IELTS Academic Reading Sample 84 - Variations on a theme: the sonnet form in English poetry

You should spend about 20 minutes on Questions 28-40, which are based on Reading Passage 84 on the following pages.

Variations on a theme:
the sonnet form in English poetry

A The form of lyric poetry known as 'the sonnet', or 'little song', was introduced into the English poetic corpus by Sir Thomas Wyatt the Elder and his contemporary Henry Howard, Earl of Surrey, during the first half of the sixteenth century. It originated, however, in Italy three centuries earlier, with the earliest examples known being those of Giacomo de Lentino, 'The Notary' in the Sicilian court of the Emperor Frederick II, dating from the third decade of the thirteenth century. The Sicilian sonneteers are relatively obscure, but the form was taken up by the two most famous poets of the Italian Renaissance, Dante and Petrarch, and indeed the latter is regarded as the master of the form.

B The Petrarchan sonnet form, the first to be introduced into English poetry, is a complex poetic structure. It comprises fourteen lines written in a rhyming metrical pattern of iambic pentameter, that into say each line is ten syllables long, divided into five 'feet' or pairs of syllables (hence 'pentameter'), with a stress pattern where the first syllable of each foot is unstressed and the second stressed (an iambic foot). This can be seen if we look at the first line of one of Wordsworth's sonnets, 'After-Thought':
'I thought of thee my partner and my guide'.
If we hreak down this line into its constituent syllabic parts, we can see the five feet and the stress pattern (in this example each stressed syllable is underlined), thus: 'I thought/ of thee/ my partner and/ my guide'.

C The rhyme scheme for the Petrarchan sonnet is equally as rigid. The poem is generally divided into two parts, the octave (eight lines) and the sestet (six lines), which is demonstrated through rhyme rather than an actual space between each section. The octave is usually rhymed abbaabba with the first, fourth, fifth and eighth lines rhyming with each other, and the second, third, sixth and seventh also rhyming. The sestet is more varied: it can follow the patterns cdecde, cdccdc, or cdedce. Perhaps the best interpretation of this division in the Petrarchan sonnet is by Charles Gayley, who wrote: "The octave bears the burden; a doubt, a problem,. a reflection, a query, an historical statement, a cry of indignation or desire, a vision of the ideal. The sestet eases the load, resolves the problem or doubt, answers the query or doubt, solaces the yearning, realizes the vision." Thus, we can see that the rhyme scheme demonstrates a twofold division in the poem, providing a structure for the development of themes and ideas.

D Early on, however, English poets began to vary and experiment with this structure. The first major development was made by Henry Howard, Earl of Surrey, altogether an indifferent poet, but was taken up and perfected by William Shakespeare, and is named after him. The Shakespearean sonnet also has fourteen lines in iambic pentameter, but rather than the division into octave and sestet, the poem is divided into four parts: three quatrains and a final rhyming couplet. Each quatrain has its own internal rhyme scheme, thus a typical Shakespearean sonnet would rhyme abab cdcd efef gg. Such a structure naturally allows greater flexibility for the author and it would be hard, if not impossible, to enumerate the different ways in which it has been employed, by Shakespeare and others. For example, an idea might be introduced in the first quatrain, complicated in the second, further complicated in the third, and resolved in the final couplet -indeed, the couplet is almost always used as a resolution to the poem, though often in a surprising way.

E These, then, are the two standard forms of the sonnet in English poetry, but it should be recognized that poets rarely follow rules precisely and a number of other sonnet types have been developed, playing with the structural. elements. Edmund Spenser, for example, more famous for his verse epic 'The Faerie Queene', invented a variation on the Shakespearean form by interlocking the rhyme schemes between the quatrains, thus: abab bcbc cdcd ee, while in the twentieth century Rupert Brooke reversed his sonnet, beginning with the couplet. John Milton, the seventeenth-century poet, was unsatisfied with the fourteen-line format and wrote a number of 'Caudate' sonnets, or 'sonnets with the regular fourteen lines (on the Petrarchan model) with a 'coda' or 'tail' of a further six lines. A similar notion informs George Meredith's sonnet sequence 'Modern Love', where most sonnets in the cycle have sixteen lines.

