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阅读理解思路标准解读

模拟及答案

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阅读理解 A

Passage 1

In the spring of 2010, a group of academics gathered at Wagner College in Staten Island, N.Y., to propose a new field of research: “Male Studies.” Not to be confused with Men’s Studies, which has been around for more than two decades, Male Studies is founded on the premise that men are now disenfranchised, and women’s success has come at their expense.

Sound counterintuitive? It may be. But those backing the proposal have some solid statistics behind them. For starters, since 2000, women have represented about 57 percent of enrollment at colleges in the United States; they consistently outperform males in high school, and are now earning more Ph.D.s.

Taken at face value, it sure seems like something’s wrong. But is it correct to assume that the imbalance indicates discrimination against men? Or is it the other way around? In 2006, Jennifer Delahunty Britz, an admissions dean at Ohio’s Kenyon College, caused a stir when she wrote in *The New York Times* apologizing to female college applicants for routinely rejecting them in favor of their less qualified male peers. Kenyon is far from alone: at Northwestern, the acceptance rate is 26 percent for women and 34 percent for men; and at the University of Richmond, the admissions rate for males is 13 percent higher than for females.

But despite probes into discrimination against women, it’s groups like those gathered at Wagner—who believe that it’s men who get the short stick—that are the most vocal about gender imbalance on campus. The folks at Wagner are quick to say that women are keeping mum because drawing attention to the issue would be tantamount to declaring victory for women’s rights.

With boys continuing to fall behind, and the recession claiming more men’s jobs than women’s, the subject has been getting increasing attention. But its sources and solutions remain hard to pin down. Leonard Sax, the author of *Boys Adrift and Girls on the Edge*, believes that the problem with boys is related to basic assumptions about gender, saying that boys increasingly think of academic success as unmasculine.

If there’s one thing that almost everyone agrees on, it’s that making sure that boys succeed in school does not have to come at the expense of girls—it’s not a zero sum game. In fact, Sax calls the conflict between the Male Studies and Men’s Studies advocates an “ongoing and unproductive debate.” Noting that although girls might do better academically, they’re also more likely to experience very high stress levels, eating disorders, and cutting, he says, “Boys have problems. Girls have problems. Both are disadvantaged, but they’re disadvantaged in different ways.” Before we declare victory for either gender, it’s a message to bear in mind.

1. Male studies focuses on _____.

- | | |
|---|--------------------------------------|
| [A] the inferior position of men | [B] the sacrifices made by men |
| [C] the improvement of women’s position | [D] the discrimination against women |

2. The author cites the example of Kenyon College to prove _____.

- | | |
|--|--|
| [A] the inclusiveness of Jennifer | [B] the malpractice of colleges |
| [C] the discrimination against male students | [D] the discrimination against female students |

3. Leonard Sax attributes the more serious unemployment of men to _____.

- | | |
|---|--|
| [A] their arrogance for gender advantages | [B] their ignorance of academic success |
| [C] the misleading social stereotype | [D] the unreasonable assumption about gender |

4. Sax would agree that _____.

- | |
|--|
| [A] the Male Studies and Men’s Studies should be prohibited |
| [B] the Male Studies will be ultimately unproductive and useless |

[C] men and women, boys and girls, have an equal position

[D] people should hold an objective attitude towards women's success

5. The best title for the passage should be _____.

[A] Men and Women

[B] Male Studies or Men's Studies

[C] The Discrimination Against Men

[D] Disadvantaged Men

Passage 2

"Print is going to live longer than people think," asserts Mathias Dopfner, the boss of Axel Springer. Perhaps it will in central Europe. The publisher of *Bild* and *Die Welt* recently recorded the most profitable first quarter in its history. If newspapers are in crisis, Mr Dopfner says, he likes crisis.

A year ago the mere survival of many newspapers seemed doubtful. It had become clear that the young, in particular, were getting much of their news online. Readers were flitting from story to story, rarely paying. Advertising too was moving online, but not to newspapers' websites. Rather, it was being swallowed by search engines. The classified-ad market was ravaged by free listings websites such as Craigslist. A deep recession, received wisdom had it, would surely finish off newspapers, which have high fixed costs in the form of journalists and printing presses.

In some ways the pain proved even greater than analysts expected. The Newspaper Association of America reports that print and online advertising has fallen by 35% since the first quarter of 2008. Circulation has dropped alarmingly too. Yet almost all newspapers have survived, although with occasional help from the bankruptcy courts. American newspaper firms like McClatchy stayed mostly profitable even as revenues plunged.

Newspapers have cut their way out of crisis. In the past year McClatchy reduced payroll costs by 25%. Many publications closed bureaus and forced journalists to take unpaid leave. There have been clever adaptations, too. At Gannett, another American firm, 46 local titles now carry national and international news from *USA Today*, the firm's national paper. A group of New Jersey newspapers jointly produces features and editorials.

