

Angol gyakorló hallás jegyzet
Zöld Út középfokú általános nyelvvizsgához

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Bevezetés

A Zöld Út szaknyelvi nyelvvizsgarendszer 2023-ban általános nyelvvizsgarendszerrel bővült, amelyben a főleg a fiatalabb korosztály részére kínálunk nyelvi készségmérést mai, modern témákon keresztül.

A mostani válogatásban részben a Zöld Út nyelvvizsgán felhasznált, de mostanra az éles nyelvvizsgáztatásból kivont, valódi vizsgaformátumú anyagok találhatók, részben pedig speciálisan a beszédértés gyakorlása céljára írott feladatok. A hangfelvételeken terjedelmi okokból egyszer szerepel minden hanganyag, a vizsgán azonban kétszeri meghallgatással szerepelnek, előttük és köztük, valamint utánuk egy-egy perc szünettel, hogy a válaszokat ki tudják egészíteni, illetve ellenőrizni a vizsgázók. Az éles vizsgán egy környezetvédelmi témájú (7-8 pontot érő) és egy általános témájú (12-13 pontot érő) feladat szerepel egy mérési egységben.

A jelenlegi, ingyenesen letölthető feladatgyűjteményben 5 környezetvédelmi és 5 általános témájú feladatot teszünk közzé. Az első feladatcsoport többnyire igaz-hamis, esetleg feleletválasztós vagy összepárosítás típusú feladat. A második feladatcsoportnál egyéni válaszokat kell írni, vagy jegyzetelés, vagy kérdésre adandó válaszok formájában.

Mind a 10 hangfelvételhez megtalálhatók a megoldások és a leírt szöveg (tapescript) is.

Hogyan használjuk a hallott szövegértés feladatokat gyakorlásra?

- **Először** érdemes a honlapunkon található mintavizsga feladatsoron felmérni a jelenlegi tudásunkat, hogy hol tartunk most.
- **Készítsük elő** a meghallgatást úgy, hogy a cím és rövid bevezetés alapján gondoljuk át, mit tudunk az adott témáról, milyen angol kifejezések jöhetnek elő a téma kapcsán. Ha a téma viszonylag ismeretlen, keressünk hozzá egy hasonló témájú angol cikket, olvassuk el, tájékozódjunk!
- **Oldjuk meg** a feladatot kétszeri meghallgatással!
- **Ellenőrizzük** a megoldásoknál a válaszainkat! A helyesírási hibák ellenére a választ jónak tekintjük, ha a hibás írásmód nem egy másik értelmes szót eredményezett (pl. sea-see). A válaszoknál a rokon értelmű szavakat is elfogadjuk.
- **Hallgassuk meg még egyszer** a felvételt úgy, hogy közben **olvassuk a szöveget!**
- **Hallgassuk meg utoljára** most a szöveg nélkül, az eredeti feladatlapot nézve. Ki tudjuk-e már hallani azokat a szavakat és kifejezéseket, amiket az első két hallásnál nem tudtunk beazonosítani? Ha probléma nem a hallás volt, hanem az, hogy ismeretlen szavak voltak az elvárt válaszok, akkor **nézzük meg őket a szótárban**, és tanuljuk meg! Ezek valószínűleg a középfokon elvárható aktív szókincs részei.
- Ha még mindig nem egészen értjük a fontos részeket, **fordítsuk le a szöveget!**

Lehetséges beszéd- és íráskészség fejlesztés: **Foglaljuk össze a hallott szöveget** szóban vagy írásban!

Sokat segít még a beszédértés fejlesztésében, ha a felvételeken található gyakorló anyagokon kívül angol nyelvű híreket hallgatunk vagy nézünk angol / amerikai hírcsatornákon, és (pl. BBC, Voice of America, podcastok) természetesen a sorozatok és filmek is nagyon jól fejlesztik a halláskészséget. És végül a szókincsről: minél nagyobb a szókincsünk, annál több mindent értünk ki, és annál kevesebbet kell kikövetkeztetnünk vagy egyéb kommunikációs stratégiával kiderítenünk, érdemes tehát minél erőteljesebben fejleszteni a szókincset.

