

『英語で話す力。』DL 特典付録一穴埋めトレーニング・ドリル！
頭や末尾の文字をヒントに（ ）の中に単語を書き込もう。

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Unit 01

Is a rural lifestyle preferable to an urban lifestyle?

A

① I (a) feel that a rural lifestyle is preferable, and my reason is simple. ② Humans evolved to live in nature, just (a) every other species did. ③ A natural life is healthier, more peaceful, and better for both the body and the mind. In a rural environment, our bodies naturally slow down and adjust (t) to the rhythm of nature. ④ In urban settings, we are under a huge amount of man-made stress that shortens our lives and keeps us unhappy. ⑤ That's (w) people want to escape to the countryside when they have vacations, right? Life in the countryside calls to us, naturally. It is (w) we belong.

Unit 01

B

① To (m), there is no question that a city life is better. ② Big cities, such (a) Tokyo, offer every kind of stimulation — museums, galleries, theaters and concert halls, restaurants and cafes, etc. Throughout history, the great artists, writers and musicians felt the pull of the city. ③ Cities are (w) the great ideas that move humanity forward happen, because they offer so many opportunities for human interaction. ④ It's okay to spend a few days in the countryside, (b) after that it is simply boring. ⑤ People (w) enjoy life want to be where the action is, and that means living in a city, the bigger the better!

Unit 01

C

① There are (p) and cons to both, but I feel that city life is more suited to younger people, (w s) country life is the best way to spend one's golden years. ② When people are young, they need to gain a lot of experiences. They also need to be open (t) different points of views. Life in the country can be very stifling. So, for younger people, nothing can compare to life in the city. ③ (H), when we get older, we don't need all that stimulation. We manage better with less stress, and more time to be silent and move slowly through our days. When we are older, it is enough to wake up to the sound of birds singing, and to watch the seasons change. ④ So, there is a proper time for (b).

Unit 02

Is buying your own place better than renting?

A

① To own a home, and be able to call a piece of land your own, is great. (E) if we can only have a tiny home, it is a great feeling to know (t) we have something that we can pass on to our children. ② I am working hard and saving my money (s) that some day I will leave renting behind for good, and move into my own home. ③ Renting feels like (t g) money away to me. I pay and pay for something that never becomes mine. ④ Home ownership involves sacrifice and long-term commitment, just like a marriage. And, like a marriage, there are great benefits. ⑤ My parents have given me lots of advice about the importance of owning a home as a true sign of maturity. I am looking (f) to the day I can make them proud!

Unit 02

B

① Owning a home might be the dream of many people, but it's (n) for me. I prefer the freedom to change neighborhoods, cities, or even countries depending on the opportunities. ② These days, business is more global, and people are (b) sent by their companies to work in foreign countries much more (t) before. I work for such a company, and I expect that in the future I will be asked to work overseas for three to five years. ③ I don't want to deal (w) the burdens of a mortgage and home maintenance in such a situation. Even if I stay in Tokyo, I prefer the freedom that renting allows. ④ I actually wonder if the value of home ownership might belong (t) another time. I don't think it matches the modern work situation.

Unit 02

C

① There (a) many risks to home ownership. Therefore, I would say, (i) your salary or position makes home ownership difficult, you probably shouldn't risk it. ② (F) example, I am self-employed, and it is very difficult for me (t) get a bank loan. I may never be (a) to buy a home unless I can save up more than half the price as a down payment. ③ That is a lot of money, and it will take me many years to reach that point. When I do, I will probably buy a home, but only (i) my work situation is stable. ④ I think there are many advantages to home ownership, but I don't feel that it's necessary for everyone. ⑤ It may never be a part of my life, and I am okay with that.

Unit 03

Is it good to have a pet if you live in a condo or apartment?

A

① (I) seems to me that having a pet is one of the best ways to deal with the stress of urban life. Therefore, even if a person lives in a condo or an apartment, I would recommend keeping a pet for peace of mind. Pets provide affection, and give us something natural to live for and enjoy. ② Otherwise, the lives of many city dwellers end (u) being just about work, and maybe some time to have fun on weekends. ③ When people come home (f) work, and see the sparkling eyes of a dog or a cat who is overjoyed to see them, it is a magical experience. I can't imagine my life (w) my beloved dog. ④ Keeping a pet in a small room isn't perfect for the pet, (o) course. They would like to have more space. ⑤ But they are so happy to receive our love and affection, and it is really good for our mental and spiritual health.

Unit 03

B

① I really feel that it is a selfish thing to own a pet in urban spaces such (a) condominiums or apartments. ② First of (a), it is inconvenient for the people sharing the building. Dogs and cats, especially dogs, often (m) a lot of noise. Nearly everyone living in an apartment has been bothered by the barking of a dog, sometimes in the middle of the night. It is maddening! We must also take (i) account the fact that many people are allergic to the fur, not only of dogs and cats, but also rabbits, ferrets, etc. ③ When we live close to other people, we must live in ways that don't harm or inconvenience them. ④ Finally, it is cruel (t) keep animals locked up all day while we are out working. Perhaps it makes us feel happy, but the animal ends up feeling lonely and unhappy. ⑤ So, overall, I maintain that it is selfish to own a pet unless we have our own piece of land.

Unit 03

C

① I think people living in condominiums or apartments should certainly be (a d) to keep pets, as it is their right. ② However, there is a big difference (b) keeping an aquarium and owning a large dog! So, I think many things need to be kept in mind. ③ First of all, if it is a really big or active breed of dog, I would say it's wrong. It's simply not kind to keep a large or active dog locked up all day in a small room. Such pets can never be happy. (F e), they may bark all day because they are lonely, which will annoy the neighbors. ④ Cats are better, as well (a) smaller, less active breeds of dogs. In general, cats require much less space than dogs to be happy. Smaller animals like rabbits and hamsters are even better. They don't make noise and they require less attention. ⑤ To sum up, it depends (o) the animal, but big noisy dogs are out of the question!

Unit 04

Do we need to be doing more to solve the problem of food loss?

A

① It is an outrage that tons of food are thrown (a) uneaten every year while millions of people are starving. ② In Japan, the amount of food that gets (w d) every year is enough to feed the population of Spain. Moreover, Australia throws away twice as (m) food as Japan, per capita. This is insane levels of waste! ③ To me, this shows a massive failure of distribution. ④ We live in a global economy (w e) raw materials and finished products are easily shipped all over the world, with most of the products we have in our homes traveling thousands of kilometers to get here. Yet, the most essential product of all, food, is being tossed away rather (t) delivered to people who live with daily hunger. ⑤ You can't tell me it's not possible to employ our sophisticated infrastructure channels to get food where it is needed.

Unit 04

B

① I'm not foolish enough (t) argue that wasting food is a good thing. ② However, the fact (t) we live in a time of such high production that tons of it get disposed of points to major advancements in agriculture. For that, we all owe a debt of gratitude. ③ Throughout human history, food scarcity, (n) food waste, was our biggest worry. Droughts and other calamities made famine common, and all over the world children starved or were malnourished. That is our history, a history that most of our ancestors would have been familiar (w). ④ They would experience awe and envy if they could see how much food we have coaxed out of the ground due (t) revolutionary changes in agriculture. Automation of equipment, pesticides, fertilizers, etc. have made more food available than ever. ⑤ The next frontier is to eliminate waste, but that is better than never having enough.

Unit 04

C

① I don't know (h) to solve the food waste issue, but one thing that could help is a revision of the policies of expiration dating on food. ② Preservatives are not the healthiest thing in the world, but they do keep food edible (f) a lot longer. The result is that many of the products that people throw away could continue (t) be consumed for weeks or months after the premature 'expiration' date stamped on the package. ③ Let's bring together experts in nutrition, in health, in medicine, etc. to find out (w h) products can have their expiration periods extended. ④ Restaurants are another culprit. So much restaurant food gets wasted, either discarded in the kitchen (o) left on the plate. ⑤ Restaurant staff need to learn how to do more with less, not aim to make customers so full they can hardly stand!

Unit 05

Should convenience stores stay open 24 hours?

A

① It seems like the question sort of answers itself. (W) I mean is, what's (m) 'convenient' than a store being open any time someone wants to shop? To me, this is a debate that doesn't even have to happen. What is the downside? ② Convenience stores are not 'cultural' places like museums or libraries, but they are very much a part of our culture. Even complainers would have to (a t) that they secretly love them. They make our lives easier by making shopping easy and convenient. ③ (F e), they are always innovating to provide even better service. Being open 24 hours a day, 7 days a week is an extension of that. ④ Nowadays, people have different schedules. Overseas conference calls and such have people up at all hours. That's a challenge; but having a store open (w) it is convenient for you to shop makes it less challenging.

Unit 05

B

① I don't like convenience stores being open all through the night, and definitely would not want to live near one. ② (F t), I hardly think it is necessary. I imagine stores do much less business between 1 to 6 am (t) other times. That's a waste of electricity, especially when we are trying to make our cities more sustainable. ③ Second, I don't think it's good for people to be working (n) shifts. Of (c), some jobs require that, but store clerk isn't one of them. Young people are often the ones who take these jobs, and they need to be encouraged to get enough sleep! There are already more (t) enough distractions robbing young people of very necessary sleep. ④ Third, they make it possible for people, often drunk, to gather together and make noise and be troublesome all through the night. Such a nuisance!

Unit 05

C

① There are areas where it makes sense to have 24-hour convenience stores. ② Places like Shinjuku, Roppongi and Shibuya always have 'night owls' there. Having a convenience store (o) doesn't increase their numbers; it just gives them a place to buy things when they need to. ③ Many convenience stores have small seating areas, very useful if one misses the (l) train and has to spend the night in urban areas after the clubs close. People (w) may have had too much alcohol can rehydrate themselves with the drinks on offer to avoid hangovers. ④ (H), in most places, there is no need. People can get their shopping done, and even if they can't, they'll just have to wait till the next day. It's not the end of the world. Suburbs and rural areas have (n) need for this 'service.'

Unit 06

Should we be moving to adopt a cashless society?

A

① (N) doubt it will take getting used to, but there are major advantages to a cashless society. ② One of the biggest is that it leads to reduced crimes such (a) muggings, pickpocketing and robberies at places that carry a lot of cash such as banks, convenience stores, gas stations, etc. It is less stressful not being a target of such violent acts. Money can still be stolen digitally, (b) digital currency is easier to trace and that acts as a major deterrent. ③ Then there is the convenience of not having to carry cash with us. For example, I travel overseas a lot and it (u) to be a hassle trying to figure out how much cash I should convert to local currencies before each trip, especially when visiting multiple countries. ④ All that is (t) care of for me when I pay with my phone or credit card. It's liberating!

Unit 06

B

① The very notion of a cashless society strikes me (a) totalitarian. ② It's exactly the kind of thing George Orwell warned about in '1984': the government taking over every part of our lives in (o) to control us. Going completely cashless means every purchase you make, and your entire life, becomes traceable. ③ (L) say somebody in the government doesn't approve of some purchases you make, such as radical literature. You might be investigated. That's a total invasion of privacy and violation of your rights! ④ Scarier still, in the (w t) case, your spending ability can be completely cut off. If somebody in the government considers you a nuisance, you might walk into a store someday, try to use your card (o) phone, and be told that you are rejected. Then what will you do? ⑤ We need to hang onto our freedoms while we still have them!

