

STUDENT TEST BOOKLET

READING SECTION (40 questions)

Passage 1

The seismic shift in the global work landscape, accelerated by recent world events, has firmly embedded remote work as a cornerstone of modern employment. This transition, often referred to as the ‘great decentralization,’ has been lauded for its potential to enhance work-life balance and offer unprecedented flexibility. Employees, freed from the geographical constraints of a central office, can design their workdays around personal commitments, leading to increased job satisfaction and autonomy. A 2023 study by Stanford University revealed that remote workers report, on average, a 13% increase in productivity and take fewer sick days. This heightened efficiency is often attributed to a reduction in workplace distractions and the elimination of the daily commute, which can be a significant source of stress and lost time for many. Furthermore, the ability to work from anywhere has opened up a global talent pool for companies, allowing them to hire the best candidates regardless of their location. This not only diversifies the workforce but also fosters a more inclusive and competitive business environment.

However, the widespread adoption of remote work is not without its challenges. A primary concern is the erosion of a clear boundary between professional and personal life. The ‘always-on’ culture, where employees feel pressured to be constantly available, can lead to burnout and a decline in mental well-being. The absence of informal, face-to-face interactions can also result in feelings of isolation and a weakened sense of belonging to a team. These ‘water cooler’ moments, often dismissed as trivial, are crucial for building rapport and fostering a collaborative spirit. Moreover, not all employees have access to a suitable home office environment. Distractions from family members, inadequate workspace, and unreliable internet connectivity can all hinder productivity and create a stressful work atmosphere. The long-term career implications of remote work also remain a subject of debate. Some studies suggest that remote employees may be overlooked for promotions and professional development opportunities due to a lack of visibility and direct interaction with senior management.

Another significant hurdle is the issue of cybersecurity. With employees accessing sensitive company data from personal networks, the risk of security breaches and cyberattacks increases substantially. Companies must invest heavily in robust security protocols and provide comprehensive training to mitigate these risks. Furthermore, the transition to a remote-first model requires a fundamental shift in management style. Traditional, top-down supervision is no longer effective. Instead, managers must learn to lead with trust, focusing on outcomes rather than hours worked. This requires a new set of skills, including effective communication, empathy, and the ability to foster a positive and engaging virtual team culture. As we navigate this new era of work, it is clear that a one-size-fits-all approach is unlikely to succeed. The future of work will likely involve a hybrid model, combining the benefits of both remote and in-office work to create a more flexible, productive, and people-centric work environment.

Questions 1-13

Questions 1-6: True/False/Not Given

Do the following statements agree with the information given in the reading passage?

In boxes 1-6 on your answer sheet, write

- **TRUE** if the statement agrees with the information
 - **FALSE** if the statement contradicts the information
 - **NOT GIVEN** if there is no information on this
1. The shift to remote work has been a gradual process over the last decade.
 2. Remote workers are generally more productive and take less time off for illness.
 3. Companies that embrace remote work have access to a more diverse range of potential employees.
 4. Remote workers are more likely to be promoted than their office-based colleagues.
 5. A major disadvantage of remote work is the increased risk of cyberattacks.
 6. The passage suggests that all companies will eventually adopt a fully remote work model.

Questions 7-10: Multiple Choice

Choose the correct letter, A, B, C, or D.

Write the correct letter in boxes 7-10 on your answer sheet.

1. According to the passage, what is a primary benefit of remote work for employees? A. Higher salaries B. More opportunities for promotion C. Greater flexibility and autonomy D. Increased social interaction with colleagues
2. What is a significant challenge associated with remote work? A. A decrease in employee productivity B. The blurring of lines between work and personal life C. A lack of available technology D. An increase in commuting time
3. The passage suggests that ‘water cooler’ moments are important for: A. Wasting time during the workday B. Building relationships and a sense of team C. Discussing confidential company information D. Complaining about management
4. What is required for managers to effectively lead a remote team? A. A focus on the number of hours worked B. A traditional, top-down approach C. Trust, empathy, and strong communication skills D. A deep understanding of cybersecurity

Questions 11-13: Summary Completion

Complete the summary below.

*Choose **NO MORE THAN TWO WORDS** from the passage for each answer.*

Write your answers in boxes 11-13 on your answer sheet.

While remote work offers numerous advantages, such as increased productivity and access to a global talent pool, it also presents several challenges. One major issue is the potential for 11 _____ and a decline in mental well-being due to an ‘always-on’ culture. Another concern is the feeling of 12 _____ that can result from a lack of face-to-face interaction. Finally, companies must address the significant 13 _____ risks associated with employees working from home.