Another unexpected *boon* (福利) is that spending on paper—the second-biggest expense at many firms, after staff pay—has *plummeted* (大幅下跌) by as much as 40%. A global commodities slump depressed prices. The possibility that paper prices will roar back as the world economy accelerates is only one danger facing newspaper firms. Readers may suddenly *balk* (退缩) at paying higher prices for thinner products. Yet it is also possible that advertising will begin to recover from severely depressed levels. If that happens, profit margins will inflate quickly.

That emphasis on giving readers what they want to read, as opposed to what lofty notions of civic responsibility suggest they ought to read, is part of a global trend. Newspapers are becoming more distinctive and customer-focused. Rather than trying to bring the world to as many readers as possible, they are carving out *niches* (用户群). Proprietors and editors are trying to identify distinctive strengths and investing what money they have in those areas.

The survival of newspapers is by no means guaranteed. They still face big structural obstacles: it remains unclear, for example, whether the young will pay for news in any form. But the recession brought out an impressive and unexpected ability to adapt. If newspapers can keep that up in better times, they may be able to contemplate more than mere survival.

1. What's Mathias Dopfner's attitude towards the development of newspapers?

[A] Worried.

[B] Unconcerned.

[C] Optimistic.

[D] Doubted.

2. What can we know about McClatchy in the past year?
 - [A] It suffered a substantial loss.
 - [B] It made profits in most times.
 - [C] Its circulation kept rising although advertising fell.
 - [D] It got much help from bankruptcy courts.
3. What does Gannett do to help its newspapers out?
 - [A] It forces journalists to take unpaid leave.
 - [B] It allows its local titles to share same news from its national paper.
 - [C] It carries news from other national and international papers.
 - [D] It gives features and editorials more spaces.
4. Why could the growth of world economy possibly put newspaper firms in danger?
 - [A] It could increase the costs of newspapers.
 - [B] It could push more advertising to move online.
 - [C] It could cause the shift of the investment in newspapers.
 - [D] It could lead to fiercer competition.
5. What is true about the global development trend of newspapers?
 - [A] Newspapers will bring the world to more and more readers.
 - [B] Newspapers will give readers more suggestions.
 - [C] Newspapers will pander to readers' interest.
 - [D] Newspapers will survive any possible crisis.

Passage 3

As playwright Arthur Miller once observed, "An era can be said to end when its basic illusions are exhausted." And most of the illusions that defined the late global economic boom are now indeed exhausted. Yet one idea still has the power to capture imaginations and markets: it is that commodities like oil, copper, grains and gold are all destined to rise over time.

It's a view rooted in powerful and real trends, like the growth of China and India, the decline in global reserves, fears over resource nationalization and long-term underinvestment in energy and agriculture, which hampers supply.

Yet the fact is that the world has faced all these issues before, and for the past 200 years, commodity prices have been trending downwards, thanks to new technologies, greater efficiency in extraction and the substitution of one commodity for another.

Despite all the worries over "peak oil", the fact is that the major bear markets in oil have been demand, rather than supply led. And when demand eventually picks up, there's usually some new alternative waiting to pick up some of the slack. The real price of oil today is now at the same level as in 1976 and, before that, in the 1870s, when oil was first put to mass use in the United States. This long-term price decline is due mainly to the constant discovery of new fields and greater energy efficiency. The experience of the 1980s is instructive in the current context as well.

Japan and Europe continued to grow strongly in the 1980s, and yet oil consumption remained essentially flat through that decade as both the regions strived to achieve better fuel efficiency and switched to alternative sources of energy, such as nuclear power. As countries get richer, their per capita consumption of commodities declines. It's a myth, then, that the boom in China and India will inexorably drive up oil and other commodity prices.

Yet markets are still betting that the price of oil is poised to spike again. Prices of other commodities are also expected to rise.

This *bullishness* (行情看涨) is misplaced. The world is now in the biggest growth slump since the Great Depression. Yet for the most part of analysts, no matter what their view on the global economy, agree that commodity prices will rise. Optimists say a revival in consumer demand will drive up oil and other commodity prices, while pessimists are buying commodities as a hedge against a feared outbreak in inflation, given all the money central banks are printing across the world.

Both scenarios ignore history, which shows that only one commodity rises in an inflationary environment: gold. Other commodity prices tend to bloom only during the mature stages of a boom when the global economy overheats and demand briefly exceeds supply. At the moment, supply for nearly all commodities far outweighs demand, and likely will decline for at least the next couple of years.

1. What does the author cite Arthur Miller's words to show in the first paragraph?

- [A] Most people feel hopeless about today's world economy.
- [B] The prices of the commodities like oil, copper, and gold will rise.
- [C] The late global economic boom is near its end.
- [D] People are too optimistic over the late economy situation.

