curiosity journal

version zero

name _____

volume _____

start date _____

end date _____

table of contents

write page numbers for your entries or use this like a research to-do list

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002		date

question

let's write a question together – here are some suggestions to get you started

visit factoid aggregators online – is there more to the story?

what is something that bothers you?
learn why it exists and if there are any solutions

pick a word in the dictionary and trace back its etymology

you can set yourself up for success by considering the following

Ⓐ i believe that this question has an answer i can find with my current resources, ability, and time

Ⓑ i am already somewhat familiar with the domain of this question

Ⓒ i have an idea of where to start

Ⓓ i will develop a skill i want by pursuing this question

Ⓔ i think answering this question will help me better understand my world and the people around me

it is okay if any of the above fail to apply to your question, just keep in mind that the question can be a bit tougher to answer

just remember: don't be too hard on yourself - answer questions should lead to excitement and interest... not burnout.

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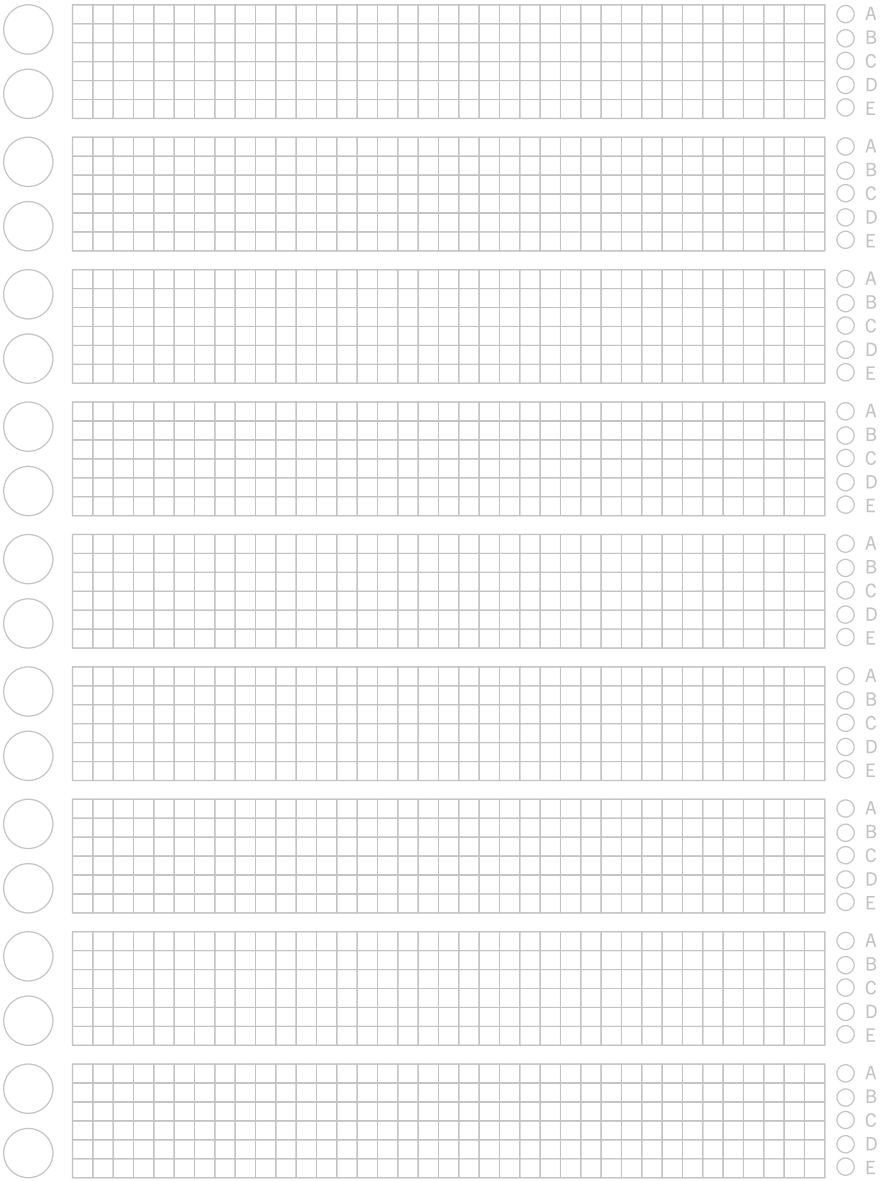
question



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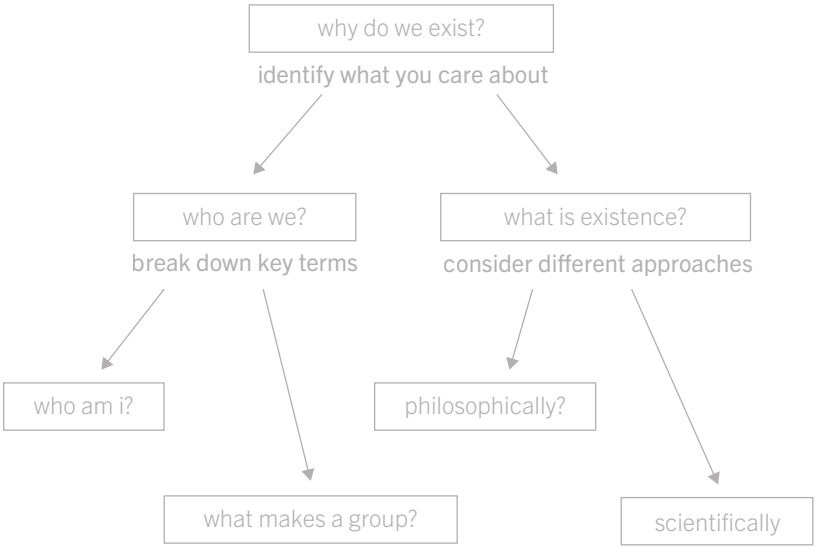
question

if you do find yourself with a question that feels like too much, try to ask yourself the following questions

- ○ what am i actually interested in knowing (an origin story, applications, responses, impact, etc.)?
- ○ what are the key terms and concepts involved and what do i mean when i use them?
- ○ how might other people approach this question (anthropologists, physicists, great-aunt Susan, etc.)?



you may never answer really big questions but you'll get to think about it in more precise and meaningful ways

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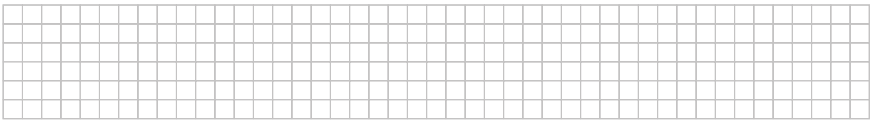
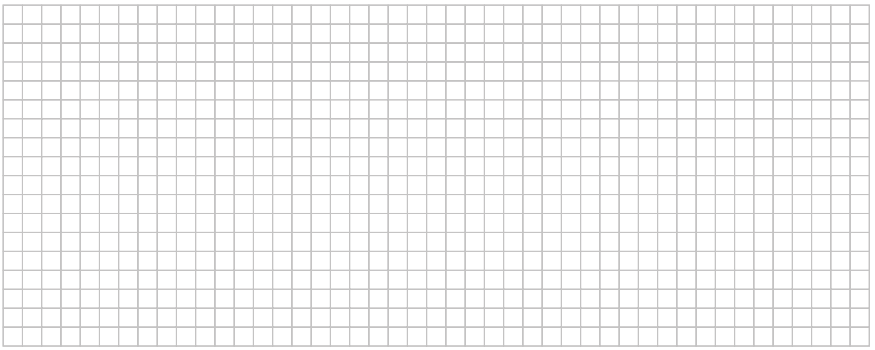
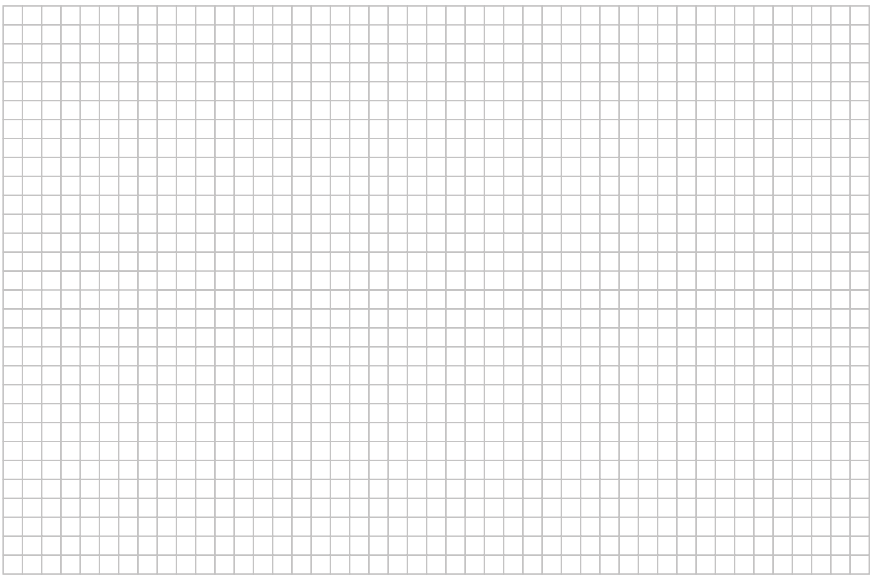
big question



medium questions



little questions



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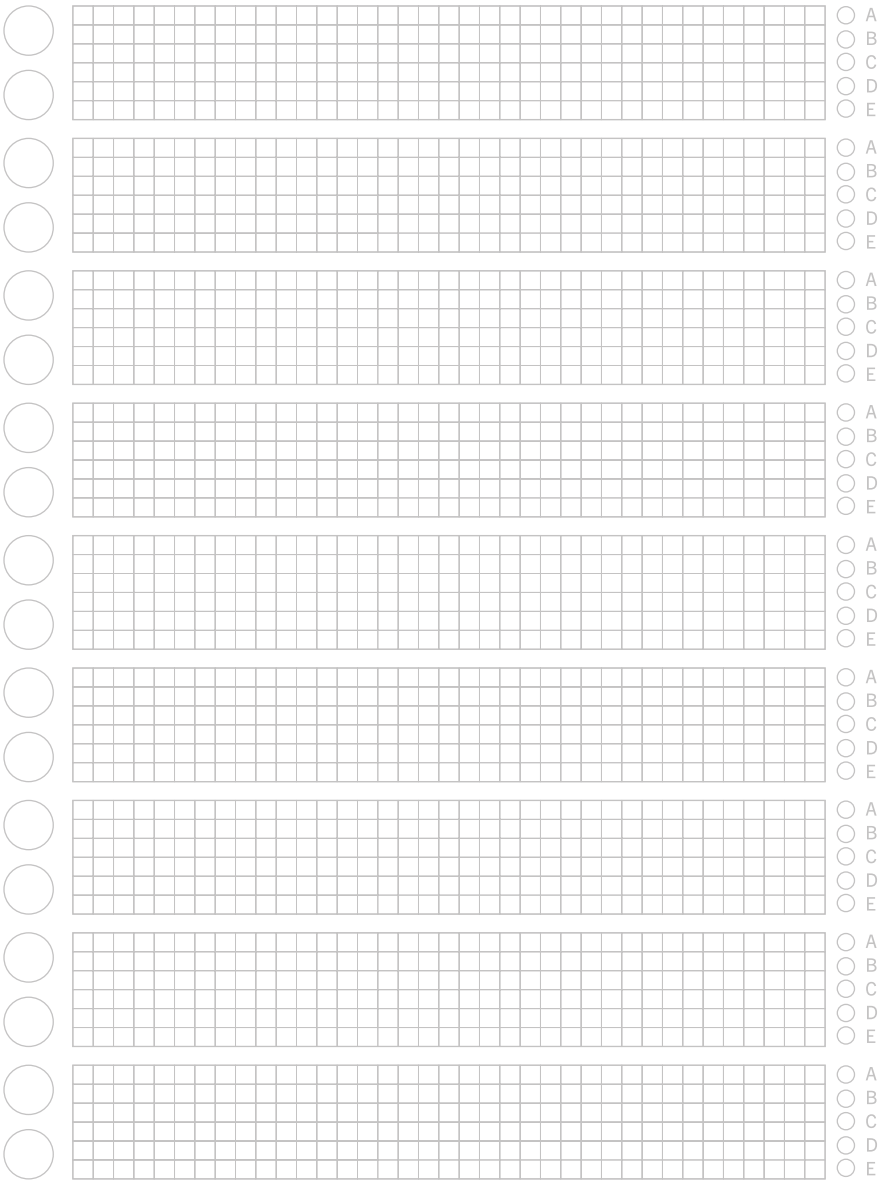
question



