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**Academic
Reading
Practice Test
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ACADEMIC READING 60 minutes**READING PASSAGE 1**

You should spend about 20 minutes on Questions 1 – 13, which are based on Reading Passage 1.

Unlikely Boomtowns: The World's Hottest Cities

Megacities like London, New York and Tokyo loom large in our imaginations. They are still associated with fortune, fame and the future. They can dominate national economies and politics. The last fifty years has been their era, as the number of cities with more than ten million people grew from two to twenty. But with all respect to the science-fiction novelists who have envisioned a future of urban giants, their day is over. The typical growth rate of the population within a megacity has slowed from more than eight per cent in the 1980s to less than half that over the last five years, and numbers are expected to be static in the next quarter century. Instead, the coming years will belong to a smaller, far humbler relation – the Second City.

Within a few years, more people will live in cities than in the countryside for the first time in human history. But increasingly, the urban core itself is downsizing. Already, half the city dwellers in the world live in metropolises with fewer than half-a-million residents. Second Cities – from *exurbs*, residential areas outside the suburbs of a town, to regional centres – are booming. Between 2000 and 2015, the world's smallest cities (with under 500,000 people) will grow by 23 per cent, while the next smallest (one million to five million people) will grow by 27 per cent. This trend is the result of dramatic shifts, including the global real-estate bubble; increasing international migration; cheaper transport; new technologies, and the fact that the baby-boom generation is reaching retirement age.

The emergence of Second Cities has flowed naturally (if unexpectedly) from the earlier success of the megacities. In the 1990s, megacities boomed as global markets did. This was particularly true in areas with high-tech or 'knowledge-based' industries like finance. Bonuses got bigger, bankers got richer and real-estate prices in the world's most sought-after cities soared. The result has been the creation of what demographer William Frey of the Washington-based Brookings Institute calls 'gated regions' in which both the city and many of the surrounding suburbs have become unaffordable for all but the very wealthy. 'Economically, after a city reaches a certain size its productivity starts to fall,' notes Mario Pezzini, head of the regional-competitiveness division of the OECD. He puts the tipping point at about six million people, after which costs, travel times and the occasional chaos 'create a situation in which the centre of the city may be a great place, but only for the rich, and the outlying areas become harder to live and work in'.

One reaction to this phenomenon is further sprawl – high prices in the urban core and traditional suburbs drive people to distant exurbs with extreme commutes into big cities. As Frey notes, in the major US metropolitan areas, average commuting times have doubled over the last fifteen years.

Why does one town become a booming Second City while another fails? The answer hinges on whether a community has the wherewithal to exploit the forces pushing people and businesses out of the megacities. One key is excellent transport links, especially to the biggest commercial centres. Though barely a decade old, Goyang is South Korea's fastest-growing city in part because it is 30 minutes by subway from Seoul.

Another growth driver for Second Cities is the decentralization of work, driven in large part by new technologies. While more financial deals are done now in big capitals like New York and London than ever before, it is also clear that plenty of booming service industries are leaving for ‘Rising Urban Stars’ like Dubai, Montpellier and Cape Town. These places have not only improved their Internet backbones, but often have technical institutes and universities that turn out the kinds of talent that populate growth industries.

Consider Montpellier, France, a case study in urban decentralization. Until the 1980s, it was like a big Mediterranean village, but one with a strong university, many lovely villas and an IBM manufacturing base. Once the high-speed train lines were built, Parisians began pouring in for weekend breaks. Some bought houses, creating a critical mass of middle-class professionals who began taking advantage of flexible working systems to do three days in Paris, and two down South, where things seemed less pressured. Soon, big companies began looking at the area; a number of medical-technology and electronics firms came to town, and IBM put more investment into service businesses there. To cater to the incoming professionals, the city began building amenities: an opera house, a tram line to discourage cars in the city centre. The result, says French urban-planning expert Nacima Baron, is that ‘the city is now full of cosmopolitan business people. It’s a new society’.