F Perhaps the most radical of innovators, however, has been Gerard Manley Hopkins, who developed what he called the 'Curtal' sonnet. This form varies the length of the poem, reducing it in effect to eleven and a half lines, the rhyme scheme and the number of feet per line. Modulating the Petrarchan form, instead of two quatrains in the octave, he has two tercets rhyming abc abc, and in place of the sestet he has four and a half lines, with a rhyme scheme dcbdc. As if this is not enough, the tercets are no longer in iambic pentameter, but have six stresses instead of five, as does the final quatrain, with the exception of the last line, which has three. Many critics, however, are sceptical as to whether such a major variation can indeed be classified as a sonnet, but as verse forms and structures become freer, and poets less satisfied with convention, it is likely that even more experimental forms will out.

Questions 28-32

Reading Passage 91 has eight paragraphs labelled **A-H**.

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

Write the appropriate numbers (**i-xiii**) in boxes **28-32** on your answer sheet.

One of the headings has been done for you as an example. Any heading may be used more than once.

Note: *There are more headings than paragraphs, so you will not use all of them.*

List of Headings

i Octave develops sestet

ii The Faerie Queene and Modern Love

iii The origins of the sonnet

iv The Shakespearean sonnet form

v The structure of the Petrarchan sonnet form

vi A real sonnet?

vii Rhyme scheme provides structure developing themes and ideas

viii Dissatisfaction with format

xi The Sicilian sonneteers

x Howard v. Shakespeare

xi Wordsworth's sonnet form

xii Future breaks with convention

xiii The sonnet form: variations and additions

28 Paragraph A

29 Paragraph B

30 Paragraph C

31 Paragraph D

32 Paragraph E

Example Paragraph **A** **Answer** iii

Questions 33-37

Using **NO MORE THAN THREE WORDS** from the passage, complete the sentences below.

33 Sir Thomas Wyatt the Elder and Henry Howard were ..... .

34 It was in the third decade of the thirteenth century that the ..... was introduced.

35 Among poets of the Italian Renaissance ..... was considered to be the better sonneteer.

36 The Petrarchan sonnet form consists of ..... .

37 In comparison with the octave, the rhyming scheme of the sestet is ..... varied.

Questions 38-40

Choose the correct letters **A-D** and write them in boxes **38-40** on your answer sheet.

38 According to Charles Gayley,

A the octave is longer than the sestet.

B the octave develops themes and ideas.

C the sestet provides answers and solutions.

D the sestet demonstrates a twofold division.

39 The Shakespearean sonnet is

A an indifferent development.

B more developed than the Petrarchan sonnet.

C more flexible than the Petrarchan sonnet.

D enumerated in different ways.

40 According to the passage, whose sonnet types are similar?

A Spenser and Brooke

B Brooke and Milton

C Hopkins and Spenser

D Milton and Meredith

Answer:

28. v 29. vii 30. iv 31. xiii 32. vi 33. contemporaries 34. sonnet/little song 35. Petrarch 36. fourteen lines/octave and sestet 37. more 38. C 39. C 40. D

IELTS Academic Reading Sample 85 - Delivering the Goods

DELIVERING THE GOODS

The vast expansion in international trade owes much to a revolution in the business of moving freight

A International trade is growing at a startling pace. While the global economy has been expanding at a bit over 3% a year, the volume of trade has been rising at a compound annual rate of about twice that. Foreign products, from meat to machinery, play a more important role in almost every economy in the world, and foreign markets now tempt businesses that never much worried about sales beyond their nation's borders.