Eredményes felkészülést kívánok!

A szerkesztő

Section 1

Task 1 - Plastic bags

Listen to the text. Based on the text, decide if the statements are true (T) or false (F). Write your answers in the table below, according to the example (0). *Please note that if all your answers are marked as true or as false, your test will be disqualified.*

STATEMENTS	TRUE or FALSE
0. London is planning to ban the use of plastic bags. (Example)	T
1. 1.6 billion plastic bags are used in London annually.	
2. One shopper uses 400 bags a year.	
3. According to a spokesman, London is already behind other cities in this issue.	
4. The British Retail Consortium supports the plan of the ban.	
5. Retailers have already promised to reduce their environmental effect by a quarter by the end of next year.	
6. According to a spokesman, shoppers should be encouraged to bring a bag with them.	
7. 92% of Londoners think plastic bags should be banned or taxed.	

Task 2 - Machine Sucks CO2

Listen to the text. Based on the text, decide if the statements are true (T) or false (F). Write your answers in the table below, according to the example (0). *Please note that if all your answers are marked as true or as false, your test will be disqualified.*

STATEMENTS	TRUE or FALSE
0. The Sandia National Lab is in the USA.	T
1. The new machine makes liquid fuel from CO2 in the air.	
2. The idea was first described in a science fiction novel.	
3. The short name of the machine is CR 5.	
4. Sandia Lab is also working on a method of burying CO2 underground.	
5. The new machine needs 15-20 years before used in everyday life.	
6. The method is good for producing fuel for cars rather than for airplanes.	
7. The method is proved to reduce our carbon footprint considerably.	

Task 3 - Shrinking fish

Listen to the text about the size of fish getting smaller. Based on the text, decide if the statements are true (T) or false (F). Write your answers in the table below according to the example (0). *Please note that if all your answers are marked as true or as false, your answers will be disqualified.*

STATEMENTS	TRUE or FALSE
0. <i>The size of ocean fish is getting smaller.</i>	T
1. The report on the size of fish was issued by a university in Canada.	
2. More than 600 species of fish were involved in the research.	
3. The size of most fish might get smaller by 50%.	
4. Many fish will leave the tropical waters. According to professor Cheung ...	
5. ...this decrease in fish size was unexpected.	
6. ...pollution does not affect this problem.	
7. ..too many changes have been made in fish management policies.	

Task 4 - Sun On Screen

Listen to the text about the size of fish getting smaller. Based on the text, decide if the statements are true (T) or false (F). Write your answers in the table below according to the example (0). *Please note that if all your answers are marked as true or as false, your answers will be disqualified.*

STATEMENTS	TRUE or FALSE
0. <i>The sun cannot be seen in Beijing all day because of the smog.</i>	T
0. Leaders of the city put up big screens in the city.	
1. People can choose which sunny landscape to see on the screens.	
2. The screen on Tiananmen Square says data on the level of pollution.	
3. Ricardo Hernandez says seeing the screen makes the smog less worrying.	
4. The situation is worse in winter because of the huge number of cars.	
5. The mayor says the city is planning to spend \$2.4 billion to make the air cleaner.	
6. One man said he couldn't see the other side of the street because of the smog.	
7. One man turned up at the door of the US embassy to ask for help.	

Task 5 - Keeping potentially harmful cosmetics on sale

Listen to the text about banning harmful materials from cosmetics. Based on the text, decide if the statements are true (T) or false (F). Write your answers in the table below according to the example (0). *Please note that if all your answers are marked as true or as false, your answers will be disqualified.*

STATEMENTS		TRUE or FALSE
0.	<i>Harmful chemicals mustn't be used in cosmetics.</i>	<i>T</i>
1.	The European Chemicals Agency is in charge of checking if a chemical is toxic.	
2.	Currently, products with newly labelled harmful materials can be sold for 8 more months.	
3.	There is disagreement between different organisations about the period a harmful product can still be sold.	
4.	The chemicals industry faces several problems today.	
5.	The planned regulatory changes might cost an extra €363 million for the industry.	
6.	The launching time of a new product with a newly classified CMR ingredient has been agreed on.	
7.	The final rules will still need further negotiations.	

