

READING PASSAGE 3

You should spend about 20 minutes on **Questions 27-40**, which are based on Reading Passage 3 below.

Star Performers

*Most organisations are looking for talent. But what if they've got it wrong,
asks Jeffrey Pfeffer*

- A** One widely held assumption about talent is that it is a reasonably fixed characteristic and it is therefore the job of organisations to identify, recruit and retain star performers. This belief affects the way people are managed in the workplace. Most recruitment decisions are influenced by the skills and abilities of an individual rather than their aptitude and attitude. In terms of career development, organisations invest in staff who have been selected to reach higher-level positions, while ignoring front-line employees and people with less perceived potential. This idea, that talent is a fixed, identifiable characteristic – and that those firms with the best people do the best – is both flawed and harmful to people and organisations. There is a lot of evidence on this point, and it is useful to highlight some of the most pertinent arguments.
- B** First, are there stars? There is no question that in every field, from sports to computer programming to music, there are people who are better than the rest. As psychologist Dean Keith Simonton, who has spent his career studying greatness, has said, 'Wherever you look, the same story can be told. Identify the ten per cent who have achieved the most in a certain endeavour. Count the accomplishments they have to their credit. Now tally the accomplishments of the remaining 90 per cent. The first tally will equal or surpass the second.' For instance, in music, 16 individuals have produced about 50 per cent of the Western classical music that is performed and recorded today, while another 235 composers have produced the remaining half. The more interesting questions concern not the existence of stars, but whether these stars can be reliably identified and, even more importantly, whether their talent is a fixed aspect or can be altered.
- C** Identifying the best people is tricky. Quality of performance changes over time and this is true whether we are talking about professors or footballers. If performance naturally varies, any measurement taken at a single point in time, such as when someone is being hired, will have error and imprecision. Therefore, single assessments of talent are likely to contain mistakes in their categorisation of people. Also, judgements about performance and ability depend on the standards used to judge what is good and bad. It should surprise no-one that for Bach to be considered a great musician, standards of music needed to change to embrace the qualities that his compositions possessed. Similarly, artists and art come in and out of fashion, which means that what is genius depends not only on a person's ability, but on the prevailing standards used to evaluate output.

- D** Finally, it is difficult to evaluate people and their abilities with precision. In the domain of work, research shows that the best predictors of job performance tend to be measures of intelligence. But even these measures correlate only loosely with performance, which means that more than 80 per cent of the variation in performance is unexplained by even the best predictors. Even in the sports arena, where one would think natural ability would be readily assessed because sports teams spend lots of resources on identifying talent, mistakes get made. Basketball star Michael Jordan was dropped by his high-school basketball coach and a number of top American football quarterbacks were available early in their careers because they were not considered good enough by various teams.
- E** This leads on to the next question: is talent born or made? Should organisations assume that almost anyone can become a star performer, which implies that there ought to be a greater emphasis on motivation and development, or do they just figure out who is good and who isn't? Here the evidence is clear: talent is at least as much 'created' as inherent and, more importantly, the customary way companies think about identifying talent almost certainly works to destroy a lot of untapped potential. Decades of research by K. Anders Ericsson, professor of psychology at Florida State University, show that exceptional performance doesn't happen without around ten years of nearly daily, deliberate practice for about four hours a day, by people who, with the assistance of their coaches, have access to the best techniques. Once achieved, exceptional performance can't be maintained without relentless effort. So performance may be as much a consequence of training as it is of innate ability, which suggests that performance can be altered by how people are managed.
- F** Further research by Stanford psychology professor Carol Dweck shows that the tendency of organisations to see performance results as an opportunity for an 'assessment' of ability, results in lower performance and poor motivation. Dweck identified two sets of goals that people bring to a performance context: 'performance goals, where the purpose is to validate one's ability or avoid demonstrating a lack of ability, and learning goals, where the aim is to acquire new knowledge and skills'. People with performance goals have been shown to be more prone to helpless behaviour and debilitation after a setback, while people with learning goals strive for higher performance. The implications for managing people and talent are clear. Seeing talent as fixed and job performance as a way of classifying people creates a self-fulfilling prophecy in which ability and intelligence do become fixed. By contrast, seeing ability as malleable leads to a different sort of self-fulfilling prophecy, in which individuals and their employers may invest in ways to enhance performance.

Questions 27–32

Reading Passage 3 has six paragraphs, **A–F**.

Which paragraph contains the following information?

Write the correct letter, **A–F**, in boxes 27–32 on your answer sheet.

NB You may use any letter more than once.