Passage 2

The Virtual Water Cooler: Fostering Connection in a Remote World

A. The informal interactions that occur in a traditional office setting, often referred to as ‘water cooler moments,’ have long been recognized as vital for building a strong company culture. These spontaneous conversations, whether in the breakroom, hallway, or over a shared lunch, are the threads that weave together the social fabric of an organization. They provide a platform for employees to connect on a personal level, share ideas, and build the trust and rapport that are essential for effective collaboration. In a remote work environment, however, these organic opportunities for connection are conspicuously absent, and companies must be intentional about creating virtual spaces that replicate the camaraderie of the physical office.

B. The challenge lies in recreating the serendipity of these unplanned encounters. While scheduled video conferences and team meetings are essential for communication and project management, they rarely allow for the kind of informal chatter that builds personal relationships. To address this, many companies are experimenting with a variety of virtual team-building activities. These range from virtual coffee breaks and happy hours to online games and themed social events. The goal is to create a relaxed and informal atmosphere where employees can interact in a way that is not strictly work-related.

C. Another popular strategy is the implementation of dedicated communication channels for non-work-related discussions. These ‘virtual water coolers,’ often hosted on platforms like Slack or Microsoft Teams, provide a space for employees to share personal news, hobbies, and interests. They can also be used to celebrate birthdays, work anniversaries, and other milestones, helping to foster a sense of community and shared identity. However, the success of these channels depends heavily on employee participation and a supportive company culture that encourages and values non-work-related interaction.

D. Mentorship and buddy programs have also proven to be effective in combating the isolation that can accompany remote work. Pairing new hires with experienced colleagues, or connecting employees from different departments, can help to facilitate the transfer of knowledge and create a sense of belonging. These structured relationships can be particularly beneficial for junior employees, who may find it challenging to navigate the company culture and build a professional network in a remote setting.

E. Despite these efforts, some argue that virtual team-building can never fully replace the richness of in-person interaction. The subtle cues of body language, the energy of a shared physical space, and the spontaneity of a face-to-face conversation are all

elements that are difficult to replicate in a virtual environment. Critics also point out that virtual social events can feel forced or contrived, and may not appeal to all employees. The pressure to be ‘on’ for yet another video call can also contribute to screen fatigue and a sense of being overwhelmed.

F. Ultimately, the key to fostering connection in a remote world lies in a multi-faceted approach that combines technology, intentionality, and a deep understanding of employee needs. There is no one-size-fits-all solution, and what works for one company may not work for another. The most successful organizations will be those that are willing to experiment, listen to employee feedback, and adapt their strategies over time. By creating a virtual environment that is both professionally and personally fulfilling, companies can ensure that their remote teams remain connected, engaged, and productive.

Questions 14-26

Questions 14-19: Matching Headings

The reading passage has six paragraphs, A-F.

Choose the correct heading for each paragraph from the list of headings below.

Write the correct number, i-viii, in boxes 14-19 on your answer sheet.

List of Headings

- i. The limitations of virtual team-building
- ii. The importance of informal communication in the workplace
- iii. The role of technology in fostering connection
- iv. Strategies for creating virtual social spaces
- v. The benefits of in-person interaction
- vi. The importance of a tailored approach
- vii. The challenges of remote work for new employees
- viii. The role of leadership in building a remote culture

1. Paragraph A
2. Paragraph B
3. Paragraph C
4. Paragraph D
5. Paragraph E
6. Paragraph F

Questions 20-23: Multiple Choice

Choose the correct letter, A, B, C, or D.

Write the correct letter in boxes 20-23 on your answer sheet.

1. The passage suggests that ‘water cooler moments’ are: A. A waste of company time B. Essential for building a strong company culture C. A source of conflict and gossip D. Only possible in a physical office
2. What is a key challenge in a remote work environment? A. A lack of formal communication channels B. The difficulty of managing projects effectively C. The absence of spontaneous, informal interactions D. The high cost of virtual team-building activities
3. According to the passage, what is a potential drawback of virtual social events? A. They are not effective at building relationships. B. They can feel forced and contribute to screen fatigue. C. They are only popular with younger employees. D. They are difficult to organize and manage.
4. The passage concludes that the most successful organizations will: A. Return to a fully in-office work model B. Adopt a one-size-fits-all approach to remote work C. Experiment with different strategies and listen to employee feedback D. Focus solely on technology to foster connection

Questions 24-26: Sentence Completion

Complete the sentences below.

*Choose **NO MORE THAN THREE WORDS** from the passage for each answer.*

Write your answers in boxes 24-26 on your answer sheet.

1. The success of virtual communication channels depends on employee participation and a _____.
2. Mentorship programs can be particularly helpful for _____ who are new to a company.
3. A multi-faceted approach to fostering connection should combine technology, intentionality, and an understanding of _____.