All this means that Second Cities won’t stay small. Indeed some countries are actively promoting their growth. Italy, for example, is trying to create tourist hubs of towns close to each other with distinctive buildings and offering different yet complementary cultural activities. Devolution of policymaking power is leaving many lesser cities more free than ever to shape their destinies. To them all: this is your era. Don’t blow it.

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Questions 1 – 3

Choose **THREE** letters, **A – G**.

Write your answers in boxes 1 – 3 on your answer sheet.

Which **THREE** of the following statements are true of megacities, according to the text?

- A** They tend to lead the way in terms of fashion.
- B** Their population has ceased to expand.
- C** They reached their peak in the second half of the twentieth century.
- D** 50 per cent of the world's inhabitants now live in them.
- E** They grew rich on the profits from manufacturing industry.
- F** Their success begins to work against them at a certain stage.
- G** It is no longer automatically advantageous to base a company there.

Questions 4 – 6

Choose **THREE** letters, **A – G**.

Write your answers in boxes 4 – 6 on your answer sheet.

The list below gives some possible reasons why small towns can turn into successful Second Cities.

Which **THREE** of these reasons are mentioned by the writer of the text?

- A** the existence of support services for foreign workers
- B** the provision of cheap housing for older people
- C** the creation of efficient access routes
- D** the ability to attract financial companies
- E** the expertise to keep up with electronic developments
- F** the maintenance of a special local atmosphere
- G** the willingness to imitate international-style architecture

Questions 7 – 13

Complete the summary using the list of words A – R below.

Write the correct letter, A – R, in boxes 7 – 13 on your answer sheet.

Urban Decentralisation

It is becoming increasingly obvious that large numbers of 7 are giving up their expensive premises in the megacities and relocating to smaller cities like Montpellier. One of the attractions of Montpellier is the presence of a good 8 that can provide them with the necessary skilled workforce.

Another important factor for Montpellier was the arrival of visitors from the 9 The introduction of the 10 meant that increasing numbers were able to come for short stays. Of these, a significant proportion decided to get a base in the city. The city council soon realised that they needed to provide appropriate 11 for their new inhabitants. In fact, the 12 among them liked the more relaxed lifestyle so much that they took advantage of any 13 arrangements offered by their firms to spend more of the week in Montpellier.

- | | | |
|---------------------|---------------------|----------------------|
| A urban centres | B finance companies | C flexible |
| D tram line | E cosmopolitan | F service industries |
| G capital | H high-speed train | I infrastructure |
| J unskilled workers | K jobs | L medical-technology |
| M professionals | N European Union | O amenities |
| P middle-age | Q overtime | R university |

Questions 14 – 20

Reading Passage 2 has seven paragraphs, A – G.

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

Write the correct number i – x in boxes 14 – 20 on your answer sheet.

List of Headings

- i The influence of the seasons on productivity
- ii A natural way to anger management
- iii Natural building materials promote health
- iv Learning from experience in another field
- v Stimulating the brain through internal design features
- vi Current effects on the species of ancient experiences
- vii Uniformity is not the answer
- viii The negative effects of restricted spaces
- ix Improving occupational performance
- x The modern continuation of ancient customs

14 Paragraph A

15 Paragraph B

16 Paragraph C

17 Paragraph D

18 Paragraph E

19 Paragraph F

20 Paragraph G

READING PASSAGE 2

You should spend about 20 minutes on Questions 14 – 26, which are based on Reading Passage 2.