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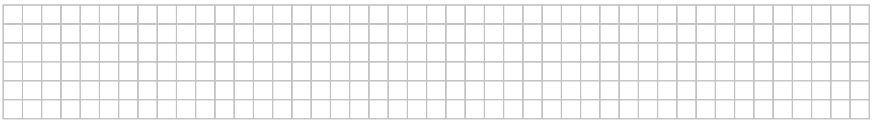
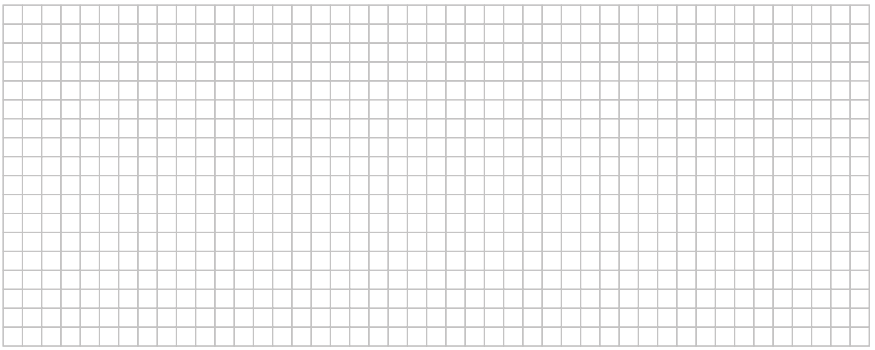
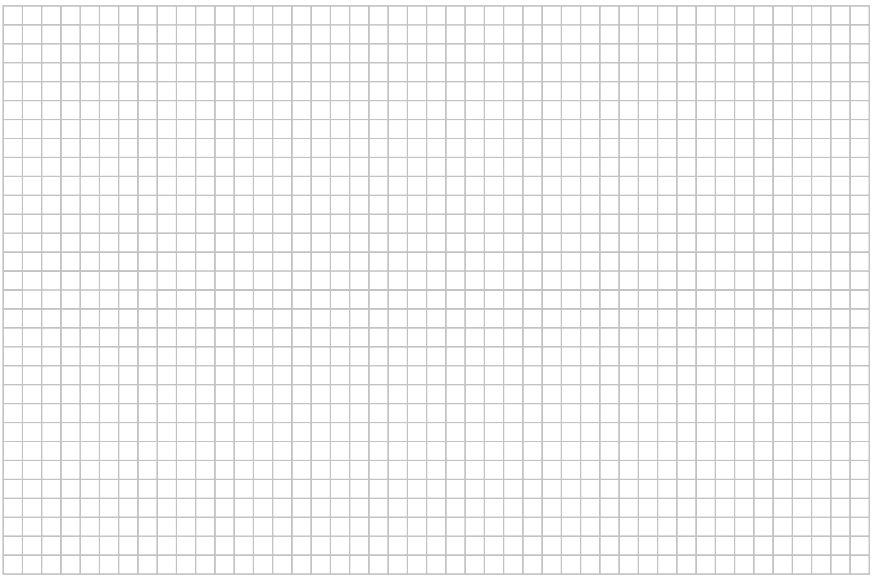
big question



medium questions



little questions



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hypothesis

while you may not be performing original research, a hypothesis can form a helpful guide when looking for sources – a good hypothesis should:

Ⓐ answer your question clearly and avoid niche terminology

Ⓑ justify the logic behind why your answer works

Ⓒ be specific enough that it can be proven wrong

for example

entry level jobs are not entry level

this hypothesis is clear but doesn't offer any justification

if many jobs labeled "entry-level" have requirements that are pretty unachievable for entry level job seekers, then we can justify saying that the "entry-level" label is inaccurate

if your question is too big or vague, then your answer will likely end up the same way, like:

AI can be ethically and morally good

this hypothesis is too broad and has no clear path to being disproved

if an AI can match my responses to ethical and moral challenges, then an AI can be as ethically and morally good as me within those specific challenges.

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hypothesis

A
B
C

A
B
C

A
B
C

A
B
C

A
B
C

A
B
C

A
B
C

A
B
C

A
B
C

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sources

your research is only as good as the data you start with; so, dedicate some time to finding 5-7 sources that are

Ⓐ relevant

Ⓑ written by qualified author(s)

Ⓒ peer reviewed

Ⓓ using primary research alongside cited sources

Ⓔ published within the last 5 years and/or foundational to the domain

here are some ways we find our sources

look for frequently edited overviews of the subject like wikis for a basic review; when you find something that relates to your questions, record the source

find key terms related to your question and search for them on library websites and academic archives (arXiv, Google Scholar, jStor, etc.)

visit your favourite media sources and see if they have covered the subject; it can be more accessible to learn from sources that already meet your interests

look up experts in the field and see what they have written, reviewed, and/or recommend

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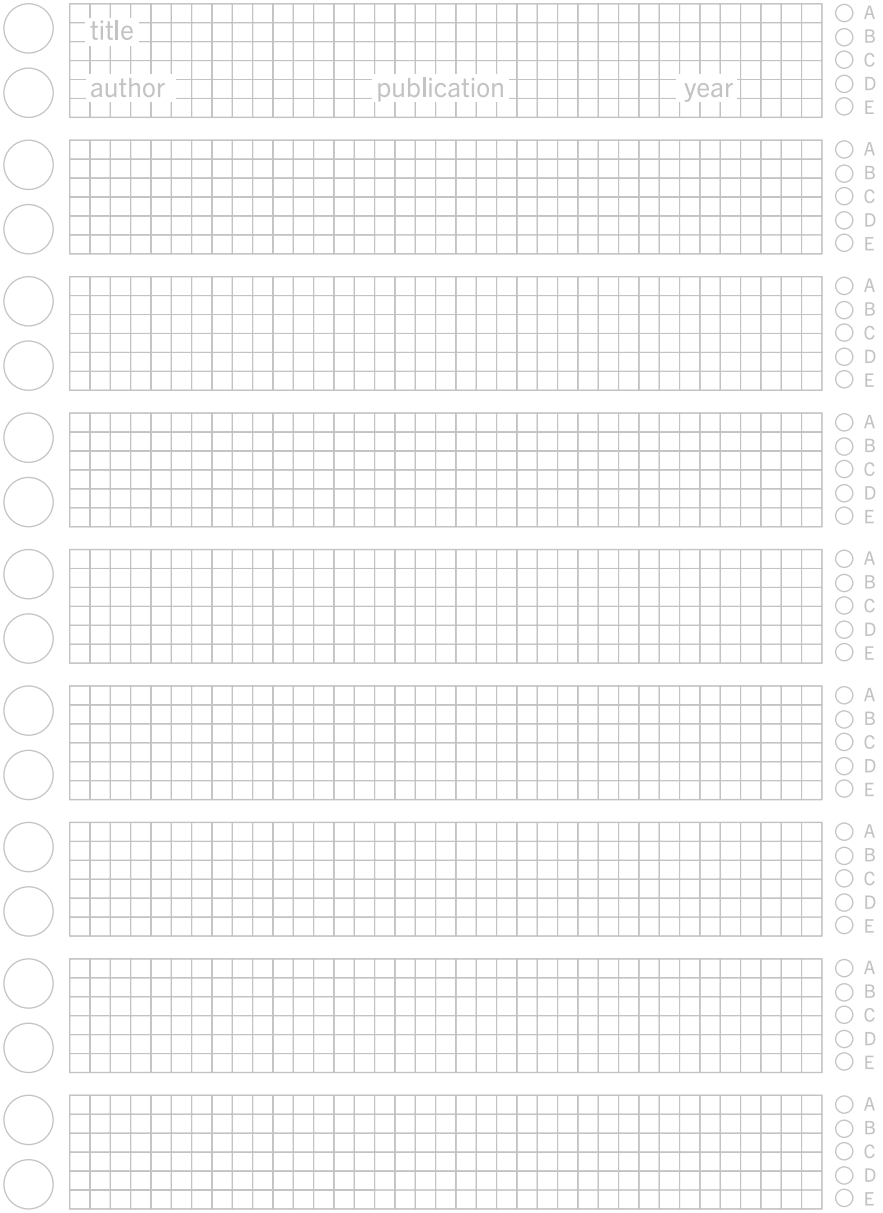

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research

here is the research procedure we use while filter through sources

1. number all sources in order of priority based on how much criteria they meet and how useful they seem at first glance

2. create a key of symbols representing different types of notes

3. go through your sources and use your key to tag facts as you note them

4. after finishing a source, note 3 takeaways - focus on how it relates to your question to save yourself in a week when you don't remember anything

5. if a source is helpful, fill in the bottom bubble in the sources page to show that you have fully reviewed it

6. if a source is not helpful, draw a little ghost in the bottom bubble to show that it is dead to you >:(

7. after you run out of sources and / or you are no longer learning anything new, go through your notes and identify any follow up questions

8. go through old sources or search for new ones to answer those follow ups using this same procedure

remember to take breaks while researching – try to channel your curiosity into a healthy challenge instead of an unwanted fixation

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key

add some symbols and their meaning for note-taking

normal note

important note

future task

number / statistic

key person

key time / date

follow up question

key time / date

new source

new terminology

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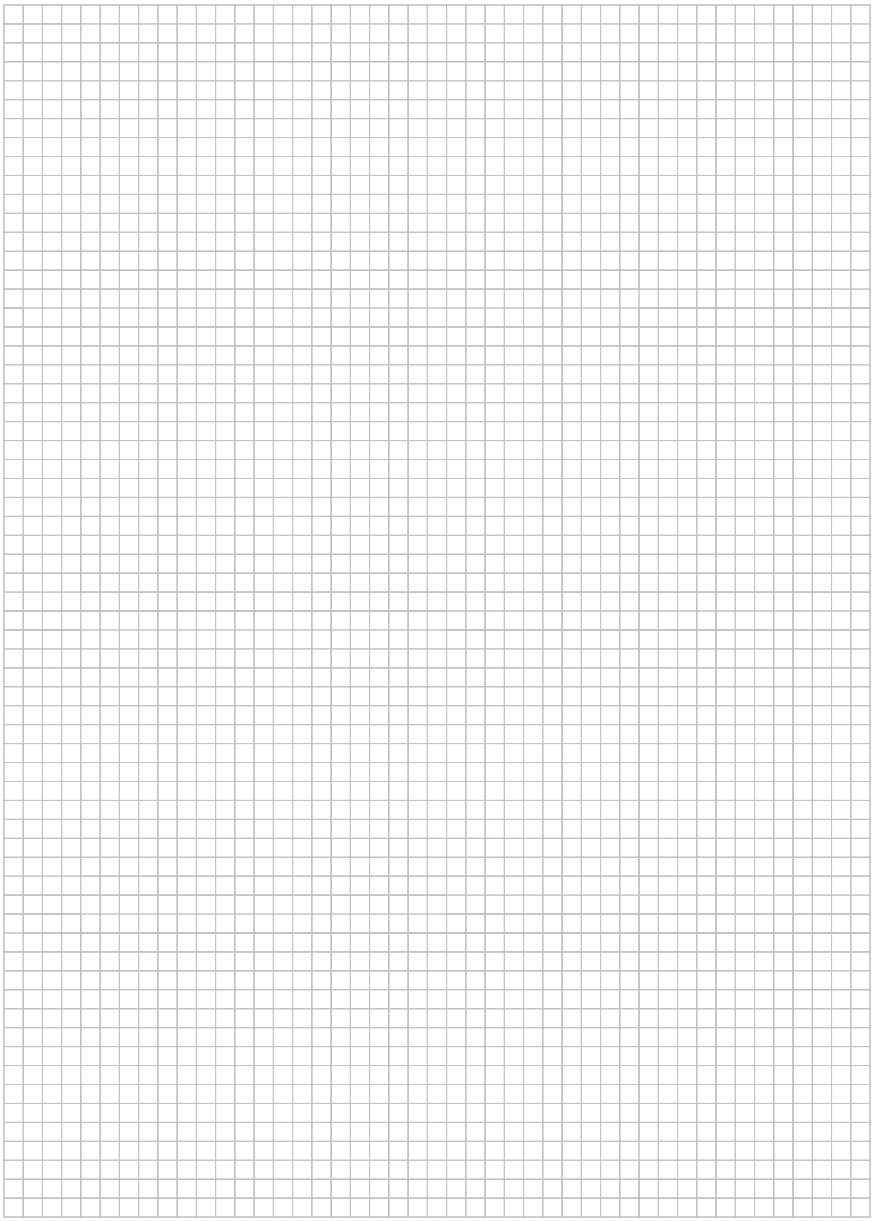

