اختبارات القراءة الاستيعابية Towns Small and Megacities



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التواصل الاجتماعي بحسب الصف الثاني عشر المتقدم					
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المزيد من الملفات بحسب الصف الثاني عشر المتقدم والمادة لغة انجليزية في الفصل الأول	
1	دليل مهارات الكتابة وتلخيص وجهات النظر – نهاية الفصل
2	نموذج اختبار تجريبي
3	نماذج تدريبات القراءة وفق الهيكل الوزاري
4	نماذج تدريبية لمهارات القراءة وفق الهيكل الوزاري
5	اختبار كتابة للتحضير للامتحان النهائي وفق الهيكل

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READING PRACTICE

Megacities and Small Towns

GRADE 12 ADVANCED

End-of-Term 1 | Reading Comprehension

Name: _____

Class: _____ Date: _____

READING 01 / TEXT

The Density Paradox

Rise to the Challenge! | Megacities and Small Towns

A skyline crowded with apartment towers is often treated as shorthand for environmental failure. Yet the ecological consequences of urban density are less straightforward than the silhouette suggests. When residents share walls, transport networks and water systems, the resources required per household can fall substantially. The difficulty is that density seldom arrives alone: rising incomes, expanding consumption and the construction needed to accommodate newcomers can offset those efficiencies.

Consider a transport authority that widens an urban motorway to relieve congestion. At first, journey times improve. Businesses subsequently relocate farther from employees, households make additional trips and drivers abandon slower alternatives. The extra capacity becomes a reason to travel more, rather than a lasting cure for traffic. By contrast, a moderately dense district with dependable public transport may generate fewer car journeys even though its streets appear visibly busier. The distinction is between movement accommodated and movement induced.

None of this means that small towns are necessarily wasteful. A town whose residents work nearby, maintain compact housing and rely on regional buses can have a modest footprint. Equally, a supposedly sustainable megacity may outsource the environmental costs of its appetite for steel, food and electricity to places beyond its administrative boundary. Accounting only for emissions released within city limits therefore rewards a misleading form of cleanliness: pollution has moved, not vanished.

Urban planners consequently face a measurement problem as much as a design problem. Should success be judged by emissions per resident, total emissions or the resources embedded in what residents consume? Each measure reveals something important while concealing something else. Per-capita figures can disguise an enormous aggregate burden; total figures can unfairly penalise places that accommodate large populations; consumption-based estimates require imperfect supply-chain data.

The most credible comparison treats density neither as a virtue nor a vice. It examines the infrastructure that makes proximity useful, the behaviour it encourages and the environmental costs displaced elsewhere. A city's apparent compactness is merely the starting point of that inquiry, not its conclusion.

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READING 01 / QUESTIONS

The Density Paradox

Read the text and choose the best answer. Choose A, B or C.

1. Why can urban density reduce resource use per household?

A Shared infrastructure offsets emissions from all urban consumption.
B Infrastructure and building space can be shared.
C Compact homes consistently reduce total city emissions.

2. What undermines the long-term benefit of motorway expansion?

A Additional capacity encourages further journeys.
B Improved roads encourage firms to concentrate near existing jobs.
C The first gains vanish because maintenance becomes more expensive.

3. Why might a megacity appear cleaner than it is?

A City accounts routinely omit emissions from private households.
B Emissions per resident exclude electricity used inside the city.
C Its consumption can shift emissions beyond city limits.

4. What can be inferred about per-capita emissions as a sole indicator?

A They may understate the total burden of a huge city.
B They can mask differences in households' consumption patterns.
C They systematically exaggerate a city's imported emissions.

5. Which inference best follows from the discussion of small towns?

A Their advantage comes primarily from their smaller populations.
B Their local transport systems determine their footprint completely.
C Their impact depends partly on settlement and travel patterns.

6. Which description best captures the writer's tone?

A Neutral about the weaknesses of territorial accounting.
B Optimistic about density as a sufficient policy.
C Analytical and sceptical of simplistic comparisons.

7. How does the motorway example support the broader argument?

A It shows that infrastructure changes behaviour as well as capacity.
B It shows that traffic growth makes dense housing necessary.
C It shows that road capacity alone determines citywide demand.

8. What is the central claim of the passage?

A Urban sustainability should be judged primarily by imported goods.
B Density is useful only when total emissions are declining.
C Urban sustainability requires wider accounting than density alone.