Passage 3

The Ripple Effect: How Remote Work is Reshaping Our Cities

The mass exodus from traditional office spaces, spurred by the rise of remote work, is sending ripples through the urban landscape, forcing a fundamental rethinking of the very nature of our cities. For decades, the daily commute has been the lifeblood of urban economies, supporting a complex ecosystem of businesses, from coffee shops and restaurants to public transportation and retail stores. As this daily influx of commuters dwindles, these businesses are facing an existential crisis. The once-bustling central business districts of major metropolitan areas are now grappling with vacant office buildings and a sharp decline in foot traffic, leading to significant economic and social consequences.

One of the most immediate impacts has been on the commercial real estate market. With companies downsizing their office footprints or abandoning them altogether, the demand for office space has plummeted. This has led to a surge in vacancy rates and a corresponding drop in rental prices, creating a challenging environment for property owners and developers. The long-term implications of this trend are still unfolding, but some experts predict a wave of office-to-residential conversions, as cities seek to repurpose these empty spaces and address the growing demand for affordable housing.

However, the impact of remote work extends far beyond the commercial real estate sector. The decline in commuters has also had a profound effect on public transportation systems. With fewer people relying on buses, trains, and subways to get to work, transit agencies are facing a significant loss of revenue. This could lead to service cuts and fare increases, disproportionately affecting low-income workers who may not have the option to work from home. The future of urban mobility is now a subject of intense debate, with cities exploring new models that are less reliant on the traditional 9-to-5 commute.

The rise of remote work is also reshaping the residential landscape. As employees are no longer tethered to a central office, they are increasingly choosing to live in suburban and rural areas, where they can enjoy a lower cost of living and a better quality of life. This trend, often referred to as 'de-urbanization,' has the potential to revitalize smaller towns and communities, but it also raises concerns about urban sprawl and the environmental impact of increased car dependency. The long-term social and cultural consequences of this demographic shift are also a matter of speculation. Will our cities become less diverse and dynamic as they lose a portion of their professional workforce?

Despite these challenges, the rise of remote work also presents a unique opportunity to create more livable, sustainable, and equitable cities. By reducing our reliance on the daily commute, we can decrease traffic congestion, improve air quality, and reduce our carbon footprint. The decentralization of work also has the potential to create a more distributed and resilient economy, with a network of smaller, more vibrant urban centers. The cities that thrive in this new era will be those that are able to adapt and innovate, embracing a more flexible and people-centric approach to urban planning and design.

Questions 27-40

Questions 27-32: Yes/No/Not Given

Do the following statements agree with the claims of the writer in the reading passage?

In boxes 27-32 on your answer sheet, write

- **YES** if the statement agrees with the claims of the writer
 - **NO** if the statement contradicts the claims of the writer
 - **NOT GIVEN** if it is impossible to say what the writer thinks about this
1. The writer believes that the daily commute is essential for a thriving urban economy.
 2. The writer claims that the demand for office space has decreased significantly.
 3. The writer argues that converting office buildings to residential properties is the only solution to the vacancy problem.
 4. The writer suggests that the decline in public transportation usage will primarily affect high-income workers.
 5. The writer believes that the trend of ‘de-urbanization’ will have a negative impact on the environment.
 6. The writer is optimistic about the potential for cities to become more sustainable and equitable.

Questions 33-36: Multiple Choice

Choose the correct letter, A, B, C, or D.

Write the correct letter in boxes 33-36 on your answer sheet.

1. What is a major consequence of the decline in commuters for urban businesses?
A. An increase in profits B. A decrease in foot traffic and revenue C. A shift to online sales D. A greater demand for their services

2. According to the passage, what is a potential solution to the problem of vacant office buildings?
A. Demolishing the buildings B. Converting them into residential properties C. Offering them to businesses for free D. Turning them into parks and green spaces

3. The passage suggests that the rise of remote work could have a negative impact on:
A. The cost of living in suburban areas B. The quality of life in rural communities C. The diversity and dynamism of cities D. The availability of affordable housing

4. The passage concludes that the cities of the future will need to be:
A. More focused on attracting large corporations B. Less reliant on public transportation C. More adaptable and innovative in their approach to urban planning D. More resistant to the trend of remote work

Questions 37-40: Note Completion

Complete the notes below.

Choose **NO MORE THAN TWO WORDS** from the passage for each answer.

Write your answers in boxes 37-40 on your answer sheet.

The Impact of Remote Work on Cities

- **Economic Consequences:**
 - Decline in foot traffic for urban businesses
 - Plummeting demand for 37 _____
 - Loss of revenue for 38 _____ systems

- **Social and Environmental Consequences:**
 - Trend of ‘de-urbanization’ as people move to suburban and rural areas
 - Concerns about 39 _____ and increased car dependency
 - Opportunity to create more livable and 40 _____ cities

LISTENING SECTION (40 questions)

Section 1: Questions 1-10

Complete the form below.