Tapescript

Section 1

Task 1 - Plastic bags

London may soon be changing the habits of shoppers in the city and helping the environment by banning the use of the ubiquitous plastic shopping bag. Estimates are that Londoners and tourists use 1.6 billion plastic bags each year, many of which are thrown away after just one use. Shoppers may soon have to buy reusable bags in an attempt to reduce the strain on landfill sites, where the bags take 400 years to break down. Local authorities have asked the British government to ban retailers from giving away free plastic bags. A spokesman said stores should sell reusable bags and pass the money raised on to environmental projects. "As a society, we need to do far more to reduce the amount of waste we are sending to landfill and London as a city is determined to take an ambitious lead on this issue," he said.

Retailers are up in arms at the idea and have promised to fight the government to stop the ban from going ahead. The British Retail Consortium said there was no need for the ban as it would simply cause inconvenience to shoppers. A spokesman told reporters: "We think it's excessive and misguided [because] retailers are already committed to reducing the environmental impact of bags by 25 per cent by the end of next year." He was worried the ban would affect sales, saying: "If somebody is going to go into a supermarket or convenience store, it's hard to see in practical terms, unless they have brought a bag with them, how they will be able to buy more than a few items." A recent survey found 92 percent of Londoners supported a total ban on plastic bags or a tax on them.

Task 2 - Machine Sucks CO2

Engineers at a U.S. laboratory may have discovered one answer to the problem of global warming. They have made a machine that can suck carbon dioxide from the air and convert it into liquid fuel. Researchers at the Sandia National Labs believe their creation can provide a sustainable form of renewable energy. Their device sounds like something from science fiction.

Rotating-Ring Receiver Reactor Recuperator, or CR5 for short. Lead developer Rich Diver is excited about his project. He said sucking CO2 from the environment could be an alternative to carbon sequestration. This is a method of burying CO2 deep underground.

Sandia calls the process carried out by CR5 "Sunshine to Petrol". The researchers say their invention is still 15 to 20 years away from being in full operation. It is currently just a prototype – a small model of the real thing. A Sandia spokeswoman said it "holds a real promise of being able to reduce carbon dioxide emissions". She added it would allow us "to keep using fuels we know and love". It is possible that by 2030, cars and airplanes will run on the converted fuel. It will produce fuels such as methanol and gasoline. It will be interesting to see if this machine can actually lower our carbon footprint. Yes, it reduces carbon dioxide in the atmosphere, but its liquid fuel product causes pollution when it burns.

Task 3 - Shrinking fish

The size of fish in the oceans is shrinking. A new report from the University of British Columbia in Canada states fish may shrink by as much as a quarter in the coming decades because of

global warming. The research team conducted extensive tests on the effect of rising ocean temperatures on the size and number of over 600 species of fish around the world. They concluded that most fish are likely to shrink in size by 14-24 per cent by the year 2050. The biggest changes will be seen in tropical regions. The scientists said there is less oxygen in warmer water so fish cannot grow at the rate they should. They added that many fish will migrate to cooler waters outside the tropics.

Lead researcher Professor William Cheung said: "We were surprised to see such a large decrease in fish size. Marine fish are generally known to respond to climate change through changing distribution and seasonality. But the unexpectedly big effect that climate change could have on body size suggests that we may be missing a big piece of the puzzle of understanding climate change effects in the ocean." He added that human activities such as overfishing and pollution will worsen the problem: "Our work shows a very concerning future for the oceans and so it is very important to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and develop better fish management policies to adapt to these changes," he said

Task 4 - Sun On Screen

People in Beijing cannot see the sun. The air is full of smog (a mixture of smoke and fog). The smog is so thick that it blocks the sun all day. People really miss seeing the sun. Beijing's leaders decided to do something so people could see the sunrise. They put giant LED screens across the city. People stand in front of the digital screens and watch the sunrise. The screen in Tiananmen Square also had a special message on it. It was a public announcement that read: "Protecting the atmosphere and environment is everyone's responsibility." The live, digital sunrise is already a hit with tourists. Ricardo Hernandez from Mexico said: "It looks like science fiction. It's kind of cool, but it's also worrying. This smog sucks."