Psychosocial Value of Space

- A** What would a building space look and feel like if it were designed to promote psychological and social well-being? How would it affect the senses, the emotions, and the mind? How would it affect behavioral patterns? For insights, it is useful to look not at buildings, but at zoos. Zoo design has gone through a radical transformation in the past several decades. Cages have been replaced by natural habitats and geographic clustering of animals. In some places, the animals are free-ranging and the visitors are enclosed in buses or trains moving through the habitat. Animals now exist in mixed species exhibits more like their natural landscapes. And, as in nature, the animals have much greater control over their behavior. They can be on view if they want, or out of sight. They forage, play, rest, mate and act like normal animals.
- B** What brought about this transformation in philosophy and design? A key factor was concern over the animals' psychological and social well-being. Zoos could keep animals alive, but they couldn't make them flourish. Caged animals often exhibit neurotic behaviors—pacing, repetitive motions, aggression, and withdrawal. In one famous example, an animal psychologist was hired by the Central Park Zoo to study a polar bear that spent the day swimming in endless figure eights in its small pool. This was not normal polar bear behavior and the zoo was concerned about it. After several days of observation, the animal psychologist offered a diagnosis. The bear was bored. To compensate for this unfortunate situation, the zoo added amenities and toys to the bear's enclosure to encourage exploration and play.
- C** Are there lessons that we can apply to building design? Some experts believe so: for example, biologist Stephen Boyden (1971) defines the optimum healthy environment as 'the conditions which tend to promote or permit an animal optimal physiological, mental, and social performance in its natural or "evolutionary" environment.' Because humans evolved in a natural landscape, it is reasonable to turn to the natural environment for clues about preference patterns that may be applicable to building design. Drawing on habitat selection theory, ecologist Gordon Orians argues that humans are psychologically adapted to and prefer landscape features that characterized the African plain or savannah, the presumed site of human evolution. Although humans now live in many different habitats, Orians argues that our species' long history as mobile hunters and gatherers on the African savannahs should have left its mark on our psyche. If the 'savannah hypothesis' is true, we would expect to find that humans intrinsically like and find pleasurable environments that contain the key features of the savannah most likely to have aided our ancestors' survival and well-being.
- D** Although Boyden distinguishes between survival and well-being needs, they often overlap. For example, people clearly need food for survival and health. However, food often serves as the basis for bonding and relationship development. The ritual of sitting around a fire on the savannah or in a cave telling stories of the day's events and planning for tomorrow may be an ancient carryover from *Homo sapiens'* hunting and gathering days. According to anthropologist Melvin Konner, the sense of safety and intimacy associated with the campfire may have been a factor in the evolution of intellectual progression as well as social bonds. Today's hearth is the family kitchen at home, and the community places, such as cafes and coffee bars, where people increasingly congregate to eat, talk, read and work.

- E** A growing body of research shows that building environments that connect people to nature are more supportive of human emotional well-being and cognitive performance than environments lacking these features. For instance, research by Roger Ulrich consistently shows that passive viewing of nature through windows promotes positive moods. Similarly, research by Rachel Kaplan found that workers with window views of trees had a more positive outlook on life than those doing similar work but whose window looked out onto a parking lot. Connection to nature also provides mini mental breaks that may aid the ability to concentrate, according to research by Stephen Kaplan. Terry Hartig and colleagues report similar results in a field experiment. People in their study who went for a walk in a predominantly natural setting achieved better on several office tasks requiring concentration than those who walked in a predominantly built setting or who quietly read a magazine indoors.
- F** Studies of outdoor landscapes are providing evidence that the effects of nature on human health and well-being extend beyond emotional and cognitive functioning to social behavior and crime reduction. For instance, Francis Kuo found that outdoor nature buffers aggression in urban high-rise settings and enhances ability to deal with demanding circumstances. He also reported that planting trees in urban areas increases sociability by providing comfortable places for residents to talk with one another and develop friendships that promote mutual support.
- G** A natural perspective also contributes important insights into comfort maintenance. Because people differ from one another in many ways (genetics, cultures, lifestyles) their ambient preferences vary. Furthermore, a given person varies over time depending upon his or her state of health, activities, clothing levels, and so forth. For most of human history, people have actively managed their surroundings as well as their behaviors to achieve comfort. Yet buildings continue to be designed with a “one size fits all” approach. Very few buildings or workstations enable occupants to control lighting, temperature, ventilation rates, or noise conditions. Although the technology is largely available to do this, the personal comfort systems have not sold well in the market place, even though research by Walter Kroner and colleagues at Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute shows that personal control leads to significant increases in comfort and morale.