*Write **ONE WORD AND/OR A NUMBER** for each answer.*

Remote Work Policy Inquiry

| | |
|---|---|
| Caller's Name: | Sarah 1 _____ |
| Company: | 2 _____ Solutions |
| Position applying for: | 3 _____ Manager |
| Questions about remote work: | |
| - Days per week in the office: | 4 _____ (maximum) |
| - Flexibility of working hours: | Core hours are 10am - 5 _____ pm |
| - Equipment provided: | Laptop, keyboard, and 6 _____ |
| - Internet allowance: | £7 _____ per month |
| - Opportunities for social interaction: | Weekly team 8 _____ and monthly social events |
| Next steps: | Send an email to 9 _____@techsolutions.com |
| Contact person: | John 10 _____ |

Section 2: Questions 11-20

Questions 11-15: Multiple Choice

Choose the correct letter, A, B, or C.

1. The main purpose of the talk is to: A. Announce the closure of the office B. Introduce the new hybrid work model C. Discuss the challenges of remote work

2. The new hybrid work model will be implemented on: A. The first of next month B. The fifteenth of next month C. The first of the following month

3. Employees will be expected to come to the office: A. One day a week B. Two days a week C. Three days a week

4. The company will provide a subsidy for: A. Childcare expenses B. Home office furniture C. Public transportation

5. The speaker emphasizes the importance of: A. Maintaining a strong company culture B. Increasing employee productivity C. Reducing operational costs

Questions 16-20: Matching

What is the main focus of each of the following workshops?

Choose your answers from the box and write the correct letter, A-F, next to questions 16-20.

| Workshops |

| | |
|--|-------|
| 16. Time Management in a Hybrid World | _____ |
| 17. Effective Virtual Communication | _____ |
| 18. Building a Resilient Team | _____ |
| 19. The Digital Toolkit | _____ |
| 20. Health and Wellness for Remote Workers | _____ |

| Focus |

| | |
|----|---|
| A. | Strategies for avoiding burnout |
| B. | Using new software and platforms |
| C. | Building trust and rapport in a virtual team |
| D. | The importance of regular exercise |
| E. | Techniques for prioritizing tasks and managing distractions |
| F. | Best practices for video conferencing and email |

Section 3: Questions 21-30

Questions 21-30: Multiple Choice

Choose the correct letter, A, B, or C.

1. The students are discussing the psychological effects of remote work for: A. A class presentation B. A research project C. A personal interest
2. According to their research, a major benefit of remote work is: A. Increased job satisfaction B. Higher salaries C. More opportunities for promotion
3. A significant drawback of remote work is: A. A lack of autonomy B. A feeling of isolation C. A decrease in productivity
4. The students agree that the ‘always-on’ culture can lead to: A. Increased stress and burnout B. A better work-life balance C. A stronger sense of team
5. They suggest that companies can help to mitigate the negative effects of remote work by: A. Encouraging employees to work longer hours B. Providing more opportunities for social interaction C. Monitoring employee activity more closely
6. The students disagree about the impact of remote work on: A. Employee well-being B. Company culture C. Career progression
7. They believe that the future of work is likely to be: A. Fully remote B. Fully in-office C. A hybrid model
8. The students plan to focus their research on: A. The impact of remote work on mental health B. The challenges of managing a remote team C. The economic consequences of remote work
9. They will collect their data through: A. Interviews and surveys B. Observations and case studies C. A review of existing literature
10. The students are most concerned about: A. The length of their research paper B. The difficulty of finding participants C. The reliability of their data

Section 4: Questions 31-40

Complete the notes below.

*Write **ONE WORD ONLY** for each answer.*

The Economic Impact of Remote Work on Urban Areas

- **Introduction**

- The rise of remote work is a major 31 _____ in the global economy.
- This lecture will focus on the impact on 32 _____ areas.

- **Impact on Commercial Real Estate**

- Decline in demand for office space, leading to higher 33 _____ rates.
- Potential for office-to-residential conversions to address the housing 34 _____.

- **Impact on Public Transportation**

- Significant loss of revenue for transit agencies.
- Risk of service cuts and fare increases, affecting 35 _____ workers.

- **Impact on Local Businesses**

- Decline in foot traffic for restaurants, cafes, and 36 _____ stores.
- Some businesses are adapting by offering 37 _____ services.

- **The Rise of ‘Zoom Towns’**

- People are moving to smaller towns and 38 _____ areas.
- Potential for economic revitalization, but also concerns about urban 39 _____.

- **Conclusion**

- Remote work presents both challenges and 40 _____ for cities.
- The future of our cities will depend on our ability to adapt and innovate.

