

READING

READING PASSAGE 1

You should spend about 20 minutes on **Questions 1–13**, which are based on Reading Passage 1 below.

The life and work of Marie Curie

Marie Curie is probably the most famous woman scientist who has ever lived. Born Maria Sklodowska in Poland in 1867, she is famous for her work on radioactivity, and was twice a winner of the Nobel Prize. With her husband, Pierre Curie, and Henri Becquerel, she was awarded the 1903 Nobel Prize for Physics, and was then sole winner of the 1911 Nobel Prize for Chemistry. She was the first woman to win a Nobel Prize.



From childhood, Marie was remarkable for her prodigious memory, and at the age of 16 won a gold medal on completion of her secondary education. Because her father lost his savings through bad investment, she then had to take work as a teacher. From her earnings she was able to finance her sister Bronia's medical studies in Paris, on the understanding that Bronia would, in turn, later help her to get an education.

In 1891 this promise was fulfilled and Marie went to Paris and began to study at the Sorbonne (the University of Paris). She often worked far into the night and lived on little more than bread and butter and tea. She came first in the examination in the physical sciences in 1893, and in 1894 was placed second in the examination in mathematical sciences. It was not until the spring of that year that she was introduced to Pierre Curie.

Their marriage in 1895 marked the start of a partnership that was soon to achieve results of world significance. Following Henri Becquerel's discovery in 1896 of a new phenomenon, which Marie later called 'radioactivity', Marie Curie decided to find out if the radioactivity discovered in uranium was to be found in other elements. She discovered that this was true for thorium.

Turning her attention to minerals, she found her interest drawn to pitchblende, a mineral whose radioactivity, superior to that of pure uranium, could be explained only by the presence in the ore of small quantities of an unknown substance of very high activity. Pierre Curie joined her in the work that she had undertaken to resolve this problem, and that led to the discovery of the new elements, polonium and radium. While Pierre Curie devoted himself chiefly to the physical study of the new radiations, Marie Curie struggled to obtain pure radium in the metallic state. This was achieved with the help of the chemist André-Louis Debierne, one of

Pierre Curie's pupils. Based on the results of this research, Marie Curie received her Doctorate of Science, and in 1903 Marie and Pierre shared with Becquerel the Nobel Prize for Physics for the discovery of radioactivity.

The births of Marie's two daughters, Irène and Eve, in 1897 and 1904 failed to interrupt her scientific work. She was appointed lecturer in physics at the École Normale Supérieure for girls in Sèvres, France (1900), and introduced a method of teaching based on experimental demonstrations. In December 1904 she was appointed chief assistant in the laboratory directed by Pierre Curie.

The sudden death of her husband in 1906 was a bitter blow to Marie Curie, but was also a turning point in her career: henceforth she was to devote all her energy to completing alone the scientific work that they had undertaken. On May 13, 1906, she was appointed to the professorship that had been left vacant on her husband's death, becoming the first woman to teach at the Sorbonne. In 1911 she was awarded the Nobel Prize for Chemistry for the isolation of a pure form of radium.

During World War I, Marie Curie, with the help of her daughter Irène, devoted herself to the development of the use of X-radiography, including the mobile units which came to be known as 'Little Curies', used for the treatment of wounded soldiers. In 1918 the Radium Institute, whose staff Irène had joined, began to operate in earnest, and became a centre for nuclear physics and chemistry. Marie Curie, now at the highest point of her fame and, from 1922, a member of the Academy of Medicine, researched the chemistry of radioactive substances and their medical applications.

In 1921, accompanied by her two daughters, Marie Curie made a triumphant journey to the United States to raise funds for research on radium. Women there presented her with a gram of radium for her campaign. Marie also gave lectures in Belgium, Brazil, Spain and Czechoslovakia and, in addition, had the satisfaction of seeing the development of the Curie Foundation in Paris, and the inauguration in 1932 in Warsaw of the Radium Institute, where her sister Bronia became director.