Unit 06

C

① (A h) I think it likely we are heading toward a completely cashless society, we needn't be in any hurry to get there. It should be phased in incrementally, and above all, fairly. ② The first group we need to be concerned (a) are the elderly. They don't adapt to new things easily. They will end (u) being discouraged from making important purchases if it becomes a hassle they would (r) avoid. ③ People in isolated, rural communities don't have the same easy access to broadband and mobile connectivity. Their needs must be considered. Then there are the economically disadvantaged. Using cash helps them avoid piling up debt. ④ Thus, in my view, it is necessary that the option of using cash remain with us for the time (b). Twenty, thirty years from now, I doubt we will be having this conversation, but for now, let's keep cash around.

Unit 07

Do you prefer traveling alone to vacationing with a friend?

A

① I prefer the freedom of traveling alone. ② I have tried going places with a friend in the past, and it was always a hassle. We didn't want to do the same things, and we ended up wasting time arguing about (w) to do and not do. By the end of the vacation we practically hated each other! ③ When I take a vacation, I want to make the (b) use of my time and avoid unnecessary stress. ④ (S), for me, traveling alone is the best solution. I can sleep as late as I want or get up as (e) as I want. I can do anything I choose, or just stay at my hotel reading a book. I never feel that a second of my time is wasted. I will never go back to compromising (w) someone about my precious vacation time. ⑤ It's one of the few chances in my life to feel completely free.

Unit 07

B

① I think traveling by myself is a bore! ② I want someone that I can share my experiences (w). ③ In the past I have traveled with family members, friends (a) romantic partners, and the experiences have all been wonderful. To me (n) matches the excitement of exploring a new locale with someone you care about. ④ Sightseeing and dining in a foreign country is not (s g) to do alone. The value of the experience is completely lost, I feel. I tried it once, but after three days I was so lonely and bored (t) I ended up cutting my vacation short, and returned home. ⑤ I learned my lesson that time, and will never make the same mistake again.

Unit 07

C

① I think (i) depends most upon the destination. ② If I am planning to travel someplace (w) I will possibly face danger, I certainly want to have someone along with me. ③ (F) example, mountain trekking can be dangerous, and some popular tourist destinations have a crime problem. If I go missing while traveling alone, who would know? It might (t) days or weeks before people can start searching for me. We need to have people who can watch out for us when traveling in such situations. ④ On the other (h), if I am just heading to a quiet beach resort and all I want to do is read, sunbathe, and maybe shop a bit, I am fine with going by myself. ⑤ It makes it easier for me to do what I came to do, which is relax.

Unit 08

People seem to be reading books less and less. Is that a bad thing?

A

① I am very concerned about the decline in reading. ② I truly believe that reading is our most valuable cultural heritage. ③ Books engage the mind and the imagination in ways (t) TV shows, movies and computer games (d). Those things provide so much stimulation (t) the mind doesn't really grow. All they do is entertain. Books, on the (o) hand, expand our horizons. ④ Less reading results in a great loss to culture and society. ⑤ I think those of us who love books must do everything possible to encourage the younger generations to read. (O) the value of books has been lost, it will be lost forever, and that strikes me as very sad.

Unit 08

B

① I don't really consider it a major problem if people read (l).
② Technology changes, and people find new ways to access information. For hundreds of years, people read books, because that was the best (w) to learn. But, if television had been invented three hundred years ago, people would have switched to that, and this discussion would (h) taken place earlier. ③ Now, it's the internet age, and people like getting information in (m) immediate and time-effective ways. To be honest, I don't really feel there is something all that different between reading a book and reading blog articles or stories on the internet. ④ People become accustomed to something and resist change, but that (d) mean the old way is better.

Unit 08

C

① My concern is not so much with books, per se, but (w) the importance of deep thinking. As (l) as people have a medium that encourages them to think deeply and critically, society is okay.
② Books have served that function in the past, but now new (w) of getting information are coming out one after the other. I don't think television was a good replacement for books, because it didn't encourage deep thought. (B) the internet is different. It is much more than entertainment. It makes discussion and debate possible, online. To me, this is fabulous! ③ Books, as wonderful as they are, don't let you communicate directly with other people like the internet (d). ④ I think, in the future, we will look back and see that the internet was an even better tool than books for making people more thoughtful.

Unit 09

Should we be moving to a paperless society?

A

① A paperless society is well past due. We've been hearing about it (s e) the late 80s, when email became widespread, and then with the arrival of digital book platforms (l) Kindle. ② But we still cut down too many trees. In 300 years, the world has lost 35% of its forests, and deforestation continues to accelerate. Putting (i) simply, we are running out of trees. ③ The publishing industry is not the biggest culprit, which is agriculture. Nevertheless, publishing has no excuse. Obviously, we need land to grow food on. However, we have shown that there is a perfect alternative to paper for printing, so we (d) need it. ④ Technology has made it unnecessary the same way that Gutenberg's printing press made hand-scribed books (u y). The printing press changed the world, and now it is time for a second revolution in publishing, that saves trees while we still have a chance.

Unit 09

B

① The fact (t) we still have a preference for paper in a time when a digital alternative is easily available should tell us something. People (i) general prefer paper as a medium for the written language. Count me among them. ② There are advantages to reading print on paper. First of (a), it is easier on the eyes. Staring at the backlit screens of devices is a strain on the eyes. Then there is the pleasant tactile sensation of turning pages. Even the scent of the paper engages us. Altogether, it is a more natural and sensual experience. ③ Interestingly, that translates into how well we retain information. Research shows that people have higher levels of comprehension and retention (memory) when reading on paper compared (t) digital media. It seems that by turning pages, our minds record the progress of information (b r) than by scrolling. ④ I'm sticking with print!

Unit 09

C

① I do think that (e) y) printed materials will be phased out, just (a) handwritten books were phased out by the printing process and black and white photographs were phased out by color alternatives. ② I think it will happen (o) generations, and there will still be some fondness for them, in the way we value antiques and hand-crafted goods. ③ Obviously, children today will grow up feeling (l) need for printed materials. And this trend will continue, such that their children will probably have no thoughts about them at all. Just as children today are completely unfamiliar with the dial function of older telephones, turning pages will eventually become a relic of the past. This will happen naturally, over time. ④ Furthermore, people will adjust and adapt, so I'm not concerned (t) the loss of paper will decrease the mental ability of future generations.

Unit 10

Are EVs Going to Help Solve the Environmental Crisis?

A

① I am greatly in (f) of EVs. ② Fossil fuels don't have much of a future, as they will run (o) in the latter half of this century. Furthermore, the burning of fossil fuels has direct consequences for the future of the human race. Therefore, they should be considered a dead (e). ③ Cars that run on electricity still require energy, but the amount of CO₂ that would be released if everybody drove them would be far (l) than at present. ④ In the early days of the automobile industry, electric cars were just as popular (a) combustion engine cars that used gasoline and other fuels. Can you imagine how much progress we would have made in terms of their efficiency if we had kept on using them? ⑤ Unfortunately, that is lost time we can't get back, but we CAN work on innovating EVs now, and phasing out fuel burners.

Unit 10

B

① EVs are one of the biggest scams out there. ② People think they are 'green,' (b) they are bad for the environment. True, when in operation, they don't emit CO₂. But the life cycle of a car is much (m) than just driving time. ③ EVs actually burn more fuel than gas powered cars during the manufacturing process! The result? You have to own and drive an EV for (a) least five years to achieve carbon neutrality, emitting less CO₂ than if you had purchased a gas car. ④ Then there are the precious metals needed to make the batteries. Even at present usage, they are a very limited resource that are often extracted using child labor or forced labor. If everybody switched to EVs, those problems would grow (w e). ⑤ So, who benefits? In my view, only the billionaires (w) make them to appear like they are saving the planet.

Unit 10

C

① We need to widen the discussion beyond simply contrasting EVs and fuel burning cars. Let's think (o) the box. ② For (o) thing, how about NO cars? What if we gear our societies toward using personal motor vehicles as little as (p e)? Walkable cities, improved public transportation, car sharing, more bike lanes and the re-greening of city streets are all things that I want to hear (m) about. We have become too dependent on personal vehicles, despite the damage they cause. ③ Then there are many promising alternative technologies. Fuel cell cars that run on hydrogen, biofuels made from vegetables, and (s) on. Testing is already being done on cars that are powered by air, or by water! Leonardo DaVinci designed, but never built, a spring-operated car. ④ Some, or all, of these imaginative ideas can become the future story of the automobile.

Unit 11

Should parents limit their child's access to the internet?

A

① Limiting a child's access to the internet is not a good idea. ② The result would be that one's child ends up getting left (b) in our modern world, which depends so much (o) the internet. ③ The children who become fluent in internet usage will definitely take leadership positions in the world. ④ This has already happened, considering companies (l) Facebook, Google and Rakuten. ⑤ If we teach children that the internet is bad or dangerous, they won't be able to keep (u) with their peers. It would be like telling children one hundred years ago not to use the telephone. You can't stop progress. ⑥ Furthermore, all technology offers both benefits and risks, and the internet is just (a) example of this.

Unit 11

B

① Unfortunately, I think it's necessary for children to be protected (f) the dangers of the internet. ② Of course it is an amazing technology, (b) too many bad people are using it in ways (t) put our children at risk. ③ Perverts use the internet to lure children into dangerous situations. This must be stopped. Religious cults, scam artists, etc, are all using the internet to lead children astray. ④ The only (w) to protect them is for parents to play a role. ⑤ Parents have the wisdom and experience to guide their children away from the dangers of the internet, and they must view that (a) a parental duty.

Unit 11

C

① I (d) think it is realistic anymore to imagine that parents can limit their child's access to the internet. ② The technology is just too ubiquitous. Children will always find a way (t) get online. ③ And besides, if parents tell their children not to do something, children will always use that (a) a reason to do it. It's just human nature. ④ So, what can parents do? Well, I feel that parents have to accept the presence of the internet in their children's lives, and prepare them for it. ⑤ Parents must teach children that the internet is (b) good and bad, and show them (h) to take advantage of its benefits and avoid its dangers. A good parent must be a guide, not a policeman.

Unit 12

Are people overusing their smartphones?

A

① With smartphones, a gigantic experiment is being conducted and we are the guinea (p)! ② The full effects of holding these devices close to our bodies, staring at them (a) the time, and so on has not been adequately investigated. Does it increase our risk of cancer? We don't know. Does it harm the brain development of children? We don't know. ③ Yet, in the absence of very rigorous studies, capitalism seems determined to get these products into the hands (o) everyone on Earth, the younger the better! ④ I think we are taking foolish risks. The American Cancer Society has given recommendations for lowering potential risks, but nobody pays attention. We have become (s) hooked on them that we keep them close to our heads even when sleeping. We're a society of people who would rather risk cancer (t) give up precious hours with their smartphones. ⑤ To me, this is deeply troubling.