B What lies behind this explosion in international commerce? The general worldwide decline in trade barriers, such as customs duties and import quotas, is surely one explanation. The economic opening of countries that have traditionally been minor players is another. But one force behind the import-export boom has passed all but unnoticed: the rapidly falling cost of getting goods to market. Theoretically, in the world of trade, shipping costs do not matter. Goods, once they have been made, are assumed to move instantly and at no cost from place to place. The real world, however, is full of frictions. Cheap labour may make Chinese clothing competitive in America, but if delays in shipment tie up working capital and cause winter coats to arrive in spring, trade may lose its advantages.

C At the turn of the 20th century, agriculture and manufacturing were the two most important sectors almost everywhere, accounting for about 70% of total output in Germany, Italy and France, and 40-50% in America, Britain and Japan. International commerce was therefore dominated by raw materials, such as wheat, wood and iron ore, or processed commodities, such as meat and steel. But these sorts of products are heavy and bulky and the cost of transporting them relatively high.

D Countries still trade disproportionately with their geographic neighbours. Over time, however, world output has shifted into goods whose worth is unrelated to their size and weight. Today, it is finished manufactured products that dominate the flow of trade, and, thanks to technological advances such as lightweight components, manufactured goods themselves have tended to become lighter and less bulky. As a result, less transportation is required for every dollar's worth of imports or exports.

E To see how this influences trade, consider the business of making disk drives for computers. Most of the world's disk-drive manufacturing is concentrated in South-east Asia. This is possible only because disk drives,

while valuable, are small and light and so cost little to ship. Computer manufacturers in Japan or Texas will not face hugely bigger freight bills if they import drives from Singapore rather than purchasing them on the domestic market. Distance therefore poses no obstacle to the globalisation of the disk-drive industry.

F This is even more true of the fast-growing information industries. Films and compact discs cost little to transport, even by aeroplane. Computer software can be 'exported' without ever loading it onto a ship, simply by transmitting it over telephone lines from one country to another, so freight rates and cargo-handling schedules become insignificant factors in deciding where to make the product. Businesses can locate based on other considerations, such as the availability of labour, while worrying less about the cost of delivering their output.

G In many countries deregulation has helped to drive the process along. But, behind the scenes, a series of technological innovations known broadly as containerisation and inter-modal transportation has led to swift productivity improvements in cargo-handling. Forty years ago, the process of exporting or importing involved a great many stages of handling, which risked portions of the shipment being damaged or stolen along the way. The invention of the container crane made it possible to load and unload containers without capsizing the ship and the adoption of standard container sizes allowed almost any box to be transported on any ship. By 1967, dual-purpose ships, carrying loose cargo in the hold* and containers on the deck, were giving way to all-container vessels that moved thousands of boxes at a time.

H The shipping container transformed ocean shipping into a highly efficient, intensely competitive business. But getting the cargo to and from the dock was a different story. National governments, by and large, kept a much firmer hand on truck and railroad tariffs than on charges for ocean freight. This started changing, however, in the mid-1970s, when America began to deregulate its transportation industry. First airlines, then road hauliers and railways, were freed from restrictions on what they could carry, where they could haul it and se what price they could charge. Big productivity gains resulted. Between 1985 and 1996, for example, America's freight railways dramatically reduced their employment, trackage, and their fleets of locomotives - while increasing the amount of cargo they hauled. Europe's railways have also shown marked, albeit smaller, productivity improvements.

I In America the period of huge productivity gains in transportation may be almost over, but in most countries the process still has far to go. State ownership of railways and airlines, regulation of freight rates and toleration of anti-competitive practices, such as cargo-handling monopolies, all keep the cost of shipping unnecessarily high and deter international trade. Bringing these barriers down would help the world's economies grow even closer.

Questions 14-17

Reading Passage **90** has six sections, **A-I.**

Which paragraph contains the following information?

Write the correct letter **A-I** in boxes **14-17** on your answer sheet.