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READING 02 / TEXT

When Remote Work Reaches the High Street

Rise to the Challenge! | Megacities and Small Towns

The possibility of working from a small town while earning a metropolitan salary has been presented as a revolution in regional development. Its appeal is obvious: professionals gain living space, local cafés acquire customers and villages previously dismissed as peripheral appear newly competitive. But an influx of remote workers can strengthen a town's economy while weakening the foundations of its social life.

The first beneficiaries are not necessarily longstanding residents. Property owners may enjoy rising asset values, whereas renters face higher costs without corresponding wage increases. Independent retailers can adapt to affluent newcomers, yet the resulting changes in price and product range may make a familiar high street less useful to people whose incomes remain local. A renovated bakery does not compensate for the disappearance of an affordable hardware shop.

Meanwhile, remote workers do not automatically transfer their civic loyalties to the place where they sleep. Their employers, professional networks and sometimes their tax obligations remain elsewhere. Some contribute enthusiastically to local organisations; others regard the town as a comfortable backdrop to careers conducted through screens. The difference matters because libraries, youth clubs and volunteer services depend on sustained participation, not merely consumer spending.

Municipal leaders are therefore tempted by a misleading metric: the number of new residents registered in a year. That figure says little about whether younger local workers can remain, whether public services have expanded or whether newcomers and established communities interact. A town can grow wealthier on paper and less inclusive in practice. Conversely, policies that protect mixed-income housing, encourage shared civic spaces and support locally owned enterprises can make migration beneficial beyond a narrow property-owning group.

Remote work also leaves towns vulnerable to decisions made far away. A change in corporate attendance policy can suddenly empty rented houses or reduce weekday spending. What looks like a permanent reversal of urban concentration may be a temporary redistribution of particular occupations.

A town's revival should consequently be judged not by its popularity with mobile professionals but by whether the opportunity they bring is distributed and anchored locally. Economic arrival is only the first stage of social integration.

READING 02 / QUESTIONS

When Remote Work Reaches the High Street

Read the text and choose the best answer. Choose A, B or C.

1. Which group can face immediate costs from incoming remote workers?

A Homeowners whose asset values increase but incomes do not.
B Local businesses that attract customers from outside the town.
C Long-term renters whose earnings do not rise.

2. What concern is illustrated by the renovated bakery?

A Retail upgrading may displace essential affordable services.
B Retail renewal may benefit residents despite raising local rents.
C Retail renovation can boost prestige without changing the product mix.

3. Why is consumer spending an incomplete measure of integration?

A Community services also require ongoing participation.
B Civic commitment depends on living near one's employer.
C Spending measures purchasing power rather than wage inequality.

4. What does the passage imply about population growth figures?

A They measure new demand for public services more accurately.
B They can conceal who benefits and who is displaced.
C They distinguish temporary residents from permanent migrants.

5. What is a likely consequence of stricter office-attendance policies?

A Employment networks may become less dependent on large cities.
B Some towns could lose spending that seemed secure.
C Property values could rise even as spending increases.

6. How would the writer's attitude to remote-work migration best be described?

A Qualified optimism tempered by distributional concerns.
B Concern that remote work produces no economic benefits.
C Optimism based chiefly on greater consumer choice.

7. How are housing policy and civic spaces connected in the argument?

A Both can spread the gains of in-migration more broadly.
B Both encourage newcomers to relocate their employers locally.
C Both chiefly protect existing businesses from outside competition.

8. Which statement best expresses the overall message?

A Town revival depends principally on attracting high earners.
B Town revival is best measured by property and business growth.
C Town revival depends on durable, inclusive local benefits.

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READING 03 / TEXT

The Informal City as an Unwritten Plan

Rise to the Challenge! | Megacities and Small Towns

Informal settlements are frequently described through the language of absence: no formal title, incomplete drainage, unapproved streets. This vocabulary identifies genuine dangers but can obscure the sophisticated arrangements residents devise to compensate for inadequate provision. Informality is neither a romantic alternative to planning nor evidence that planning is unnecessary. It is often a record of what people build when formal systems fail to reach them.

In one neighbourhood, vendors organise delivery times so that a narrow lane can alternate between marketplace and pedestrian route. Households collectively finance water storage, while local associations negotiate with electricity providers. Such arrangements may be remarkably adaptive because users revise them as conditions change. They can also be fragile. A system that depends on personal relationships may exclude recent arrivals, and an improvised drainage channel cannot always withstand exceptional rainfall.

Authorities sometimes respond with clearance and reconstruction, arguing that regulation can finally be applied. Yet the replacement estate may place residents far from customers, relatives and informal employment. If planners calculate only the number of legally compliant housing units, the project can appear successful even as household income collapses. Physical order, in other words, may come at the expense of the social networks that made the original settlement viable.