One of Marie Curie's outstanding achievements was to have understood the need to accumulate intense radioactive sources, not only to treat illness but also to maintain an abundant supply for research. The existence in Paris at the Radium Institute of a stock of 1.5 grams of radium made a decisive contribution to the success of the experiments undertaken in the years around 1930. This work prepared the way for the discovery of the neutron by Sir James Chadwick and, above all, for the discovery in 1934 by Irène and Frédéric Joliot-Curie of artificial radioactivity. A few months after this discovery, Marie Curie died as a result of leukaemia caused by exposure to radiation. She had often carried test tubes containing radioactive isotopes in her pocket, remarking on the pretty blue-green light they gave off.

Her contribution to physics had been immense, not only in her own work, the importance of which had been demonstrated by her two Nobel Prizes, but because of her influence on subsequent generations of nuclear physicists and chemists.

Questions 1–6

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

In boxes 1–6 on your answer sheet, write

TRUE *if the statement agrees with the information*
FALSE *if the statement contradicts the information*
NOT GIVEN *if there is no information on this*

- 1 Marie Curie's husband was a joint winner of both Marie's Nobel Prizes.
- 2 Marie became interested in science when she was a child.
- 3 Marie was able to attend the Sorbonne because of her sister's financial contribution.
- 4 Marie stopped doing research for several years when her children were born.
- 5 Marie took over the teaching position her husband had held.
- 6 Marie's sister Bronia studied the medical uses of radioactivity.

Questions 7–13

Complete the notes below.

Choose **ONE WORD** from the passage for each answer.

Write your answers in boxes 7–13 on your answer sheet.

Marie Curie's research on radioactivity

- When uranium was discovered to be radioactive, Marie Curie found that the element called **7** had the same property.
- Marie and Pierre Curie's research into the radioactivity of the mineral known as **8** led to the discovery of two new elements.
- In 1911, Marie Curie received recognition for her work on the element **9**
- Marie and Irène Curie developed X-radiography which was used as a medical technique for **10**
- Marie Curie saw the importance of collecting radioactive material both for research and for cases of **11**
- The radioactive material stocked in Paris contributed to the discoveries in the 1930s of the **12** and of what was known as artificial radioactivity.
- During her research, Marie Curie was exposed to radiation and as a result she suffered from **13**

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READING PASSAGE 1

You should spend about 20 minutes on **Questions 1–13**, which are based on Reading Passage 1 below.

Crop-growing skyscrapers

By the year 2050, nearly 80% of the Earth's population will live in urban centres. Applying the most conservative estimates to current demographic trends, the human population will increase by about three billion people by then. An estimated 10^9 hectares of new land (about 20% larger than Brazil) will be needed to grow enough food to feed them, if traditional farming methods continue as they are practised today. At present, throughout the world, over 80% of the land that is suitable for raising crops is in use. Historically, some 15% of that has been laid waste by poor management practices. What can be done to ensure enough food for the world's population to live on?

The concept of indoor farming is not new, since hothouse production of tomatoes and other produce has been in vogue for some time. What is new is the urgent need to scale up this technology to accommodate another three billion people. Many believe an entirely new approach to indoor farming is required, employing cutting-edge technologies. One such proposal is for the 'Vertical Farm'. The concept is of multi-storey

buildings in which food crops are grown in environmentally controlled conditions. Situated in the heart of urban centres, they would drastically reduce the amount of transportation required to bring food to consumers. Vertical farms would need to be efficient, cheap to construct and safe to operate. If successfully implemented, proponents claim, vertical farms offer the promise of urban renewal, sustainable production of a safe and varied food supply (through year-round production of all crops), and the eventual repair of ecosystems that have been sacrificed for horizontal farming.

It took humans 10,000 years to learn how to grow most of the crops we now take for granted. Along the way, we despoiled most of the land we worked, often turning verdant, natural ecozones into semi-arid deserts. Within that same time frame, we evolved into an urban species, in which 60% of the human population now lives vertically in cities. This means that, for the majority, we humans have shelter from the elements, yet we subject our food-

bearing plants to the rigours of the great outdoors and can do no more than hope for a good weather year. However, more often than not now, due to a rapidly changing climate, that is not what happens. Massive floods, long droughts, hurricanes and severe monsoons take their toll each year, destroying millions of tons of valuable crops.