2. In the past two centuries, alternative sources of commodities have helped propel the trend of _____.

- [A] the exhaustion of natural resources
- [B] the nationalization of rare fuel resources
- [C] the decrease of commodities prices
- [D] the decline in global reserves

3. What does the author think lead to the major bear markets in oil?

- [A] The great demand for oil stimulates the development of new substitutions.
- [B] There is always adequate supply of oil.
- [C] Governments have given great support to oil industry.
- [D] Many countries have consciously reduced their dependence on oil.

4. According to the passage, what is true about Japan in the 1980s?

- [A] Its rapid growth of economy accelerated the pace of oil exhaustion.
- [B] Its development speed exceeded China and India thanks to better fuel efficiency.
- [C] Its oil consumption had no obvious increase.
- [D] Nuclear power became its top energy source.

5. According to the author, the analysts who agree commodity price will rise have ignored the fact that _____.

- [A] the commodities' prices are related to inflation closely
- [B] inflation will lead to the decline of most commodities' prices in the long run
- [C] today's economy has entered an era of stable development
- [D] the price of gold determines the prices of other commodities

Passage 4

On March 16th, the Obama administration announced that it intends to work with Congress to produce a "privacy bill of rights" giving American consumers greater control over how their information is collected and used by digital marketers.

Those who have been *lobbying* (游说) for change agree with, but are unsympathetic to, Internet firms' worries that such a law could damage their advertising-driven business models, which rely on tracking and targeting consumers to maximize revenues. "This is dimming the prospects of Google, Facebook and other digital

ad companies,” says Jeffrey Chester of the Centre for Digital Democracy.

Quite how dark things get for them will depend on the details of the bill. It will seek to lay down the basic principles of Internet privacy rights, broadly following recommendations published last December by the Department of Commerce. The department's report said consumers should be told more about why data are being collected about them and how they are used; and it called for stricter limits on what companies can do with information they collect.

Whatever legislation finally emerges is likely to give a broader role to the Federal Trade Commission (FTC), which will almost certainly be charged with deciding how those principles are translated into practice and with policing their implementation. Among other things, the FTC is known to be keen on a formal “do-not-track” system, which would allow users to block certain sites from monitoring their online activities.

Keen to avoid this, the online-advertising industry has been working overtime to convince policymakers that it can police itself using systems such as icons on web pages that show surfers when they are being tracked. And it is telling anyone who will listen that consumers will suffer if tough do-not-track rules hit ad revenues, forcing web firms to charge for more content.

With Mr Obama throwing his weight behind Internet privacy, this *rearguard* (无望取胜的) action is less likely to be successful. Some ad firms have started talking of creating a do-not-track system of their own that would limit the damage to their digital activities. Microsoft and Mozilla, two tech giants, have recently said they are including do-not-track features in new versions of their respective web browsers.

Although all this may dent their revenues, America's Internet giants could also benefit from the legislation if it helps them in their dealings with the European Union. The EU's already fairly strict rules on privacy are being tightened further. The time-consuming and expensive legal hoops the EU makes American Internet firms jump through, to be allowed to handle Europeans' online data, will become more demanding.

If by passing its own online-privacy bill of rights, America can convince the EU to ease this legal burden, then it will be an important win for American companies, says Joel Reidenberg, a professor at Fordham University's law school. Google, Facebook and others will no doubt be tracking the progress of EU-American talks on this matter very closely.

1. Which of the following statements is true about the “privacy bill of rights”?

- [A] It is accepted by most Internet firms including Google, Facebook.
- [B] It aims at breaking monopoly of America's Internet giants.
- [C] It might influence Internet firms' advertising-driven business models.
- [D] It gives Internet users more control in gathering and using data.

2. What can we know about the report published last December by the Department of Commerce?

- [A] It included the basic principles of Internet privacy rights.
- [B] It said that Internet users should be informed about the use of their data.
- [C] It didn't allow Internet companies to collect private information.
- [D] It gave more power to the Federal Trade Commission.

3. According to the passage, why has online-advertising industry been working overtime?

- [A] To prove it can police itself.
- [B] To block certain sites from monitoring users.
- [C] To force web firms to charge for more content.
- [D] To increase their ad revenues.

4. What can we learn about the “do-not-track” system?

- [A] It is so tough that it is impossible for ad firms to accept it.

- [B] It plays a role in protecting surfers' privacy.
- [C] It could improve the performance of web browsers.
- [D] It might be bad for consumers in the long run.

5. According to Joel, what is an important win for American companies?

- [A] They create a do-not-track system of their own successfully.
- [B] They help the government to pass their own online-privacy bill of rights.
- [C] American online-privacy bill of rights could help them to get European online data easier.
- [D] They could jump through the America's legal hoops on privacy.

Passage 5

If we're going to find a way to fix our long-term energy woes—whether through biofuels made from algae or miniature nuclear-power plants—the solution is likely to come from Northern California. Yes, in Silicon Valley, the same entrepreneurs who brought us the Internet—and, O.K., Pets.com—are exploring new ways to make and use energy.