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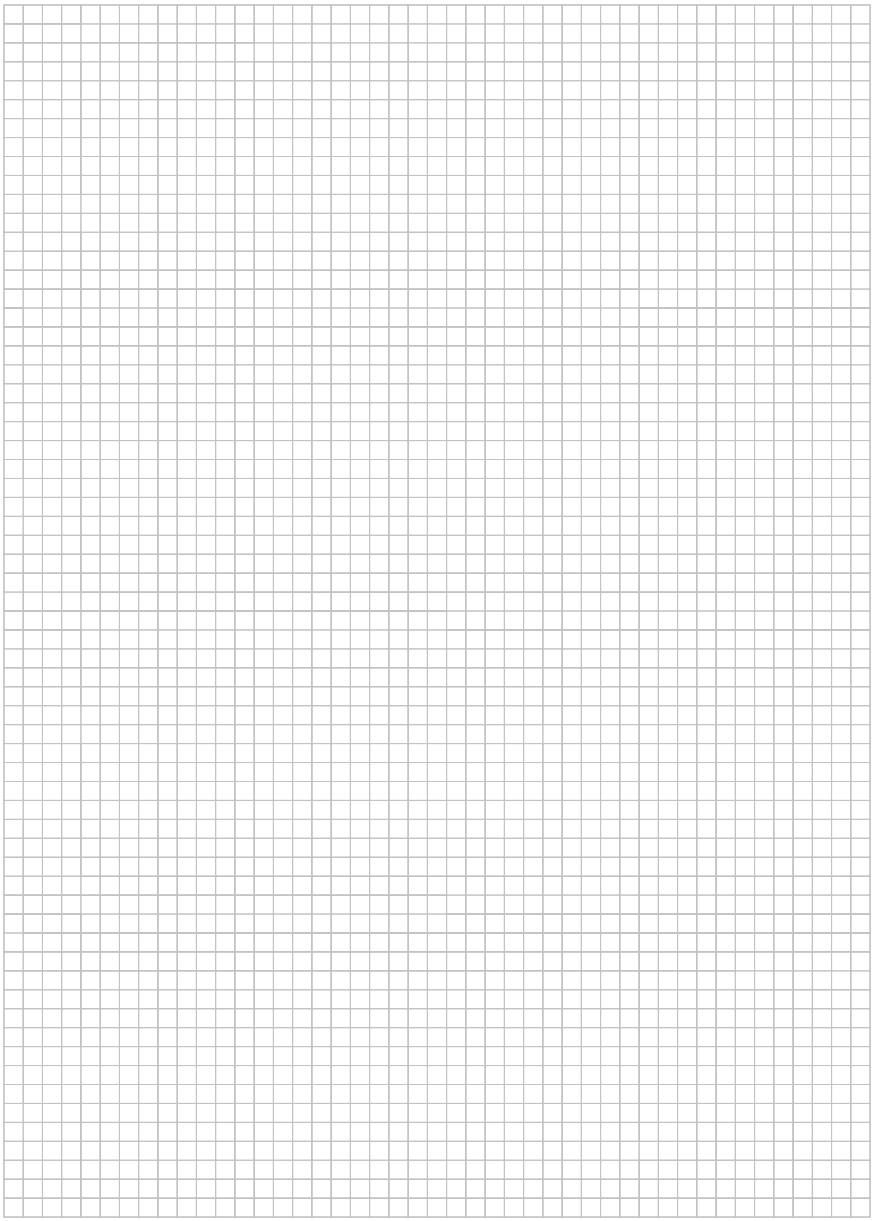

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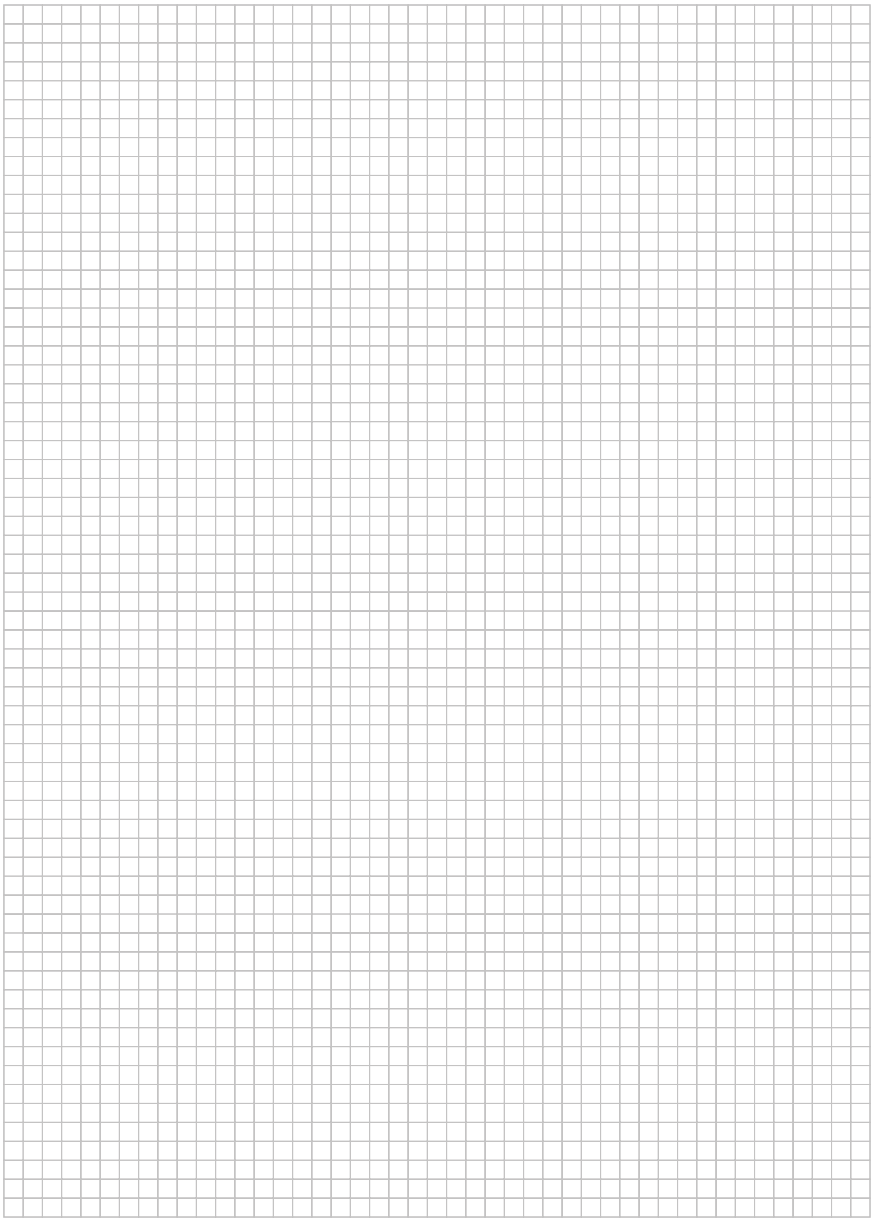

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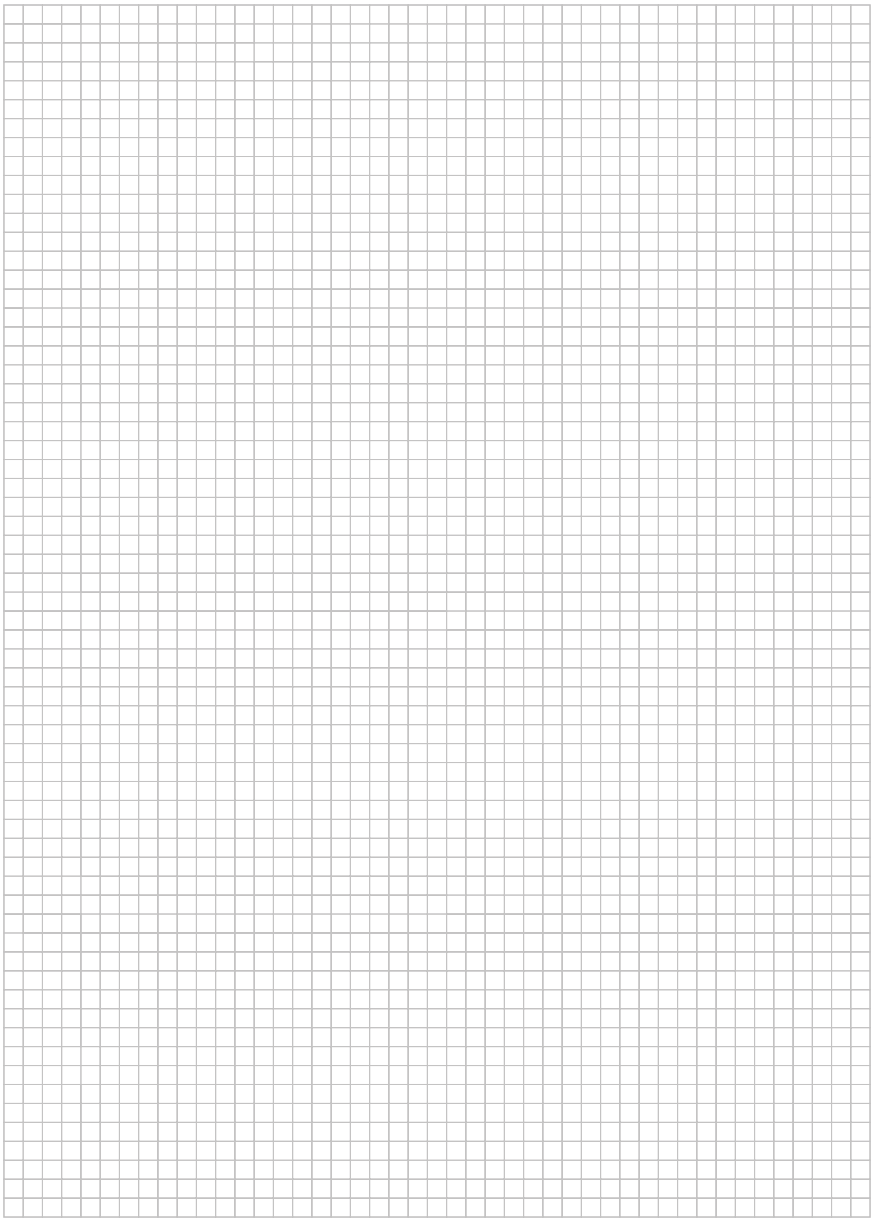