The supporters of vertical farming claim many potential advantages for the system. For instance, crops would be produced all year round, as they would be kept in artificially controlled, optimum growing conditions. There would be no weather-related crop failures due to droughts, floods or pests. All the food could be grown organically, eliminating the need for herbicides, pesticides and fertilisers. The system would greatly reduce the incidence of many infectious diseases that are acquired at the agricultural interface. Although the system would consume energy, it would return energy to the grid via methane generation from composting non-edible parts of plants. It would also dramatically reduce fossil fuel use, by cutting out the need for tractors, ploughs and shipping.

A major drawback of vertical farming, however, is that the plants would require artificial light. Without it, those plants nearest the windows would be exposed to more sunlight and grow more quickly, reducing

the efficiency of the system. Single-storey greenhouses have the benefit of natural overhead light: even so, many still need artificial lighting. A multi-storey facility with no natural overhead light would require far more. Generating enough light could be prohibitively expensive, unless cheap, renewable energy is available, and this appears to be rather a future aspiration than a likelihood for the near future.

One variation on vertical farming that has been developed is to grow plants in stacked trays that move on rails. Moving the trays allows the plants to get enough sunlight. This system is already in operation, and works well within a single-storey greenhouse with light reaching it from above: it is not certain, however, that it can be made to work without that overhead natural light.

Vertical farming is an attempt to address the undoubted problems that we face in producing enough food for a growing population. At the moment, though, more needs to be done to reduce the detrimental impact it would have on the environment, particularly as regards the use of energy. While it is possible that much of our food will be grown in skyscrapers in future, most experts currently believe it is far more likely that we will simply use the space available on urban rooftops.

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Questions 1–7

Complete the sentences below.

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

Write your answers in boxes 1–7 on your answer sheet.

Indoor farming

- 1 Some food plants, including , are already grown indoors.
- 2 Vertical farms would be located in , meaning that there would be less need to take them long distances to customers.
- 3 Vertical farms could use methane from plants and animals to produce
- 4 The consumption of would be cut because agricultural vehicles would be unnecessary.
- 5 The fact that vertical farms would need light is a disadvantage.
- 6 One form of vertical farming involves planting in which are not fixed.
- 7 The most probable development is that food will be grown on in towns and cities.

Questions 8–13

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

In boxes 8–13 on your answer sheet, write

TRUE if the statement agrees with the information
FALSE if the statement contradicts the information
NOT GIVEN if there is no information on this

- 8 Methods for predicting the Earth's population have recently changed.
- 9 Human beings are responsible for some of the destruction to food-producing land.
- 10 The crops produced in vertical farms will depend on the season.
- 11 Some damage to food crops is caused by climate change.
- 12 Fertilisers will be needed for certain crops in vertical farms.
- 13 Vertical farming will make plants less likely to be affected by infectious diseases.

READING PASSAGE 3

You should spend about 20 minutes on **Questions 27–40**, which are based on Reading Passage 3 below.

Reducing the Effects of Climate Change

Mark Rowe reports on the increasingly ambitious geo-engineering projects being explored by scientists