Questions 21 – 26

Look at the following people (**Questions 21 – 26**) and the list of theories below.

Match each person with the correct theory, **A – I**.

Write the correct letter **A – I** in boxes 21 – 26 on your answer sheet.

21 Gordon Orians

22 Melvin Konner

23 Roger Ulrich

24 Stephen Kaplan

25 Francis Kuo

26 Walter Kroner

List of Theories

- A** Creating a green area can stimulate a sense of community.
- B** People need adequate living space in order to be healthy.
- C** Natural landscape can both relax and sharpen the mind.
- D** Cooking together is an important element in human bonding.
- E** People feel more at ease if they can adjust their environment.
- F** Looking at a green environment improves people's spirits.
- G** Physical exercise improves creative thinking at work.
- H** Man's brain developed partly through regular association with peers.
- I** We are drawn to places similar to the area where our species originated.

READING PASSAGE 3

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

Ditching that Saintly Image

Charities, it is still widely believed, are separate from government, staffed entirely by volunteers and spend every penny donated on the cause they support. Noble stuff, but in most cases entirely wrong. Yet these misapprehensions underpin much of the trust and goodwill behind giving. And there is concern that such outdated perceptions could blow up in charities' faces as people begin to discover what the voluntary sector is really about.

High-profile international programmes of awareness-raising activities, such as Make Poverty History, have dragged the voluntary sector into the spotlight and shown charity workers to be as much business entrepreneurs as they are angels of mercy. But with the spotlight comes scrutiny, and unless charities present compelling cases for political campaigning, six-figure salaries and paying the expenses of celebrities who go on demanding trips to refugee camps for nothing, they may get bitten. 'If people become more sceptical about how charities use their donations, they will be less inclined to give money,' says Nick Aldridge, director of strategy at the Association of Chief Executives of Voluntary Organisations (ACEVO).

A wide range of initiatives have been undertaken to secure long-term trust in the sector by explaining what charities do and publishing the figures. But it's still difficult to give donors a complete picture because, unlike profit-driven businesses, charities can't measure achievement purely by the bottom line.

The report *Funding Success* suggests this might explain some of the communication difficulties charities face. Nevertheless, it suggests there are sound reasons for trying. Many funders, it claims, regard high overheads on, for example, premises, publicity and so on, that are properly accounted for, as a sign of an efficiently run organisation, rather than a waste of resources. Detailed reporting can be an important element in efforts to increase transparency. Better information might also unlock more money by highlighting social problems, and explaining what might be done to address them.

Some charities are already taking steps in this direction. The Royal National Institute for the Deaf (RNID) introduced annual impact reporting, to tell people about the effects of its work in a broader sense than an annual report would usually allow.

Each impact report looks back at what has been achieved over the previous 12 months and also states the charity's aims for the year ahead. Brian Lamb, director of communications at the RNID, says the sector has been complacent about transparency because of the high level of trust it enjoys. 'We have not been good at educating the public on issues such as why we do a lot of campaigning,' he says. 'But the more high-profile the sector becomes, the more people will ask questions.'

Baroness Onora O'Neill, chair of the Nuffield Foundation, says building trust goes deeper than providing information. She points out that the additional reporting and accounting requirements imposed on institutions across all sectors in recent years may have made them more transparent, but it has not made them more trusted. '... If we are to judge for ourselves, we need genuine communication

in which we can question and observe, check and even challenge the evidence that others present.' Laying out the evidence of what has been done, with all its shortcomings, may provide a rather better basis for placing – or refusing – trust than any number of glossy publications that trumpet unending success.

Not everyone thinks the public needs to be spoon-fed reams of information to maintain confidence. 'There isn't any evidence that there is a crisis of confidence in charities,' says Cathy Pharoah, research director at the Charities Aid Foundation. The facts support her claim. In a Charity Commission report published in November last year, the public awarded charities 6.3 out of 10 on trust. Pharoah believes key donors are savvier than they are portrayed. 'There is heavy dependence on middle-class donors for charity income, and I would be amazed if they didn't realise charities had to pay to get professional staff,' she says.