The air quality in China's cities often becomes bad in winter. People burn more coal for heating in the winter months. This makes more pollution. Beijing's mayor promised to make the air cleaner. He said the city would spend \$2.4 billion this year to improve the air quality. Many workers wore face masks on their way to work. They did not want to breathe the poisonous air. One man told reporters: "I couldn't see the tall buildings across the street this morning. The smog has become worse in the last two to three years." He said the smog usually makes him feel bad: "I often cough and my nose is always running," he said. The US embassy advised people to, "avoid all physical activity outdoors".

Task 5 – Keeping potentially harmful cosmetics on sale

Chemicals that may harm human health aren't allowed in the cream you put on your face or the deodorant you spray under your arms – except when they've just been identified as a risk and cosmetic manufacturers are given time to withdraw and reformulate their products.

The European Chemicals Agency is responsible for assessing whether a chemical is carcinogenic, mutagenic, or toxic to reproduction (CMR). Once a substance is formally labelled as CMR, it can no longer be used in cosmetic or food products.

This could soon apply to two common fragrance ingredients found in many plant extracts, which are currently being examined as potential CMRs. This is a long process that involves checking at what levels a substance may be harmful.

At the same time, EU officials must now decide how long products with newly classified CMR substances can stay on store shelves. There's currently an 18-month window for such products to remain on the market.

Should that be longer to give more time to chemical producers to adapt, as the European Commission suggests? Or shorter to reduce potential risks to health, as EU governments and the European Parliament argue?

The Commission last year set out a broad strategy to help the chemicals industry, which it described as crucial for the EU economy but also in need of help with falling global market share, high energy costs, shuttered factories, and a heavy regulatory burden.

It promised to “simplify” or reduce regulatory requirements for several laws targeting the chemicals industry, including fertilisers and cosmetics. Those could save at least €363 million a year, it said.

One of these changes would extend how long cosmetic products containing newly classified CMRs could be sold. It said existing products could stay on sale for up to two years, but that any new products could only be launched for a year after a chemical is classified as harmful.

That needs to be agreed with both EU governments and the European Parliament. Neither wants an extension, but they disagree on how long the products should stay on sale. EU governments want a 1-year limit to sell off stock.

The European Parliament voted earlier this week to keep products on sale for up to 15 months. Both want a six-month limit for new products to enter the market. They must now negotiate what the final rules should be.

Answer keys

Section 1

Task 1 - Plastic bags

1T, 2F, 3F, 4F, 5T, 6F, 7T

Task 2 - Machine Sucks CO2

1T, 2F, 3T, 4F, 5T, 6F, 7F

Task 3 - Shrinking fish

1T, 2T, 3F, 4T, 5T, 6F, 7F

Task 4 - Sun On Screen

1T, 2F, 3F, 4F, 5F, 6T, 7T, 8 F

Task 5 - Keeping potentially harmful cosmetics on sale

1T, 2F, 3T, 4T, 5F, 6F, 7T

Section 2

Task 1 - New Food Entrepreneurs

Listen to the text about new electronic products. Use what you heard to complete the table with your notes of no more than 3 words each, according to the example (0).

name of business: 0. *Too Busy to Bake*

his customers: 1.

2.

3.

location of his business: 4.

previous field of work: 5.

title of interviewee's book: 6.

in his opinion, the helping factors of new businesses: 7.

8.

strength of new businesses: 9.

10.

11.

typical new business as a result of last recession: 12.

In this recession, business climate changed. Logistics, communications and social media (websites) are available.

necessities to start a new small business now: 13.

14.