- A** Such is our dependence on fossil fuels, and such is the volume of carbon dioxide already released into the atmosphere, that many experts agree that significant global warming is now inevitable. They believe that the best we can do is keep it at a reasonable level, and at present the only serious option for doing this is cutting back on our carbon emissions. But while a few countries are making major strides in this regard, the majority are having great difficulty even stemming the rate of increase, let alone reversing it. Consequently, an increasing number of scientists are beginning to explore the alternative of geo-engineering – a term which generally refers to the intentional large-scale manipulation of the environment. According to its proponents, geo-engineering is the equivalent of a backup generator: if Plan A – reducing our dependency on fossil fuels – fails, we require a Plan B, employing grand schemes to slow down or reverse the process of global warming.
- B** Geo-engineering has been shown to work, at least on a small localised scale. For decades, May Day parades in Moscow have taken place under clear blue skies, aircraft having deposited dry ice, silver iodide and cement powder to disperse clouds. Many of the schemes now suggested look to do the opposite, and reduce the amount of sunlight reaching the planet. The most eye-catching idea of all is suggested by Professor Roger Angel of the University of Arizona. His scheme would employ up to 16 trillion minute spacecraft, each weighing about one gram, to form a transparent, sunlight-refracting sunshade in an orbit 1.5 million km above the Earth. This could, argues Angel, reduce the amount of light reaching the Earth by two per cent.
- C** The majority of geo-engineering projects so far carried out – which include planting forests in deserts and depositing iron in the ocean to stimulate the growth of algae – have focused on achieving a general cooling of the Earth. But some look specifically at reversing the melting at the poles, particularly the Arctic. The reasoning is that if you replenish the ice sheets and frozen waters of the high latitudes, more light will be reflected back into space, so reducing the warming of the oceans and atmosphere.
- D** The concept of releasing aerosol sprays into the stratosphere above the Arctic has been proposed by several scientists. This would involve using sulphur or hydrogen sulphide aerosols so that sulphur dioxide would form clouds, which would, in turn, lead to a global dimming. The idea is modelled on historic volcanic explosions, such as that of Mount Pinatubo in the Philippines in 1991, which led to a short-term cooling of global temperatures by 0.5 °C. Scientists have also scrutinised whether it's possible to preserve the ice sheets of Greenland with reinforced high-tension cables, preventing icebergs from moving into the sea. Meanwhile in the Russian Arctic, geo-engineering plans include the planting of millions of birch trees. Whereas the region's native evergreen pines shade the snow and absorb radiation, birches would shed their

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leaves in winter, thus enabling radiation to be reflected by the snow. Re-routing Russian rivers to increase cold water flow to ice-forming areas could also be used to slow down warming, say some climate scientists.

- E** But will such schemes ever be implemented? Generally speaking, those who are most cautious about geo-engineering are the scientists involved in the research. Angel says that his plan is ‘no substitute for developing renewable energy: the only permanent solution’. And Dr Phil Rasch of the US-based Pacific Northwest National Laboratory is equally guarded about the role of geo-engineering: ‘I think all of us agree that if we were to end geo-engineering on a given day, then the planet would return to its pre-engineered condition very rapidly, and probably within ten to twenty years. That’s certainly something to worry about.’
- F** The US National Center for Atmospheric Research has already suggested that the proposal to inject sulphur into the atmosphere might affect rainfall patterns across the tropics and the Southern Ocean. ‘Geo-engineering plans to inject stratospheric aerosols or to seed clouds would act to cool the planet, and act to increase the extent of sea ice,’ says Rasch. ‘But all the models suggest some impact on the distribution of precipitation.’
- G** ‘A further risk with geo-engineering projects is that you can “overshoot”,’ says Dr Dan Lunt, from the University of Bristol’s School of Geophysical Sciences, who has studied the likely impacts of the sunshade and aerosol schemes on the climate. ‘You may bring global temperatures back to pre-industrial levels, but the risk is that the poles will still be warmer than they should be and the tropics will be cooler than before industrialisation.’ To avoid such a scenario, Lunt says Angel’s project would have to operate at half strength; all of which reinforces his view that the best option is to avoid the need for geo-engineering altogether.
- H** The main reason why geo-engineering is supported by many in the scientific community is that most researchers have little faith in the ability of politicians to agree – and then bring in – the necessary carbon cuts. Even leading conservation organisations see the value of investigating the potential of geo-engineering. According to Dr Martin Sommerkorn, climate change advisor for the World Wildlife Fund’s International Arctic Programme, ‘Human-induced climate change has brought humanity to a position where we shouldn’t exclude thinking thoroughly about this topic and its possibilities.’

Test 1

Questions 30–36

Complete the table below.

Choose **ONE WORD** from the passage for each answer.

Write your answers in boxes 30–36 on your answer sheet.

GEO-ENGINEERING PROJECTS

Procedure	Aim
put a large number of tiny spacecraft into orbit far above Earth	to create a 30 that would reduce the amount of light reaching Earth
place 31 in the sea	to encourage 32 to form
release aerosol sprays into the stratosphere	to create 33 that would reduce the amount of light reaching Earth
fix strong 34 to Greenland ice sheets	to prevent icebergs moving into the sea
plant trees in Russian Arctic that would lose their leaves in winter	to allow the 35 to reflect radiation
change the direction of 36	to bring more cold water into ice-forming areas