She believes the biggest threats to trust are the kind of scandals that blighted the Scottish voluntary sector in 2003. Two high-profile charities, Breast Cancer Research (Scotland) and Moonbeams, were exposed for spending a fraction of their profits on their causes. The revelations created intensely damaging media coverage. Even charity stalwarts were shocked by how quickly the coverage snowballed as two bad stories turned into a sector-wide crisis. 'Those two incidents caused a media frenzy as journalists took every opportunity to undermine the sector,' says Fiona Duncan, director of external affairs at Capability Scotland. After suffering a media grilling herself, Duncan launched Giving Scotland to redress the balance. Fourteen charities, plus the Scottish Council for Voluntary Organisations and the Institute of Fundraising Scotland, joined together to put out communications restoring confidence in charities. The Scottish Executive pledged £30,000 and, with donations from corporate supporters, the campaign was able to secure advertising worth £300,000 for a lightning two-week campaign over Christmas 2003.

Two months before the campaign was launched, The Herald newspaper published a poll revealing that 52 per cent of people were less likely to give because of the scandals. Giving Scotland did a similar poll in February 2004 and this time more than half of the population said they were more likely to consider giving because of the campaign. 'We learned about strength in numbers and the importance of timing – because it was Christmas, we were able to get good coverage,' says Duncan.

It was an effective rearguard campaign. The numerous proactive initiatives now underway across the UK give charities the chance to prevent the situation ever getting that bad again – but their success will depend on whether they are prepared to shed their saintly image and rally to the cause of creating a newer, bolder one.

Questions 27 – 33

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

Write the correct letter in boxes 27 – 33 on your answer sheet.

- 27 What do we learn about charities in the first paragraph?
- A People trust charities because they are approved by government.
B Not all the funds a charity receives go on practical aid for people.
C Charities do not disclose their systems for fear of losing official status.
D People who work for charities without pay are not fit for the job.
- 28 Why, in the writer's view, is it hard for charities to inform the public properly?
- A They calculate success differently from other businesses.
B They are unable to publish a true financial report.
C The amount of resources needed changes radically year by year.
D Donors may be disappointed if they see large profits in the accounts.
- 29 One of the conclusions of the report 'Funding Success' is that
- A charities must cut down on any unnecessary expenditure.
B raising more money for their cause should be a charity's main aim.
C charities should give the public an assessment of the results of their work.
D clarifying the reasons for administration costs would not dissuade donors.
- 30 Baroness O'Neill's main recommendation is that charities should
- A follow the current government requirements on reporting.
B encourage the public to examine and discuss the facts.
C publicise any areas in which they have been effective.
D make sure the figures are laid out as clearly as possible.
- 31 What is Cathy Pharoah most concerned about?
- A the public's adverse reaction to the money spent on charity personnel
B the effect on general donations if any charity misuses their funds
C the reliance of many charities on a single sector of the population
D the findings of a Charity Commission report on public confidence
- 32 Why does Fiona Duncan think the 'Giving Scotland' campaign succeeded?
- A The message came over strongly because so many organisations united.
B People did not believe the critical stories that appeared in newspapers.
C Private donors paid for some advertising in the national press.
D People forgot about the scandals over the Christmas holidays.

- 33 The writer suggests that in the future, charities
- A may well have to face a number of further scandals.
 - B will need to think up some new promotional campaigns.
 - C may find it hard to change the public's perception of them.
 - D will lose the public's confidence if they modernise their image.

Questions 34 – 40

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

In boxes 34 – 40 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.*

- 34 Charity involvement in some prominent campaigns has meant that they are undergoing more careful examination by the public.
- 35 Famous people insist on a large fee if they appear for a charity.
- 36 The new RNID documents outline expected progress as well as detailing past achievements.
- 37 People have been challenging the RNID on their promotional activities.
- 38 The two charities involved in a scandal have altered their funding programmes.
- 39 Following the scandal, the media attacked the charity sector as a whole.
- 40 Charity donations in Scotland are now back to their pre-scandal level.