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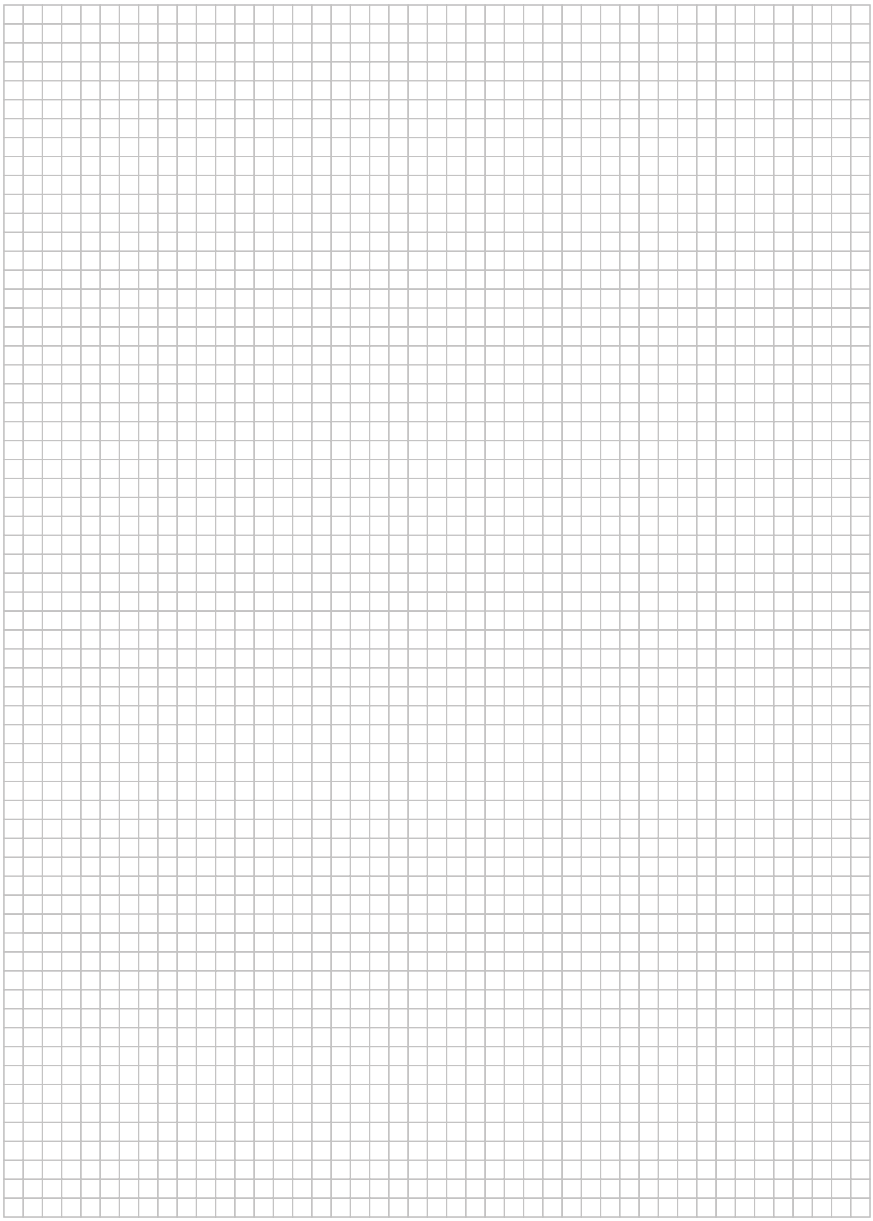

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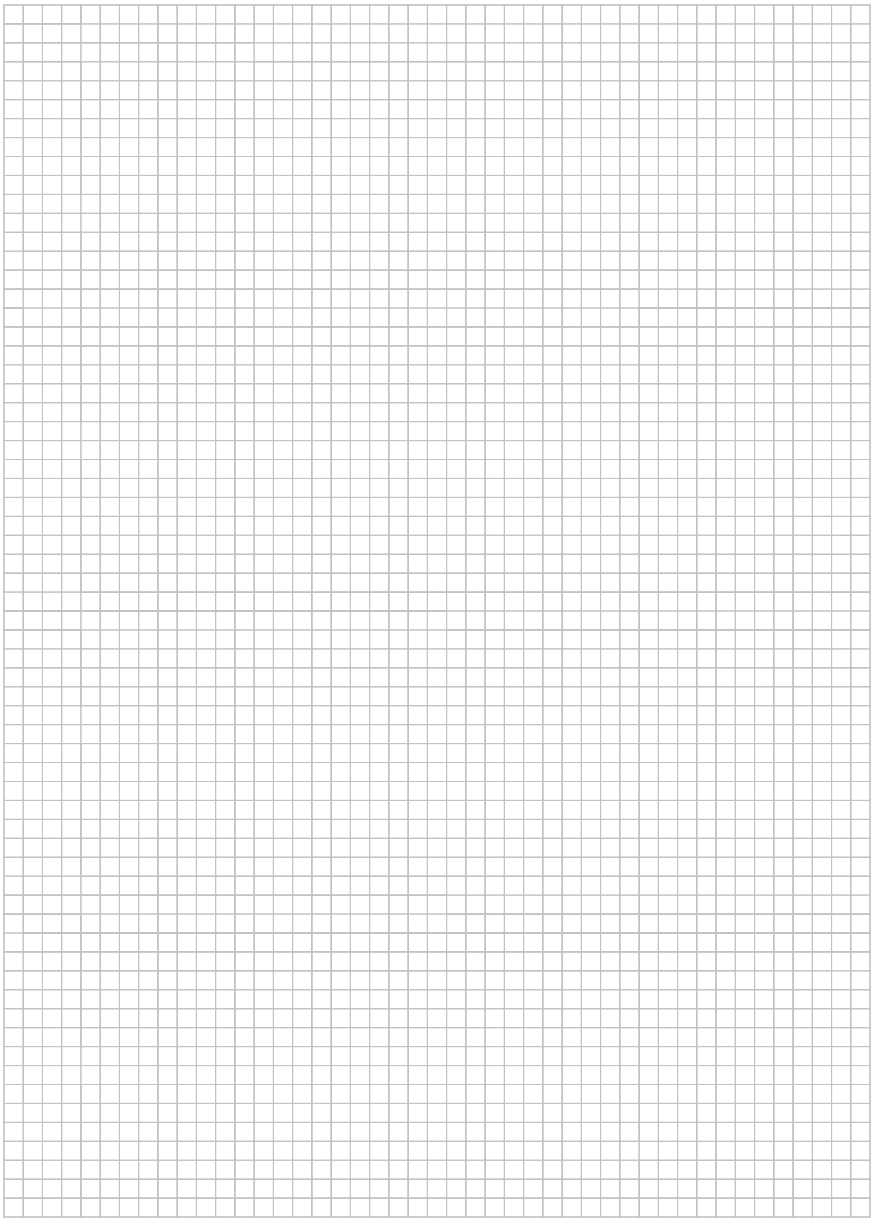

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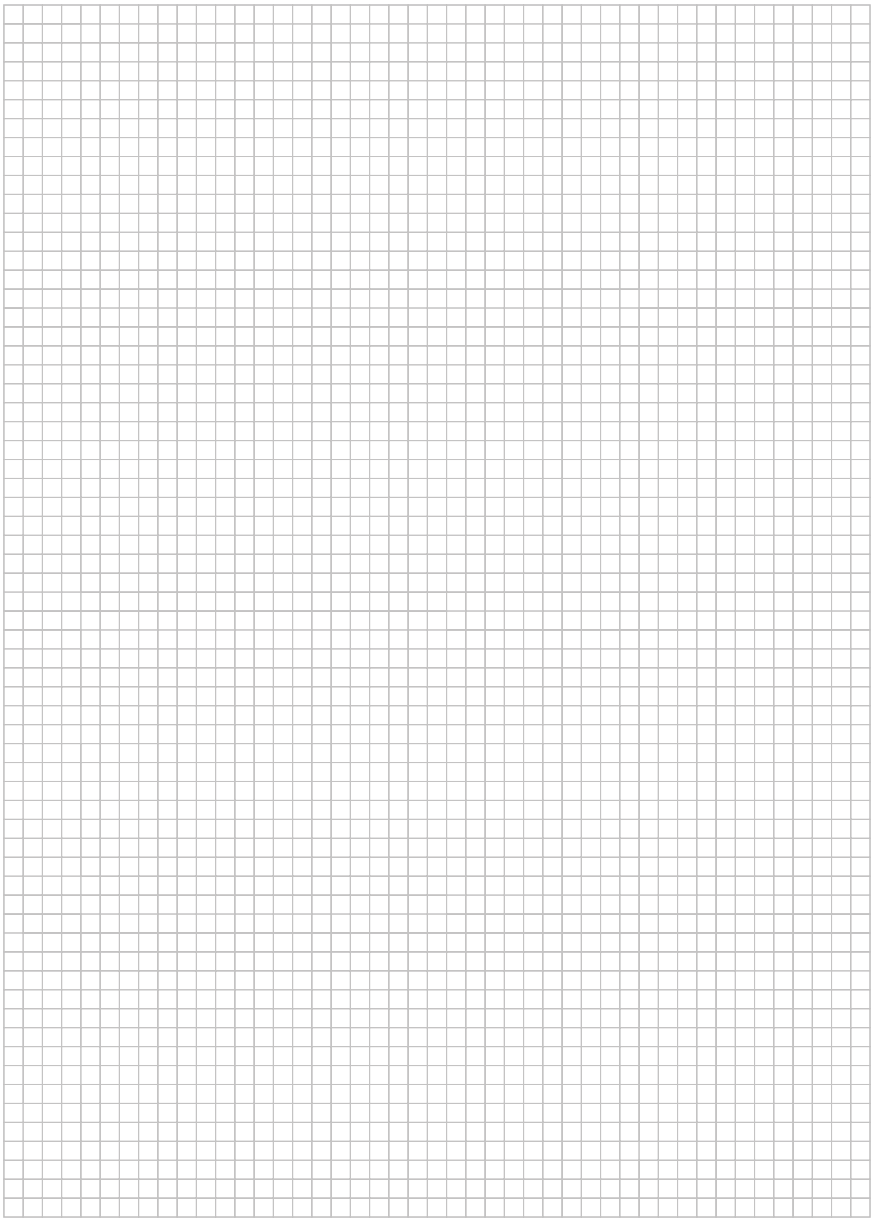

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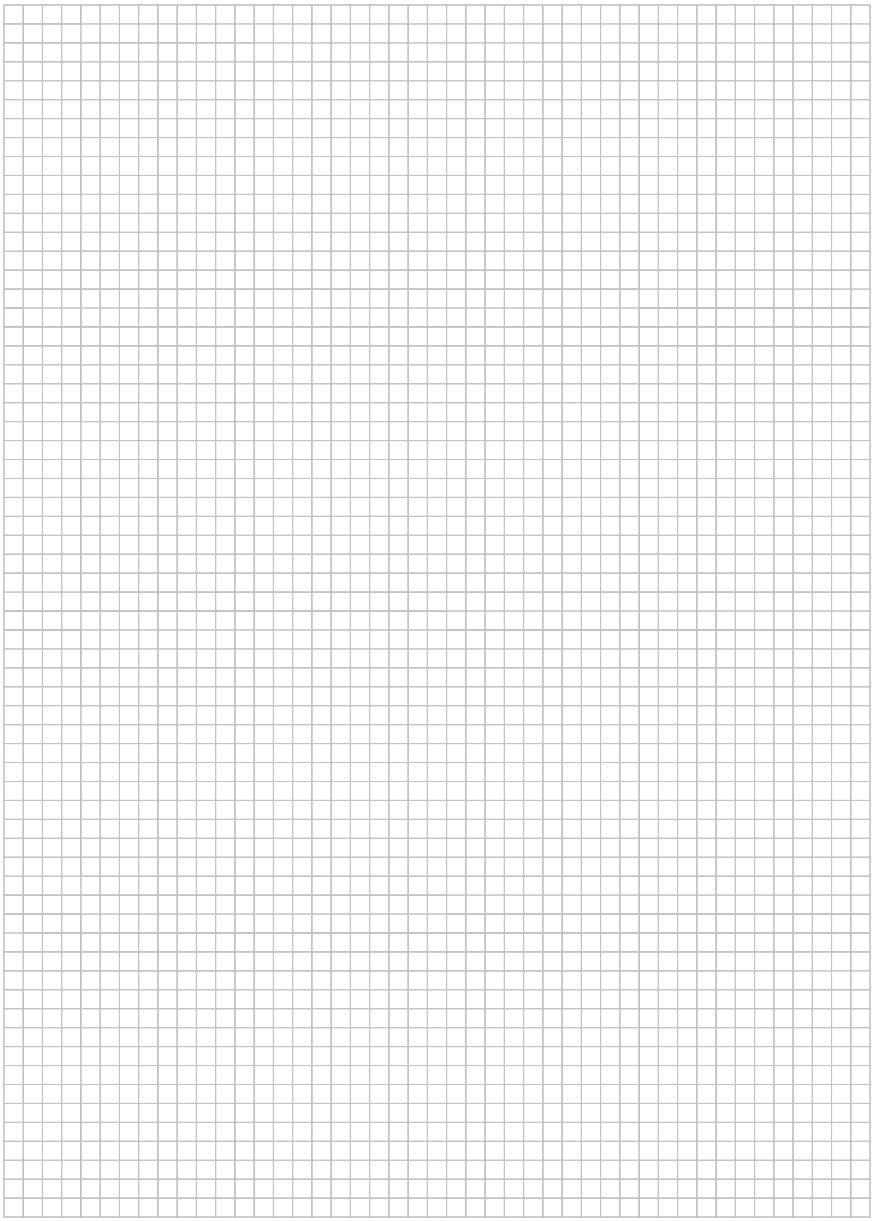