The research and advisory company Cleantech Group estimates that by 2020, the global clean-tech sector will be worth more than \$ 3 trillion and could account for as much as 15% of some nations' GDP.

"We know the potential benefit of focusing on energy or electricity is still valid, no matter what happens with the climate debate," says Amit Chatterjee, CEO of Hara Software and the author of *The Post-Carbon Economy*.

The problem is that clean-tech start-ups run on venture capital—and VC money, like just about every other form of financing, fell off a cliff during the recession, dropping 33% in 2009 from the previous year. Not to mention that creating a new energy company is much more challenging than building, say, a major dotcom player, because energy companies often need lots of capital to finance major manufacturing.

But help could be coming from an unlikely source—the giant, slow-moving corporations that many clean-tech start-ups are trying to replace. According to the Cleantech Group, which monitors and guides investment in the sector, the next major investments are likely to come from large companies looking to snap up or form joint ventures with spunky start-ups. If done right, the relationship can benefit both sides: start-ups get a major name and funding to work with, while *Fortune* 500 companies can take advantage of insurgent innovation.

Those changes are already beginning to happen. At the Cleantech Group's forum in San Francisco on Feb. 25, the \$ 50 billion French environmental-services company Veolia announced the launch of the Veolia Innovation Accelerator, which will seek to build partnerships with clean-tech start-ups. It will start with NanoH2O, a small company that has pioneered membranes for use in desalinization plants, which can make it less expensive to provide clean water. The program is a tacit admission that even the best corporations need to look beyond their borders to find smart ideas.

It might also represent the best way for revolutionary ideas to scale up fast, to go from promising pilot projects to products that can really change the world. But the role of major corporations isn't without risk. As a venture capitalist at the Cleantech meeting put it, start-ups can suffer "death by pilot project," where a promising idea gets caught in the institutional eddies of a major corporation and never fully develops. "We've all heard the horror stories from entrepreneurs," says Haji. "But ultimately, we have to go with optimism." That's because there's really no other choice—not for start-up CEOs desperate to stay afloat or for the rest of us waiting for a clean-tech miracle.

1. The author mentioned the entrepreneurs in Silicon Valley in the first paragraph are to show that _____.
 [A] they contribute a lot to economy
 [B] they are pioneers of new technology

- [C] they may find the solution to energy problems
[D] they urgently need new energy
2. According to the passage, it is difficult to build a new energy company because _____.
[A] it needs a large sum of money
[B] the economic recession has influenced the potential benefit
[C] there is competition from large companies
[D] it takes lots of time and money to get through the approval process
3. What does “Those changes” (in Line 1, Para. 6) refer to?
[A] Large companies are beginning to build partnerships with clean-tech start-ups.
[B] Many clean-tech start-ups are replacing the giant corporations.
[C] Large companies are making technical innovations.
[D] Clean-tech start-ups are developing rapidly.
4. What does the launch of the program “Veolia Innovation Accelerator” show?
[A] Smart ideas often come from small companies.
[B] Start-ups need help from large companies.
[C] Large companies also need to cooperate with other companies.
[D] Large companies are trying to change the world by finding smart ideas.
5. Which of the following is the best title of the passage?—
[A] A new way to solve energy problems.
[B] The difficulties facing start-ups.
[C] The competition between the giant corporations and the start-ups.
[D] The capital source of clean-tech start-ups.

Passage 6

ETON COLLEGE, the school that taught David Cameron, the Conservative leader, is renowned for its excellence. Indeed, 175 of its boys gained the top grade in all their A-level exams in 2008. In the rest of the country, only 75 state-school boys from families poor enough to qualify for free school meals achieved the same distinction. On January 19th Mr. Cameron laid out his plans for giving more children in state schools access to the sort of education—and the opportunities it affords for students to attend good universities—provided by his *alma mater* (母校).

According to the plan, “the single most important thing for a good education is for every child to have access to a good teacher”. Yet in recent years graduates have rarely aspired to such a grubby job as teaching. Instead, the country coasts along on the education—itsself far from perfect—provided a generation or so ago to its present workforce. Then, teaching was not only a respected profession but also a way in which a clever poor child could leap into the middle class.

But Mr. Cameron is right: the quality of teaching affects student performance more than anything else in school. In 2007 an international investigation by an outsider to education—McKinsey, a consultancy that normally advises companies and governments—concluded that differences between countries in the cognitive skills of pupils aged 15 could be explained by differences in the ways in which teachers were recruited, trained and supported. It advised countries to accept only the most academically able as teachers, to train them well and encourage them to share ideas in the classroom. The conclusions were echoed the following year by the European Trade Union Committee for Education, which did its own research and urged that teachers hold a master’s degree.

The Conservative’s timing is canny. Demand for teacher training has risen as graduates struggle to find other

work during the recession. Should the party win the imminent election, its policy may work, at least in the short term. Whether it will succeed in burnishing the cultural image of teaching once the economy has recovered, and students at elite universities are once again enticed by the high pay offered elsewhere, seems less likely.