Unit 12

B

① I'm confident that fears (a t) smartphone use are overblown and even a bit hysterical. ② With every new technology, a group of people feels like it is their duty to warn us of all the imagined dangers. This has been going on (s) the 'Luddite Rebellion' in the early days of the Industrial Revolution. The last I looked, civilization is still here! ③ I get it. Revolutionary technology is always frightening to some people. And certainly, science fiction stories don't help when they always portray mysterious technology and 'mad scientists' (a) villains threatening humanity. ④ I won't argue that there haven't been risks and negative consequences alongside technological breakthroughs. (H r), upon sober analysis, society always benefits, on balance, from progress. People live longer, have more opportunities, and live more convenient lives with every breakthrough. The naysayers need to lighten (u)!

Unit 12

C

① I have some concerns about excessive smartphone use, particularly how they are becoming indispensable at increasingly young ages. ② The brains of small children and adolescents are still developing; these are the most crucial periods for developing the personality and the ability to live independently. The last thing we should (b) doing is creating technological addiction at such important life stages. ③ On the other (h), when I look around, I see young people adapting surprisingly well. They are 'digital natives' (w)'ve grown up with smartphones and are completely comfortable with them. ④ They use them in original and creative ways. They are developing new vocabulary, new ways to entertain each other, even lucrative new careers. ⑤ I'm less (w d) about them (t) I am about older folks like me falling behind. So, the bottom line for me is that the signs so far are reassuring.

Unit 13

Do you feel that social media is harming how we communicate?

A

① People on chat forums are so rude! ② It is like the lack of face (t) face communication gives them permission to be obnoxious and insulting. ③ People have called me 'stupid' and (s) forth just for sharing an opinion different (f) theirs. That has never happened to me in 'real life.' ④ Of course I realize that social media makes it possible (t) interact with people you wouldn't otherwise meet, but it also takes away the simple requirement of decency and respect. People feel like because they are online, they can say whatever they want and get (a) with it. ⑤ I feel concerned about younger generations, because social media is becoming their main means of communicating.

Unit 13

B

① I would say (n). In fact, I would argue the opposite. ② Social media is a tool, (l) the telephone and email. All have done the same thing, in that they have broadened the possibility of who we can communicate with. ③ Social media enables people (t.) learn new things, meet new people and share fresh ideas, literally every day! ④ I think it's (m) just the older generations, who don't understand it and refuse to use it, who have a negative view of social media. ⑤ For me, it has been a wonderful experience, to chat and share online, and I can't imagine my life (w) it. It would be so boring!

Unit 13

C

There might be a danger to too much time (s) chatting online, but I think it's greatly exaggerated. ② I don't think anyone would argue that online friends should replace real ones, or that online communication can replace (f) to face communication. ③ Human beings are social, and will always (l) for ways to expand their networks. But, the invention of the telephone didn't put an end (t) face to face communication, did it? Neither will social media. ④ Reasonable people will always recognize that one's best friends are those you can talk to face to face. ⑤ Social media just provides another option in terms (o) how to keep in touch.

Unit 14

Should we be concerned about AI?

A

① I am very optimistic about AI. ② I think we will use it to solve some of the biggest problems humanity has ever faced. AI is destined to become the most valuable tool ever invented. We'll use it to solve issues that (h) persisted forever, such (a) poverty, and issues that have arisen recently, such as climate change. ③ As for work, AI isn't going to replace the value of human skills and talents. Quite the opposite! We'll use it to perform boring and dangerous tasks, (s) people will be free to do the things they really WANT to do! We will see an explosion of creativity, perhaps even a new Renaissance. ④ (B e) AI can solve problems quickly, it will help our leaders make better decisions about the environment and other concerns. I'm betting within half a century, many problems considered 'unsolvable' will have (b) solved. Bring it on!

Unit 14

B

① I am concerned that AI poses a threat to mankind. ② It is growing more powerful every day. Soon, it will be much smarter (t) humans. It took the human brain millions of years to evolve. It has (b) a very slow process. ③ In contrast, the intelligence of AI grows exponentially. That means that once it surpasses us, it will keep on racing further beyond us. ④ At a certain (p) its brain will be to ours as ours is to a cockroach! Then, what will it do? Nobody knows, but there is little reason (f) optimism. ⑤ It may become bored with us, and decide not to serve us anymore. We're (s) dependent on it that we will be lost if that happens. Worse, it may decide to eliminate us, and we will be powerless to stop it. ⑥ I fear we are creating our own worst nightmare.

Unit 14

C

① Every technological step forward is met with resistance. ② In the early days of movies, people actually complained about the introduction of 'talkies,' preferring silent movies! That seems ridiculous now, (b) people had their reasons. ③ So, now we come to AI, and we see that same resistance from people (w) resist change. But you know what? Things NEVER stay the same! What it really comes (d) to is fear of the unknown. ④ That means once AI becomes fully integrated into our society, its familiarity will make it (l) scary. Just like silent movies, future generations won't be able to understand why people were so upset. ⑤ So my approach is to learn from history and not resist every new innovation. Over time, the benefits of AI will change doubters' minds about it. Let's be forward thinking, not (b) looking.

Unit 15

Do we need to replace plastic?

A

① I find it shocking that plastic has only been (l) use for roughly a hundred years, but in that time the damage it has caused is enormous! ② If we continue at our current usage rate, (i) is said that by 2050 there will be more plastic in the ocean than fish! Think about that. Fish have been in the ocean for a billion years, and plastic less than a hundred. Something clearly needs to (b) done. ③ As many have pointed out, plastic doesn't decompose, but rather breaks down into tiny particles (c) d) microplastics. They get into everything, particularly into the food we eat as they move through the food chain. This can have harmful effects on our bodies, like cancer. ④ The convenience of plastic is hardly worth the inconvenience to the body of preventable diseases! It is (t) to take this issue seriously and begin replacing all plastic with biodegradable substitutes.

Unit 15

B

① To my way (o) thinking, people who complain about plastic are not only unrealistic, but (a) ungrateful. ② Plastic has played a hugely important role in the tremendous progress we have experienced in the 20th and 21st centuries. ③ There is a good reason why it is in nearly every product we use and depend upon. It is lightweight, durable and less expensive (t) alternatives. We can't turn back all the progress we have made, and why would we want to? ④ Do people imagine that before plastics, things were better? Dream on, because much more of the population was poorer, less traveled and less healthy. I'm not saying we live in a perfect world, (b) our ancestors would certainly be envious of the many conveniences we have. ⑤ So, you want to get (r.) of plastics? Then say goodbye to your phone, your car, your furniture, your appliances, etc. I won't be joining you.

Unit 15

C

① I think it will be a long time (b) modern society is able to completely replace plastic, but a lot can be done in terms of decreasing and recycling it in (o) to minimize its harmful effects to the environment and our own bodies. We have already begun to make progress in this regard, as there are far fewer plastic bags being produced (t) before. ② However, there is still so much more that needs to be done. One thing I can't stand to see is all the overwrapping of merchandise I see in supermarkets. ③ In many cases, a simple consumer (c) can make a huge difference. ④ If you buy a whole cabbage, generally you are purchasing only the vegetable, whereas if you buy half a cabbage, it comes with all that unnecessary plastic wrapping that you throw (a) and which ultimately ends up in the ecosystem. ⑤ In our everyday lives, there are dozens of such choices that have an impact.

Unit 16

Is nuclear energy safe for earthquake-prone Japan?

A

① Japan is a major industrial country (w) a population above 100 million. I wonder if people realize just how much energy it takes (t) keep such a country running. Lacking abundant fossil fuel deposits, we need nuclear energy to (p) an important role in meeting our energy requirements. ② The Fukushima accident was a disaster, but it ultimately came down to human error. I am furious about the lax safety standards at the plant, every time I think about it. ③ But that (d) mean we should shut down our nuclear program. Rather, what it means is that we should increase inspections, increase training, and increase penalties for infractions. ④ People working at the plants face the greatest risks. You would think that even if they can't be bothered to think about the safety of the country, they would want to do (w) it takes to protect themselves!

Unit 16

B

① Japan is uniquely aware (o) the horrors of radiation. ② As the only country ever to be attacked with nuclear (w s), our position is unique. Furthermore, as a country that experiences more (t) 10% of the planet's earthquakes, we are doubly unique. ③ Therefore, I am a big 'NO' when it comes to nuclear energy. It isn't worth it. ④ When the Fukushima meltdown happened, I was traumatized. It felt like the monster that destroyed Hiroshima and Nagasaki had awoken to do (m) damage to my country. I still live in fear of the next accident being far worse. ⑤ There have to be other ways to supply our energy needs without threatening our lives. Japan is one of the world's top engineering countries. Surely we have the ability to produce safe, sustainable and renewable energy. (W) we need is the political will to do so.

Unit 16

C

① I believe that Japan has not been cautious enough in (i) adoption of nuclear power. It is obviously risky to build nuclear power plants on an island archipelago (t) experiences frequent earthquakes. ② On the other (h), one thing that many people don't realize is that nuclear energy is evolving, with producers putting increasing safety at the top of their priorities. We aren't there yet, but I believe the day will soon arrive (w) nuclear energy is among the safest energy options available. ③ Certainly safer than offshore drilling. Just think of all the horrendous oil spills that happen far too often. And even oil spills have become less common due to increased safety innovations implemented by the fossil fuel industry. ④ Nuclear energy is a renewable energy that has great potential; a potential that can be fully realized (o e) it has become safer.

Unit 17

Should genetic manipulation be allowed?

A

① I believe (i) progress. I see genetic science existing along a continuum of medical and agricultural breakthroughs that have made people healthier, lengthened lifespans, and cured diseases. ② We shouldn't set some artificial point at (w) such research is banned. ③ Very little food we eat today is 'natural'; breeding of plants and livestock has resulted in foods that are more delicious, easier to eat, stay fresh longer and so on. All of that is a form of 'genetic modification.' ④ (H) far should we allow research to apply directly to the human genome? ⑤ We're not there yet, but what if decades from now families could be sure of birthing babies (w) no genetic defects, no susceptibility to childhood diseases and so on? In (o) words, a child that is guaranteed to grow up healthy and live a long life? Who would say no?

Unit 17

B

① I favor taking extreme caution concerning genetic modification of food, even more (s) in making 'designer' changes to the human genome. ② To me, this is what 'Frankenstein' warned us about. It is human arrogance to assume science enables us to (p) God. We must recall that 'eugenics' was the mad dream of Hitler to create a perfect race. That should give us all an indication of where this could go. ③ Even worse to contemplate is if some huge mistake were (t) occur that resulted in a pandemic that wipes us out, or results in millions of deformed infants. ④ Scientists always talk about the upside, (b) history shows that they rarely consider the risks fully. We see this with the automobile, with asbestos, with pesticides and with nuclear power. ⑤ Let's (n) take foolish gambles on something as important as our DNA!

Unit 17

C

① I think this issue is mostly a case of the media stirring up hysteria by coming up with catchy sounding words (l) 'Frankenfoods' and 'designer babies.' People get more worked up than they should and are less likely (t) consider the matter logically. The media loves to do that; scare people and then have shocking narratives to present night (a) night. I dislike this trend and feel that it dumbs down the populace. ② What we need, for something as important as genetic manipulation is GOOD information, not hype. ③ (L) all technology and medical research, I am sure there are both risks and benefits to working directly on human DNA. ④ We need to tune out both the media horror stories and the overly optimistic pronouncements of entrepreneurs in this industry. Neither side can be relied (u) to give us the full picture.