14 a suggestion for improving trade in the future

15 the effects of the introduction of electronic delivery

16 the similar cost involved in transporting a product from abroad or from a local supplier

17 the weakening relationship between the value of goods and the cost of their delivery

Questions 18-22

Do the following statements agree with the information given in Reading Passage 90?

*In boxes **18-22** 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

18 International trade is increasing at a greater rate than the world economy.

19 Cheap labour guarantees effective trade conditions.

20 Japan imports more meat and steel than France.

21 Most countries continue to prefer to trade with nearby nations.

22 Small computer components are manufactured in Germany.

Questions 23-26

Complete the summary using the list of words, **A-K**, below.

Write the correct letter, **A-K**, in boxes **23-26** on your answer sheet.

THE TRANSPORT REVOLUTION

Modern cargo-handling methods have had a significant effect on **23** ..... as the business of moving freight around the world becomes increasingly streamlined.

Manufacturers of computers, for instance, are able to import **24** ..... from overseas, rather than having to rely on a local supplier. The introduction of **25** ..... has meant that bulk cargo can be safely and efficiently moved over long distances. While international shipping is now efficient, there is still a need for governments to reduce **26**..... in order to free up the domestic cargo sector.

A tariffs **B** components **C** container ships **D** output
E employees **F** insurance costs **G** trade **H** freight
I fares **J** software **K** international standards

Answer:

14. I 15. F 16. E 17. D 18. TRUE 19. FALSE 20. NOT GIVEN 21. TRUE 22. NOT GIVEN 23. trade 24. components 25. container ships 26. tariffs

IELTS Academic Reading Sample 86 - Ancient Egypt

You should spend about 20 minutes on questions **1-13**, which are based on Reading Passage 86

Ancient Egypt

The people of ancient Egypt emerged as one of the first Western civilisations. Sustained by the River Nile and protected by vast deserts, the Egyptians lived in comparative security, prosperity and peace far thousands of years. When such conditions exist, the civilisation and its arts usually flourish. To this day, many of the Egyptian artistic creations display the wealth, splendour and talent of this great civilisation.

Ancient Egypt has been called a land of temples and tombs, and for centuries people have been filled with wonder at the ingenuity of the Egyptians, whose impressive works have withstood the ravages of time so well. Had it not been for the long-lasting nature of their monuments and carved inscriptions in the form of hieroglyphics', much evidence of their activities would have vanished from ail historical records. In about 3000 BC, Upper and Lower Egypt were united under the first pharaoh, and generally from that time until the invasion by Alexander the Great in 332 BC, Egypt prospered as a nation of skilful craftsmen and artists.

The Egyptians were an industrious, highly civilised and deeply religious people, who obediently accepted the supreme authority of their pharaohs. The people were content to serve and work for the state in return for a secure livelihood. They considered this earthly life to be a segment in a great cycle, at the end of which everything would be returned to its original form. The richer and more important the person, the more careful and elaborate would be his or her burial, and the stronger and safer the tomb in which they would be buried. The burial of the dead in the ground was not considered sufficiently safe for kings, queens and court officials, so sunken, sealed tombs were ingeniously constructed to protect personal treasures, food and instructions for the safe conduct of the soul after death. The design of these tombs developed into the stepped pyramid, and finally into the square pyramid that we know today.

There are about 80 ancient pyramids in Egypt. The Great Pyramid at Gizeh, which King Cheops built as his tomb 5000 years ago, holds most interest. It stands with two other pyramids on a slight rise overlooking the River Nile. At the centre of the pyramid is the King's Chamber and leading down from there is a long narrow area known as the Grand Gallery. The pyramid covers 13 acres and contains 2,300,000 blocks of limestone, each weighing an average of 1.5 tons. Its pyramidal form has a perfectly square base with sides of 756 feet and a height of 481 feet. Situated directly below the King's Chamber is the Queen's Chamber and there are two air channels leading upwards from the centre of the pyramid to the outside.

