

## Reading text A

You should spend about 20 minutes answering questions 1 to 10.

### India slowly gets ready for internet shopping

Vipul Modi is a busy lawyer in India's financial capital Mumbai. Like many people, he uses the Internet to buy rail and airline tickets as well as pay his utility bills. Yet when it comes to buying other products online, the 44-year-old has doubts, particularly about the security of his bank account details and other (1) \_\_\_\_\_ data. He says that online shopping is not something that people in India feel comfortable with because the (2) \_\_\_\_\_ of having to pay large sums of money, if your credit card is misused, is for the customer instead of the credit card companies.

From books to groceries, Internet shopping has become popular in many Western countries for people with disposable income, busy lifestyles and unpredictable working hours. As Indian society changes, and perhaps as a (3) \_\_\_\_\_ of the country's economic expansion, retailers are now looking to follow this shopping trend.

Gift shop chain The Bombay Store recently became the latest outlet to launch an online facility, following in the footsteps of major retailers such as Big Bazaar, Pantaloons and shopping websites like www.rediff.com. Online shopping in India is just about to take off, according to Deepa Thomas, a senior manager at the Indian eBay online auction site, which has 2.5 million registered users in nearly 2,500 locations across the country.

(4) \_\_\_\_\_, when it comes to buying products online there's still a fairly long way to go. For a country with 1.1 billion people, India's use of computers and the Internet is still low, despite being a major player in global information technology and outsourcing. According to the country's IT and Communications Minister, Sachin Pilot, only eight percent of Indian households have access to a personal computer at present. Of India's estimated 60 million Internet users, about six million shop online, with the e-commerce market thought to be worth about 2.2 billion dollars and, in a (5) \_\_\_\_\_ trend for the companies, expanding by about 30 percent a year.

At present, social networking, email and accessing news and sports sites remain the main reasons for using computers for (6) \_\_\_\_\_ Indians. It has been predicted that there will be an exponential growth in computer use and Internet availability in the coming years, as the government works to extend broadband access into 250,000 out of India's more than 600,000 villages. This can only help develop e-commerce because countries where Internet shopping has been increasing are those with highly developed broadband infrastructure, (7) \_\_\_\_\_ allows for quick, easy and secure connections.

India's half-a-billion mobile phone users could also help drive the sector's (8) \_\_\_\_\_. The government is currently auctioning 3G licences, which would enable more users to access data at high-speed, instead of having to rely on (9) \_\_\_\_\_ dial-up connections at places such as public cyber cafes, making transactions easier.

Going online seems to make good business sense for India's businesses in the global economy as they expand beyond India's borders. This, however, depends how quickly Indian consumers will change their preference for personal contact with suppliers for the convenience of internet shopping; India's bustling street markets have

traditionally been more (10) \_\_\_\_\_ for local consumers in a country with a strong sense of community and neighbourly cooperation.

**Questions 1 to 10**

Choose from options A to D to complete the gaps in the text. Only one option is correct. Write the correct letter in boxes 1 to 10 on your answer sheet.

- |                |                   |
|----------------|-------------------|
| 1. A. personal | 6. A. few         |
| B. public      | B. most           |
| C. government  | C. other          |
| D. company     | D. any            |
| 2. A. chance   | 7. A. who         |
| B. warning     | B. when           |
| C. danger      | C. which          |
| D. opportunity | D. where          |
| 3. A. cause    | 8. A. stop        |
| B. loss        | B. start          |
| C. problem     | C. reduction      |
| D. result      | D. expansion      |
| 4. A. Though   | 9. A. fast        |
| B. However     | B. slow           |
| C. Moreover    | C. speedy         |
| D. Furthermore | D. reliable       |
| 5. A. positive | 10. A. attractive |
| B. negative    | B. stressful      |
| C. future      | C. unusual        |
| D. past        | D. difficult      |

## Reading B

You should spend about 40 minutes answering questions 11 to 25.

### In Mobile Age, Sound Quality Steps Back

- A. At the age of 28, Jon Zimmer is already an old man. That is, he is obsessive about the sound quality of his music. Previously an audio engineer, Mr. Zimmer now works as a consultant for Stereo Exchange, an upscale audio store in Manhattan, and lights up when talking about high fidelity, bit rates and \$10,000 speakers. However, iPods and compressed computer files (the most popular vehicles for audio today) are “sucking the life out of music,” he says.
- B. The last decade has brought an explosion in amazing technological advances, including improvements in surround sound, high definition television and 3-D, which have transformed the fan’s experience. There are improvements in the quality of media everywhere, except in music. In many ways, the quality of what people hear has taken a step back. To many music experts, compressed music files produce a thinner sound than music on CDs and certainly on vinyl. In addition, to compete with other songs, tracks are engineered to be much louder as well.
- C. In one way, the music business has been the victim of its own technological success: the ease of loading songs onto a computer or an iPod has meant that a generation of fans has happily exchanged quality for portability and convenience. This is the obstacle the industry faces in any effort to create higher-quality (and more expensive) ways of listening. “If people are interested in getting a better sound, there are many ways to do it,” Mr. Zimmer said. “But many people don’t even know that they might be interested.”
- D. Take Thomas Pinales, a 22-year-old from Spanish Harlem and a fan of some of today’s most popular artists, including Lady Gaga, Jay-Z and Lil Wayne. Mr. Pinales listens to his music stored on his Apple iPod through a pair of earbuds, and while he wouldn’t mind having a better system, he is not convinced that it would be worth the cost. “My ears aren’t well-trained,” he said. “I don’t know if I could really hear the difference.”
- E. The change in sound quality is as much cultural as technological. For decades, starting around the 1950s, expensive stereos were a status symbol. A high-quality system was something to show off, like a new flat-screen TV today. However, Michael Fremer, who runs *musicangle.com*, said that today, “a stereo has become an object of ridicule.” The market reflects that change. From 2000 to 2009, Americans reduced their spending on home stereo components by more than a third, to roughly \$960 million, according to the Consumer Electronics Association. Spending on portable digital devices during the same period increased by more than fifty times, to \$5.4 billion.