Unit 18

Should vaccines be mandatory to prevent pandemics?

A

① There are times (w) personal freedom must be sacrificed for the greater good. ② A good (e) is speed limits. People recognize their necessity, and only a selfish person would say their rights are being violated by not being (a) to drive as fast as they want. The reason is obvious; the societal risk is too great. ③ In the case of Covid vaccines, we need to consider the enormity of the situation. ④ 100 years ago, an epidemic killed 50 million people, at a time when the world's population was only a quarter what it is now. ⑤ Governments, science bodies and health authorities needed to take every precaution against such a thing (h) again. Nobody knew how out of hand it could (h) gotten, and they had to move quickly. They did the right thing. ⑥ Therefore, I don't have a problem with mandatory vaccines then, or in the future.

Unit 18

B

① Mandatory vaccines are a blatant (v n) of human rights. There is nothing (m) essential for personal liberty than bodily autonomy. The government does not have a right to enforce invasive procedures such (a) vaccinations on people. My body, my choices. ② If that sounds extreme, think of the alternative. What if government forced people to eat certain foods, have certain medical procedures performed on them, etc? It's a nightmare scenario. ③ Making it worse is the experimental nature of the vaccines themselves. Humanity essentially became guinea pigs. I understand that certain testing procedures needed to be sped up or eliminated in (o) to stay on top of the situation. But that makes personal choice even MORE necessary. ④ I'm not going to (l) some pharmaceutical company test their product on me without fully understanding its side effects or other negative consequences to my body. Absolutely not!

Unit 18

C

① I think the jury is still (o) on how truly effective the vaccines were. ② I followed the news, and it appeared that cases and deaths were fairly similar whether vaccinations were mandated (o) not. Some countries freaked out, others didn't, and the results were basically the same. ③ We found that in general, the worst effects of Covid 19 befell people (w) were already in weakened physical conditions. The elderly, the obese, people with severe chronic illnesses and so on. Thus, mandating vaccinations in a nursing home (m) perfect sense, for example. ④ But what about children? In general children have very adaptable and resilient bodies. Humans could not have survived otherwise. Young healthy children can be expected to overcome Covid 19 like any (o) flu or severe cold. Mandating vaccinations for them is a violation of parental rights, in my view. Likewise for healthy adults.

Unit 19

Should English education start from the first year of elementary school?

A

① I am strongly (o) the opinion that English education should begin as early as possible. I would recommend starting even earlier (t) primary education. ② I feel Japan should have 'immersion' programs like they have in Canada, where all the citizens grow up able to speak (b) English and French. ③ The (r) I feel so strongly about this is that Japanese people are at a great disadvantage by not knowing English. In all international affairs, such as politics, business and science research, English is the international language that everyone is using. ④ Japan can not remain an important country (w) English. ⑤ We have to accept that and deal with it.

Unit 19

B

① (P) me in the camp of thinking that it's much more important for Japanese children to master Japanese, (n) English. ② I understand that English has become the most international language, but the language of Japan is, and will always remain, Japanese. Language is the root of culture and identity. ③ Children need to be taught to appreciate and value their (o) language, or they won't appreciate and value their own culture. And that would be a disaster. ④ Yes, English is important. But countries that don't place priority on their own mother (t) e) will lose their identity, and I don't want that (t) happen here.

Unit 19

C

① I think that question might actually be irrelevant. (W) I mean is, the important thing is not when children begin to study English, but (h) they are taught it. ② Currently, Japanese children are not taught to view English (a) a communication tool. Rather, they are taught to view it as just a set of rules to be understood in order to pass various tests. ③ If you start teaching children that type of English even at the age of six, they will (n) make much progress. ④ What is needed is native speakers teaching them how to use English in various environments, so (t) they acquire natural skills. ⑤ And that type of education has the benefit of being much more enjoyable for students. ⑥ So, in short, we need to change the system before thinking about changing the age.

Unit 20

Should university students take time off to pursue other experiences?

A

① I think it's a great idea for university students to (t) off time from studying. ② (W) we enter university, usually at eighteen, we don't really know what we want to do with the rest of our lives. It's too early, and we don't have the maturity. ③ If students have a chance to travel, or work in an intern program for a year, they will gain valuable experiences. ④ These experiences will point them in the (r) direction in terms of career choice. They might find something they love to do, or they might find something they definitely do not want to do. Either (w) helps their future. ⑤ College courses are great, but they don't help us mature in the way real life experiences do. Therefore, I think a year, or even two, away will lead to a (m) satisfying future.

Unit 20

B

① (A h) taking time off has benefits, for it to work I think the whole system should be changed. ② By that, I mean there should be a period of time set aside for every young person to have real life experiences. Otherwise, students (w) take time off face obstacles in the job market. ③ In the U.S. young people have the option (o) joining the military and spend a couple years there, learning tons of useful skills. Then, they enter university with a better awareness of what they are good at. ④ I don't like the idea of joining the military, but I think Japan could create a similar system of providing all high school graduates with one or two year programs (b) joining university. They could try out farming, or apprentice with design companies, or volunteer. ⑤ Everyone would finish university at the same time, and could fairly compete for jobs. This system would work much (b) than the current one.

Unit 20

C

① I see one major flaw with taking a year (o) so off from studies. When students do that, they fall out of the group they entered with. ② In Japan, the connections we form in university, and also when we first join a company, are extremely important. Our friends help us in so many ways. With them, we have a network that provides emotional support and sometimes help with changing careers, as (w) as other things. ③ The friends I made at university are still the (m) important people in my life outside my family. I would have hated to lose that strong connection by taking a year off. ④ It might work for some people, perhaps people (w) are more independent by nature. ⑤ But it would not have worked for me, and I wouldn't trade my college friends (f) anything!

Unit 21

Should a country provide free education to all its citizens?

A

① I have heard (t) in Scandinavian countries such as Sweden, education is freely available to all citizens, all the way through university. (E n) international students receive free education! ② I think this is a wonderful system. ③ When a country provides free education to its citizens, it is investing in its (o) future. ④ It is often said about Japan that we have few natural resources. That means that our most important (r) is the people, and what we can produce with our minds. ⑤ Providing education for (f) makes good economic sense in the long term. I imagine that if education were free to all Japanese until the age of 22, this country could experience a renaissance of ideas and innovations.

Unit 21

B

① I don't believe that it is the government's responsibility to provide education for its citizens (b) high school. ② When government takes on too many roles, it becomes a big (w) of taxpayer money. ③ There are many good universities in Japan, and there are many options for (h) students pay for their education. There are scholarships, loans, etc, for those who need financial assistance to pay for school. It's a good system, and it (d) need to change. ④ Another problem I foresee is that if education becomes free, students won't value it as much. ⑤ Students need to know that education costs money, so they have to make the (m) of their learning opportunities.

Unit 21

C

① College is not (f) everyone. Some people prefer (t) work after high school, and some people wish to learn at specialized trade schools. ② I think England has a good system where many learn trades, and (t) who really value higher education enter universities. ③ I think a good system might be for the Japanese government to provide a base level of free education to everyone. For people in two-year trade schools, the training would be free. ④ University students could receive the same government stipend, and pay the rest of the tuition cost on (t r) own. I think that is the fairest, (m) practical system.

Unit 22

Does money bring you happiness?

A

① I (d) see that it's even a question whether money can bring happiness. Of course it does. ② Money makes it possible (t) have a great home, great food, enjoy great vacations, and so on ... We can pay for our health care, (s) we don't have to worry about getting sick. Money solves most of life's problems. ③ On the other side of the (c), imagine trying to be happy without money. Such a struggle! Can people expect to be 'happy' with insufficient food, and insecurities about a place to live or what happens if they get sick? I don't see how it is possible. ④ Money equals happiness, (b) that is how this world works. And there is nothing wrong with that. ⑤ Money may not guarantee happiness, but it definitely makes it possible.

Unit 22

B

① All you have (t) do is read stories about rich people to know that money definitely doesn't bring happiness. ② Rich people are just as likely to complain and be unhappy (a) anyone else. They are just as likely to become depressed or even to commit suicide. I think in a way, you could say that having a lot of money even contributes (t) unhappiness. ③ People feel that if they just have a lot of money they will be happy. But, when they get it, and (s) feel unhappy, they feel like they made all those sacrifices for nothing. ④ Some of the happiest people in the world are very poor, and some of the unhappiest people in the world are very rich. ⑤ There is no correlation (b) happiness and money.

Unit 22

C

① As I see it, the answer is (y) and no. ② By that I mean, a certain amount of money enables a person to be happy. If a person doesn't have (e) money to eat well, live someplace warm and dry, and take care of his or her family, they will find (i) very difficult to be happy. So, in that sense, enough money to do those things brings happiness. ③ However, once you go beyond those basic needs, having extra money doesn't make you feel happier. ④ (M r), if a person is obsessed with money, that person probably won't be very happy. It can be an addiction (j) like drugs or alcohol, and that never leads to happiness. ⑤ So, I maintain that money brings us happiness only to the point where it provides for our human needs.

Unit 23

Is having a lot of time off better than earning a lot of money?

A

① I feel that time is (m) precious and valuable than money.
② If you think about it, even billionaires are not really (a) to buy themselves more time. ③ Each of us is here for only a few short decades, and we should try to treat every day (a) if it matters.
④ When I have free time, I can do something creative, or I can enjoy the company of friends. When I am at my company, I generally think about (h) I will spend my time when my work is finished. ⑤ All I want to do is work enough so that I have money to support myself and spend my time pleasantly. ⑥ Beyond that, I feel that money can become an addiction, and people work just to have more and more of it. That lifestyle may satisfy some people, (b) definitely not me.

Unit 23

B

① Having a lot of free time is nice, (o) course. But in my opinion it is more fulfilling to take care of one's responsibilities (t h) earning a lot of money. ② I depended on the hard work of my parents for my education, and I want to be able to support my own family in the (s) way. ③ I think that people have become rather selfish, only thinking about what makes them happy personally. As members of society, we should try to provide for the people (w) depend upon us, and also work hard to contribute to the economy. ④ Earning a lot of money is the proof (t) society values me. As a reward, I can enjoy expensive things and make my family happy. ⑤ I think that is the best way to live a good life.

Unit 23

C

① The expression, 'time is money' is interesting, because it points out that they are really the (s) thing. We always (h) to trade one for the other. If we want more money, we give up time, and (v) versa. ② Therefore, I feel that the important thing is to strike a balance (b) having time off and having enough money. ③ It won't be the same for everyone, but each of us should think of what we most want out of life, and then decide how (m) time we are willing to trade for money. ④ I don't really feel that you can say that one is better than the other when they are both such an important part of a happy life. ⑤ The most important thing is having enough of both.

Unit 24

Are Japanese people marrying too late in life?

A

① I do think it's a concern. ② Later marriage translates (i) fewer children, and a rapidly shrinking population. ③ I read that if current demographic trends persist, the population of Japan will be down to 60 million by the end of the century. In other (w), essentially half of what it is now. To me, that's heartbreaking. It's like watching a tragedy unfold in slow motion. (F e), it seems unnecessary. ④ If government priorities shift, younger people can be incentivized to marry and start families younger. This has benefits not (o) for the country, but for individual families as well. ⑤ People in their twenties are better able to deal with the physical demands of parenting. Children also benefit. ⑥ If young people didn't feel pressured to work till nine or ten p.m. to show their dedication to their employer, they could devote that energy to (w) REALLY matters; the family.