An alternative approach begins with negotiated upgrading: securing occupancy, installing infrastructure and preserving useful street connections where possible. It requires officials to regard local knowledge as evidence without treating every existing practice as safe. Engineers still need to assess flood exposure and structural risk; residents need genuine influence over relocation decisions. Consultation held after a scheme has already been finalised is participation in name only.

This approach is administratively slower and politically less spectacular than demolition. Nonetheless, its benefits may last longer because it improves material conditions without indiscriminately destroying livelihoods. The central challenge is to distinguish between those informal arrangements that represent ingenuity and those that represent an unacceptable transfer of risk onto the poor.

Cities become more equitable not when the informal is made invisible, but when residents receive the infrastructure, rights and voice that formal districts take for granted.

READING 03 / QUESTIONS

The Informal City as an Unwritten Plan

Read the text and choose the best answer. Choose A, B or C.

1. What does the alternating use of the narrow lane demonstrate?

A Public authorities regularly adapt roads to marketplace demand.
B Residents coordinate scarce space through flexible rules.
C Residents bypass formal rules whenever trade expands.

2. Which weakness of informal arrangements is explicitly acknowledged?

A Reliance on personal ties can exclude newcomers.
B Shared facilities remain reliable during extreme weather.
C Local networks are slower to respond than municipal agencies.

3. Why might a compliant replacement estate still be harmful?

A It may sever networks essential to residents' incomes.
B Formal homes tend to increase residents' transport expenses alone.
C Replacement homes can restore residents' access to distant employers.

4. What is implied by the criticism of late consultation?

A Public attendance is sufficient evidence of resident consent.
B Consultation should follow risk assessment but precede demolition.
C Procedural involvement is inadequate without influence.

5. Which inference best reflects the author's view of negotiated upgrading?

A It prioritises housing titles above economic activity.
B It attempts to preserve useful practices while reducing danger.
C It substitutes resident expertise for formal safety checks.

6. What is the writer's tone towards informal settlements?

A Respectful of ingenuity but alert to serious risks.
B Concerned chiefly with the administrative cost of upgrading.
C Enthusiastic about self-regulation as a substitute for infrastructure.

7. How does the housing-unit metric relate to the passage's final argument?

A Both suggest social ties matter more than physical safety.
B Both show why compliance indicators are usually misleading.
C Both question judgments that ignore residents' lived conditions.

8. Which overall claim best represents the passage?

A Local knowledge should override technical planning decisions.
B Inclusive planning must combine technical standards with local agency.
C Safety improves mainly when construction follows formal standards.

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READING 04 / TEXT

The Water a City Never Sees

Rise to the Challenge! | Megacities and Small Towns

When drought restrictions are announced in a megacity, public attention turns to visible consumption: garden hoses, swimming pools and dripping taps. These uses matter, but they constitute only one part of a larger water system. Urban diets, electricity supplies and manufactured goods depend on water withdrawn elsewhere, sometimes from regions with far less capacity to recover after a dry year.

This creates an uncomfortable accounting problem. A city can reduce its municipal consumption while increasing its dependence on imported products grown in water-stressed catchments. A small agricultural town may appear less efficient because irrigation withdrawals are recorded locally, even though much of the harvest is destined for metropolitan supermarkets. The apparent contrast between a prudent city and a wasteful town may therefore reflect the location of accounting boundaries rather than the location of demand.

Water footprints attempt to capture these hidden flows, but a litre is not always equivalent to another litre. Using rainwater in a humid region has different consequences from pumping groundwater that replenishes over centuries. Furthermore, an imported product can support livelihoods in its region of origin. Simply forbidding trade in water-intensive goods might shift financial hardship to communities with few alternatives.

Some planners advocate local food production as a universal response. Yet greenhouses require energy, soil conditions vary and producing every crop locally may consume more resources than importing selected goods. The more defensible strategy is to assess scarcity, energy demand and social effects together, rather than substituting distance for environmental evidence.

For municipalities, this means combining practical local measures with informed procurement and cooperation across regions. Leak repair can achieve immediate gains, but institutions must also ask where their food and construction materials originate and under what water conditions they are produced. Suppliers may resist disclosure, and estimates will remain uncertain. Uncertainty, however, is not an argument for ignoring indirect impacts.

Water governance becomes credible when responsibility follows consumption across jurisdictional boundaries. A tap reveals where water is delivered; it does not reveal the entire chain of decisions that determines who ultimately bears the cost.

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READING 04 / QUESTIONS

The Water a City Never Sees

Read the text and choose the best answer. Choose A, B or C.