WRITING SECTION

WRITING TASK 1

You should spend about 20 minutes on this task.

The chart below shows the percentage of employees working from home in five different countries in 2015 and 2025.

Summarise the information by selecting and reporting the main features, and make comparisons where relevant.

Write at least 150 words.

(A bar chart would be inserted here showing the following data:)

Percentage of Employees Working From Home

| Country | 2015 | 2025 |
|---------|------|------|
| USA | 15% | 35% |
| UK | 12% | 30% |
| Germany | 10% | 25% |
| Japan | 5% | 15% |
| India | 8% | 28% |

WRITING TASK 2

You should spend about 40 minutes on this task.

Write about the following topic:

In recent years, there has been a significant increase in the number of people working from home. While this trend has many benefits for both individuals and companies, it also has some drawbacks.

To what extent do the advantages of remote work outweigh the disadvantages?

Give reasons for your answer and include any relevant examples from your own knowledge or experience.

Write at least 250 words.

SPEAKING SECTION

Part 1: Introduction and Interview (4-5 minutes)

1. Do you currently work or study?
2. What are your career aspirations?
3. Have you ever worked or studied from home?

4. What do you think are the main advantages of working from home?
5. Do you think remote work will become more common in the future?

Part 2: Cue Card (2-3 minutes)

Describe a time when you had to work or study from home for an extended period.

You should say:

- when this was
- why you had to work or study from home
- what you liked and disliked about it

and explain how this experience affected you.

Part 3: Discussion (4-5 minutes)

1. What are the biggest challenges for companies that have a remote workforce?
2. How can companies foster a positive and productive remote work culture?
3. Do you think that remote work is suitable for all types of jobs and industries?
4. How might the rise of remote work affect our towns and cities in the future?
5. What role should governments play in regulating remote work and protecting the rights of remote employees?

GRAMMAR SECTION (20 questions)

Questions 1-5: Error Correction

Identify the error in each sentence and correct it.

1. He have been working from home for the past two years.
2. The company's remote work policy is more flexible then the previous one.
3. She is finding it difficult to adapt to work from home.
4. The team have a virtual meeting every morning to discuss their progress.
5. I am looking forward to see you at the conference next week.

Questions 6-10: Sentence Transformation

Complete the second sentence so that it has a similar meaning to the first sentence, using the word given. Do not change the word given. You must use between two and five words, including the word given.

1. The company has decided to allow all employees to work from home. **ALLOWED**
All employees _____ to work from home.
2. It is not necessary to come to the office every day. **HAVE** You _____ to come to the office every day.
3. She is finding it difficult to concentrate at home. **DIFFICULTY** She _____ at home.
4. The team has been working on this project for six months. **STARTED** The team _____ this project six months ago.
5. I would rather work from home than in an office. **PREFER** I _____ from home to working in an office.

Questions 11-15: Fill in the Blanks

Complete the sentences with the correct form of the verb in brackets, or with an appropriate article or preposition.

1. The company is considering _____ (implement) a new remote work policy.
2. She has been working for the same company _____ ten years.
3. I am not used to _____ (work) in such a quiet environment.
4. The report needs to be submitted _____ Friday at the latest.
5. He is responsible _____ managing the remote team.

Questions 16-20: Word Formation

Use the word in capitals to form a word that fits in the gap in the same line.

1. The company has seen a significant _____ in productivity since implementing the new policy. (IMPROVE)
2. It is important to have a _____ workspace when working from home. (COMFORT)
3. The team has a weekly _____ to discuss their progress. (MEET)

4. The company provides all the necessary _____ for remote workers. (EQUIP)
 5. It is important to maintain a healthy work-life _____. (BALANCE)
-

LISTENING SCRIPTS

Section 1

(Sound of a phone ringing)

John: Hello, Tech Solutions, John speaking. How can I help you?

Sarah: Hello, my name is Sarah. I'm calling to inquire about the remote work policy for the Project Manager position I saw advertised on your website.

John: Of course, I can help you with that. Just to confirm, your name is Sarah... what's your surname?

Sarah: It's (1) Cheung. That's C-H-E-U-N-G.

John: Got it. And you're interested in the Project Manager position at (2) Tech Solutions. That's correct, we are hiring for that role.

Sarah: Yes, that's right. I have a few years of experience as a (3) Project Manager, and the role seems like a great fit. I'm particularly interested in your remote work policy.

John: We've recently transitioned to a hybrid model. We require employees to come into the office a maximum of (4) two days per week. The other three days you can work from home.

Sarah: That sounds great. And what about the flexibility of working hours?

John: We have core hours from 10am to (5) 4 pm. Outside of those hours, you can structure your day as you see fit, as long as you complete your work.

Sarah: That's very helpful. And what about equipment? Does the company provide any?