Unit 24

B

① There is (n) wrong with Japanese people choosing to marry later. It is altogether a good thing. ② People in their thirties, and even forties, have greater financial security and have matured to be (b r) spouses and parents. Both my parents were in their early twenties when they married. That's practically kids raising kids! I could (h) benefitted from being raised by wiser parents. ③ So, with more life experience, what if many people decide that marrying and child rearing isn't for them? What's wrong with that? I don't plan to get married. I enjoy my freedom and my friends are my 'family.' ④ Finally, what does this mean for Japan? I don't see a problem. The world is facing crises caused by (o n), not underpopulation. ⑤ Japan can (e r) allow itself to shrink, making fewer demands on resources, or can allow more immigrants, taking pressure off overpopulated places elsewhere. Both good.

Unit 24

C

① This issue can't be looked at in isolation, but must instead be understood as a symptom of a larger societal problem. ② We have created too many superficial distractions (t) diminish peoples' appreciation for things that truly matter. I see it as a spiritual issue, one that is worsening. ③ In the near future, people will share 'romantic' relationships with AI avatars. This is already beginning! People are spending more (a) more of their time online, living empty 'virtual' lives. ④ A REAL marriage with a REAL partner and REAL children to care for requires effort and sacrifice. Today's young people (d) want that. ⑤ They want everything to be easily obtainable and just as easily discardable. They are convinced that life is best lived moment to moment, one fun diversion (a) another, without responsibilities. And who can blame them? Society pushes this attitude (u n) them relentlessly.

Unit 25

Is society moving in the right direction regarding LGBTQ rights?

A

① Traditional gender roles are (o) of place in our current world. They (b) to another time, when women were considered property of men. ② Women struggled to get voting rights, and even now struggle to achieve high positions in business and government. They have been kept down too long by a patriarchal system that views them (a) second-class citizens. ③ It's not only women, of course. Homosexuals have similarly struggled to gain rights while facing resistance. Homosexuality (u) to be a capital offense in England, and still is in some countries. As of now, less than 40 countries have legalized gay marriage. ④ How is that fair? Who is victimized if a gay couple marries? Nobody. Who benefits when women are able to break through the 'glass (c)' and assume higher positions? Everybody! ⑤ Old, outdated prejudices are preventing a happier, fairer world from emerging.

Unit 25

B

① 'Traditional' gender roles are hardly a fad that society can simply move (o) from. They result from the physiological differences (b) males and females. ② Men are typically larger and stronger, with body chemistry such as testosterone making them this way. This makes them better equipped to hunt and protect the group against attack. We find this in many species in the animal kingdom. ③ (A) for women, their 'traditional' advantage is even greater. They give life to the human race! What 'role' could be more valuable than that? Their bodies are also designed, chemically and physiologically, to promote their role (a) birth-givers and caretakers. This is quite beautiful. It is also how our species has survived for two hundred thousand years. ④ As for LGBT members, their rights must be protected, but I am opposed to attempts to completely remake society as if gender has (n) meaning.

Unit 25

C

① There is a big (d) e) between traditional roles and traditional restrictions. As for roles, they serve as helpful generalities in defining society, and also assist children in preparing for adulthood by providing (r) models. ② Restrictions, on the other (h), violate the rights of individuals. I believe individual rights must be upheld, even if that goes against tradition. ③ We probably all know women who are more competitive than the average man. Similarly, we can point to some men who are more nurturing and supportive than the average (w). ④ In neither case should such persons be made to feel 'unnatural,' or be prevented (f) expressing themselves as they choose. ⑤ This extends to the LGBT community. As individuals, they have a right to live their lives as they choose, without restrictions. They reject traditional roles, and such is their right.

Unit 26

Should women keep their own surnames after getting married?

A

I think the current rule, (w) a married couple can take either surname, is the best. ② Although traditionally, the husband's name is taken, (t) are exceptions. I think it is a fair rule. ③ Furthermore, I feel that society will continue to offer (m) opportunities to women in the future. So, we will see more cases where the wife's name is selected. Eventually it might be just as common one way (o) the other. ④ So, we already have a good rule (i) place that prepares us for the future days of growing equality.

Unit 26

B

① I am opposed to people (c g) their names when they get married. I have no intention to change my name when I do. ② In older days, women were thought (o) as property. Those were the times when rich people would buy slaves, and marrying was basically another (f m) of slavery. The woman was owned by the man. So, I think the custom of changing your name when you get married reflects an older, (l s) developed period in our culture. ③ There is nothing wrong with people keeping their own name. ④ It might create a few problems for banks, government offices, etc., but they can be easily solved. ⑤ There is (n) reason to keep an old-fashioned rule.

Unit 26

C

① The problem (w) keeping both names comes when a married couple has children. The child can't have two surnames, so eventually a choice will (h) to be made. Keeping both names just puts off the decision until a child is born. ② Here is what I think is a good solution. In many countries, such (a) the U.S., people have middle names. Why not use one surname as a middle name? I think it's a very convenient idea, because it makes people (e) to be identified. ③ For example, you might have two Taro Suzukis working at the same company, right? But if my system would be adopted, you would have Taro Ueda Suzuki and Taro Watanabe Suzuki. (J) like John Fitzgerald Kennedy! ④ I truly feel that this is the best solution.

Unit 27

Should men and women be expected to play the same social roles?

A

① I take the side of feminists, because I feel that throughout history, women have been (u y) treated by societies that favored men. In order to end such injustice, we have to (m) sure that women have all the same rights as men. ② That means, we not only have to give them all the same opportunities legally, (b) also socially. ③ For example, in professional sports, very few women are actually able to make a living. Why? Because society has decided that it values male sports spectacles more, so people spend more money on tickets and other things. ④ That is just one example, but it shows how society is infected with prejudice (a t) women. So I feel the answer is to change the culture radically, so that within one or two generations women and men will be viewed equally (i) all respects.

Unit 27

B

① Women and men should not play the same social roles, because it (i) natural. ② There are important biological differences (b) men and women, and most of our culture is directly related to those differences. ③ Physically, men are generally larger and stronger. Mentally, they tend (t) enjoy risky behavior and competition more. In ancient societies, people understood this, and men were the hunters and warriors. Women, on the (o) hand, are biologically built to provide the future of society. ④ Only women can have babies, after all. So women are both physically and emotionally built that way. They tend to be more caring. They also tend to want stability more. ⑤ Society falls apart if women try to act (l) men. ⑥ Women should be proud of their own importance to society, as mothers and nurturers.

Unit 27

C

① There are many general differences between the two genders, (o) course. But when you break it down to the individual level, things are not so simple. ② There are many men who don't really feel that they fit in with a 'man's world' mentality that pushes them (t) be competitive and ambitious. There are many women on the other hand (w) love to compete, and want to go as far as they can in their careers. ③ Boys and girls, when they are small, should not be pressured (i) conforming to stereotypes. ④ I have known some very gentle men, who prefer staying at home and taking care of children. I have also known some women who could outpace all the men in the company in terms of business smarts and energy. ⑤ We should be able to appreciate all types of people, and let each live according (t) their own character.

Unit 28

Would you prefer to spend your last years in an elderly care facility?

A

It's a difficult decision, but I think that I would prefer to live in an elderly care facility, as I don't (w h) to be a burden on my family. ② Care facilities are staffed by professionals. That (m s) they are prepared to deal with the various problems that elderly people face, physically and mentally. ③ Family members can try to provide the (s) care, but the stress on them can be enormous. If I start forgetting things, become confused all the time, lose control of my body, etc., I don't want to cause disruption to my children. ④ The stress is (e n) harder on my spouse, who will be dealing with his own aging challenges. ⑤ Therefore, if I become someone who requires a lot of care, I will admit (m) into a care facility.

Unit 28

B

① The sad thing is that when people move into an elderly care facility, they die soon after. I have seen this (h n) so many times. ② Recently it happened to an aunt of mine. She told me how happy she was when she first moved in, but in less than a year she passed (a). She longed to be back in her own home, with her own memories and mementos. ③ People in retirement homes simply lose all sense of purpose. They fall (o) of the flow of life, such (a) doing things for themselves, tending a garden, etc. ④ Life loses its meaning, and so they break down, mentally and physically. It is tragic. ⑤ I do everything I can to stay healthy (b) I want to stay in my own home for the duration of my life.

Unit 28

C

① If possible, I feel that people should be able to live out their lives in their own homes, with family nearby. ② (H), it is not always possible. ③ I think that loved ones are the best people to care for people with mild disabilities, such as forgetfulness. Or, for (e), if an aged parent needs someone to drive them around to their doctor's appointments, or prepare their meals. This is a very natural cycle of life, after (a). ④ Sometimes the conditions of an old person are much more severe, however. (I) such cases, the only practical option is to admit the person into a care facility, (w) staff are trained and available 24 hours a day. ⑤ So my conclusion is that, the choice needs to be made depending on the severity of the condition.

Unit 29

Are risk takers happier and more productive than people who avoid risks?

A

① I think the figures tend to show that risk takers are happier. ② They are the people with the courage to try new things, (s) they have a higher degree of success in fields such as business, sports, the arts, etc. All entrepreneurs are (r) takers, as well as the highest-paid people in the financial world. ③ So there is a strong (c n) between risk and success. ④ Of course, happiness is not only money. But I feel that risk takers are (m) likely to find happiness in other areas. They are more courageous to find the right romantic partner, to have the most fun traveling on vacation, etc. ⑤ I actually wish I was more of a risk taker, (s e) I think I would be happier.

Unit 29

B

I think cautious people are more likely to find happiness in the long run. ② Life has many risks, and so people need to develop a cautious, commonsense attitude. ③ Risk (t s) tend to put themselves in unnecessary situations. (S) of them might succeed, but the majority of them fail. ④ Cautious people can manage their lives better, (b) minimizing risks and making full use of opportunities. Risk taking might sound more exciting, (b) there is nothing boring about making decisions carefully. ⑤ If we look at other animals, they almost all avoid risk, because that is the best, most natural (w) to live. And a natural life is more likely to be a happy life.

Unit 29

C

① I think the optimal situation is somewhere in the (m), between taking risks and proceeding with caution. ② People who are not willing to (r) at all will never be happy, because their life circumstances will be so limited. ③ (C y), people who choose to live like daredevils, taking every risk for the thrill it brings them, will find it hard (t) be happy. That thrill will become like an addiction, and so they will keep looking for more and more of it. They might become gambling addicts or embezzlers. ④ The people around them won't trust them. Too much risk and too much caution are (b) unhealthy, if you ask me. ⑤ We need to find a balance, where we don't seek risks, but we don't run away from them either.

Unit 30

Do you go with your first judgment before making an important decision?

