

GT Reading Mock Test 25:

Part 3: Question 29-40

Read the text below and answers to the questions **29-40** on your answer sheet.

GT Reading: "Employment in Japan"

Look at the information about the '**Employment in Japan**' and answer questions **29-40**.

Employment in Japan

A. Every autumn, when recruitment of new graduates and school leavers begins, major cities in Japan are flooded with students hunting for a job. Wearing suits for the first time, they run from one interview to another. The season is crucial for many students, as their whole lives may be determined during this period.

B. In Japan, lifetime employment is commonly practised by large companies. While people working in small companies and those working for sub-contractors do not, in general, enjoy the advantages conferred by the large companies, there is a general expectation that employees will, in fact, remain more or less permanently in the same job.

C. Unlike in many Western countries where companies employ people whose skills can be effective immediately, Japanese companies select applicants with potential who can

be trained to become suitable employees. For this reason, recruiting employees is an important exercise for companies, as they invest a lot of time and money in training new staff. This is basically true both for factory workers and for professionals. Professionals who have studied subjects which are of immediate use in the workplace, such as industrial engineers, are very often placed in factories and transferred from one section to another. By gaining experience in several different areas and by working in close contact with workers, the engineers are believed, in the long run, to become more effective members of the company. Workers too feel more involved by working with professionals and by being allowed to voice their opinions. Loyalty is believed to be cultivated in this type of egalitarian working environment.

D. Because of this system of training employees to be all-rounders, mobility between companies is low. Wages are set according to educational background or initial field of employment, ordinary graduates being employed in administration, engineers in engineering and design departments and so on. Both promotions and wage increases tend to be tied to seniority, though some differences may arise later on as a result of ability and business performance. Wages are paid monthly, and the net sum, after the deduction of tax, is usually paid directly into a bank account. As well as salary, a bonus is usually paid twice a year. This is a custom that dates back to the time when employers gave special allowances so that employees could properly celebrate bon, a Buddhist festival held in mid-July in Tokyo, but on other dates in other regions. The festival is held to appease the souls of ancestors. The second bonus is distributed at New Year. Recently, bonuses have also been offered as a way of allowing workers a share in the profits that their hard work has gained.

E. Many female graduates complain that they are not given equal training and equal opportunity in comparison to male graduates. Japanese companies generally believe

that female employees will eventually leave to get married and have children. It is also true that, as well as the still-existing belief among women themselves that nothing should stand in the way of child-rearing, the extended hours of work often do not allow women to continue their careers after marriage.

F. Disappointed career-minded female graduates often opt to work for foreign firms. Since most male graduates prefer to join Japanese firms with their guaranteed security, foreign firms are often keen to employ female graduates as their potential tends to be greater than that of male applicants.

G. Some men, however, do leave their companies in spite of future prospects, one reason being to take over the family business. The eldest sons in families that own family companies or businesses such as stores are normally expected to take over the business when their parents retire. It is therefore quite common to see a businessman, on succeeding to his parents' business, completely change his professional direction by becoming, for example, a shopkeeper.

H. On the job, working relationships tend to be very close because of the long hours of work and years of service in common. Social life, in fact, is frequently based on the workplace. Restaurants and nomi-ya, "pubs", are always crowded at night with people enjoying an evening out with their colleagues. Many companies organise trips and sports days for their employees. Senior staff often play the role of mentor. This may mean becoming involved in the lives of junior staff in such things as marriage and the children's education.

I. The average age of retirement is between 55 and 60. For most Westerners, retirement may be an eagerly awaited time to undertake such things as travel and hobbies. Many Japanese, however, simply cannot get used to the freedom of retirement and they look for ways of constructively using their time. Many look for new jobs, feeling that if they do not work they will be abandoned by society. This has recently led to the development in some municipalities of municipal job centres which advertise casual work such as cleaning and lawn mowing. Given that Japan is facing the problem of an increasingly ageing society, such activities may be vital in the future.

Questions 29-37

The Reading Passage has nine paragraphs **A–I**.

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

List of Phrases

- i. how new employees are used in a company
- ii. women and Japanese companies
- iii. why men sometimes resign from Japanese companies
- iv. permanency in employment in Japan

v. recruiting season: who, when and where

vi. the social aspect of work

vii. the salary structure

viii. the recruitment strategy of foreign firms

ix. Japanese people after retirement

29. Section A

30. Section B

31. Section C

32. Section D

33. Section E

34. Section F

35. Section G

36. Section H

37. Section I

Questions 38-40

Complete the sentences below with words taken from the reading passage.

Use **NO MORE THAN THREE WORDS** for each answer.

38. Japanese employers believe that moving professionals within companies and listening to workers' views leads to

39. Employees receive their wages monthly and a bonus

40. Japanese workers often form close personal relationships and older staff may even become a to junior staff.

ANSWER
29. v
30. iv
31. i
32. vii
33. ii
34. viii
35. iii
36. vi
37. ix
38. loyalty
39. twice yearly // twice a year
40. mentor