Task 2 - Personality test

Listen to the text. Use what you heard to complete the table with your notes of no more than 2 words each, according to the example (0).

QUESTIONS		ANSWERS
0.	<i>What is it like to find a good manager? (Example)</i>	 Hard
1.	How many dollars' worth is the psychometric test market annually?	.....
2.	What kind of firms are Heidrick & Struggles and Egon Zehnder?	.....
3.	What arm do the firms that IBM and Oracle bought have?	.....
4.	What is the cost of a psychometric test?	.....
5.	What characteristics do many psychometric tests measure? (Give 2 examples!)	.....
6.		.....
7.	What leadership styles does the Korn/Ferry test measure? (Give 2 examples!)	.....
8.		.....
9.	For what position was the correspondent assessed by the Korn/Ferry test?	.....
10.	How was his leadership style characterised by the test?	.....
11.	How do good leaders react to new evidence?	.....
12.	In what workplace are the candidates asked to imagine themselves?	.....
13.	What institution does John Rust work for?	.....

Task 3 - Personal debt

Listen to the text. Use what you heard to complete the table with your notes of no more than 2 words each, according to the example (0).

Personal debt
What do we mean by personal debts?
▪ ... credit cards ....0. (Example);
▪ (1) (Give 2 more examples);
▪ (2)
Personal debt does not include:
▪ (3);
▪ (4);
How big is the debt?
▪ at the moment: £..... (5) billion.
▪ per household: £13 200 (6).
▪ growth rate of credit card debt: (7) a year.
Who are the worst affected?
▪ those who are with the lowest income
▪ (8) and on less than £25,000 a year
▪ people who are in the private rental sector
▪ (9) who pay for essentials.
Why are people borrowing?
Interest rates have gone up on credit cards and they are going up on (10).
There are some (11) with interest rates up to 60 % over a year.
It is easy for creditors (12).
If creditors find their customers unable to repay they sell that debt on the..... (13).

Task 4 - Hayfever

Listen to the text about the rapidly rising levels of hayfever. Use what you heard to complete the table with your notes of **no more than 2 word each**, according to the example (0).

Proportion of people suffering from hayfever in the EU in spring: ...*One third*... (0)

- symptoms: (*Give 1 example*). (1)

phenomenon, making hay fever worse: (2)

- the way pollen season is changing (3)

- start of pollen season in 2015-2024: two weeks (4)

than 1991-2000

example of extraordinary early blooming of hazel trees in the Netherlands:

currently: in (5)

50 years ago: in (6)

- tendency for the end of season: (7)

ragweed: worst plant for hayfever, even at (8)

- number of sufferers will (9) by 2041-2050
- pollen counts are (10), depending on the (11)
- modern epidemic of tree pollen (12)

other factors to make hayfever worse: (13)

Task 5 - Voice assistant

Listen to the text about voice assistants, and answer the questions briefly, according to the example (0).

QUESTIONS		ANSWERS
0.	What are voice assistants?	They are programs that run on digital devices.
1.	What do they answer to?	.....
2.	What kind of things do people ask about? Give 2 examples.	.....
3.		.....
4.	How does a request start?	.....
5.	What does this first word do?	
6.	What shows the end of the request?	
7.	Where will the request be sent?	.....
8.	What will be sent back?	.....
9.	How fast does this happen?	.....
10.	How do voice assistants learn and develop?	.....
11.	What parts of a smart home can voice assistants control?	.....
12.		.....

Tapescript

Section 2

Task 1 - New Food Entrepreneurs

Hello, my name is Gavin from Too Busy to Bake. I make cakes from home, things like Canadian carrot cake and chocolate Ganache cake and today I'm just about to make a Red velvet cake. I make cakes for individuals who request them, but mainly it's to cafes and delicatessens in the Birmingham area. I'm operating out of my kitchen, I live in Oldridge, which is the north side of Birmingham. I've been here for a number of years but only been properly baking probably the last 18 months since been made redundant 2 years ago after 20 years in doing household insurance claims and prior to that another insurance. So, 20 years in corporate life, got made redundant for the third time and decided with my wife, we just have a review of life and what was going on and this seemed to fit in much nicer with the work-life balance.