A

① I suppose it depends on (w) type of person you are, but I find that my snap decisions always work (o) the best for me. When I overthink things, I generally end up talking myself out of the right decision. ② I feel that people have a kind of intuition that (l) them know right away if something is good for them or not. At least, that's the way it has always been for me. ③ So, when I go with that intuition, and choose right away, things tend to (g) better for me. ④ When I hesitate and spend a lot of time resisting my intuition, I almost always end up regretting it. ⑤ So, although I can only speak for (m), I think it is better to follow through on our gut feelings about things.

Unit 30

B

① I am the type of person (w) likes to consider things carefully, and weigh my decisions thoroughly. So the idea of going with my first judgment runs (c r) to that. ② Too many times in my life, I have seen things come to me that look great at first, but turn (o) badly. ③ I definitely relate to the feeling of wanting to make a snap decision, but I think nine times out of ten, it's best to give matters (m) thought. ④ Of course, snap decisions are fine for trivial things, but for the things that REALLY matter, we owe it to ourselves to give careful consideration (b) taking action. ⑤ In the long run, we will be happier if we take the time to think our important decisions through.

Unit 30

C

① I think (t) is a time for following hunches, and a time for thinking things through properly. There are pros and (c) to both. ② People have to take the whole situation into account. For example, if other people are going to be affected by our decision, it is selfish to just go with our first judgment. ③ On the other hand, thinking too much about something is often just a way to avoid (t) action. That's not good, obviously. ④ So, I think people need to be honest with themselves. They need to consider how a decision will impact themselves, and other people. And they have to recognize if they are really just avoiding doing something (t) makes them uncomfortable. ⑤ Once we sort those types of things out, I think we can better choose (b) a first judgment and more deliberate consideration.

Unit 31

Is it better to hire someone fresh out of school than to hire someone with experience at another company?

A

① Companies are smarter to hire people away from other companies rather (t) recruit from universities. ② People who have (w) experience are much more capable of handling the responsibilities required of them. ③ In Japan, university students acquire very little in (t s) of knowledge. They treat their college years as a vacation time between high school cramming and corporate life. ④ Mid-(c) hires, on the other hand, have professional experience and familiarity with the life of a businessperson. You don't have to treat them like children. ⑤ Midcareer hires know how to work, (w s) university grads just know how to play. There is no comparison.

Unit 31

B

① The best (r n) to recruit personnel out of universities is that a company can train them. ② People with previous work experience bring their company's bad habits (w) them. They tend to be inflexible and want to do things the way they were taught at their former company. ③ New hires, (o) the other hand, want to be taught. Their minds are fresh and they can absorb the values and methods of the company (t) hires them. There are no bad habits to break them of. ④ A company with a good training program can take the best people from universities and mold them (i) competent, skilled workers.

Unit 31

C

① These days, business has become increasingly competitive. ② (T), a smart company will take advantage of (b) mid-career hires and people fresh out of university. ③ Companies need to act quickly to keep (u) with their competition, and hiring away people from other companies provides a definite competitive advantage. ④ Companies also need young, fresh perspectives, and (t) comes from people in their early twenties. In (o) words, university graduates. ⑤ The only way for a company to succeed these days is to have the best people from various walks of life working for it.

Unit 32

Is remote work preferable to on-site work?

A

① From my perspective, remote work fails on two extremes. Firstly, it erases the boundary (b) work and free time, and it's important to keep the two (s e). ② When work creeps into my home life, I end up feeling I am just a person who works to stay alive, and am available to my company (w r) they need me, no matter what I happen to be doing. I don't see how that's a good thing. ③ At the (o) extreme, my work suffers. Home has too many distractions. Going to the refrigerator to get a soda, seeing what's on TV, stepping outside for fresh air, and so on. Of course, I want to do those things while at home. But the result is that I'm less focused than I need to (b) in order to work productively. ④ Bottom line: keep work and home separate.

Unit 32

B

① I'm not exaggerating (w) I say that the move to remote work might be the greatest development in the history of labor! (F), people are free to work where they want, live where they want. ② Until now, people have been shuffled into workspaces, commuting long distances, forced to put on ties or makeup, etc. Not to mention having to spend long hours away from one's family. It was so constricting. ③ Thanks (t) the miracles of technology, all of that has become unnecessary. We can fulfill our obligations to our employer without becoming worker bees in a hive! ④ I feel sad for my parents who had to spend so much time at the office, knowing I would have benefitted from having them around (m). ⑤ Thankfully, I now have an opportunity that didn't exist for them, and I intend to make full (u) of it!

Unit 32

C

① (l) recent history has shown us anything, it is that we need to be prepared for any contingency! ② The need to keep 'social distance' during an epidemic has proven itself, and thankfully the ability to do that while working together is now available to us. The world's economy doesn't (h) to collapse due to a pandemic! ③ Nevertheless, the ways we must behave during a major crisis should NOT become the way we always operate. There is (n) need to completely redesign society④. Remote work substitutes for some aspects of working together with colleagues, meeting clients and learning from mentors, (b) not all. There continues to be value in spending time in the same room, face to face, while collaborating on a project. ⑤ So, in general I think it's better to keep that the norm, making remote work the (e) n) as circumstances dictate.

Unit 33

Should the retirement age be raised?

A

① I favor extending the official retirement age on (b) practical and moral grounds. ② As a practical matter, it simply makes sense to (a w) people to work longer. For one, older workers have amassed a great amount of knowledge and expertise (t) can't be replicated by inexperienced younger workers. Their employers benefit. ③ More importantly, as Japan's aging crisis deepens, there will be increasingly more elderly people and (l) young people to do the work that needs done. ④ Morally, it's the right thing to do. Something called 'the empty nest syndrome' often befalls parents when children leave home. It can be heartbreaking. The same thing happens (w) many people retire. They feel that they have served their purpose and have nothing more to contribute. That is tragic. ⑤ People should be allowed to work as long as they find it fulfilling.

Unit 33

B

① I think it is morally unacceptable to squeeze every last drop of sweat out of people, as (i) the purpose of our lives is just to fuel the engines of commerce and industry. ② Life should be a beautiful experience, particularly for the elderly who have earned it (m) than anyone. ③ Raising the retirement age is an insult; it asks individuals to pay for the shortcomings of government for not dealing (w) the aging issue. ④ The later years of life are called 'golden years' for a reason. It's a time to cherish the remaining experiences life offers. Taking trips, watching grandchildren grow, reading, pursuing hobbies, and so (o). ⑤ If people are denied that, it's as if life has no meaning beyond work, like we are just cattle (t) be used up and discarded. We owe our senior citizens so much more, and remember: in the future, that's us!

Unit 33

C

① It isn't a simple yes (o) no question. It depends on the person, and (o) the type of work being done. ② Some people remain mentally sharp and physically fit at an advanced age. Why put an artificial cut-off age on someone who (s) has plenty to offer? ③ Others, perhaps due to genetics, are less fortunate. If they are physically and mentally exhausted, they have a fundamental right to retire. ④ Then there is the type of work. Probably (n) of us want to receive brain or heart surgery from an elderly doctor, or be flown by an elderly pilot. ⑤ But on the other hand, look at the arts. Picasso, Miro, Dali and Chagall all continued to produce great work past 90. There are numerous such fields, such (a) scientific research and higher education where society benefits by letting people continue to do what they are best at.

Unit 34

Should we move to a four-day workweek?

A

① Too many traditions stay around (a) becoming obsolete, and the five-day workweek is one (e) e). ② It is an anachronism hanging over from the Industrial Revolution. At that time, the world's labor force rapidly shifted from mostly agricultural to mostly industrial. Factory workers were largely untrained and uneducated, and productivity was (l). People needed to be trained to perform millions of new tasks that were appearing overnight. ③ Today, the situation is completely (d). Productivity is at an all-time high. ④ Society should reward workers for all the hard work done over generations to achieve this current age of prosperity. Shortening the workweek, and having three days to enjoy our lives and our families is the best way to do that. ⑤ Work, after all, is not and never (s d) be the most important thing in life.

Unit 34

B

① There is a saying, 'if something isn't broke, don't (f) it.' That applies here. There's (n) wrong with working five days a week and taking two days off. ② People grow up with this at school, and remain accustomed to it when entering the workforce. ③ The key is to not overwork people during those days, limiting the number of hours to an acceptable level (w) people are able to relax in the evening or spend time with family. ④ It is equally important to make the work atmosphere as enjoyable as (p e). Work fulfills people when it is satisfying work that is valued by employers and managers. Things like ergonomic furniture, plants in the office, art on the wall and so (f) help make time spent at work enjoyable. ⑤ Let's focus on such things, instead of suddenly giving everybody an extra day off.

Unit 34

C

① I am (f) shortening the work week, but instead of simply lengthening the weekend, make Friday (or Monday) a day for volunteering. ② Japan faces many issues, such (a) caring for a rapidly aging society, as well as devastating earthquakes, tsunami and mudslides which we are susceptible to. Such problems are likely to intensify (d) to demographics and climate change. ③ We can't just talk about the challenges these issues create; we have to do something about them! ④ Plus, it would be good for people to spend one day a week contributing to society (w) meeting people outside of one's work and family circles. This would be such a positive innovation that I imagine it making Japan a much better country to live in. ⑤ Japan is known historically (a) a country that highly values cooperation. By doing this, we will set an example for the whole world!

Unit 35

Do you think restrictions on smokers are too severe?

A

① (A) a smoker, I definitely consider the laws to be (t) severe. Smokers are being punished in ways that other people aren't. ② For example, people can walk down a street completely drunk. Nobody says anything. Smoking is a right, like any other. ③ Not (o) that, it is very troublesome to me to have to look for smoking spaces (b) they are so scarce. I don't think nonsmokers realize how inconvenient that is. ④ Also, if you want to say that smoking affects other peoples' health, then you should ban people with coughs, colds and flus (f) riding public trains. They are a much greater health hazard. ⑤ The laws are just to punish, plain and simple.

Unit 35

B

① I think the laws should be severe, because secondhand smoke is a major health issue. ② (W) should non-smokers have to deal with the health risks of people who demand to smoke (i) our presence? I think (i) is pretty arrogant of smokers to expect to be able to blow their smoke wherever they want, without caring that others might get sick. ③ And let's remember that these laws come after extensive research into the harmfulness of second-hand smoke. ④ For a long time, smokers (h) it much too easy. Things have changed, for the better. ⑤ My (r) to clean, safe air is just as important as their right to smoke.

Unit 35

C

① Smoking is an unhealthy addiction. The connection (b) smoking and lung cancer is very strong. ② Furthermore, there is research that people who live with smokers are (a) similar risks as the smoker. ③ So, I don't think smokers are being punished by laws that say they can (o) smoke in some places. ④ I feel the laws should be more about ending this terrible addiction. I think we should go (f), and restrict the sale of cigarettes. I also feel that all smokers should be provided with assistance in curing their addiction. (O) the tobacco companies would complain! ⑤ I think if we did that, within one generation we could end smoking, and the country would be healthier as a whole.

Unit 36

Do we need all the security cameras in public places?

A

① I personally feel that the prevalence of security cameras is (m) about government spying on its own citizens than preventing crime. It's (l) we live in George Orwell's '1984.' ② Because of modern technology, satellites connected to these cameras, we can be tracked (d) at any time. The government can know what stores we go to, who we meet. It's scary! ③ It's an invasion of everyone's privacy. Privacy is one of the most fundamental human rights, I feel. ④ Security cameras are like a tradeoff between safety and freedom, and so many people want to feel safe all the time (t) they let the government spy on them. ⑤ I am well aware this world has dangers, (b) I don't want to be followed everywhere I go by Big Brother.