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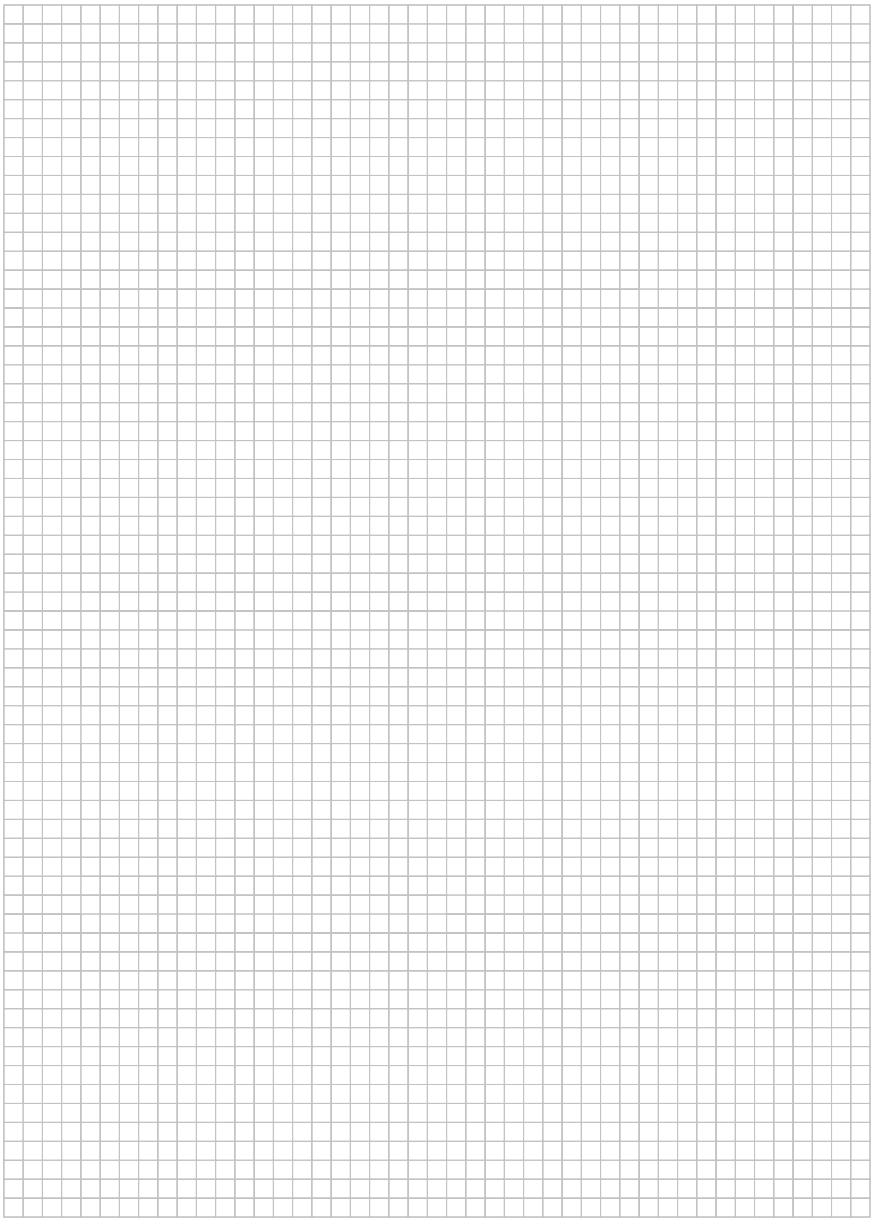

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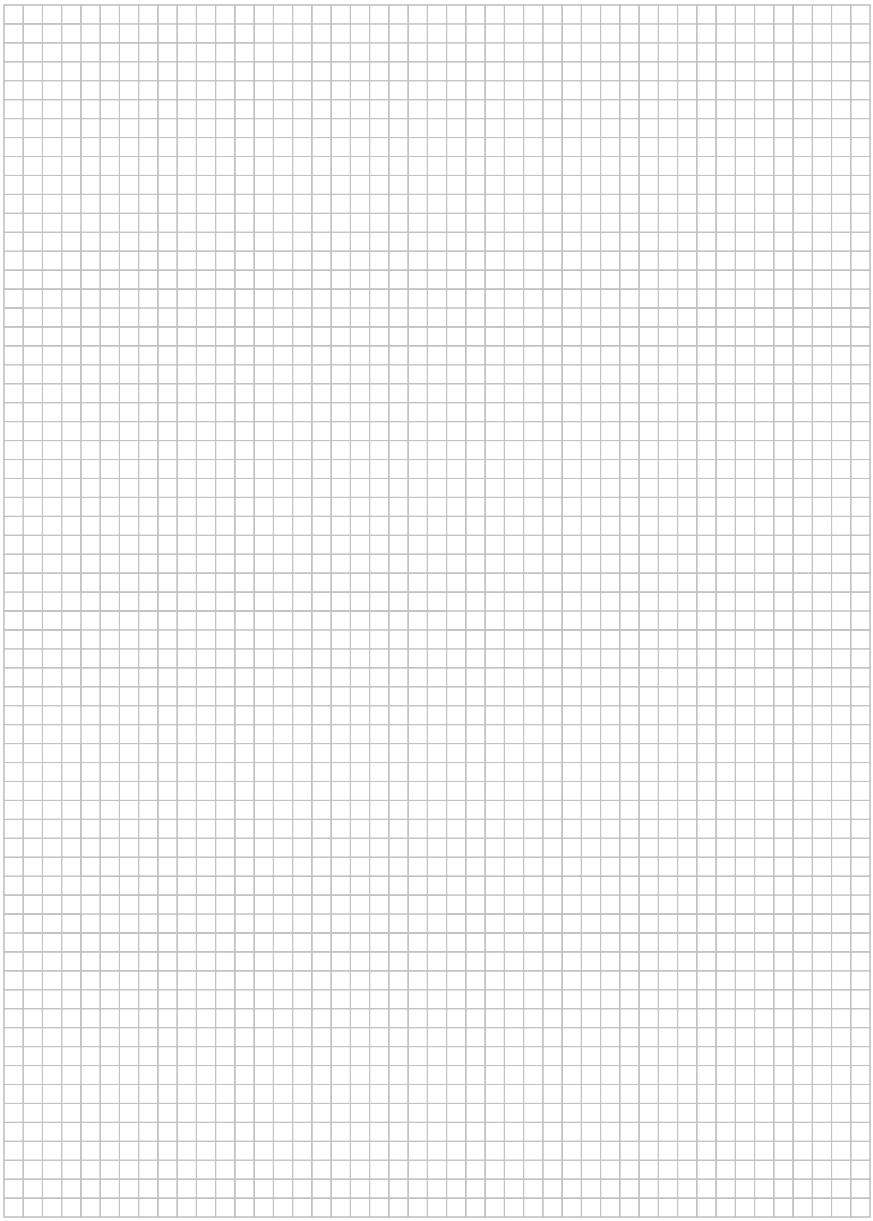

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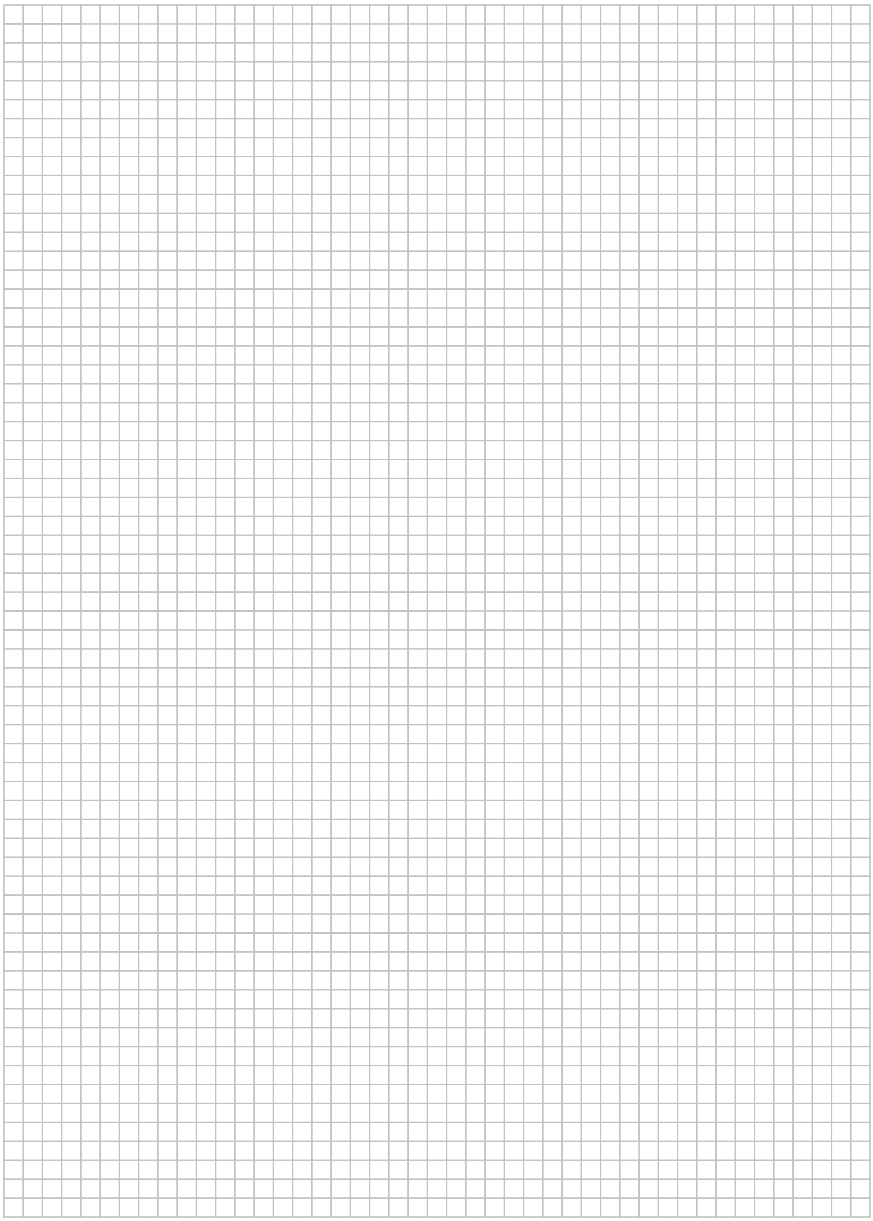

