IELTS Reading Practice: Matching Information

Text

Paragraph **A**

In the early twentieth century, city governments across the world faced the challenge of rapidly growing populations. Industrialization drew workers into urban centers, and housing conditions were often overcrowded and unsanitary. Reformers argued that poor living environments contributed to disease and social unrest. As a response, the concept of *urban planning* gained recognition. Early initiatives focused on providing basic sanitation, clean water, and better housing, laying the foundation for modern city development.

Paragraph **B**

By the mid-century, the focus of urban planning had shifted toward transport systems. The increasing number of automobiles created new problems: traffic congestion, road safety, and pollution. Some cities experimented with wide boulevards and ring roads, while others invested in underground railways or tram networks. The balance between private cars and public transport became a defining issue. In many regions, particularly North America, urban sprawl was encouraged by policies that favored highways over public transit.

Paragraph **C**

Energy efficiency emerged as a significant concern in the late twentieth century. High-rise buildings with sealed windows required large amounts of heating or cooling. At the same time, growing dependence on fossil fuels raised alarms about environmental impact. Cities began to introduce stricter building codes, demanding insulation, efficient boilers, and later, renewable energy integration. Although progress was uneven, these regulations marked the beginning of environmentally conscious urban design.

Paragraph **D**

Waste management soon followed as a major area of concern. The variety and volume of urban waste expanded dramatically with consumer culture. Plastics, electronic devices, and packaging materials created disposal problems. Recycling initiatives were launched in many cities, often beginning as pilot projects in local communities. Some were highly successful, achieving significant reductions in landfill use, while others struggled due to lack of infrastructure and inconsistent public participation.

Paragraph **E**

Another dimension of urban life that drew attention was social equity. Cities are not homogeneous: wealthy districts often have access to superior schools, hospitals, and parks, while poorer neighborhoods lack these facilities. Such disparities can foster resentment and hinder social cohesion. Urban sociologists argued that inclusive planning, affordable housing, and community spaces were not luxuries but necessities for long-term stability. Some cities introduced mixed-income housing projects to prevent segregation, though their success varied widely.

Paragraph **F**

In the twenty-first century, technology has increasingly shaped how cities function. The rise of "smart city" initiatives has enabled local authorities to gather real-time

data on traffic, pollution, and energy consumption. Sensors embedded in infrastructure can adjust street lighting, control water usage, or reroute vehicles to reduce congestion. Yet, critics warn that over-reliance on technology risks creating surveillance states, where citizens' privacy is compromised in the name of efficiency.

Paragraph **G**

Looking toward the future, experts agree that cities must adapt to the realities of climate change. Rising sea levels threaten coastal settlements, while heatwaves and storms test the resilience of urban infrastructure. Solutions may include seawalls, green roofs, and expanded public transport to reduce emissions. Importantly, decision-makers emphasize collaboration between governments, businesses, and citizens. The future of cities is not only a technical issue but also a political and cultural one, requiring collective action.

Questions (1–8)

Which paragraph contains the following information?
Write the correct letter, A–G.
NB: You may use any letter more than once. An explanation of how environmental rules changed construction practices.

1. The risks of making technology too central to city management.
2. Reference to early arguments that poor living conditions affected public health.
3. Mention of consumer habits that complicated disposal of rubbish.
4. A prediction that climate change will determine the priorities of city planners.
5. Description of policies that unintentionally encouraged car use.
6. An example of programs designed to reduce inequality in housing.
7. A claim that collaboration between different groups is necessary for future solutions.