Unit 36

B

① The (o) people who complain about security cameras are people who have something to hide. I am a good citizen, and I obey all the laws, so (w) should I care if cameras track me? ② Those cameras are there for a reason, to prevent crime. They are also extremely useful (i) finding criminals when a crime has been committed. ③ We should definitely use technology to make our world safer, and that's precisely (w) these cameras do. ④ Would anyone complain if a security camera was useful in catching someone who robbed them? Plainly not. ⑤ (T e), I think it is obvious that all those cameras provide a valuable service.

Unit 36

C

① I am somewhat on the (f e) about this. ② On the one hand, I feel that it is right to be concerned about the invasion-of-privacy aspect of this situation. On the (o) hand, I think most people would have to admit they feel a bit safer knowing that criminals can be caught in the act through these cameras. Who wouldn't want that? ③ But I think the situation could get out (o) hand, if it hasn't already. ④ For example, private establishments such as hotels, banks and restaurants should be strongly prohibited (f) placing cameras in places where people insist upon privacy, such as restrooms and bedrooms. It is absolutely wrong to have cameras installed in such places. And employers (s t) have cameras to catch their employees goofing off, I feel. ⑤ The cameras should be used to prevent crime, NOT to find out everybody's secrets!

Unit 37

Do you agree with raising the sales tax?

A

① I think that raising the sales tax should only be considered (a) a final resort to solving Japan's economic problems. ② (F) one thing, raising the sales tax discourages people from purchasing items. It could end up causing the economic situation to go (f) bad to worse. ③ More importantly, I feel that sales taxes on consumption of basic needs like food are unfair, (b) they tax the poor as much as the rich. ④ If you want to place a high tax on luxury items such as yachts or sports cars, I can agree, because only people who can afford high prices buy them anyway. ⑤ But if you tax everything people buy in the supermarket, you are hurting working families, college students, and other people who are struggling or just getting by. ⑥ Small children might even end up having less food, or less healthy food, because of the rise in prices. That's not being fair to those most in (n).

Unit 37

B

① I agree with the decision to raise the sales tax for the simple reason (t) it is a necessity. ② Our government is building up a huge deficit, and the situation will only get worse (a) the population continues to age. The entire economy of Japan will collapse if the government can't (f) ways to increase revenue and decrease the deficit. ③ Japan worked very hard after the end of the last war to build a prosperous country that takes good care of its people. We can't lose that. ④ Just (a) people did then, we all have to be willing to make sacrifices for the greater good. ⑤ Nobody likes prices going up, but we have run out of other good options. Raising the sales tax is not ideal, (b) it is the best available option.

Unit 37

C

We keep (h g) from the government about how things are desperate and they need to keep raising taxes. ② I don't think we can always trust the government to tell us the truth in such matters. ③ What are the benefits to the people for these increased taxes? It has to be a (f r) exchange. Will we see improvements in schools, in safety, in having clean air and increased public transportation? If so, I think most people could agree that the exchange of our money for improved services is fair. ④ But we (d) really know how the government uses our money. I suspect that a tremendous amount of it is just wasted, and some of it just (m) politicians richer. ⑤ People will become increasingly angry with the government if it just raises taxes (w) improving our lives.

Unit 38

In the future, will universal basic income (UBI) be necessary?

A

① Today's economic system comes down to two essentials, production and consumption. If people can't afford to consume, (t) companies can't produce. Most people today play (b) vital roles, consumer and producer. ② The problem is that automation is doing more and more of the work, while robots, AI programs, etc. will never be (c s).' They don't have wants, and they don't have needs. The whole system collapses. ③ The solution is UBI. ④ If production is to be taken over by automation, people will still need to be able to purchase what they need, and what they desire. This is not (o) moral, it is a necessity to maintain the production/consumption system that makes our economy thrive. ⑤ Whether or not automation SHOULD replace so many jobs is a separate argument. The importance of UBI is the (r) it will play in preventing the global economy from collapsing.

Unit 38

B

① I am dead (s) against UBI. ② To begin (w), it is blatantly unfair. If tens of millions of people are provided with income without earning it, then the money they receive is coming from someone else's labor. It's as simple as that. It's Karl Marx's dream of 'from each according to his abilities, to each according to his needs.' Some people consider that a noble idea, but not me. ③ I think the rewards of someone's efforts should go to the individual, not taken (f) them to provide for someone else. ④ Furthermore, a human being's dignity largely derives from being able to contribute something (o) value to society. This, to me, is a beautiful thing. It is why the human race has achieved so many things, and progressed (w e) other species remain stagnant. ⑤ UBI to humans is like cattle feed for animals. It reduces human beings to livestock.

Unit 38

C

① I suppose I can get behind the idea of UBI, but the problem for me is (w) would be in charge. ② Let's say it's the government. In that case, the money must come from government revenue, which means (t). It would explode spending beyond anything we have seen so far, which will cause government debt to soar. In Japan, as (w) many countries, debt is already at dangerously high levels. So that's a nonstarter, which leaves the corporations themselves to fund it. ③ If companies insist on taking people's livelihoods (a) from them by automating our jobs to make billions for themselves, then they should take responsibility. The question is, will they? Obviously not, as the point of automating is to keep as much of the pie for themselves as they (c). ④ So, it seems like a good idea in principle that won't work in the real world.

Unit 39

Should elderly people be allowed to drive?

A

① I think it depends on the person. There are some people who are excellent drivers (e n) in their eighties. These people shouldn't lose their ability to drive. ② Particularly in rural areas, elderly people need cars to do their shopping and keep their medical appointments. If they are capable of driving, we have no (r) to deny them that right. ③ The problem is that many elderly people do, in fact, deteriorate as drivers. They become a danger to themselves and others on the road. ④ So, I think the (s n) is to create a good system of checking older people's driving ability. Perhaps we should make them take a test every two years. ⑤ Furthermore, let's do our (b) to create alternative transportation for the senior citizens who have their licenses revoked. Growing old is difficult to begin with. We shouldn't increase burdens (o) the elderly.

Unit 39

B

① I am opposed to making it a (r e) that elderly people lose their license at a certain age. It is discrimination, plain and simple. ② If you want to make the roads safer, perhaps raising the driving age is a (b r) solution. ③ I am more worried about young boys showing off in their cars by racing down streets (t) I am about elderly people, who in general drive very carefully. ④ You can't deny them something as essential as a car. When we are older, we need to make more frequent trips to the doctor. Older people frequently have to drive their spouses to the hospital. Furthermore, older people are not able to carry heavy bags, and need cars to do their shopping. ⑤ (U s) they have really bad eyesight, or some other condition that makes driving dangerous, they (s) be able to keep their licenses as long as they want.

Unit 39

C

I have long felt that driving licenses should be revoked after a certain age, (s) as perhaps eighty. ② There are plenty of studies that show that as people age, their reflexes slow down. Not only does the body move more slowly, but (a) the brain's decision-making ability slows. These are just facts of aging. ③ Meanwhile, cars are very dangerous (w) not driven properly. I think the fatality figures for Japan is something like five thousand a year. These are senseless tragedies. ④ It is not the fault of the elderly people, but the (f) of the matter is they become a danger to themselves and to others when they start to lose their reflexes, or their eyesight starts declining, etc. ⑤ Furthermore, elderly people tend to be stubborn. They rarely want to give up their licenses (o) their own. That decision needs to be made for them.

Unit 40

Are you for capital punishment?

A

① I am strongly in (f) of capital punishment. ② Sometimes, we hear about criminal acts that are (s) evil and shocking that everyone who reads them is outraged and disgusted. Can you imagine how the family members and loved ones of the victims feel in such cases? ③ There is no possible justification for (a) the people who commit such crimes to continue living. It is an insult to the family members. Completely innocent people were senselessly murdered, (y) the criminal gets to keep on living? That makes no sense at all. ④ Executing the people who commit such crimes is just, while keeping such people alive in prison, using taxpayer money, is (u) t).

Unit 40

B

① I am (i) favor of abolishing the death penalty. ② Society has rightly determined that murder is the worst crime. Therefore, society should not (c t) murder. It's as simple as that. ③ Furthermore, it has been shown that capital punishment does not deter criminal behavior. There have also been numerous cases where someone (w) was wrongly convicted for a crime was executed. ④ The only ethical solution is to end the death penalty and make murderers spend the remainder of (t) lives in prison. Let them reflect upon their crimes and feel guilt and shame for (w) they have done. ⑤ Civilized countries should not be killing their own citizens, period.

Unit 40

C

① This is a very difficult issue for me. ② On the one (h), I am almost certain that if someone I care about was murdered, I would want the murderer to be executed. It would make me angry knowing they could be walking the streets again some day. ③ (H), I realize that most advanced countries have abolished the death penalty, and they have good reasons for doing (s). ④ So, I feel that even though people naturally have an emotional desire for revenge against murderers, we (s d) not base our laws on that. ⑤ There are strong legal and ethical reasons (w) countries have abolished the death penalty, and ultimately I feel I should pay more attention to them than to my emotions.

Unit 41

Are you in favor of euthanasia?

A

① I am (s y) against euthanasia for two reasons. ② The first reason is that medical advancement is occurring rapidly. Euthanasia is also called '(m) killing' and in the past that might have made sense, because medicine was very primitive. But now, we have new painkilling drugs coming out all the time. We have the ability to prolong life, and we are finding cures for diseases (t) in the past were incurable. It is wrong to end the life of someone (w) two or three years later a cure for their disease might be discovered. ③ The second reason is philosophical. I believe that a human life is the most sacred and precious thing on earth. We can't treat it like a machine that we discard as (s) as it starts malfunctioning. ④ The role of medicine is to preserve life because life is so valuable.

Unit 41

B

① An individual should most definitely be allowed to end their life if they are suffering terribly, (e y) from an incurable condition. If necessary, doctors should be allowed to assist them in carrying out their choice. ② Some horrible conditions, (s) as cancer or burns all over the entire body, create a situation of hell for the patient. If the law says they can't be euthanized, it is (l) the government is insisting that they experience a life of hell, year after year. That is terrible. ③ People should have (f l) rights over their own body. ④ It is not the doctors or the lawyers or the politicians who experience the suffering, after all. It is the patient, and so (o) the patient should be allowed to choose.

Unit 41

C

① (O) of the most common times that euthanasia is considered is for patients who are in a coma and can never come back to consciousness. We actually compare them to 'vegetables.' To me, that's not life! ② The problem is that since they are unconscious, they can't make their wishes (k n). ③ Therefore, I think people should be encouraged to make written statements about what they want to happen to them if they go into a vegetative state. I read about this in other countries, where it is (r d) to as a 'living will.' The will is given to a trusted spouse or other family member. ④ If the living will says they don't want to continue being (k) alive after losing consciousness, then the family should be able to insist that the patient be allowed to die. ⑤ This isn't the same as killing someone. It is simply turning off machines that keep them alive indefinitely (a t) their wishes. It is the best way, I feel.

Unit 42

Should the voting age be lowered to 16?