The Conservatives also want to expand the Teach First scheme. It hand-picks highly-motivated graduates to teach for two years in schools with a significant proportion of poor children. Although it could never become the most common route by which to enter teaching, the scheme could help to boost the supply of good head teachers. It may well prove useful, moreover, in attempting to breathe life into another of the proposals published in the draft manifesto: a pledge to allow any “good education provider”—charities, churches, even groups of parents—to open new state schools. Such measures may not produce a new Eton but, if they can boost the achievements of the poor, they will make Britain a fairer society.

1. What can be inferred from the first passage?

- [A] It is very important for children to choose a right school.
- [B] Children from poor families can't afford the sort of education like Eton College.
- [C] Mr. Cameron plans to increase Eton College's enrollment to poor students.
- [D] It is for David Cameron that Eton College becomes renowned.

2. Many graduates have lost their interest in becoming a teacher in recent years partly because _____.

- [A] today's children are more demanding for the teacher
- [B] teachers aren't respected any more like before
- [C] there is no big need for the teaching workforce
- [D] the government has provided more job choices to graduates

3. What does the author mean by saying “the country coasts along on education” (Line 3, Para. 2)?

- [A] Britain lags behind many other countries on education.
- [B] Britain makes no much effort in improving education.
- [C] Britain pays much attention to education though it is not perfect.
- [D] Britain's education is quite conservative and old-fashioned.

4. Which of the following statements is right about the investigation by McKinsey?

- [A] Its conclusions were suspected by the European Trade Union Committee for Education.
- [B] It explained the differences between countries in the ways in which the teaching team was set up.
- [C] It supported Mr. Cameron's opinion on teaching quality.
- [D] It is somewhat one-sided since McKinsey is an outsider to education.

5. From the fourth paragraph, we can know that the author is _____ towards Cameron's education policy.

- [A] skeptical
- [B] optimistic
- [C] indifferent
- [D] critical

Passage 7

“GOOGLE is not a conventional company. We do not intend to become one,” wrote Larry Page and Sergey Brin, the search firm's founders, in a letter to investors ahead of its stockmarket flotation in 2004. Since then, Google has burnished its reputation as one of the quirkiest companies on the planet. This year alone it has raised eyebrows by taking a stake in a wind-energy project off the east coast of America and by testing self-driving cars, which have already covered over 140,000 miles on the country's roads.

Google has been able to afford such flights of fancy thanks to its amazingly successful online-search business. This has produced handsome returns for the firm's investors, who have seen the company transform itself in the space of a mere 12 years from a tiny start-up into a behemoth with a \$ 180 billion market capitalisation that sprawls across a vast headquarters in Silicon Valley known as the Googleplex. Google also

stretches across the web like a giant spider, with a leg in everything from online search and e-mail to social networking and web-based software applications, or apps.

Much of its growth has been organic, but Google has also splashed out on some sizeable acquisitions. In 2006 it paid \$ 1.7 billion for YouTube, a website that lets people post videos of their children, kittens and Lady Gaga impersonations. The following year it snapped up DoubleClick, an online-advertising network, for \$ 3.1 billion. More deals are likely. Google is bidding for Groupon, a trendy e-commerce business, using some of the \$ 33 billion sitting in its coffers.

All this has turned Google into a force to be reckoned with. But now the champion of the *unorthodox* (非正统的) is faced with two conventional business challenges. The first involves placating regulators, who fret that it may be abusing its considerable power. On November 30th the European Union announced a formal investigation into claims that Google has been manipulating search results to give an unfair advantage to its own services—a charge the firm vigorously denies.

The other challenge facing Google is how to find new sources of growth. In spite of all the experiments it has launched, the firm is still heavily dependent on search-related advertising. Last year this accounted for almost all of its \$ 24 billion of revenue and \$ 6.5 billion of profit. Acquisitions such as YouTube have deepened rather than reduced the firm's dependence on advertising. Steve Ballmer, the boss of Google's arch-rival Microsoft, has derided the search company for being "a one-trick pony".

Ironically, investors' biggest worry is that Google will end up like Microsoft, which has failed to find big new sources of revenue and profit to replace those from its two ageing ponies, the Windows operating system and the Office suite of business software. That explains why Google's share price has stagnated. "The market seems to believe this could be like Microsoft version two," says Mark Mahaney, an analyst at Citigroup.

