Whereas a disciplined planner might weigh long-term consequences carefully, the emotional part of the brain tends to win the argument in the moment. This imbalance is not a personal failing but a basic feature of how the human mind evolved.

IV The good news is that procrastination can be managed once its true nature is understood. Since the problem is emotional, purely practical advice such as telling someone to try harder rarely works. Experts instead recommend making the first step so small that it no longer feels threatening: writing a single sentence, for example, rather than an entire essay. Others suggest treating oneself with a little kindness rather than harsh criticism, because self-blame only intensifies the negative emotions that caused the delay in the first place.

Removing distractions and setting clear, nearer deadlines can also weaken the powerful pull of present bias.

V Perhaps the most encouraging discovery is that procrastination is not a fixed character flaw but a habit that can gradually be reshaped. As researchers continue to uncover the emotional machinery behind our delays, they are developing practical strategies that almost anyone can learn. The aim is not to transform people into tireless machines who never rest, but rather to help them act in line with their own genuine goals. In a world increasingly full of instant distractions, learning to work with our emotions, rather than against them, may well prove one of the most valuable skills of all.

QUESTIONS — PART I (60 points)

1. Why does the writer reject the idea that procrastination is simply laziness?

i. Because people who procrastinate are usually lazy and unambitious.
ii. Because those who procrastinate are frequently hard-working and ambitious.
iii. Because procrastination only affects people who are not very intelligent.
iv. Because psychologists have proved that laziness does not really exist.

(6 points)

2. According to paragraph II, why does delaying a task make a person feel better at first?

ANSWER:

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(7 points)

3. What is the main point of paragraph II?

i. Procrastination is mainly caused by poor time management.
ii. Procrastinators always prefer leisure activities to any kind of work.
iii. Procrastination is driven by a wish to escape unpleasant emotions.
iv. Delaying a task permanently removes the anxiety it causes.

(7 points)

4. According to paragraph III, human beings value rewards differently depending on when they arrive. COMPLETE: People naturally value rewards available now much more highly than rewards that

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(7 points)

5. According to paragraph III, why does the temptation to relax often win over long-term thinking?

ANSWER:

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(7 points)

6. Paragraph IV explains why experts advise starting with a tiny action. COMPLETE: Experts recommend making the first step so small that it

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(7 points)

7. According to paragraph IV, why do experts advise treating yourself with kindness rather than harsh criticism?

ANSWER:

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(7 points)

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

- ☐ Procrastination is a permanent character flaw that cannot be changed.
- ☐ Procrastination is a habit that can gradually be reshaped.
- ☐ The aim is to turn people into tireless machines who never rest.
- ☐ Researchers are developing practical strategies that almost anyone can learn.
- ☐ Experts believe that procrastination cannot be managed at all.
- ☐ The writer claims that distractions have disappeared from modern life.

(2×6=12 points)

PART II — WRITTEN PRODUCTION (40 points)

9. *(40 points)*

Some people believe that schools should teach students practical skills for managing their time and overcoming procrastination, just as they teach subjects like maths and science. 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 (120–140 words)

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