A

① A good reason for supporting lowering the voting age to 16 is (t) once someone receives the right to vote, it persists throughout their life. ② So people can vote at 80, 90, even 100. Obviously, someone of an advanced age is going to have very different priorities (t) someone in their teens. That results in young peoples' concerns not being (f y) addressed, particularly in Japan, which has the highest percentage of senior citizens in the world. The current situation is lopsided and unfair. The voice of youth must be represented. ③ People may argue that young people don't know enough about politics to vote responsibly, but let's face it: most people, no (m) what their age, don't follow politics deeply. They follow media reports and vote in their own interests. ④ This will be the same for 16-year-olds, who have far greater access to media than (e) before.

Unit 42

B

① Voting is (t) important a civic duty to extend to people who have barely even begun to think about important matters, much less to form opinions about them. ② Recall yourself at sixteen. Probably you were obsessed with sports, bands, entertainment figures, and above all your own popularity. Were you immature? Of (c). ③ There is nothing wrong with that, but it is a fact of life that adolescents are hardly concerned global citizens, beyond a few rare exceptions. Teenagers are at the very beginning of forming worldviews, so how can we (e) them to make informed decisions? ④ They would rather vote for their favorite idol group member than for legislators to lead the community, municipality or nation. There are already too many celebrities in politics, offering nothing (b) their notoriety. Add teenage voters into the mix, and this unfortunate trend would explode! ⑤ (L) kids be kids!

Unit 42

C

① An informed citizenry is essential to a healthy democracy. ② It's not about age; it's about civic awareness. There are 16-year-olds who know way (m) about government than people in their 40s. In fact, very few people have either the time or interest to deeply investigate the many political (i)s that affect our lives. ③ (T), I support lowering the voting age, provided this goes with strengthening civics education in high school. Give students a firm understanding of how government works and what it does, and by sixteen you will have informed and knowledgeable voters. With luck, you will have citizens who will stay engaged, and choose wisely throughout their lives. Absent focus on civics education, I don't see any particular advantage to (l)g the voting age. ④ Things won't change (u) people of ALL ages have it impressed upon them the power they possess with their vote.

Unit 43

Is the 'My Number' system necessary?

A

① I think the 'My Number' system is necessary and beneficial. ② In today's world, people are plugged into a wide variety of systems: health insurance, bank accounts, loan repayments, residency (a) so on. (H g) a single number that can be used in all such situations simplifies things tremendously. Life has become so complicated; it's nice to have a program in place that makes things go (m) simply and smoothly. ③ I studied in the U.S. and was issued a Social Security card with my own unique number, so I am used (t) the procedure. In America, one of the first things people are asked to give on certain applications is their 'SSN' (Social Security Number), and people don't complain. They know that they will receive benefits from the system when they retire. ④ I think we in Japan just need to (g) used to it.

Unit 43

B

① I view the 'My Number' system (a) dehumanizing. I have a NAME; I don't need a number! ② I'm not some item to be stamped with a barcode and sold in a store. Modern industrial society is always trying to reduce everything (i o) sortable algorithms. It's bad enough with things that should be natural, like our food, but far worse when people are treated the (s) way. ③ And when governments issue people numbers, they tend to view them as numbers as well. People who previously lived in communist countries always talk about (h) dehumanizing it felt. People were nothing more than government statistics to be manipulated. We cannot allow this to happen! ④ We must preserve our unique identities and our human values at all costs, because (o) they are lost, history shows they are not easily regained.

Unit 43

C

① I don't have an issue with the plan in principle, (b) the implementation process has been poorly handled. ② There have been multiple cases of mistaken identity, mostly due (t) routine errors, as (w) as malicious incidents of identity theft. Major national medical and dental associations have complained about these problems, and call the system unworkable. ③ The government spent billions of yen of taxpayer money to create a system and (w) able to anticipate these types of errors and abuses. This is the reason why so many people are opposed to any intrusion by the government into peoples' lives. They think the government is better at creating problems (t) solving them, and in many cases they are right. ④ Some people go too far with 'conspiracy theories' and are convinced 'My Number' is a way to control the populace. But it's actually just very bad bureaucracy.

Unit 44

Should taxes be lowered to raise living standards?

A

① When people are allowed to keep more of their hard-earned money, they can be relied upon to use it on things they value. That often means goods and services, such as a new car or a nice vacation, (t) industries provide them. This creates a vibrant economy that yields benefits to all. ② (W) the government snatches away money, they rarely use it in wise ways. They waste it on massive unnecessary projects. I heard that in the United States, the military soaks up half the national budget. That's insane. ③ (N) to mention the corruption issue. Politicians don't just waste money; they steal it. And the whole country suffers (f) all that lost revenue. ④ I am (f) taxing as little as possible and letting commerce create the best situations for the most people. Keep the government out of my pocket!

Unit 44

B

① Nobody likes taxes, but they do (s e) a purpose. Japan is a country that has a huge need for public spending. ② Most importantly, (b) of our aging population, we have to ensure that the needs of our elderly will be seen to. Another issue is the many natural disasters we face. Earthquakes and tsunamis have caused trillions of yen in damage in recent decades, and will continue to do so. Thus, it is the role of government to act in a collective way to address problems that (c) be solved by individuals or companies. ③ Each of us must contribute to this pooled resource through our taxes, (s) it will be there for us in our own time of need. ④ Of course, I would love to pay less in taxes; who wouldn't? But taking into account Japan's special needs, I don't see (h) that's possible.

Unit 44

C

① Possibly lowering taxes could raise living standards, but it needs to be done in a way (t) is sustainable, and that means creating more of a consumer economy. ② Japanese tend to be conservative, preferring saving (t) spending. There is a huge amount of money being held 'prisoner' by senior citizens who keep millions of yen in post office accounts, (a) if they were draining water away from a river we all need to drink from. If a decrease in taxes doesn't yield an increase in spending to stimulate the economy, what's the point? ③ (A r) aspect of Japanese conservatism is that we are so unpolitical. We just keep voting for the same corrupt politicians who waste our money. We just go along with it, even though it's bad for the economy. ④ If people (c) be relied upon to spend their tax dividends, AND hold politicians accountable, it could work.

Unit 45

Should cities compete so hard to invite Olympic Games?

A

① I cannot understand (w) cities try so hard to secure the Olympics. ② It always ends up as a big waste, as (f) as I can see. Cities spend huge amounts of money to build stadiums that might only be used once. They disrupt the lives of their citizens with these enormous construction projects. ③ To (g) one example, I read that Beijing spent 80 billion dollars on their Olympics. To me, this is inexcusable. You can never convince me that China, with its many challenges, couldn't (h) used that money in much better ways. The same in Japan, where the money we spent on stadiums and hotels could have been put to better use. I think Olympics are (m) about the egos of city officials than the welfare of the citizens. ⑤ I don't see their value at all.

Unit 45

B

① The (m n) purpose of hosting the Olympics is to enhance the image of your city. We live in an age where brands sell, and the Olympics is a major brand. ② Being an Olympic host makes a city much (m) competitive in terms of hosting other events like global conferences and conventions. In other (w s), the Olympics make it clear that a host city is a 'global city.' Every major city wants to be able to hold its head proudly and proclaim, "I hosted the Olympics." ③ Not (o) that, Olympics tend to create a huge economic boost to cities. Many jobs are created in the construction industry, the hospitality industry, etc. ④ There are very few cases you can point to where the Olympics (w) successful. ⑤ I am always proud when Japan hosts an Olympics!

Unit 45

C

① The problem is that the Olympics have become (s) expensive that only cities in developed countries can take on the burden. That's not fair, as it defeats the purpose of the Olympics, which is to bring the world together. ② (S), I think the most important thing is to bring (d) the budgets of Olympic events. They should be scaled down. I am sure that much of the expense of Olympics is just a waste. ③ People (j) want to be able to stay at reasonably-priced hotels, and watch events at safe and comfortable stadiums. ④ I think host cities need to be able to show that they can provide those two necessities, and forget about all the extravagances. ⑤ The goal should be to create Olympics that any large city could host, (w r) the country is rich, poor or in the middle.

Unit 46

Are you concerned about Japan's low food self sufficiency rate?

A

① I think Japan's low food self sufficiency could be a (h e) problem for us in the near future. ② Global climate change is one concern. I have (h d) that major food producers like the United States and Canada will be affected by global warming. If their supply of food shrinks, they will have to use (w) they have to feed their own people, not Japan's. ③ If other types of disasters happen, such as a major war, Japan might also (f) it difficult to bring food into the country. ④ Japan has the lowest food self sufficiency of all developed countries, and it has steadily decreased. It is about 40% now. ⑤ We could be facing a terrible tragedy if we don't do something to raise that (f e).

Unit 46

B

① I think the fears about Japan's low food self sufficiency are exaggerated. It might be (t e) that Japan's rate is lower than many countries, but we are not the only country facing this problem. ② (F e), the population of Japan is set to decline, which means there will be (l s) mouths to feed in the coming decades. ③ My main point is that Japan has the ability to buy food on the world market. We can't change the fact that our country is small and covered with mountains. But we can make sure (t) we always have plenty of money to pay for the food we need. ④ That money comes from doing the things that we do best, providing the world with products it needs. ⑤ As long as Japan keeps on being Japan, we will have plenty of food, (b e) we will have great products to exchange for it.

Unit 46

C

① I think Japan needs to do a few things to ensure food security. ② The first is (t) improve our agricultural methods. Our current system of using farmland is very inefficient. (M t) of our farms are small, and farming methods are not modern. We need to take advantage of all the available technology (t) increases crop yields. ③ We need to transform farming in this country so that dedicated young professionals can (r e) the older generation of farmers as they retire. ④ The other thing we need to do is find a better (b e) between protecting our own food industries and allowing food to come in from outside. ⑤ This might involve adjusting our trade policies, and doing our best to maintain friendly relationships with food rich countries.

Unit 47

Do you think Japan should be involved in space exploration?

A

① First of (a), Japan's technology is among the best in the world. This gives us an opportunity to show the world (w) we can do. ② I think that if we focus on space exploration, our achievements will eventually surpass the United States. ③ Also, rival countries, such (a) China, are moving into space. Japan's economic strength will be further diminished if we (a w) China to grow ahead of us technologically. ④ Some people might say space exploration is a waste of money, (b) in fact space technology has always created great economic benefits and innovative products.

Unit 47

B

① I think that outer space (n s) to be shared. ② It is the only place (w) we still have a chance to move beyond national boundaries and rivalries. ③ Therefore, what I believe is that all space exploration should be done by international teams. That is the idea behind the international space station. ④ (O) course, Japanese scientists can contribute, (b) I think the projects should all be staffed by people of many countries working together. ⑤ Throughout human history, countries have competed over land, water and resources. It will be a terrible tragedy if the (s) thing happens to outer space.

Unit 47

C

① It may sound like a cliché, but I think we have enough things to take care of on earth (b) we start exploring space. ② Space exploration is tremendously costly, and I just feel that such large sums of money can be (b r) spent on earth. ③ Millions of people don't have enough to eat, so we should be working on improving food production and distribution. Education is another thing that money needs to be spent (o). And of course, the environmental problems we face will require lots of money and technology to solve. ④ I think space exploration (s d) come (a) we have fixed things here!