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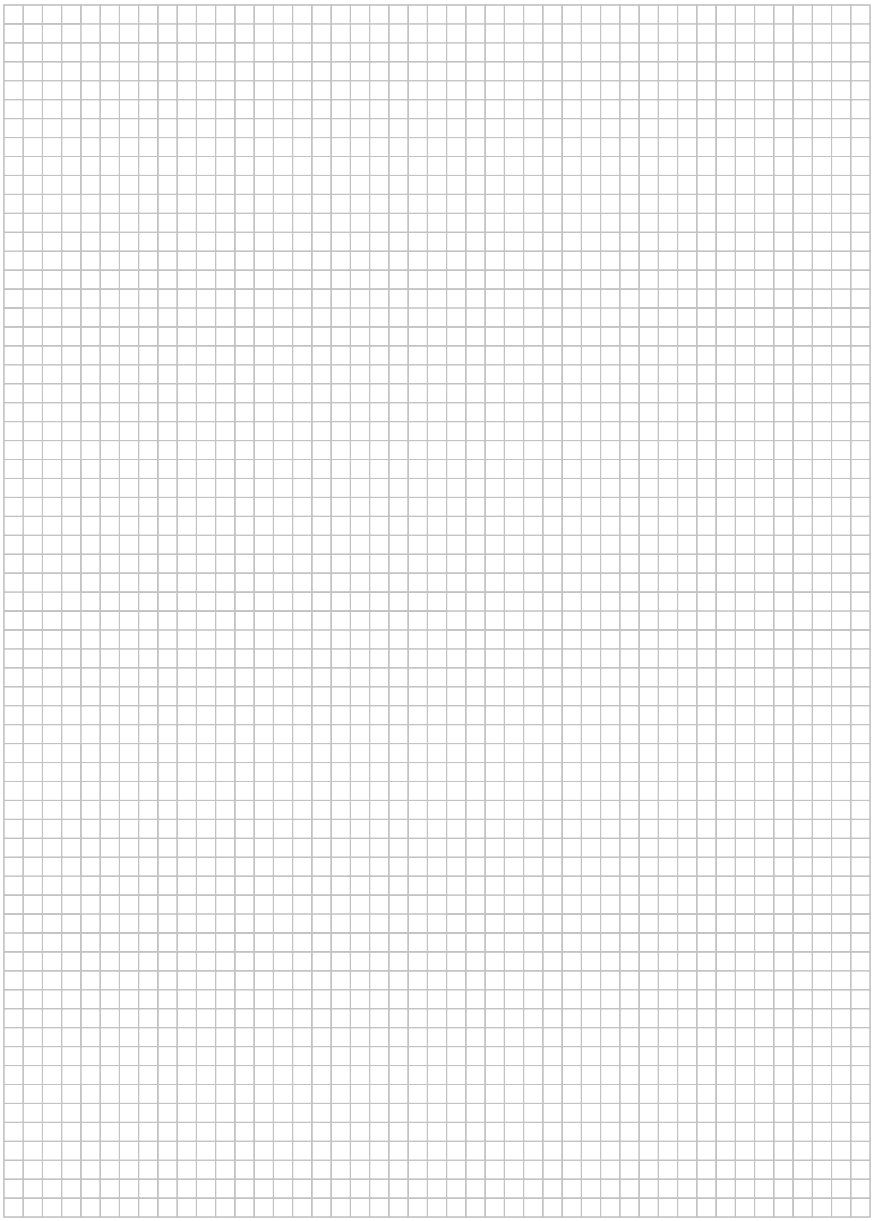

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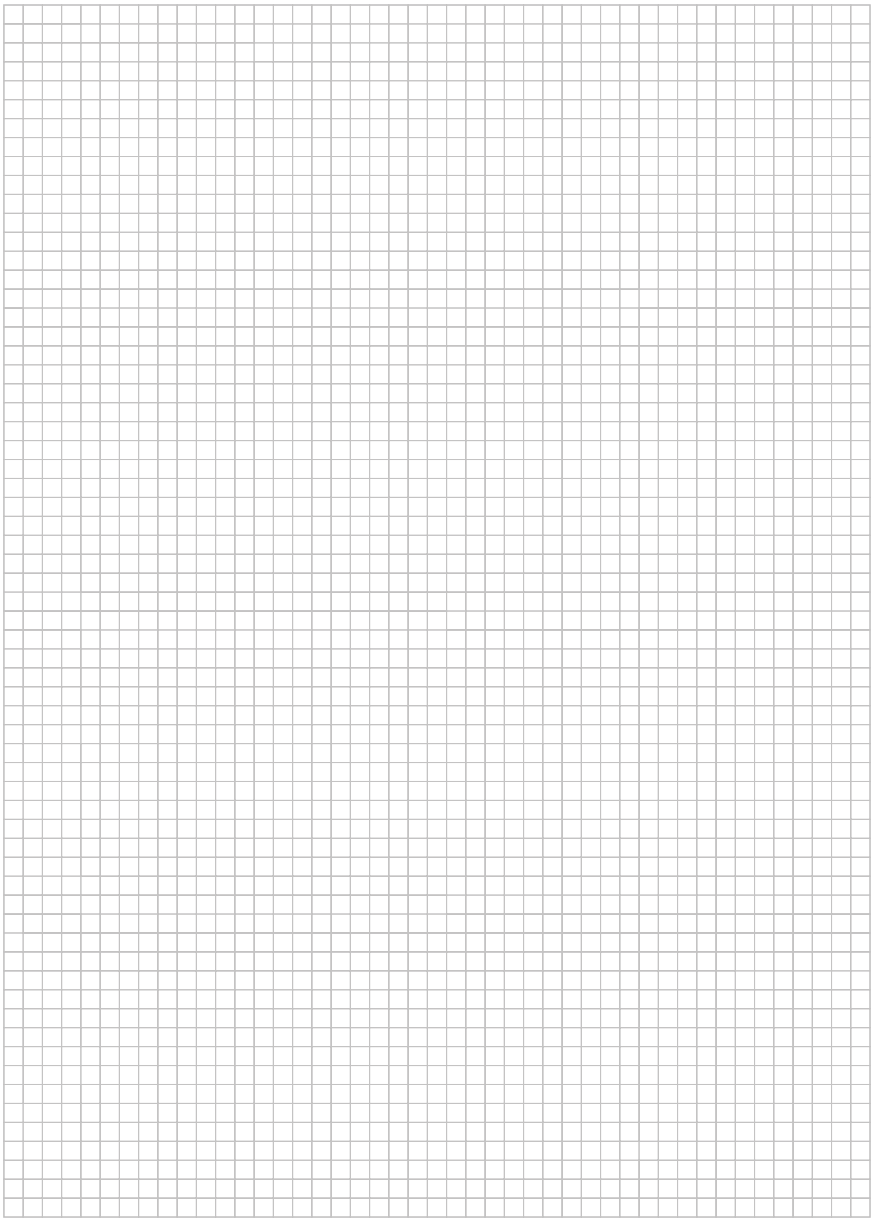

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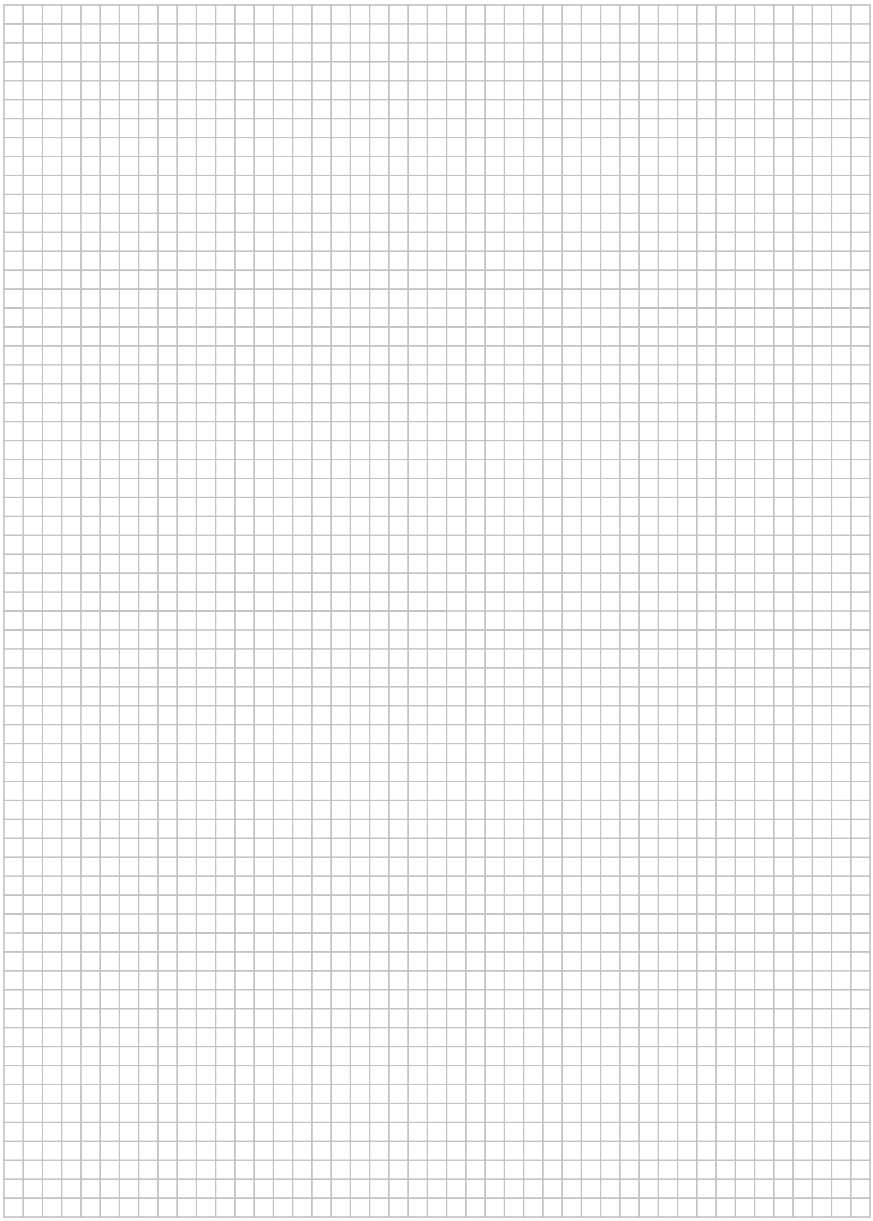