There's a quiet revolution taking place across Britain. Partly as a result of recession, and partly because a growing number of people are taking stock of their lives, and seeking new horizons. There's an exodus from highflying city careers into kitchens and restaurants across the nation. As middle-class professionals leave corporate life to take up their kitchen utensils, and start fine food businesses, Andrew Web, author of Food Britannia, thinks we're on the crest of an exciting new wave.

I suppose the people I've met who've packed it all in and started their own business, what enabled them to do that is the fact that they can leverage technology, the internet, social media, and use their agility and ability to sort of make new products, develop things rapidly as a strength. So, their size shouldn't necessarily be seen as a weakness. And that's one of the key themes I think I found is that people typically wake up in the morning and think: let's do this with cheese instead of something else!" and develop it rapidly and get it out either via the websites or via farmer's markets or smallholdings. And they can iterate and develop new products very, very quickly. And that's a strength.

By and large, they are in it because they've done other things and it's that sort of it's the post-career career in a way. (Yes.) It's something that I've been places I've done a lot of things and now this is what I will do. And I don't need an exit strategy 'cause it is this 'til I drop.

It's said that the last big recession gave us the gastro-pub when a lot of brewers were closing down premises which were licensed and chefs that otherwise couldn't afford to start their restaurants could get licensed premises. But that was the last recession. This one seems to be .. people break different kind of change and different kinds of businesses.

People are developing sort of ancillary products or sort of products that augment other ingredients. No one is gonna go „Do you know what? I fancy being a dairy farmer!" 'cause you just not gonna be able to leverage that kind of infrastructure and assets really. And so we've got the logistics, we've got the communications and the social media and websites and things. And so you can start with a very small capital outlay and a germ of a really good idea and play to that strength of agility and customer interaction and novelty and interest and do something remarkable.

Task 2 - Personality test

Spotting a good manager is hard. Some firms think psychometric tests help. An industry has appeared to supply them. No one knows how big it is, but the vendors of such tests estimate it to be worth between \$2 billion and \$4 billion a year, says Nik Kinley, a co-author of "Talent Intelligence", a forthcoming book.

Headhunters such as Heidrick & Struggles and Egon Zehnder are trying to get a foothold in the market. Another, Korn/Ferry, paid \$80m for PDI Ninth House, a specialist vendor, in December. IBM and Oracle, two software giants, have bought firms with a talent-measurement arm. Consultancies such as Deloitte and Bain are rumoured to be eyeing similar acquisitions.

Firms like psychometric tests because they are cheap (as little as \$30 per candidate) and allow an employer to whittle a mountain of job applications down to a shortlist with minimal effort. But do they work? Many seek to measure touchy-feely traits such as personality, leadership potential and “emotional intelligence”. These are hard to measure. Tests that purport to do so are as likely to mislead as to inform, says Mr Kinley.

Unsurprisingly, the firms that attempt to measure personality disagree. Korn/Ferry says that its blue-chip clients are convinced of its test’s efficacy. It assesses candidates for four “leadership styles”: task-focused, social, intellectual and participative. It then compares results against the best talent already working in the position for which they are applying. Your correspondent took the Korn/Ferry test. He was assessed to see if he would make a good director of a publishing firm. He was told that his leadership style was too intellectual. So it’s back to the day job.

Having studied thousands of examples, Korn/Ferry says the one thing good leaders have in common is a willingness to let new evidence change their views. So the firm asks candidates to put themselves in the position of a manager who has been sent to a tricky overseas office, and judges how well they react to different scenarios.

However, some think such tests are easy to game. John Rust, the director of Cambridge University’s Psychometrics Centre, says the expected answers are usually obvious. Firms, he says, end up “selecting the people who know what the right answers are”. This would be fine for a calculus test, but not for one that purports to measure personality, he argues.