John: Yes, we provide a laptop, keyboard, and (6) mouse. We also offer a monthly allowance for internet and other home office expenses.

Sarah: Oh, that's excellent. How much is the internet allowance?

John: It's (7) 30 pounds per month.

Sarah: That's very generous. I was also wondering about opportunities for social interaction with colleagues.

John: We have a weekly team (8) meeting online, and we also organize monthly social events, both virtual and in-person.

Sarah: That's good to hear. It's important to feel connected to the team. What are the next steps if I want to apply?

John: You can send your CV and a cover letter to (9) careers@techsolutions.com.

Sarah: Great. And who should I address it to?

John: You can address it to me, John (10) **Davidson**.

Sarah: Thank you so much for your help, John.

John: You're very welcome, Sarah. We look forward to receiving your application.

Section 2

Good morning, everyone. As you know, we've been discussing the future of work at our company for some time now, and I'm excited to announce that we will be implementing a new hybrid work model, starting on the (12) **first of the following month**. This new model is designed to offer greater flexibility and work-life balance for all employees, while also ensuring that we maintain the strong sense of community and collaboration that is so important to our company culture.

Under the new model, employees will be expected to come into the office a minimum of (13) **two days a week**. The specific days will be determined by your team leader, in consultation with your team members. We believe that this approach will give us the best of both worlds: the flexibility and autonomy of remote work, combined with the benefits of in-person collaboration and social interaction.

We understand that this transition will require some adjustments, and we are committed to supporting you every step of the way. We will be providing a subsidy for (14) **home office furniture** to ensure that you have a comfortable and productive workspace at home. We will also be offering a series of workshops to help you navigate the challenges and opportunities of this new way of working.

Our primary goal in making this change is to enhance our company culture. We believe that by giving you more control over where and when you work, we can create a more engaged, motivated, and productive workforce. We are confident that this new hybrid model will be a win-win for both the company and our employees, and we are excited to embark on this new chapter together. Now, let's take a look at the workshops we'll be offering.

First up is 'Time Management in a Hybrid World'. This workshop will focus on **(16) techniques for prioritizing tasks and managing distractions**, which can be a real challenge when you're working from home. Next, we have 'Effective Virtual Communication', which will cover **(17) best practices for video conferencing and email**. Then there's 'Building a Resilient Team', which is all about **(18) building trust and rapport in a virtual team**. We also have 'The Digital Toolkit', which will introduce you to some **(19) new software and platforms** that can help you to collaborate more effectively with your colleagues. And finally, we have 'Health and Wellness for Remote Workers', which will offer **(20) strategies for avoiding burnout** and maintaining a healthy work-life balance.

Section 3

Tutor: So, for your research project on the psychological effects of remote work, what have you found so far?

Student 1: Well, we've found that there are both pros and cons. On the one hand, remote work can lead to increased job satisfaction and a better work-life balance. People appreciate the flexibility and autonomy it offers. On the other hand, it can also lead to feelings of isolation and a blurring of the lines between work and personal life.

Student 2: Yes, that's a key point. The 'always-on' culture, where people feel they have to be available $^{24}_{\text{7}}$, can be a major source of stress and burnout. It's really important for companies to set clear boundaries and expectations.

Tutor: That's a very interesting point. So, what can companies do to mitigate these negative effects?

Student 1: We think it's important for companies to provide opportunities for social interaction, even if it's just virtual. Things like online coffee breaks or team-building activities can make a big difference.

Student 2: I agree. And it's also important for managers to be trained in how to manage a remote team effectively. It requires a different set of skills to managing a team in a traditional office environment.

Tutor: So, you're saying that the role of the manager is crucial?

Student 2: Absolutely. A good manager can make all the difference in whether a remote work arrangement is successful or not.

Tutor: What about the impact on company culture? Do you think it's possible to maintain a strong culture when everyone is working remotely?

Student 1: I think it's more challenging, but it's not impossible. It just requires a more intentional effort to build and maintain a sense of community.

Student 2: I'm not so sure. I think there's something about the informal, face-to-face interactions that you just can't replicate online. I think it's very difficult to maintain a strong company culture in a fully remote environment.

Tutor: So, you disagree on that point. That's interesting. What about the future of work? Do you think we'll see more companies embracing remote work in the long term?

Student 1: I think so. The pandemic has shown that it's possible for many jobs to be done remotely, and I think a lot of people will be reluctant to go back to the office full-time.

Student 2: I agree. I think we'll see a lot more hybrid models, where people split their time between the office and home. That seems to be the direction things are heading.

Tutor: And for your research project, what are you planning to focus on specifically?

Student 1: We're planning to focus on the impact of remote work on mental health. We want to look at the factors that contribute to stress and burnout, and the strategies that people can use to cope.