- F. "People used to sit and listen to music," Mr. Fremer said, but the increased portability has changed the way people experience recorded music. "In the past it was considered to be a special event, but now it is no longer seen as an activity that you pay particular attention to." Instead, music is often carried from place to place, played in the background while the consumer does something else — exercising, commuting or cooking dinner.
- G. The songs themselves are usually saved on the digital devices in a compressed format, often as an AAC or MP3 file. That compression decreases the size of the file, allowing more songs to be saved on the device and reducing download times. Both of these factors are obvious advantages for modern consumers living in a fast-paced society.
- H. Even if music companies and retailers like the iTunes Store, which opened in April 2003, had wanted to put an emphasis on sound quality, they would have faced technical limitations at the start, not to mention economic ones. "It would have been very difficult for the iTunes Store to launch with high-quality files if it took an hour to download a single song," said David Dorn, a senior vice president at Rhino Entertainment.
- I. The music industry has not failed to try. Last year, the iTunes Store upgraded the standard quality for a song to 256 kilobits per second from 128 kilobits per second. Another company, *HDtracks.com*, started selling downloads last year that contain even more information than CDs at \$2.49 a song. Right now, most of the available tracks are of classical or jazz music. David Chesky, a founder of HDtracks and composer of jazz and classical music, said the site tried to put music on a pedestal. "Musicians work their whole life trying to capture a tone, and we're trying to appreciate that by selling a product which replicates that tone," Mr. Chesky said. "If you want to listen to a \$3 million Stradivarius violin, you need to hear it in a form that allows the instrument to sound like \$3 million. We can't replicate that experience exactly, but we can try to get as close as possible".

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### Questions 11 to 14

The text has nine paragraphs, marked **A** to **I**. Which paragraph contains the following information?

Write the correct letter in boxes 11 to 14 on your answer sheet.

11. A man's ignorance regarding sound quality.
12. A decrease in the sound quality of newer technology.
13. How people listen to music.
14. How music is saved on portable audio devices.

### Questions 15 to 19

According to the text, are the following statements **True (T)**, **False (F)** or **Does Not Say (DNS)**?

Write your answers in the boxes 15 to 19 on your answer sheet.

15. Sound quality is not as important for new generations.
16. In the US, consumers have recently been spending much more money on home stereos than on digital audio systems.
17. Decreasing file size for digital devices means consumers benefit in practical ways.
18. When the iTunes Store opened, it started by selling high-quality music files.
19. *HDTracks* sells rock music files at a very low price.

### Questions 20 to 24

Complete the items below **USING NO MORE THAN TWO WORDS AND/OR NUMBERS FROM THE TEXT** to fill in each space. Write your answers in boxes 20 to 24 on your answer sheet.

20. For many music specialists, the sound produced by smaller digital audio files is \_\_\_\_\_ than that of CDs and vinyls.
21. In the past, people considered expensive music systems as a \_\_\_\_\_.

22. People now listen to music as a secondary \_\_\_\_\_.
23. A song bought from the iTunes Store used to have a quality of \_\_\_\_\_ kilobits per second.
24. David Chesky thinks we can only truly appreciate the work that \_\_\_\_\_ do by listening to music through a good quality medium.

### Question 25

*This question is based on paragraph 1 from the text, which is repeated below for you:*

The music industry has not failed to try. Last year, the iTunes Store upgraded the standard quality for a song to 256 kilobits per second from 128 kilobits per second. **(A)** Another company, HDtracks.com, started selling downloads last year that contain even more information than CDs at \$2.49 a song. **(B)** Right now, most of the available tracks are of classical or jazz music. David Chesky, a founder of HDtracks and composer of jazz and classical music, said the site tried to put music on a pedestal. **(C)** "Musicians work their whole life trying to capture a tone, and we're trying to take advantage of it," Mr. Chesky said. "If you want to listen to a \$3 million Stradivarius violin, you need to hear it in a hall that allows the instrument to sound like \$3 million." **(D)**

*The following sentence can be added to the above paragraph. Where would it best fit in the paragraph? Write position A, B, C or D on your answer sheet.*

25. This preserved more details and eliminated the worst interference.

**You must answer BOTH writing sections.**

### **Writing question 1**

*You should spend about 30 minutes on this question. Write your answer in the space provided on the answer sheet.*

You have just returned home after completing a study-abroad program. Write a letter to your host family thanking them for all their help. In your letter, include the following:

- Tell them about your arrival
- Say why you are grateful
- Tell them about your plans now that you have returned home

*Write at least 150 words. You do not need to write any addresses, but you must use the correct salutation and sign-off.*

### **Writing question 2**

*You should spend about 60 minutes on this question. Write your answer in the space provided on the answer sheet.*

Many people would argue that a university degree is absolutely necessary for success in today's job market. Others argue that it is not absolutely necessary and that in fact many people do very well without one. Discuss both these views and give your own point of view.

*You should write at least 300 words. Give reasons for your answer and include any relevant examples from your knowledge or experience.*