Task 3 – Personal debt

Right! So, by personal debt we mean things like credit cards, store cards, bank loans, catalogue repayments, pay-day loans, which had a lot of attention a couple of years ago; Rent-to-own which is when you can rent your fridge from a shop. So it’s kind of all of those types of borrowing that allow you to spend in the economy not including students’ loans and not including mortgages.

Your second question was about how big the debt is. It is large. It’s 236 and a half billion pounds at the moment, which is beyond its peak before the crisis, so in 2008 the peak was 230 billion, so it passed that and per household it’s around 13200 pounds at the moment but obviously some households have more debt the others so it’s just an average. And it’s growing really fast. So, it’s growing about at a 10 per cent a year ...or... but on things like credit cards 14 per cent a year.

And you asked who’s kind of worst affected by it. The burden tends to be greatest on those with the lowest incomes; those are self-employed, especially people self-employed on less than 25 grand a year; people who are in the private rental sector. And women interestingly who are more likely to take out credit to pay for essentials.

OK. So why are people borrowing so much?

The usual economist’s answer is that people are borrowing because debt is cheap. But I don’t think that’s true. So if you look at interest rates on different kinds of consumer debt bank loans have become cheaper in terms of interest rates. But interest rates have gone up on credit cards and they are going up on overdrafts. And if you look at credit cards you’re likely to be if you’re on low income you are likely to be spending 29.9 per cent annually on interest and some credit cards have interest rates up to 60 per cent. So, absolutely huge! And that’s just over the course of 1 year so if you are not paying a credit card off for like 2 or 3 years you’ll easily have paid

more than 100 per cent in interest. So I would say it's not because you got it cheap but it might be because it's easy to access and actually it's easy for creditors to lend at the moment. The regulation isn't particularly burdensome and if... if a creditor finds the people they've lent to can't repay then what they do they just take that debt and they sell what it's called on the secondary market other people will buy it and then they'll continue to chase the debtors for that... for that debt.

Task 4 – Hayfever

For up to a third of the European population, the arrival of spring means symptoms like sneezing, itchy eyes, and tiredness have returned with the flowers. There's more bad news: climate change is making hay fever worse – even for some people who weren't previously affected.

Last week, an international group of scientists from the Lancet Countdown concluded that climate change is prolonging the pollen season in Europe. Between 2015 and 2024, birch, alder, and olive trees – which already release allergenic pollen before grasses and other plants – started doing so one to two weeks earlier compared to 1991-2000.

This change is driven by warmer temperatures, Arnold van Vliet, biologist at Wageningen University & Research and not involved in the study, told The European Correspondent. “This year, hazel trees, for example, were spotted blooming in the Netherlands by the end of November. Fifty years ago, we used to see the first ones bloom by mid February.”

The end of the pollen season is extending as well, as non-native plants spread across Europe. Plants that thrive in warmer temperatures often bloom in late summer, when the traditional pollen season would otherwise end.

“Ragweed, for example, is one of the worst plants for hay fever. Even at low concentrations of pollen, people can become sensitised,” Van Vliet said. The weed, originally from North America, can lead to symptoms in people who had no prior allergy. According to estimates by researchers from the University of East Anglia in England, the number of people in Europe that suffer from this type of pollen allergy will more than double by 2041–2060.

According to Anne Overduin-de Vries, researcher at Leiden University Medical Center, total pollen counts are generally rising, but more research is needed as plants behave differently depending on the region. “We know that some plants react to warmer climates by producing more pollen.”

All these changes to our pollen season are bad news for allergies, Stephen Durham, emeritus professor of allergy and respiratory medicine at Imperial College London, explained to TEC. “Overall, there's a very close correlation between symptoms and the pollen count: when there's higher pollen counts, there's more and worse symptoms.”

Durham mentions that in the last 20-30 years, there has actually been a “modern epidemic of tree pollen allergies”: a lot more people are now sensitive to tree pollen, in addition to grass pollen, which generally causes most hay fever problems.