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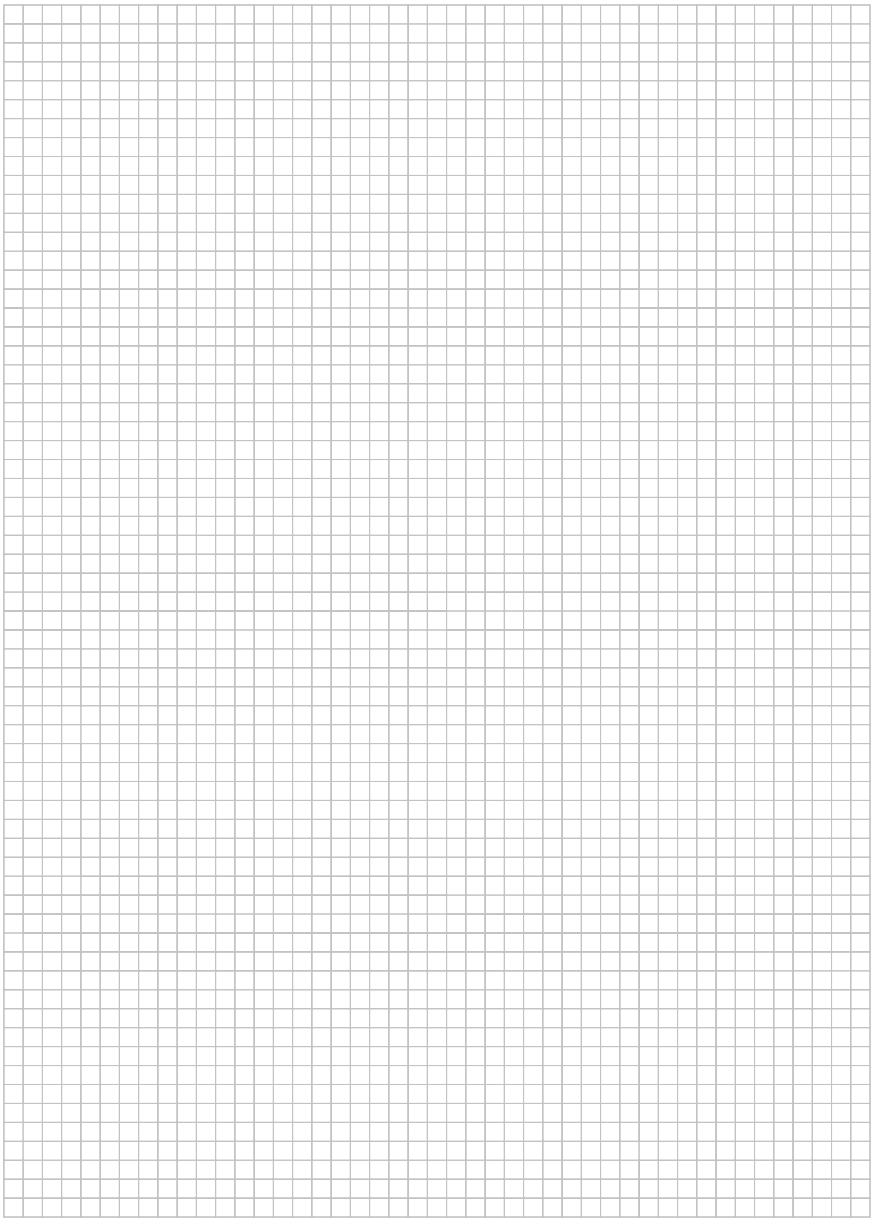

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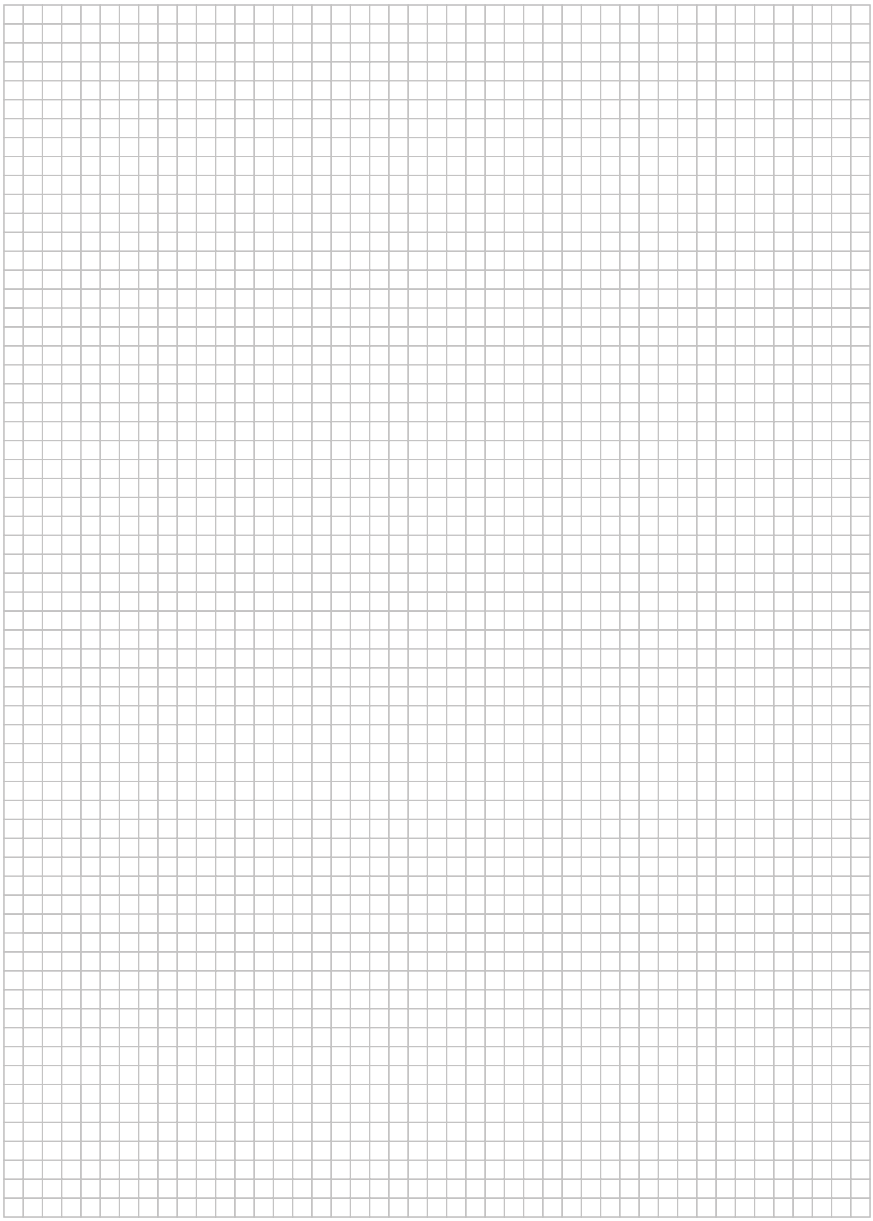

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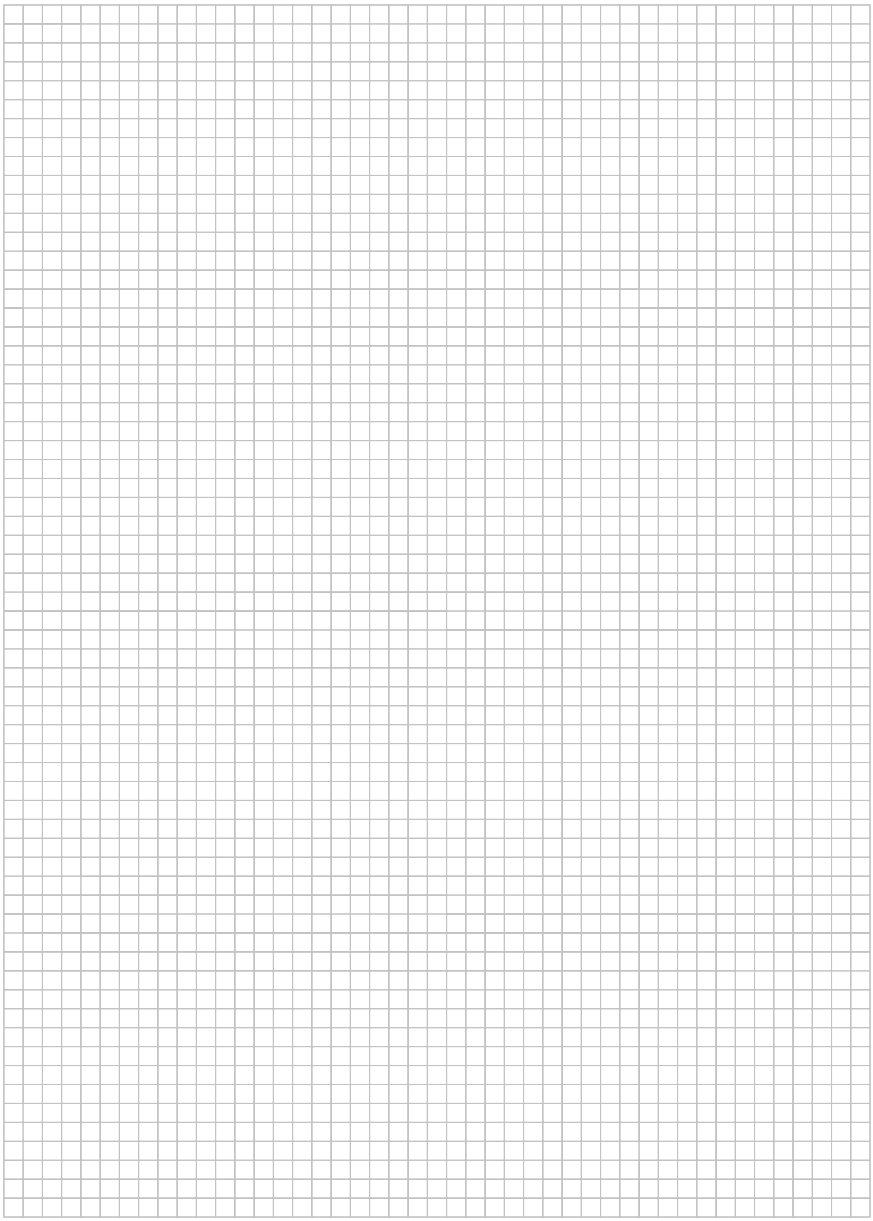

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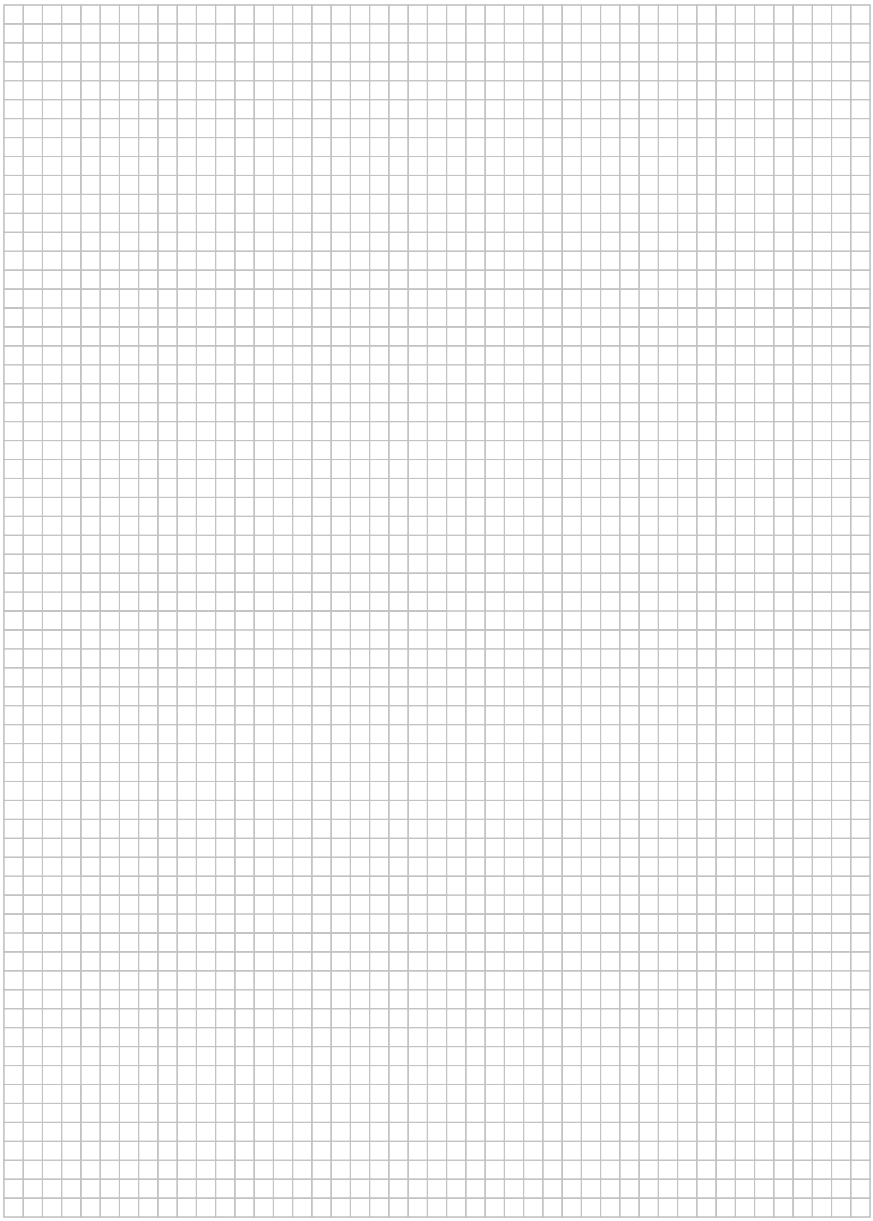

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takeaways

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refine

once you feel you have gathered enough information, it is time to refine

this process clarifies the answer in your head, reveals potential gaps, and makes it easier to retain and share your knowledge in the future

it has 5 steps

1. go through your takeaways and review all the information you have so far
2. write out the path from question-to-answer as a story of cause-and-effect
3. if there are gaps in the story, return to research, and fill them in
4. simplify the story so that a child could understand (short, no jargon, etc.)
5. if there are gaps in the story, return to research, and fill them in

> this part can be difficult and frustrating since it requires a lot of active thinking - take breaks when you need them but don't give up because you are almost there!

some questions to ask yourself while writing this story include

Ⓐ is this fact unbiased and from a reliable source?