Tutor: That sounds like a very relevant and important topic. And how are you planning to collect your data?

Student 2: We're planning to use a combination of interviews and surveys. We want to get a mix of qualitative and quantitative data.

Tutor: That's a good approach. And what are your biggest concerns at this stage?

Student 1: I think my biggest concern is finding enough people to participate in the study. It can be difficult to recruit people for this type of research.

Student 2: For me, the biggest worry is the reliability of the data. It's important that we get honest and accurate responses from our participants.

Tutor: Those are both valid concerns. Let's talk about some strategies you can use to address them.

Section 4

Good morning. In today's lecture, we're going to be discussing the economic impact of remote work on urban areas. The rise of remote work is a major (31) **disruption** in the global economy, and it's having a profound effect on our cities. This lecture will focus on the impact on (32) **urban** areas.

First, let's look at the impact on commercial real estate. With so many people working from home, there's been a sharp decline in the demand for office space. This has led to higher (33) **vacancy** rates and a fall in rental prices. In some cities, we're seeing a push for office-to-residential conversions, as a way to address the housing (34) **crisis** and repurpose these empty buildings.

Next, let's consider the impact on public transportation. With fewer commuters, transit agencies are facing a significant loss of revenue. This could lead to service cuts and fare increases, which would disproportionately affect (35) **low-income** workers who rely on public transport.

Another area that's been hit hard is local businesses. The decline in foot traffic has had a devastating impact on restaurants, cafes, and (36) **retail** stores in central business districts. Some businesses are adapting by offering (37) **delivery** services or shifting their focus to online sales, but many are struggling to survive.

We're also seeing the rise of what have been dubbed 'Zoom towns'. These are smaller towns and (38) **rural** areas that are attracting remote workers who are looking for a lower cost of living and a better quality of life. This trend has the potential for economic revitalization in these areas, but it also raises concerns about urban (39) **sprawl** and the environmental impact of increased car dependency.

In conclusion, the rise of remote work presents both challenges and **(40) opportunities** for our cities. The future of our urban areas will depend on our ability to adapt and innovate in the face of this massive economic and social shift. Now, I'd be happy to take any questions you may have.

ANSWER KEY

READING

1. FALSE
2. TRUE
3. TRUE
4. NOT GIVEN
5. TRUE
6. FALSE
7. C
8. B
9. B
10. C
11. burnout
12. isolation
13. cybersecurity
14. ii
15. iv
16. iii
17. vii
18. i
19. vi
20. B

- 21. C
- 22. B
- 23. C
- 24. supportive company culture
- 25. junior employees
- 26. employee needs
- 27. YES
- 28. YES
- 29. NOT GIVEN
- 30. NO
- 31. YES
- 32. YES
- 33. B
- 34. B
- 35. C
- 36. C
- 37. office space
- 38. public transportation
- 39. urban sprawl
- 40. sustainable

LISTENING

- 1. Cheung
- 2. Tech
- 3. Project
- 4. two
- 5. 4
- 6. mouse
- 7. 30

8. meeting

9. careers

10. Davidson

11. B

12. C

13. B

14. B

15. A

16. E

17. F

18. C

19. B

20. A

21. B

22. A

23. B

24. A

25. B

26. B

27. C

28. A

29. A

30. C

31. disruption

32. urban

33. vacancy

34. crisis

35. low-income

36. retail

37. delivery
38. rural
39. sprawl
40. opportunities

GRAMMAR

1. He **has** been working from home for the past two years.
 2. The company's remote work policy is more flexible **than** the previous one.
 3. She is finding it difficult to adapt to **working** from home.
 4. The team **has** a virtual meeting every morning to discuss their progress.
 5. I am looking forward to **seeing** you at the conference next week.
 6. have been allowed
 7. do not have
 8. has difficulty concentrating
 9. started working on
 10. prefer working
 11. implementing
 12. for
 13. working
 14. by
 15. for
 16. improvement
 17. comfortable
 18. meeting
 19. equipment
 20. balance
-

TUTOR GUIDE

WRITING TASK 1: MODEL ANSWER

The bar chart illustrates the proportion of employees working from home in five different countries in the years 2015 and 2025. Overall, the percentage of remote workers increased in all five countries over the ten-year period, with the most significant rises seen in the USA, the UK, and India.

In 2015, the USA had the highest percentage of remote workers at 15%, followed by the UK at 12%. Germany and India had similar figures, at 10% and 8% respectively, while Japan had the lowest proportion of remote workers at just 5%. By 2025, the figures for all five countries had risen substantially.

The USA is projected to see its percentage of remote workers more than double to 35%, making it the country with the highest proportion of home-based employees. The UK and India are also expected to experience a significant increase in remote work, with their figures rising to 30% and 28% respectively. Germany is predicted to see a more moderate increase to 25%, while Japan is expected to have the smallest rise, with its figure tripling to 15%.