1. Why can a city reduce municipal water use without reducing overall pressure?

A Its imported consumption may draw on stressed regions.
B Household conservation can be offset by lower food prices.
C Municipal systems include imported water used in agriculture.

2. Why may an agricultural town look comparatively inefficient?

A Urban demand is excluded from municipal supply records entirely.
B Farms use water less efficiently when they export crops.
C Irrigation is counted where crops are produced.

3. What limitation of simple water-footprint totals is identified?

A They may ignore differing degrees of water scarcity.
B They cannot distinguish agricultural from household demand.
C They conceal the water used to generate electricity.

4. What does the discussion of trade imply?

A Regional producers usually gain from reduced export dependence.
B Environmental restrictions can impose uneven social costs.
C Import limits may reduce local demand without helping producers.

5. What follows from the criticism of universal local food production?

A Local production always uses fewer non-water resources.
B Transport distance is less relevant than household income.
C Geographic proximity alone cannot establish sustainability.

6. Which phrase best characterises the writer's tone?

A Optimistic that local policies can resolve global scarcity.
B Sceptical about attempts to measure resource use.
C Cautious and systems-oriented.

7. How does the irrigation example relate to the closing claim?

A Both show why farm withdrawals should be ignored in accounting.
B Both trace responsibility beyond the place of withdrawal.
C Both show how climate variability changes water estimates.

8. What is the main purpose of the passage?

A To argue for water accountability across supply chains.
B To demonstrate the superiority of consumption-based estimates alone.
C To argue that municipal conservation is largely unnecessary.

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READING 05 / TEXT

Who Owns the Smart Street?

Rise to the Challenge! | Megacities and Small Towns

A municipal dashboard can display bus delays, air quality and pedestrian flows in real time. For officials facing difficult budget choices, that apparent precision is seductive. Yet a city that measures more is not necessarily a city that understands more. Data systems reflect what sensors can detect, which neighbourhoods receive investment and the assumptions built into the categories used to describe public life.

A footfall counter may register a busy square as successful without revealing why people are there. Some may be enjoying a public festival; others may be queuing because an essential service has too few staff. Similarly, a transport application can report improved average journey times while overlooking residents who cannot afford smartphones or whose journeys begin beyond the monitored network. A technically accurate result can therefore support a socially misleading conclusion.

The distribution of monitoring technology is rarely neutral. Wealthier districts often have denser sensor coverage, cleaner historical data and residents with greater capacity to challenge mistakes. Areas poorly represented in a dataset may receive fewer services because demand appears low. That neglect then suppresses the very activity future datasets record, producing a self-reinforcing pattern of invisibility.

Advocates suggest that anonymous information eliminates privacy concerns. Anonymisation reduces some risks, but repeated observations of where people travel can sometimes allow individuals to be inferred. More fundamentally, consent is difficult when the monitored street is the route to work rather than an optional digital platform. People cannot meaningfully decline urban participation merely to avoid data collection.

A responsible smart-city programme would publish its objectives, test datasets for unequal coverage and maintain routes for contesting automated decisions. It would also preserve non-digital services so that measurement does not become a condition for entitlement. These safeguards may complicate procurement and delay impressive demonstrations. They nevertheless protect the legitimacy on which durable innovation depends.

The question is not whether sensors should be installed. It is who defines urban success, who disappears from the measurements and who can demand a different interpretation when the numbers contradict lived experience.

READING 05 / QUESTIONS

Who Owns the Smart Street?

Read the text and choose the best answer. Choose A, B or C.

1. Why might high footfall give a misleading account of a public square?

A Crowding alone proves that public services are overstretched.
B Crowds may reflect service shortages rather than satisfaction.
C High visitor numbers can disguise unequal neighbourhood coverage.

2. How can a journey-time application misrepresent accessibility?

A Average travel time cannot describe changes between routes.
B It may miss residents outside its digital or geographic reach.
C User data is reliable only for trips within wealthy districts.

3. What process can reinforce underinvestment in poorly measured areas?

A Low recorded activity leads to neglect that further reduces activity.
B High sensor coverage in wealthy areas shifts demand outward.
C Underrepresentation can hide needs without altering actual demand.

4. What does the argument about consent imply?

A Public monitoring is acceptable when citizens are informed.
B Anonymous observations prevent individuals from opting out.
C Avoiding surveillance may be impractical in shared public space.

5. Which inference best follows from the call for non-digital services?

A Digital access is most important where coverage is weak.
B Public decisions should rely on self-reported use instead.
C Access to public provision should not depend on being measured.

