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 DEBATE OVER SPACE EXPLORATION

I When the first astronauts looked back at Earth from the surface of the Moon in 1969, millions of people watched in wonder, convinced that a new age of discovery had begun. More than half a century later, that same sense of wonder still surrounds every rocket launch, yet it is now accompanied by a persistent and difficult question. As governments and private companies pour vast sums into missions beyond our planet, many ordinary citizens ask whether the money would be better spent solving urgent problems here on Earth. The debate over space exploration, it seems, is far from settled.

II Supporters of space exploration argue that its benefits reach much further than the headlines suggest. The technologies developed for missions in orbit have quietly transformed everyday life, giving us satellite navigation, accurate weather forecasting and countless medical devices that were never imagined as products of the space race. Beyond these practical rewards, defenders point to something less tangible. Exploring the unknown, they claim, inspires young people to study science and engineering, and reminds humanity of what it can achieve when nations cooperate rather than compete. Curiosity, in this view, is a value worth funding for its own sake.

III Critics, however, remain unconvinced. They point out that space programmes swallow enormous budgets at a time when poverty, disease and climate change demand urgent attention. The billions spent sending probes to distant planets, they argue, could fund hospitals, schools or renewable energy instead. There are environmental concerns too: rocket launches release pollutants high into the atmosphere, and the growing crowd of satellites has left orbit littered with dangerous debris. For these sceptics, the romance of exploration should not blind societies to the very real problems that money might otherwise solve on the ground.

IV In recent years the debate has taken an unexpected turn, as private companies rather than governments have moved to the centre of the industry. By reusing rockets and driving down costs, these firms have made access to space cheaper than ever before, opening the possibility of space tourism and even commercial mining. Yet this shift raises fresh concerns. When exploration is guided by profit rather than public interest, critics wonder

who will set the rules, protect the environment and ensure that the benefits are shared fairly rather than concentrated in the hands of a wealthy few.

V Where, then, does the balance lie? Most experts agree that the choice need not be between the stars and the Earth, and that a modest, carefully managed investment in space can advance human knowledge without neglecting pressing needs at home. What matters is transparency about the costs, international cooperation to keep orbit safe, and honesty about who truly benefits. Whether humanity eventually settles on other worlds or simply learns to understand its own more deeply, the questions raised by space exploration are likely to shape the coming century.

QUESTIONS — PART I (60 points)

1. Why is the sense of wonder around space launches now accompanied by a difficult question?

i. Because rockets no longer inspire ordinary people.

ii. Because no one watches rocket launches any more.

iii. Because most space missions have now been cancelled.

iv. Because people wonder whether the money could be better spent on problems on Earth.

(6 points)

2. What practical technologies does the writer say were developed from space missions? (paragraph II)

ANSWER:

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(7 points)

3. Apart from practical rewards, why do defenders value space exploration, according to paragraph II?

i. Because it guarantees immediate profits.

ii. Because it inspires young people and shows what nations can achieve together.

iii. Because it removes the need for cooperation.

iv. Because it discourages the study of science.

(7 points)

4. What environmental concerns do critics raise about space programmes? (paragraph III)

ANSWER:

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(7 points)

5. Critics argue the money spent on space could be used differently. COMPLETE: Instead of sending probes to distant planets, the money could fund

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(7 points)

6. According to paragraph IV, private firms have made reaching space cheaper. COMPLETE: They achieved this mainly by

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(7 points)

7. Why are critics worried about exploration that is guided by profit? (paragraph IV)

ANSWER:

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(7 points)

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

- ☐ Space technology has had no impact on everyday life.
- ☐ Many experts believe investing in space and caring for Earth are not opposing choices.
- ☐ Rocket launches are completely clean and produce no pollution.
- ☐ Private companies have made reaching space cheaper than in the past.
- ☐ All experts agree that space exploration should be stopped immediately.
- ☐ Governments are the only organisations involved in space today.

(2×6=12 points)

PART II — WRITTEN PRODUCTION (40 points)

9. *(40 points)*

Some people believe that governments should continue to invest large sums in space exploration, while others argue this money should be spent on problems here on Earth. Discuss the advantages and disadvantages of government spending on space exploration. Write 120–140 words in English.

DRAFT / טיוטה

FINAL VERSION / גרסה סופית (120–140 words)

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