1. What does "such flights of fancy" (Line 1, Para. 2) refer to?
 [A] Noticeable big project investments. [B] Unpractical venture investments.
 [C] Imaginative reforms. [D] Non-profit programs.
2. The author says "Google is like a giant spider" in the second paragraph to show that _____.
 [A] Google expands its business in many fields
 [B] Google could make profits from many small projects
 [C] Google is engaged in developing different web-based software
 [D] Google grows a big company very rapidly
3. Google is faced with the charge that _____.
 [A] it has made some sizeable acquisitions illegally
 [B] it has been abusing its power in search results
 [C] it has provided some users unfair services to get more profits
 [D] it has violated conventional regulations in its industry
4. According to the passage, what effects have sizeable acquisitions brought Google?
 [A] They have brought Google big profits.
 [B] They have had a great impact on Google's advertising business.
 [C] They have helped Google to open up new businesses outside online searching.
 [D] They have made Google more dependent on its searching business.
5. According to the passage, Google might be like Microsoft version two because _____.
 [A] Google copies Microsoft in business model
 [B] Google's stock price trend is similar to Microsoft
 [C] Google is facing the same difficulty as Microsoft in finding new sources of growth

[D] Google might replace Microsoft in the operating system and the Office software

Passage 8

WHEN it comes to health, which is more important, nature or nurture? You may well think your genes are a more important predictor of health and ill health. Not so fast. In fact, it transpires that our everyday environment outweighs our genetics, big time, when it comes to measuring our risk of disease. The genome is out—welcome the *exposome*(环境暴露).

“The exposome represents everything a person is exposed to in the environment, that’s not in the genes,” says Stephen Rappaport, environmental health scientist at the University of California, Berkeley. That includes stress, diet, lifestyle choices, recreational and medicinal drug use and infections, to name a few. “The big difference is that the exposome changes throughout life as our bodies, diets and lifestyles change,” he says.

While our understanding of the human genome has been growing at an exponential rate over the last decade, it is not as helpful as we hoped in predicting diseases.

“Knowing genetic risk factors can prove absolutely useless,” says Jeremy Nicholson at Imperial College London. He points to work by Nina Paynter at the Brigham and Women’s Hospital in Boston, who investigated the effects of 101 genetic markers implicated in heart disease. After following over 19,000 women for 12 years, she found these markers were not able to predict anything about the incidence of heart disease in this group.

On the other hand, the impact of environmental influences is still largely a mystery. “There’s an imbalance between our ability to investigate the genome and the environment,” says Chris Wild, director of the International Agency for Research on Cancer, who came up with the idea of the exposome.

In reality, most diseases are probably caused by a combination of the two, which is where the exposome comes in. “The idea is to have a comprehensive analysis of a person’s full exposure history,” says Wild. He hopes a better understanding of exposures will shed a brighter light on disease risk factors.

There are likely to be critical periods of exposure in development. For example, the time from birth to 3 years of age is thought to be particularly important. “We know that this is the time when brain connections are made, and that if you are obese by this age, you’ll have problems as an adult,” says Nicholson.

In theory, a blood or urine sample taken from an individual could provide a snapshot of what that person has been exposed to. But how do you work out what fingerprints chemicals might leave in the body?

The task is not as formidable as it sounds. For a start, researchers could make use of swathes of biobank information that has already been collected. “There has been a huge international funding effort in adult cohorts like the UK Biobank already,” says Wild. “If we improved analysis, we could apply it to these groups.”

1. In the author’s eyes, when measuring the health level, you should _____.

- [A] first consider your weight and your everyday diet
- [B] pay more attention to your genes
- [C] put the influence of the exposome in the first place
- [D] attribute it to the stress in your daily life

2. According to Stephen Rappaport, the genes are quite different from the exposome in that _____.

- [A] the genes do not change with our lifestyles and diets like the exposome
- [B] the genes are not related to the environment like the exposome
- [C] the genes can predict one’s health and ill health better than the exposome
- [D] the genes have gotten more attention than the exposome

3. What can we know about Nina Paynter’s investigation?

- [A] It showed the gene is more important than environment.

[B] It helped predict the risk of disease effectively.

[C] It turned out to be a whole failure.

[D] It showed the genes did not work in predicting the risk of disease.

4. What does Nicholson say about one's period from birth to the age of three?

[A] It is the critical period determining one's future development.

[B] It is the period during which one forms one's brain connections.

[C] It is the period during which the problem of overweight often arises.

[D] It is the critical period of developing language ability.

5. According to the passage, we can know the fingerprints chemicals in our bodies _____.

[A] by turning to a large store of biological samples

[B] by using a huge international funding

[C] by studying what we are exposed to

[D] by analyzing our diet and lifestyles

Passage 9

LET's face it: power cables are unsightly dust-traps. PCs, TVs and music players are becoming slicker every year, but the nest of vipers in the corner of every room remains an ugly impediment to true minimalism.

Then there is the inconvenience of charging phones, MP3 players and PDAs. A minor hassle, admittedly, but it is easy to forget to top up the batteries and before you know it you have left the house with a dead gadget. Wouldn't life be simpler if power was invisibly beamed to your devices whenever you walked into a building with an electricity supply? Wireless communication is ubiquitous, after all, so why can't we permanently unshackle our electronics from power cables too?