6. What is the predominant tone of the passage?

A Critical yet open to accountable innovation.
B Convinced that better hardware will eliminate biased data.
C Neutral towards the politics of urban data collection.

7. How do unequal sensor coverage and automated decisions connect?

A Coverage mainly affects reporting rather than resource distribution.
B Automated allocation can compensate for sparse observations.
C Biased inputs can shape the allocation of public services.

8. What is the most accurate summary of the argument?

A Democratic oversight matters only after technical failures appear.
B Smart-city success depends principally on larger datasets.
C Smart cities need democratic scrutiny as well as technical capacity.

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READING 06 / TEXT

The Railway That Bypassed Its Neighbours

Rise to the Challenge! | Megacities and Small Towns

A new high-speed railway is often promoted as a means of spreading metropolitan prosperity. By shortening travel times, it appears to put smaller towns within reach of jobs, investors and visitors. The underlying assumption is that greater connectivity distributes opportunity more evenly. In practice, a faster line may concentrate economic activity around a few stations while leaving nearby places more dependent than before.

Transport economists distinguish between access to a network and the ability to benefit from it. A company may relocate to a well-connected regional centre because it can now recruit from several cities. A family in a village twenty kilometres away, however, might still need two infrequent buses to reach the station. The railway has transformed the map of theoretical accessibility without changing that family's practical options.

The consequences for local business are equally ambiguous. Improved links can attract weekend visitors, but they also enable residents to shop in larger cities where prices are lower and choices wider. Employers may draw skilled workers from the surrounding countryside, while small-town firms struggle to match salaries. The railway does not create these imbalances from nothing; it can amplify differences already present in local labour markets and services.

Some authorities respond by constructing grand stations and commercial districts, hoping that buildings will generate demand. Yet a largely vacant station plaza demonstrates little beyond the limits of property-led optimism. More promising measures include reliable feeder transport, shared training schemes and support for firms that can enter wider markets. These interventions are less photogenic but connect infrastructure to productive capability.

Assessing the line solely through aggregate passenger numbers would conceal who travels, where spending occurs and which communities bear increased housing costs near the new stations. Even a financially successful route could deepen the gap between a prosperous interchange and the settlements surrounding it.

Connectivity, then, is an opportunity with a geography, not a benefit that spreads automatically along the track. Whether a railway integrates a region depends on the institutions that make its speed accessible and economically useful to those beyond the platform.

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READING 06 / QUESTIONS

The Railway That Bypassed Its Neighbours

Read the text and choose the best answer. Choose A, B or C.

1. Why may a nearby village gain little from a high-speed station?

A Regional centres attract firms before villages gain services.
B Infrequent feeder services can make the station hard to reach.
C Rail fares remain higher than the cost of local travel.

2. What commercial disadvantage can better rail connections create?

A Businesses close because passenger services bypass their stations.
B New visitors may displace residents from town centres.
C Residents may transfer purchases to larger urban centres.

3. What weakness does the vacant station plaza illustrate?

A Commercial districts can function without nearby railway services.
B Construction alone does not guarantee economic demand.
C Architectural ambition can conceal weak local market demand.

4. What can be inferred about aggregate passenger numbers?

A They cannot distinguish leisure passengers from commuters.
B They may undercount residents using feeder buses.
C They may mask an uneven distribution of regional benefits.

5. Which inference follows from the discussion of local labour markets?

A Existing service gaps may matter more than regional connectivity.
B Connectivity can magnify pre-existing inequalities.
C Faster trains necessarily draw employers away from small towns.

6. What is the writer's attitude towards high-speed rail?

A Conditionally supportive but wary of automatic promises.
B Broadly supportive because stations reliably attract investors.
C Doubtful that rapid travel can create economic opportunities.

7. How are feeder transport and shared training schemes related?

A Both help convert a rail link into practical opportunity.
B Both are measures of transport access rather than economic capacity.
C Both reduce the pressure to expand metropolitan housing.

8. What is the main idea of the passage?

A Rail speed benefits towns only when property values increase.
B Regional development depends on passenger numbers more than jobs.
C Rail connectivity requires complementary policies to spread gains.

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READING 07 / TEXT

Growing Old Outside the Capital

Rise to the Challenge! | Megacities and Small Towns

In many small towns, an ageing population is interpreted as evidence of irreversible decline. School enrolments fall, houses change hands less frequently and young adults depart for metropolitan employment. Yet these visible trends tell only part of the story. Older residents may hold deep local knowledge, sustain volunteer organisations and create demand for services that, if organised intelligently, support employment across generations.