In conclusion, the chart shows a clear trend towards a more remote workforce in all five countries, although the rate of adoption varies considerably.

WRITING TASK 2: MODEL ESSAY (BAND 9)

The proliferation of remote work has become a defining feature of the modern professional landscape. While the benefits of this shift, such as increased flexibility and a global talent pool, are widely acknowledged, it is also accompanied by a number of significant drawbacks, including the potential for social isolation and a blurring of the work-life boundary. In my opinion, the advantages of remote work, when managed effectively, ultimately outweigh the disadvantages.

One of the most compelling arguments in favour of remote work is the enhanced work-life balance it can offer. By eliminating the daily commute, employees can reclaim a significant amount of time, which can be dedicated to personal pursuits, family, or simply rest and relaxation. This can lead to a marked improvement in overall well-being and a reduction in stress levels. Furthermore, the flexibility to work from

anywhere can be a major draw for top talent, allowing companies to recruit the best and brightest from around the world, regardless of their geographical location. This not only enriches the diversity of the workforce but also fosters a more competitive and innovative business environment.

However, the potential downsides of remote work cannot be ignored. The lack of face-to-face interaction can lead to feelings of isolation and a weakened sense of belonging to a team. The informal ‘water cooler’ moments that are so crucial for building rapport and fostering a collaborative spirit are difficult to replicate in a virtual setting. Moreover, the ‘always-on’ culture that can pervade a remote work environment can lead to burnout and a decline in mental health. It is imperative that companies establish clear boundaries and expectations to mitigate these risks.

In conclusion, while remote work presents a number of challenges, these can be overcome with a thoughtful and intentional approach. By fostering a culture of trust and open communication, providing opportunities for social interaction, and prioritizing the well-being of their employees, companies can harness the transformative power of remote work to create a more flexible, productive, and people-centric future of work. The key is not to view remote work as a panacea, but as a powerful tool that, when used wisely, can unlock a new era of professional and personal fulfilment.

SPEAKING PART 2: SAMPLE RESPONSE

I’d like to talk about a time when I had to work from home for an extended period. This was back in 2023, during the height of the COVID-19 pandemic. I was working as a marketing executive for a large multinational corporation, and the company made the decision to close all of its offices and have employees work from home to prevent the spread of the virus.

At first, I was quite excited about the prospect of working from home. I loved the idea of not having to commute every day and being able to work in my pyjamas! I also enjoyed the flexibility of being able to structure my own day. I found that I was actually more productive at home, as there were fewer distractions than in the office.

However, after a few weeks, the novelty began to wear off. I started to feel quite isolated and missed the social interaction of the office. I found it difficult to switch off at the end of the day, and the lines between my work and personal life became

increasingly blurred. I also found it challenging to collaborate with my colleagues on creative projects, as it's just not the same as being in the same room together.

Overall, the experience taught me a lot about the importance of a healthy work-life balance. I learned that while remote work has many benefits, it's not without its challenges. I think the ideal situation is a hybrid model, where you have the flexibility to work from home some of the time, but you also have the opportunity to go into the office and connect with your colleagues in person.

KEY VOCABULARY

1. **Seismic shift:** A very significant and disruptive change.
2. **Cornerstone:** An important quality or feature on which a particular thing depends or is based.
3. **Decentralization:** The process of distributing or dispersing functions, powers, or things away from a central location or authority.
4. **Lauded:** Highly praised or admired.
5. **Autonomy:** The right or condition of self-government.
6. **Geographical constraints:** Limitations related to a particular physical location.
7. **Global talent pool:** The total number of people in all countries who are available to work.
8. **Erosion:** The gradual destruction or diminution of something.
9. **Burnout:** Physical or mental collapse caused by overwork or stress.
10. **Rapport:** A close and harmonious relationship in which the people or groups concerned understand each other's feelings or ideas and communicate well.
11. **Cybersecurity:** The state of being protected against the criminal or unauthorized use of electronic data, or the measures taken to achieve this.
12. **Mitigate:** Make (something bad) less severe, serious, or painful.
13. **Serendipity:** The occurrence and development of events by chance in a happy or beneficial way.
14. **Camaraderie:** Mutual trust and friendship among people who spend a lot of time together.
15. **Contrived:** Deliberately created rather than arising naturally or spontaneously.

16. **Multi-faceted:** Having many different aspects or features.
17. **Exodus:** A mass departure of people.
18. **Dwindles:** Diminish gradually in size, amount, or strength.
19. **Plummeted:** Fall or drop straight down at high speed.
20. **De-urbanization:** The process of people moving from urban areas to rural areas.