Poor transmission efficiencies and safety concerns have plagued attempts at wireless power transfer, but a handful of start-ups—and some big names, like Sony and Intel—are having another go at making it work. The last few years have seen promising demonstrations of cellphones, laptops and TVs being powered wirelessly. Are we on our way to waving goodbye to wires once and for all?

The idea of wireless power transfer is almost as old as electricity generation itself. At the beginning of the 20th century, Nikola Tesla proposed using huge coils to transmit electricity through the troposphere to power homes. He even started building Wardenclyffe Tower on Long Island, New York, an enormous telecommunications tower that would also test his idea for wireless power transmission. The story goes that his backers pulled the funding when they realised there would be no feasible way to ensure people paid for the electricity they were using, and the wired power grid sprang up instead.

Wireless transmission emerged again in the 1960s, with a demonstration of a miniature helicopter powered using microwaves beamed from the ground. Some have even suggested that one day we might power spaceships by beaming power to them with lasers. As well as this, much theoretical work has gone into exploring the possibility of beaming power down to Earth from satellites that harvest solar energy.

Long-distance ground-to-ground wireless power transmission would require expensive infrastructure, however, and with concerns over the safety of transmitting it via high-power microwaves, the idea has been met with trepidation.

While we won't be seeing a wireless power grid any time soon, the idea of beaming power on a smaller scale is rapidly gaining momentum. That is largely because, with wireless communication, like Wi-Fi and Bluetooth, and ever-shrinking circuits, power cables are now the only limit to becoming truly portable. "The move was inevitable once wireless communication became popular," says David Graham, a co-founder of

Powerbeam in San Jose, California.

1. The phrase “the nest of vipers” in the first paragraph refers to _____.
 [A] the packing boxes of electronic devices [B] the heap of power lines
 [C] the electronic devices like PCs, TVs [D] the dustbin filled with the waste
2. People’s efforts at transferring wireless power have been hindered by _____.
 [A] the lack of funding
 [B] the low efficiency of transferring
 [C] the lack of safety technology
 [D] the fierce competition between start-ups and big companies
3. Nikola Tesla’s program on wireless power transmission lost the supports mainly because _____.
 [A] they thought his idea was very unpractical
 [B] it was very difficult to guarantee profits from the program
 [C] they realised the wired power would be a better choice for them
 [D] the program was proved to have hidden risks
4. What does David Graham think of the future of “becoming truly portable”?
 [A] It is almost impossible.
 [B] There is still a long way to go.
 [C] It is limited by the technology and the funding.
 [D] It will surely come true.
5. What does the passage mainly talk about?
 [A] The disadvantage of power cables.
 [B] The appearance of the wired power grid.
 [C] The future of wireless communication.
 [D] The development of wireless power transmission.

Passage 10

Scientists have made lots of projections over the past few years about how warming temperatures and a changing climate will affect the planet. Real-world measurements have confirmed at least some of them: sea level is clearly rising, for instance, and the ice that covers the Arctic Ocean is shrinking and thinning.

Other measurements are a lot more difficult, though. It’s reasonable to expect, for example, that ecosystems will change as plants and animals respond to a rising thermometer—but how do you measure the change of an ecosystem that may consist of hundreds or even thousands of species?

The answer, evident in a paper just published in the journal *Global Change Biology*, is that it isn’t easy—but it’s possible nevertheless. A team of scientists led by Stephen Thackeray, an expert on lake ecology at the United Kingdom’s Centre for Ecology and Hydrology, has combed through observations of more than 700 species of fish, birds, mammals, insects, amphibians, plankton and a wide variety of plants across the U.K. taken between 1976 and 2005, and found a consistent trend: more than 80% of “biological events”—including flowering of plants, ovulation among mammals and migration of birds—are coming earlier today than they were in the 1970s.

On average, these events are occurring about 11 days earlier, and the pace of change has been accelerating with every decade. “The pattern is very similar,” says Thackeray, “whether you look at marine or freshwater or terrestrial organisms.”

But differences in the pattern emerged when scientists looked at species at different levels of the food

chain. As part of the analysis, says Thackeray, “we grouped these trends according to organisms’ positions.” What they found was that the changes in biological events were greater toward the bottom of the food chain than they were at the top.

In theory, that could prove to be a serious problem. In some cases, predators will be able to adapt to changes in their prey. In others, however, maybe not. A 2006 study in *Nature*, for example, documented plummeting populations of a bird called the pied flycatcher in the Netherlands. The reason: an earlier spring was speeding up the emergence of caterpillars that were the birds’ staple. But because the flycatchers’ were leaving their wintering grounds in West Africa at the regular time, their eggs were now hatching in the Netherlands too late in the season, after the caterpillars were nearly gone.

Thackeray is too careful a scientist to speculate about whether that sort of disconnect lies in the future for U.K. species. He’s even too cautious to state that these changes are necessarily evidence of global warming. “The patterns are coherent across different habitats,” he says, “which would suggest a large-scale phenomenon. It would be tempting to conclude that this might be a change in climate. But we need to do further study before we can draw that conclusion.”