The central obstacle is often the fragmented geography of care. A clinic may be located on the outskirts, a pharmacy in the centre and a specialist hospital in another district. Each facility appears accessible on a regional map, but someone who no longer drives may find the sequence of journeys exhausting. Such difficulties are easily missed when provision is assessed by counting facilities rather than tracing the journeys required to use them.

Digital consultations offer some relief, although their advantages are uneven. A video appointment can spare a long trip, yet it may exclude people with unreliable connections, limited confidence or conditions requiring physical examination. It can also transfer administrative work from institutions to patients and relatives. A service is not necessarily efficient simply because the state spends less time delivering it.

Some councils have experimented with coordinated transport, local health hubs and adaptable housing that allows residents to remain near familiar networks. These measures can benefit younger people too: a reliable shuttle may serve students, while accessible streets help parents with prams. The crucial principle is not to design a town solely for old age, but to recognise that accessibility is a shared public good.

There are trade-offs. Concentrating specialised treatment in larger hospitals can improve clinical expertise, whereas dispersing every service may compromise quality. The task is to connect local support with regional specialisation so that distance does not become disguised exclusion. Success requires cooperation between health providers, transport authorities and housing planners, whose budgets are often managed separately.

An ageing town need not be a shrinking version of a city. Its resilience depends on whether services adapt to residents' actual routines, rather than expecting residents to conform to administratively convenient locations.

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READING 07 / QUESTIONS

Growing Old Outside the Capital

Read the text and choose the best answer. Choose A, B or C.

1. Why can facility counts overstate access to healthcare?

A They fail to reflect differences in clinical expertise.
B They overlook the difficulty of making connected journeys.
C They undercount the number of available medical appointments.

2. Which hidden cost of digital consultations is noted?

A Video consultations increase the need for regional hospitals.
B Virtual appointments can lengthen referral processes.
C Administrative effort may shift to families.

3. Why are coordinated shuttles and accessible streets described as broadly beneficial?

A They make specialised treatment available within every community.
B They allow the council to reduce services for younger residents.
C They can support residents at different life stages.

4. What is implied about centralising specialised treatment?

A It may improve expertise while creating access problems.
B It is undesirable unless all clinics are closed.
C It can reduce travel needs by relocating specialists.

5. What can be inferred about separate institutional budgets?

A They can produce gaps between services that work independently.
B They can obstruct services that require coordinated planning.
C They cause residents to prioritise transport over housing.

6. How would you describe the writer's tone?

A Optimistic that technology will reverse population decline.
B Critical of small towns' dependence on volunteers.
C Pragmatic and resistant to narratives of inevitable decline.

7. How does the digital-consultation example reinforce the facilities argument?

A Both suggest maps overstate the quality of health advice.
B Both distinguish nominal provision from usable access.
C Both show that specialist care requires physical travel.

8. What is the passage's central argument?

A Digital healthcare should replace most physical appointments.
B Ageing towns need integrated, accessible service design.
C Population decline can be halted by expanding regional hospitals.

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READING 08 / TEXT

Climate Refuge Beyond the Metropolis

Rise to the Challenge! | Megacities and Small Towns

Climate adaptation plans usually focus on defending major cities against rising seas, severe heat and damaged infrastructure. Yet migration does not always flow towards the largest urban centres. Smaller towns situated on higher ground may become destinations for households leaving vulnerable coastal districts. Their apparent safety can conceal a different exposure: the capacity to absorb population growth without reproducing the insecurity migrants hoped to escape.

A receiving town may possess available land but lack classrooms, wastewater treatment capacity and qualified healthcare staff. Expanding housing before these systems can cope risks creating a settlement that is physically distant from floodwaters yet socially fragile. Nor is vacant land necessarily unused. It may support grazing, seasonal cultivation or biodiversity, even if planning maps classify it as available for development.

Tensions can emerge when newcomers receive temporary assistance that established residents have long requested. Host communities may perceive unfairness, while displaced families confront both lost livelihoods and suspicion. Such conflicts are not inevitable, but they cannot be solved merely by urging people to welcome one another. Transparent decisions about investment, consultation and eligibility are more credible than symbolic appeals to solidarity.

Planning also requires an honest account of uncertainty. Sea-level projections and storm probabilities cannot identify precisely how many people will move or when. Overbuilding expensive infrastructure in anticipation of a single forecast can divert money from immediate needs. Waiting for complete certainty, however, may make orderly relocation impossible. Flexible public buildings, phased utility expansion and land reserved for future services offer alternatives to either extreme.