- 27 disagreement with the view that employing talented people enables companies to achieve top performance
- 28 a description of what individuals have to do on a regular basis to improve their performance
- 29 the evidence that exceptional talent exists in all areas of life
- 30 how different ways of evaluating achievement at work can cause different reactions in employees
- 31 the belief that the time when an assessment is carried out affects its accuracy
- 32 the extent to which different talented individuals have contributed to their particular area of achievement

Questions 33–35

Answer the questions below.

Choose **NO MORE THAN TWO WORDS AND/OR A NUMBER** from the passage for each answer.

Write your answers in boxes 33–35 on your answer sheet.

- 33 How many Western classical composers are identified as exceptionally talented?
- 34 Which composer initially received little recognition for his work?
- 35 Who can help improve the performance of people practising daily?

Questions 36–40

Do the following statements agree with the information given in Reading Passage 3?

In boxes 36–40 on your answer sheet, write

TRUE	<i>if the statement agrees with the information</i>
FALSE	<i>if the statement contradicts the information</i>
NOT GIVEN	<i>if there is no information on this</i>

- 36 Companies usually hire people on the basis of their character.
- 37 There are some areas of sport that have a greater proportion of talent than others.
- 38 Measures of intelligence accurately predict performance at work.
- 39 There are cases in which talented sportspeople have been overlooked.
- 40 Newly formed organisations have the most highly motivated staff.

27–32 段落匹配

题号	答案	精确定位 (段落/句)	解释
27	A	A段末: “ <i>this idea, that talent is a fixed, identifiable characteristic – and that those firms with the best people do the best – is both flawed and harmful.</i> ”	明确反对“雇最有才的人→公司表现最佳”的观点。
28	E	E段中部: “ <i>exceptional performance doesn’t happen without around ten years of nearly daily, deliberate practice for about four hours a day, by people who, with the assistance of their coaches, have access to the best techniques.</i> ”	说明个人需要长期、几乎每天的刻意练习 (还有教练协助) 来提升表现。
29	B	B段开头: “ <i>in every field, from sports to computer programing to music, there are people who are better than the rest.</i> ”	证明各领域都存在杰出人才 (star/exceptional talent)。
30	F	F段开头与中部: “ <i>see performance results as an opportunity for an ‘assessment’... results in lower performance and poor motivation... ‘performance goals’... more prone to helpless behaviour... ‘learning goals’... strive for higher performance.</i> ”	不同的评估/目标框架 (绩效目标 vs 学习目标) → 员工动机与反应不同。
31	C	C段前半: “ <i>if performance naturally varies, any measurement taken at a single point in time... will have error and imprecision.</i> ”	说明评估的时间点会影响准确性 (单次测量易出错)。
32	B	B段例子: “ <i>in music, 16 individuals have produced about 50 per cent... while another 235 composers have produced the remaining half.</i> ”	给出不同个体贡献占比 (16人占一半, 235人占一半), 正是“贡献程度”的量化。

33–35 简答题 (≤2词/数字)

题号	答案	精确定位	解释
33	16	B段: “ <i>16 individuals have produced about 50 per cent of the Western classical music...</i> ”	问“有多少位被认定为特别有才华的西方古典作曲家?” 此处的16人就是那批“star”作曲家。填数字 16 。
34	Bach	C段后半: “ <i>for Bach to be considered a great musician, standards of music needed to change...</i> ”	说明巴赫需要后来评价标准改变才被认为伟大 ⇒ 早期认可度低。
35	coaches	E段: “ <i>with the assistance of their coaches, have access to the best techniques.</i> ”	问“谁能帮助每天练习的人提高表现?” — coaches (教练)。

36–40 判断题 (T/F/NG)

题号	答案	定位	解释
36	FALSE	A段中部: “ <i>Most recruitment decisions are influenced by the skills and abilities... rather than their aptitude and attitude.</i> ”	题干说“公司通常依据品格招聘”; 原文说主要依据技能与能力, 而非态度/资质 ⇒ 相矛盾。
37	NOT GIVEN	—	文中没有说“某些体育领域比其他领域有更高比例的天赋”。只说各领域都有明星, 及识别失误的例子。
38	FALSE	D段前半: “ <i>best predictors... measures of intelligence. But even these correlate only loosely with performance... more than 80% of the variation... unexplained.</i> ”	题干称智力测量准确预测工作表现; 原文说相关性很弱 ⇒ 错误。
39	TRUE	D段后半: 迈克尔·乔丹被高中教练淘汰; 多位四分卫早期不被看好。	明确存在被忽视的天才运动员 ⇒ 正确。
40	NOT GIVEN	—	文章未谈“新成立组织员工具有最高动机”。动机讨论集中在Dweck的目标框架, 而非公司成立时间。