Originally the exterior was covered in highly polished limestone slabs, all of which have been stolen over the

years. It is estimated that a total of 100,000 men laboured for 20 years to build this gigantic structure, and although architecturally unimportant in design, it has aroused the curiosity of millions of people because of the uncanny accuracy of its measurements and proportions. It reveals the remarkable ingenuity and the great organising ability of the ancient Egyptians.

Near these pyramids stands the Great Sphinx, the origin and purpose of which constitute one of the world's most famous puzzles. Shaped from an outcrop of stone in the form of a human-headed lion, the face is possibly a portrait of King Khafra, the son of Cheops, who was buried in the second largest pyramid. The Sphinx is one of the biggest statues ever made.

The Egyptian people showed reverence towards natural objects such as the lotus flower, the scarab beetle, the falcon, the lion, the sun and the River Nile. All these subjects and many more were used symbolically and conventionally as motifs in low-relief carving and painting. It was the custom of the Egyptians to depict the various parts of the human figure, usually in the most characteristic positions. The head was shown in profile except for the eye, which was represented from the front, the shoulders and a portion of the arms wert portrayed from the front, while the hips and legs were side views. Wall decoration showed little or no attempt to indicate depth or perspective, except by placing distant objects above near things. It was essentially two-dimensional, and relative size indicated the status of the person, so the pharaoh was the largest figure in the composition.

Egyptian art is characterised by a passion for permanence, a desire to impress by size, and a determination to make each item serve its function without much regard for the whole. It is obvious that art among these people reached a very high level and the strong influence of Egyptian art can be seen in the work of nearby civilisations.

The fortunate discovery and subsequent deciphering in 1822 of the Rosetta Stone, which showed the same laws inscribed both in Egyptian hieroglyphics and the Egyptian demotic, or popular version of their language, as well as the Greek language, eventually gave the key to the meaning of Egyptian inscriptions, and therefore the significance of much Egyptian art.

Questions 1-3

Complete the sentences below.

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

*Write your answers in boxes **1-3** on your answer sheet.*

1 Security and peace are two ..... that are necessary for a civilisation to be successful.

2 Ancient Egyptians worked as both ..... .

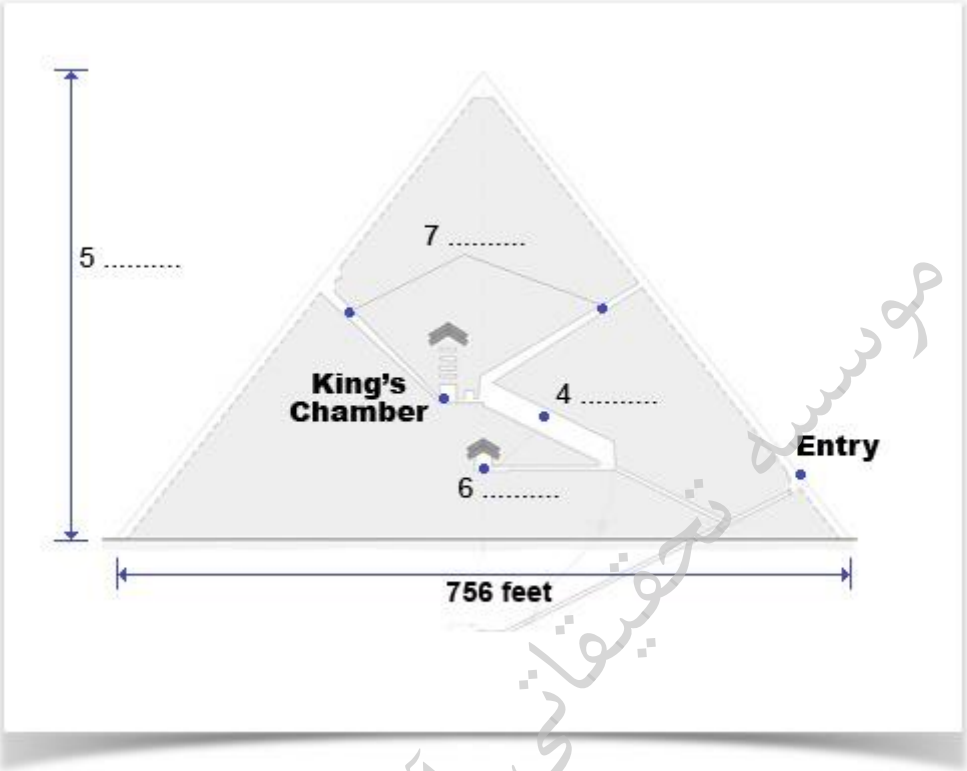
3 Ordinary Egyptians expected to receive ..... for their hard work.