A common mistake is to measure success by the number of relocated households. That indicator excludes whether people can obtain work, retain cultural ties and participate in local decisions. It also overlooks the burdens placed on host residents. Long-term integration should be assessed through housing stability, access to services and the quality of relationships between communities.

A climate-resilient town is not simply one that stands above the waterline. It is one whose institutions can adapt fairly as the human geography around it changes.

READING 08 / QUESTIONS

Climate Refuge Beyond the Metropolis

Read the text and choose the best answer. Choose A, B or C.

1. Why may apparently vacant land be unsuitable for immediate development?

A It may already support ecological or seasonal uses.
B It may be more costly to service than coastal land.
C Its apparently low value may conceal future housing demand.

2. What can make a geographically safer town socially fragile?

A Relocation inevitably reduces access to employment.
B Housing growth can outpace essential service capacity.
C Higher-ground settlements face fewer resources than coastal cities.

3. Which response to host-community tensions does the author favour?

A Equal cash payments to every household regardless of need.
B Transparent allocation and meaningful consultation.
C Central allocation that avoids local political disagreement.

4. What follows from the uncertainty of migration forecasts?

A Temporary infrastructure should replace long-term planning.
B Planners should prioritise the most probable single scenario.
C Adaptation should allow adjustment as information changes.

5. What can be inferred about relocation counts?

A They can obscure whether relocation was physically completed.
B They cannot establish whether integration has succeeded.
C They may overstate how much housing construction is required.

6. What is the overall tone of the writer?

A Confident that technical planning can eliminate social conflict.
B Primarily concerned about inefficient relocation budgets.
C Measured, anticipatory and attentive to fairness.

7. How are contested land use and migrant assistance connected?

A Both are mainly problems of accurate land classification.
B Both require decisions that recognise existing claims.
C Both can be prevented through larger municipal budgets alone.

8. What best captures the passage's thesis?

A Future safety depends primarily on better migration projections.
B Climate refuge depends on institutional and social capacity.
C Climate adaptation is chiefly a question of available housing land.

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READING 09 / TEXT

The Urban Farm and the Invisible Field

Rise to the Challenge! | Megacities and Small Towns

Vertical farms have become an appealing image of the future megacity: vegetables growing beneath carefully controlled lighting, metres from the people who will eat them. Their advocates emphasise shorter supply chains, protection from unpredictable weather and the possibility of producing food on land unsuitable for conventional agriculture. Such advantages are real, but they do not make every indoor harvest environmentally superior.

Plants require light, water and nutrients regardless of where they grow. In an outdoor field, much of the light arrives without an electricity bill; indoors, lamps and climate-control systems must supply conditions that nature previously provided. Whether an indoor farm lowers emissions therefore depends partly on the electricity mix. A building powered by low-carbon sources may perform differently from an identical facility dependent on fossil-fuel generation.

The choice of crop matters just as much. Leafy greens with short growing cycles can suit highly controlled environments, whereas growing staple grains indoors generally requires much more space and energy for a comparatively low-value product. A city that celebrates locally grown salad while importing nearly all its calories has not achieved food independence. It has diversified one narrow part of its supply chain.

Traditional agriculture, however, has its own hidden costs. Refrigerated storage, long-distance distribution and water-intensive production can be significant, especially in dry regions. Nor is the comparison a simple contest between city buildings and distant fields: peri-urban farms, regional cooperatives and improved logistics may combine resilience with lower energy use.

Food policy thus faces several objectives that cannot always be maximised simultaneously: affordability, nutritional value, resource efficiency and resilience to disruption. A technology that protects supply during storms may be too costly for everyday consumption. An inexpensive imported crop may depend on a region exposed to prolonged drought. Good procurement decisions test these vulnerabilities rather than treating local origin as proof of virtue.

The urban farm is best understood as one component of a diversified food system. Its significance lies not in replacing the invisible field but in revealing how carefully cities must examine the trade-offs behind a seemingly simple meal.

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READING 09 / QUESTIONS

The Urban Farm and the Invisible Field

Read the text and choose the best answer. Choose A, B or C.

1. Why does an indoor farm's emissions performance depend on electricity supply?

A Artificial lighting and climate control consume power.
B Indoor crops require more irrigation than field crops.
C Lighting efficiency matters more than energy generation.

2. Why are staple grains presented as difficult indoor crops?

A Staple crops are inherently less nutritious than greens.
B Their value relative to required space and energy is low.
C They require crop-specific sunlight patterns unavailable indoors.

3. What does a locally grown salad fail to demonstrate?

A That a city has secured its overall calorie supply.
B That local production can shorten transport distances.
C That controlled farms can reduce weather exposure.