Ⓑ is this fact important or is it just interesting?

Ⓒ how does this fact push my answer forward?

Ⓓ can i say this in my own words, or am i just quoting an idea i don't get?

Ⓔ does this fact rely on something the average person wouldn't know?

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summary

once you have refined your answer in a way that you can teach it to others it is time to finish this process by recording

1. what you learned
2. what surprised you
3. what you want your future self to know
4. where do you want to know next

you did it – asking questions and finding answers isn't easy but you did it and i, a notebook that you paid money for, am proud of you

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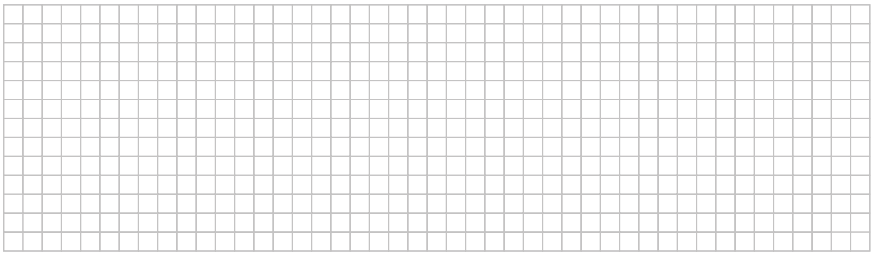
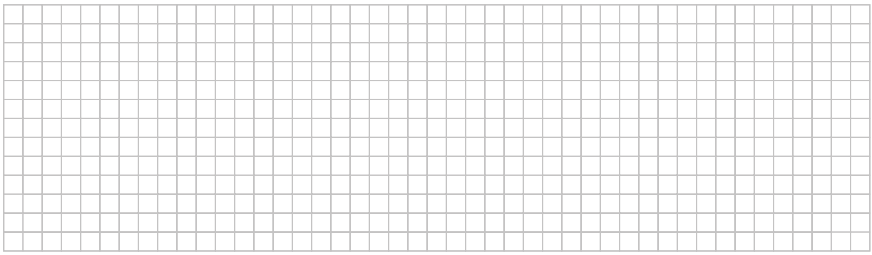
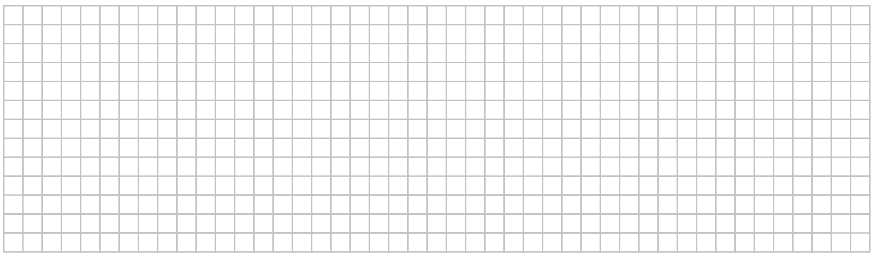
what did you learn



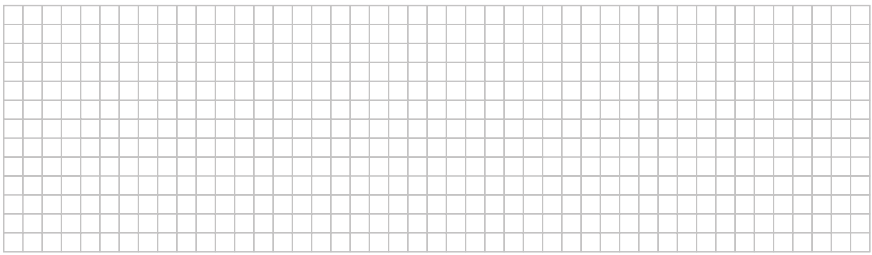
what surprised you



what do you want your future self to know



what do you want to know next



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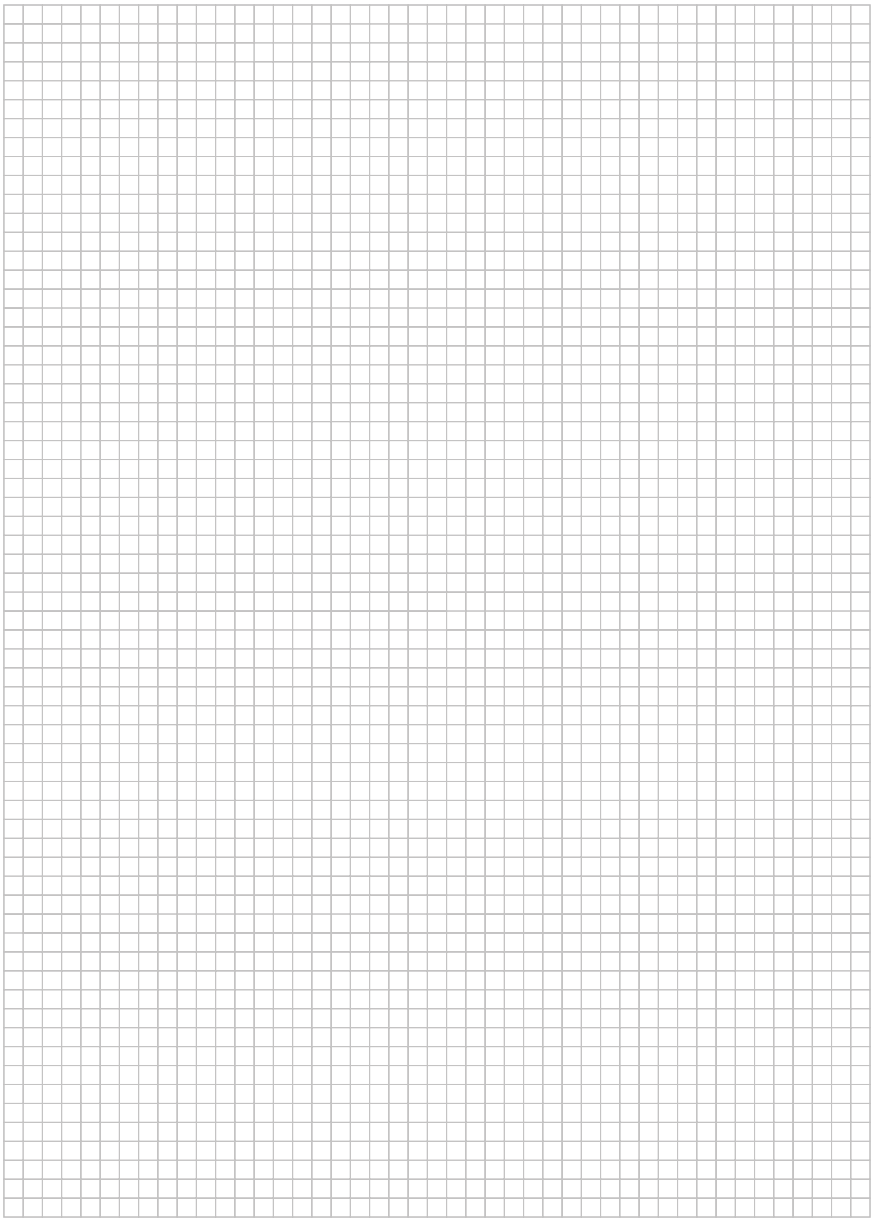

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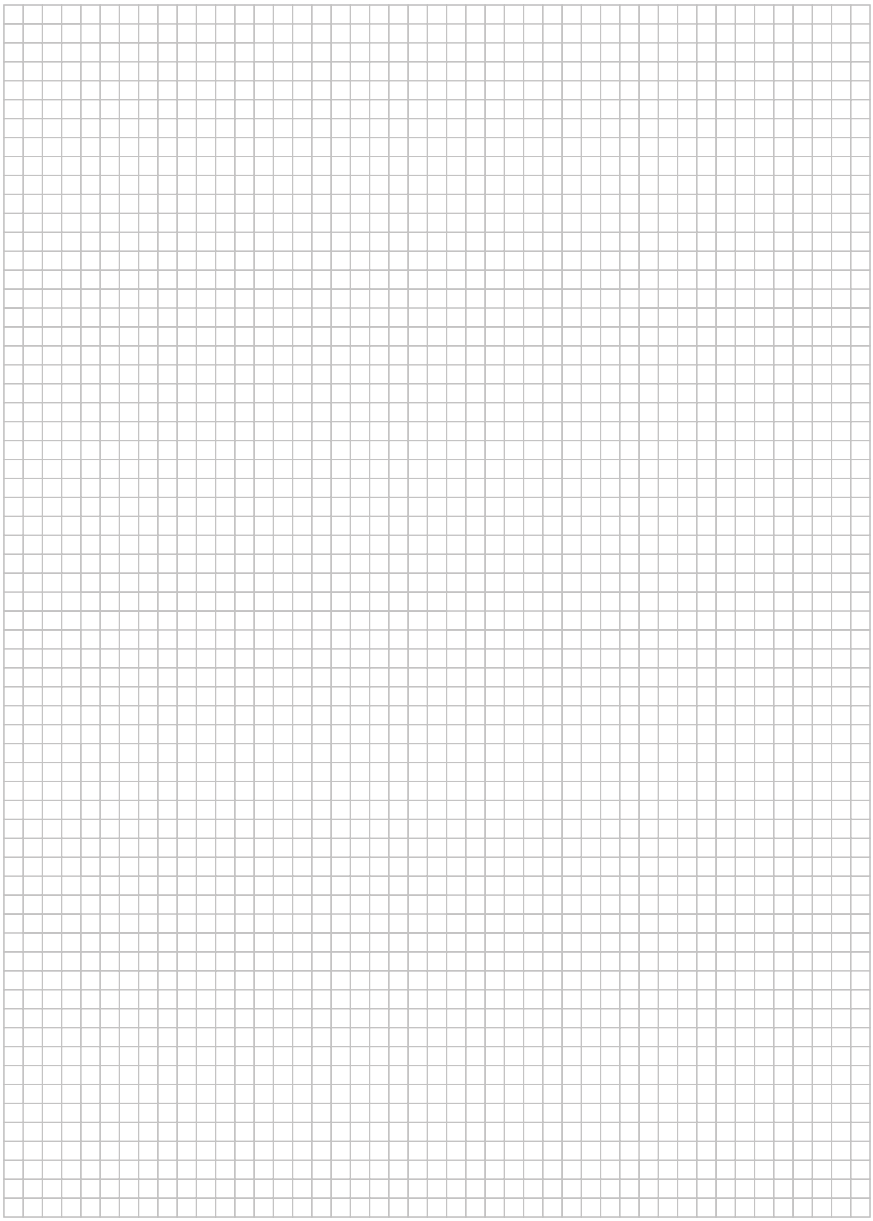

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