Questions 4-7

Label the diagram below.

Choose **NO MORE THAN THREE WORDS AND/OR NUMBERS** from the passage for each answer.

*Write your answers in boxes **4-7** on your answer sheet.*



4 .....

5 .....

6 .....

7 .....

Questions 8-12

Do the following statements agree with the information given in the Reading Passage 1.

In boxes **8-12** on your answer sheet, write

TRUE if the statement agrees with the information

FALSE if the statement contradicts the information

NOT GIVEN iif there is no information on this

8 The surface of the Great Pyramid is covered in polished limestone slabs.

9 King Khafra died before King Cheops.

10 Egyptian carvings were often based on things found in nature.

11 Important characters in Egyptian carvings were bigger than less important characters.

12 Egyptian art was greatly influenced by the art of neighbouring cultures.

Question 13

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

Write the correct letter in box **13** on your answer sheet.

The writer's aim in this passage is to **--**

A describe the construction methods of the pyramids.

B explain the beliefs of the ancient Egyptians.

C offer an interpretation of Egyptian art and sculpture.

D provide an overview of early Egyptian society.

Answer:

1. conditions 2. craftsmen and artists / artists and craftsmen 3. a secure livelihood 4. (the) Grand Gallery 5. 481 feet 6. (the) Queen's Chamber 7. (the) air channel(s) 8. FALSE 9. NOT GIVEN 10. TRUE 11. TRUE 12. FALSE 13. D

IELTS Academic Reading Sample 87 - Australia's Sporting Success

AUSTRALIA'S SPORTING SUCCESS

A

They play hard, they play often, and they play to win. Australian sports teams win more than their fair share of titles, demolishing rivals with seeming ease. How do they do it? A big part of the secret is an extensive and expensive network of sporting academies underpinned by science and medicine. At the Australian Institute of Sport (AIS), hundreds of youngsters and pros live and train under the eyes of coaches. Another body, the Australian Sports Commission (ASC), finances programmes of excellence in a total of 96 sports for thousands of sportsmen and women. Both provide intensive coaching, training facilities and nutritional advice.

B

Inside the academies, science takes centre stage. The AIS employs more than 100 sports scientists and doctors, and collaborates with scores of others in universities and research centres. AIS scientists work across a number of sports, applying skills learned in one - such as building muscle strength in golfers - to others, such as swimming and squash. They are backed up by technicians who design instruments to collect data from athletes. They all focus on one aim: winning. 'We can't waste our time looking at ethereal scientific questions that don't help the coach work with an athlete and improve performance.' says Peter Fricker, chief of science at AIS.

C

A lot of their work comes down to measurement - everything from the exact angle of a swimmers dive to the second-by-second power output of a cyclist. This data is used to wring improvements out of athletes. The focus is on individuals, tweaking performances to squeeze an extra hundredth of a second here, an extra millimetre there. No gain is too slight to bother with. It's the tiny, gradual improvements that add up to world-beating results. To demonstrate how the system works, Bruce Mason at AIS shows off the prototype of a 3D analysis tool for studying swimmers. A wire-frame model of a champion swimmer slices through the water, her arms moving in slow motion. Looking side-on, Mason measures the distance between strokes. From above, he analyses how her spine swivels. When fully developed, this system will enable him to build a biomechanical profile for coaches to use to help budding swimmers. Mason's contribution to sport also includes the development of the SWAN (SWimming ANalysis) system now used in Australian national competitions. It collects images from digital cameras running at 50 frames a second and breaks down each part of a swimmers performance into factors that can be analysed individually - stroke length, stroke frequency, average duration of each stroke, velocity, start, lap and finish times, and so on. At the end of each race, SWAN spits out data on

each swimmer.