4. What may be inferred about low-carbon electricity?

A It can overcome the economic limits of indoor grains.
B It can alter the comparative merits of indoor farming.
C It is sufficient to make indoor agriculture self-sustaining.

5. What does the passage imply about imported produce?

A Transport distance is the principal determinant of cost.
B Its impact depends on production and distribution conditions.
C Imports are more vulnerable only when they cross borders.

6. How is the author's tone best described?

A Qualified and evaluative rather than promotional.
B Dismissive of any advantages of controlled production.
C Optimistic that vertical farms will dominate urban diets.

7. How does the discussion of peri-urban farms extend the main comparison?

A It suggests transport accounts for most food emissions.
B It makes regional farms the most reliable source in all climates.
C It introduces intermediate models beyond a simple binary.

8. What is the passage's main message?

A Food resilience depends on balanced systems, not a single technology.
B Food policy should maximise resilience even at any cost.
C Urban farms should receive priority over imported staple crops.

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READING 10 / TEXT

What the Night-Time Satellite Cannot Tell Us

Rise to the Challenge! | Megacities and Small Towns

Economic researchers sometimes estimate the vitality of cities by examining satellite images of artificial light at night. Brighter areas frequently coincide with commercial activity, dense settlement and improved electricity access. The method is attractive because the images cover places where conventional statistics are incomplete. Yet illumination is a proxy for prosperity, not prosperity itself, and confusing the two can distort policy.

A newly illuminated motorway may increase a district's recorded brightness without creating many stable jobs. Conversely, a town that replaces inefficient streetlamps with carefully directed lighting might appear less economically active even though its services have improved. Light also leaks across administrative borders, while factories and offices differ greatly in the amount of illumination they require. These are not random imperfections: they can systematically favour certain forms of development.

Researchers try to correct for such problems by combining satellite data with household surveys, employment records and information about public services. The sources rarely align neatly. A national survey may describe an entire district, while an image reveals variation within individual streets. The temptation is to treat the finer resolution as greater truth, although a precise measurement of the wrong thing does not become meaningful through the addition of pixels.

This matters particularly when leaders compare megacities with smaller towns. A well-lit business district can coexist with unaffordable housing and long commutes; a dimmer settlement may offer secure work and stronger informal care networks. Neither observation proves which location is better to live in. Economic success has distributive and social dimensions that are difficult to photograph from orbit.

The danger is not merely academic. If funding follows increases in visible brightness, municipalities may favour conspicuous construction over less visible improvements such as teacher training, preventative healthcare or maintenance of ageing pipes. Measurement would then begin to shape priorities in ways that make its limitations self-fulfilling.

Night-time imagery is useful when it helps ask better questions, especially where other data are scarce. It becomes dangerous when an accessible indicator is promoted into a complete definition of urban achievement. The brightest landscape is not necessarily the one in which people flourish.

READING 10 / QUESTIONS

What the Night-Time Satellite Cannot Tell Us

Read the text and choose the best answer. Choose A, B or C.

1. Why is night-time light attractive to researchers?

A It provides broad coverage where other statistics are weak.
B It directly detects changes in household purchasing power.
C It is less sensitive to local administrative boundaries.

2. How might improved street lighting reduce measured brightness?

A Improved fixtures tend to eliminate urban night-time activity.
B More efficient fixtures can direct light more precisely.
C Economic activity can fall despite rising electricity consumption.

3. What risk arises when funding follows visible brightness?

A Authorities may favour brighter districts over smaller towns.
B Officials may shift budgets towards dimmer, under-recorded areas.
C Authorities may prioritise conspicuous projects over essential services.

4. What does the author imply about fine-grained satellite data?

A Spatial precision does not guarantee conceptual validity.
B Spatial detail chiefly reduces the bias of administrative borders.
C The finest images can establish prosperity at street level.

5. Why cannot light alone settle comparisons of living standards?

A It misses distributional conditions and social support.
B Light cannot measure the number of city residents.
C Economic conditions are determined by transport connectivity alone.

6. What tone best describes the author's approach?

A Confident that combined indicators eliminate measurement error.
B Frustrated that surveys cannot match satellite resolution.
C Methodologically sceptical but not dismissive.

7. How does the streetlamp example connect with the funding warning?

A Both show why government should publish finer spatial data.
B Both show how the proxy can misidentify real improvement.
C Both show that efficient electricity use lowers living standards.

8. What is the strongest statement of the main idea?

A Urban indicators must not be mistaken for the outcomes they approximate.
B Urban economic success can be measured only through surveys.
C No proxy indicator has any practical value in policy.

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