The combination of pollution and pollen also affects allergies in several ways. “Air pollution leads to more pollen production in some plants and more allergens in the pollen: a result of more nitrogen in the soil and CO₂ in the air,” Overduin-de Vries said. Being exposed to combinations of pollutants such as ozone (found in smog) or diesel exhaust and pollen also leads to worse allergy symptoms, Durham explained. “Besides pollen counts, pollution is exacerbating allergies.”

Task 5 – Voice assistant

Have you ever had a chat with Siri? Do you ask Google to play your favorite song? Have you ever had Alexa order a pizza for dinner? Today's voice assistants can help you out with just about anything!

Voice assistants are programs on digital devices that listen and respond to verbal commands. A user can say, "What's the weather?" and the voice assistant will answer with the weather report for that day and location. They could say, "Tell me a story," and the assistant will jump into a tale. The user could even say, "Order my favorite pizza," and dinner will be on its way!

Voice assistants are so easy to use that many people forget to stop and WONDER how they work. How do voice assistants understand us? Is it magic? A complex system of codes? An actual person listening on the other end? The answer is less complicated than you might think.

It all starts with a signal word. Have you ever called a friend's name to get their attention? Users say the names of their voice assistants for the same reason. They might say, "Hey Siri!" or simply, "Alexa!" Whatever the signal word is, it wakes up the device. It signals to the voice assistant that it should begin paying attention.

After the voice assistant hears its signal word, it starts recording. The device waits for a pause to know you've finished your request. The voice assistant then sends your recorded request over the Internet to its database.

Once in the database, your request is compared to other requests. It's split into separate commands your voice assistant can understand. The database then sends these commands back to the voice assistant. Once it receives the commands, the voice assistant knows what to do next. The device might ask a question to make sure it understands what you want. If it thinks it understands, the voice assistant will carry out the task you asked for.

If you've ever used a voice assistant, you know all of that happens very quickly! If you say, "Hey Siri! What's the weather?" Siri reports back to you in seconds. The more directions the devices receive, the better and faster they get at fulfilling our requests.

Voice assistants are improving all the time. They learn the same way people do. Have you ever asked a voice assistant for something and received results you didn't expect? Each time this happens, the voice assistant learns from its mistake. If you say, "Alexa, play rock music," and it plays country music, you'll tell Alexa to stop. That teaches the device that the command it received from its database was wrong. It communicates that with the database and tries to do better next time.

Voice assistants can do just about anything you can think of. They answer questions, make calls, and can even control parts of your home like the lights and thermostat!

Answer keys

Task 1 - New Food Entrepreneurs

1. his kitchen/ own kitchen / his own kitchen, 2. individuals, 3. cafes, 4. delicatessen, 5. insurance, 6. Food Britannia, 7. technology / internet, 8. social media, 9. agility, 10. rapid reaction time / speed / fast, 11. size 12. gastro-pub, 13. small capital outlay, 14. good idea / germ of a good idea

Task 2 - Personality test

1. 2-4 billion 2. Headhunter 3. Talent-measurement 4. \$30 per candidate 5., 6. ANY OF: personality, leadership potential, emotional intelligence 7., 8. ANY OF: task-focused, social, intellectual, participative 9. Director 10. Too intellectual 11. Change their views 12. (Tricky) overseas office 13. University

Task 3 - Personal debt

1., 2. store cards/ bank loans/catalogue repayments/ pay-day loans 3., 4. student loans/mortgages 5. 236/two-hundred six 6. average 7. 10 per-cent 8. self-employed 9. women 10. overdrafts 11. credit cards 12. to lend 13. secondary market

Task 4 - Hayfever

1. Sneezing/ itchy eyes/ tiredness, 2. Climate change, 3. Prolonged, 4. Earlier, 5. November, 6. February, 7. Extending, 8. Low concentration, 9. double, 10. Rising, 11. Region, 12. Allergies, 13. pollution

Task 5 – Voice assistant

1. Verbal commands 2.-3: weather/ story/ pizza 4. signal word 5. wakes up the device, 6. the pause 7. a database 8. commands 9. in seconds / very quickly 10. from their mistakes 11. light 12. thermostat