D

'Take a look.' says Mason, pulling out a sheet of data. He points out the data on the swimmers in second and third place, which shows that the one who finished third actually swam faster. So why did he finish 35 hundredths of a second down? 'His turn times were 44 hundredths of a second behind the other guy.' says Mason. 'If he can improve on his turns, he can do much better.' This is the kind of accuracy that AIS scientists' research is bringing to a range of sports. With the Cooperative Research Centre for Micro Technology in Melbourne, they are developing unobtrusive sensors that will be embedded in an athlete's clothes or running shoes to monitor heart rate, sweating, heat production or any other factor that might have an impact on an athlete's ability to run. There's more to it than simply measuring performance. Fricker gives the example of athletes who may be down with coughs and colds 11 or 12 times a year. After years of experimentation, AIS and the University of Newcastle in New South Wales developed a test that measures how much of the immune-system protein immunoglobulin A is present in athletes' saliva. If IgA levels suddenly fall below a certain level, training is eased or dropped altogether. Soon, IgA levels start rising again, and the danger passes. Since the tests were introduced, AIS athletes in all sports have been remarkably successful at staying healthy.

E

Using data is a complex business. Well before a championship, sports scientists and coaches start to prepare the athlete by developing a 'competition model', based on what they expect will be the winning times. 'You design the model to make that time.' says Mason. 'A start of this much, each free-swimming period has to be this fast, with a certain stroke frequency and stroke length, with turns done in these times'. All the training is then geared towards making the athlete hit those targets, both overall and for each segment of the race. Techniques like these have transformed Australia into arguably the world's most successful sporting nation.

F

Of course, there's nothing to stop other countries copying - and many have tried. Some years ago, the AIS unveiled coolant-lined jackets for endurance athletes. At the Atlanta Olympic Games in 1996, these sliced as much as two per cent off cyclists' and rowers times. Now everyone uses them. The same has happened to the altitude tent', developed by AIS to replicate the effect of altitude training at sea level. But Australia's success story is about more than easily copied technological fixes, and up to now no nation has replicated its all-encompassing system.

Questions 1-7

Reading Passage 88 has six paragraphs, **A-F**.

Which paragraph contains the following information?

Write the correct letter **A-F** in boxes **1-7** on your answer sheet.

NB *You may use any letter more than once*

1 a reference to the exchange of expertise between different sports

2 an explanation of how visual imaging is employed in investigations

3 a reason for narrowing the scope of research activity

4 how some AIS ideas have been reproduced

5 how obstacles to optimum achievement can be investigated

6 an overview of the funded support of athletes

7 how performance requirements are calculated before an event

Questions 8-11

Classify the following techniques according to whether the writer states they

A are currently exclusively used by Australians

B will be used in the future by Australians

C are currently used by both Australians and their rivals

Write the correct letter **A, B, C** or **D** in boxes **8-11** on your answer sheet.

8 cameras

9 sensors

10 protein tests

11 altitude tents

Questions 12 and **13**

Choose **NO MORE THAN THREE WORDS AND/OR A NUMBER** from the Reading Passage **88** for each answer.

Write your answers in boxes **12** and **13** on your answer sheet.

12 What is produced to help an athlete plan their performance in an event?

13 By how much did some cyclists' performance improve at the 1996 Olympic Games?

Answer:

1. B 2. C 3. B 4. F 5. D 6. A 7. E 8. A 9. B 10. A 11. C 12. (a) competition model 13. (by) 2 per cent