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.

WHY HUMANS DREAM

I Every night, as we drift into sleep, something extraordinary happens inside our minds. For roughly two hours, ordinary people become the authors of vivid, often bizarre stories in which they fly, flee, or converse with the dead as though nothing were unusual. Humans have wondered about these nocturnal adventures for centuries. Ancient civilisations regarded dreams as messages from the gods, whereas most scientists today search for their origins inside the brain itself. Yet despite decades of research, one fundamental question remains stubbornly unanswered: why, precisely, do humans dream at all?

II One influential theory proposes that dreaming exists to help us process emotion. During the phase of sleep in which most vivid dreams occur, the regions of the brain that handle feelings become remarkably active, whereas the areas responsible for logical reasoning grow quieter. According to this view, the sleeping mind revisits the day's troubling experiences in a calmer chemical environment, gradually stripping away the distress attached to them. This would explain why a worry that feels overwhelming at night can seem strangely manageable by morning. Supporters therefore argue that dreaming acts as a form of overnight therapy, quietly repairing the emotional bruises of waking life.

III A rather different explanation focuses on memory instead of emotion. As we sleep, the brain appears to sort through the enormous quantity of information gathered during the day, deciding what deserves to be stored and what can safely be forgotten. Dreams, in this account, are a by-product of that sorting, fleeting glimpses of memories being shuffled, strengthened, and woven into what we already know. Experiments lend the idea support: people who sleep after learning a new skill tend to perform it better the following day, and those who dream about the task improve most of all. Nevertheless, whether the dreams themselves cause the improvement, or merely accompany it, is far from settled.

IV Not everyone is convinced that dreams serve any purpose whatsoever. Some researchers maintain that dreaming is simply noise, the meaningless flicker of a brain kept busy while the body rests. According to this sceptical position, the sleeping brain fires at random, and the mind, which cannot tolerate nonsense, assembles these random signals into a story. The strange, illogical quality of so many dreams, they argue, is precisely what one would expect if dreams carried no message at all. Critics of this idea respond, however, that evolution

rarely preserves a behaviour so consistently across so many species unless it delivers some genuine advantage.

V For now, the truth probably lies somewhere among these competing accounts, and dreaming may well perform several jobs at once. New tools are beginning to make the once-private world of dreams observable: scanners can now identify roughly what a sleeper is picturing, and researchers have even exchanged simple signals with people in the middle of a dream. As these techniques advance, scientists may move from speculation towards firm evidence. Yet one thing already seems certain: the nightly theatre that unfolds behind our closed eyes is not an accident to be ignored, but a genuine window into how the human mind works.

QUESTIONS — PART I (60 points)

1. What point does the writer make at the end of paragraph I?

i. Ancient civilisations understood dreams better than modern scientists do.

ii. Despite much research, science still cannot fully explain why we dream.

iii. Dreams have only recently begun to attract scientific attention.

iv. Most scientists now agree completely on why humans dream.

(6 points)

2. According to the emotion theory, what does the sleeping mind do with the day's troubling experiences? (paragraph II)

ANSWER:

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(7 points)

3. What does the emotion theory suggest is the main benefit of dreaming?

i. It sharpens our ability to reason logically during the night.

ii. It erases all memory of unpleasant events completely.

iii. It works as a kind of overnight therapy that eases emotional distress.

iv. It makes our worries feel far worse by the morning.

(7 points)

4. Paragraph III describes what the brain does during sleep. COMPLETE: Dreams are said to be a by-product of the brain's process of

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(7 points)

5. Paragraph III gives evidence from experiments. COMPLETE: People who sleep after learning a new skill tend to

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(7 points)

6. Paragraph IV presents a sceptical view of dreaming. COMPLETE: Some researchers argue that dreaming is simply

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(7 points)

7. How do critics of the sceptical view respond to it? (paragraph IV)

ANSWER:

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(7 points)

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

- ☐ Scientists have now reached complete agreement about why we dream.
- ☐ New tools allow researchers to observe roughly what a sleeper is picturing.
- ☐ Dreaming may carry out several different functions at the same time.
- ☐ The writer believes dreams are an accident that should be ignored.
- ☐ Researchers have never managed to communicate with a sleeping dreamer.
- ☐ Modern technology has made the scientific study of dreams impossible.

(2×6=12 points)

PART II — WRITTEN PRODUCTION (40 points)

9. *(40 points)*

Some people believe that keeping a personal diary or journal is a valuable habit that everyone should develop. 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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