1. What does the journal *Global Change Biology* say about measuring the change of an ecosystem?
 - [A] It is too complicated and becomes impossible.
 - [B] It can be done though it is hard.
 - [C] It is easy in paper and difficult in reality.
 - [D] Its answer is quite evident.
2. Which of the following is one of the findings of Thackeray’s research group?
 - [A] Most species’ breeding is becoming earlier and faster now than the past.
 - [B] The organizational pattern of the species is not as different as people have expected.
 - [C] Different species have different changing patterns.
 - [D] Most of biological events are occurring earlier now than decades ago.
3. What can we learn from Thackeray’s group’s research about the species at different levels of the food chain?
 - [A] There were no big differences in the changing pattern of biological events between the species at different levels of the food chain.
 - [B] The lower-level organisms had greater changes in biological events than the higher-level ones.
 - [C] The organisms at the top of the food chain had greatest changes in biological events.
 - [D] The organisms’ positions in the food chain might bottom up with their changes in biological events.
4. The author cited a 2006 study in *Nature* to illustrate that _____.
 - [A] predators have the ability to adapt to changes in their preys
 - [B] one species’ changes in biological events might be a serious problem for his predator
 - [C] the climate change had a great influence on one species’ reproduction
 - [D] the birds’ migration would be influenced by the climate change
5. What’s Thackeray’s attitude towards the idea that the changes in biological events mean the changes in climate?
 - [A] Suspicious.
 - [B] Assured.
 - [C] Subjective.
 - [D] Rigorous.

Passage 11

At his research clinic in Dallas, psychologist Jasper Smits is working on an unorthodox treatment for anxiety and mood disorders, including depression. It is not yet widely accepted, but his treatment is free and has no side effects. Compare that with antidepressant drugs, which cost Americans \$ 10 billion each year and have

many common side effects: sleep disturbances, nausea, tremors, changes in body weight.

This intriguing new treatment? It's nothing more than exercise.

That physical activity is crucial to good health—both mental and physical—is nothing new. As early as the 1970s and 1980s, observational studies showed that Americans who exercised were not only less likely to be depressed than those who did not but also less likely to become depressed in the future.

In 1999, Duke University researchers demonstrated in a randomized controlled trial that depressed adults who participated in an aerobic-exercise plan improved as much as those treated with sertraline, the drug that, marketed as Zoloft, was earning Pfizer more than \$ 3 billion annually before its patent expired in 2006.

Subsequent trials have repeated these results, showing again and again that patients who follow aerobic-exercise regimens see improvement in their depression comparable to that of those treated with medication, and that both groups do better than patients given only a placebo. But exercise trials on the whole have been small, and most have run for only a few weeks; some are plagued by methodological problems. Still, despite limited data, the trials all seem to point in the same direction: exercise boosts mood. It not only relieves depressive symptoms but also appears to prevent them from recurring.

"I was really surprised that more people weren't working in this area when I got into it," says Smits, an associate professor of psychology at Southern Methodist University.

Yet for all the potential clinical benefits, the big questions about exercise treatment remain unanswered: How much? How long? In which patients? In their recent book for therapists, *Exercise for Mood and Anxiety Disorders*, Smits and co-author Michael Otto at Boston University suggest precise exercise doses that they hope will aid psychologists and primary-care doctors in prescribing exercise as treatment—which can be administered in combination with other treatments, of course.

For now, then, data on exercise are only suggestive. The clinical literature on antidepressant drugs is massive, since large-scale, rigorous studies are required for market approval from the FDA. The trials on exercise have all been smaller, perhaps in part because they need no government approval.

But the evidence is mounting, and it's hard to argue with a free treatment that is exempt from side effects for a pervasive and debilitating mental-health scourge—especially when so many other health benefits of exercise are incontrovertible. "I think that we have reason to be optimistic," Blumenthal says. "For people who at least want to consider exercise as a possible treatment, and for whom exercise is safe, it's definitely worth a shot."

1. What can we know about Smits' treatment for diseases like depression?

- [A] It is a little expensive. [B] It has been broadly accepted.
[C] It doesn't have common side effects. [D] It is an emerging method.

2. The author mentioned the studies in the 1970s and 1980s mainly to illustrate that _____.

- [A] Americans always like exercising
[B] exercise is very beneficial to people's health
[C] exercise can reduce one's chance of getting depressed in the future
[D] people have known the benefit of exercise for a long time

3. Which of the following is one of the problems about exercise treatment?

- [A] Its side-effect is quite unstable and might be dangerous sometimes.
[B] There are not enough trials on exercise.
[C] It is difficult to apply it to most people.
[D] It cannot bring big profits like Medication treatment.

4. What information do all the trials on exercise treatment for depression appear to present to us?

- [A] Exercise brings people good mood.