ANSWER KEY WITH EXPLANATIONS

ESL C2 Level MCQ Test With Answers PROFICIENCY TEST 2

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Explanations

1. **C2 MOCK EXAMINATION - Use of English and Reading Sections**

SECTION 1

Choose the correct alternatives to complete the sentences.

_____, don't tell anybody about our plans for a merger.
✓ **C) Whatever you do**
Whatever you do is a fixed expression placed before an instruction to give it strong emphasis: 'under no circumstances'. **Whatever you do, don't tell anyone.** Not **However you do**: **however** refers to the manner of an action and does not form this set phrase. **What thing you do** and **Whichever to do** are not grammatical.

2. The thought of spending a night in the so-called 'haunted' house alone made him _____ with fear.
✓ **B) shudder**
To **shudder** is to shake suddenly because of fear, cold or disgust. It collocates naturally with **with fear** or **with horror**. **Blink** and **swallow** can be nervous reactions, but they do not collocate with **with fear**. **Burp** is unrelated.

3. _____ that they booed her off the stage.
✓ **D) So badly did she sing**
When **so** + adverb comes first for emphasis, the subject and auxiliary are inverted: **So badly did she sing that…** (= She sang so badly that…). Not **So badly she sang**, because the inversion with **did** is missing. **Such** is used before nouns, not adverbs.

4. Well, you finally managed to get here; it's _____ time!
✓ **B) about**
It's about time! is an idiom that shows impatience: something has happened later than it should have. The speaker is complaining that the person has arrived late. **Over time** and **more than time** are not idioms with this meaning.

5. _____ at home, she left a note on the front door.
✓ **A) Realising there was nobody**
An active present participle clause (**Realising…**) describes what the subject did just before the main action: she realised, then she left a note. Not **Realised**: the past participle would have a passive meaning. **By realising** expresses method, not reason, and **On realised** is ungrammatical (it would need **On realising**).

6. I don't know where he is; he _____ over an hour ago.
✓ **C) should have arrived**
Should have + past participle expresses an expectation that has not been met: he was expected an hour ago, but he isn't here. Not **must have arrived**, which is a confident deduction that he did arrive. That contradicts **I don't know where he is**.

7. What are the chances they _____ the job by Friday?
✓ **D) will have finished**
The future perfect (**will have finished**) describes an action completed before a future point. The clue is **by Friday**. Not **will have been finishing**: the continuous form stresses duration and does not fit a completed result. **Are going to be finished** is passive and cannot take **the job** as an object.

8. If you _____, drop in for a chat.
✓ **B) should happen to be passing**
If you should happen to be passing is a polite, tentative first conditional. **Should** and **happen to** both make the possibility sound casual and unplanned, which suits an informal invitation in the imperative (**drop in**). Not **will be passing**: **will** is normally not used in the if-clause of a first conditional.

9. There have been a few complaints but _____ our customers are satisfied.
✓ **C) by and large**
By and large means 'generally' or 'on the whole'. It contrasts with the few complaints: there were some problems, but in general customers are happy. Not **above all**, which means 'most importantly' and does not express this contrast.

10. As this is only a reproduction of the original painting, it is practically _____.
✓ **B) worthless**
Worthless means having no value. A copy of a painting has little monetary value, and **practically** collocates well with it. Watch out: **priceless** and **invaluable** mean extremely valuable, the opposite. **Unworthy** means not deserving (**unworthy of praise**), not lacking value.

11. He promised to stick by her through _____.
✓ **C) thick and thin**
Through thick and thin means 'in good times and bad times', and it often follows **stick by someone** to express loyalty. **Spick and span** means very clean, and **odds and ends** means small miscellaneous items. **Bad and good** is not a fixed expression.

12. _____ for him, we surely would have missed our flight.
✓ **B) Had we waited any longer**
This is a third conditional with inversion: **Had we waited any longer** = **If we had waited any longer**. It matches the past result **would have missed**. Not **If we were to wait** or **Should we wait**: these refer to hypothetical future situations and do not match a past result.

13. Matters finally _____ at the office and they fired him.
✓ **D) came to a head**
When matters **come to a head**, a problem that has been developing reaches a crisis point where action must be taken. Here the action is firing him. **Hit the roof** means to become very angry. **Brought to a boil** needs an object, and the usual idiom is **come to the boil**.

14. When they speak about physics, I'm afraid it's all over _____.
✓ **C) my head**
If something is (or goes) **over your head**, it is too difficult for you to understand. **Physics is all over my head** = I can't follow it at all. The other options are not idioms with this meaning.

15. The shirt looks small but the material _____ to fit the individual.
✓ **B) stretches**
Elastic material **stretches**: it becomes longer or wider when pulled, so a small-looking shirt can still fit. **Swells** means becomes bigger from inside (e.g. with water). **Extends** and **spreads** are not used for fabric adapting to a body.

16. When he turned on the tap, the water _____ out and soaked the front of his trousers.
✓ **B) spurted**
Spurt means to come out suddenly in a strong, fast stream, so it can soak someone's trousers. **Drip**, **trickle** and **ooze** all describe slow, small amounts of liquid, which could not soak clothes instantly.

17. SECTION 3

Choose the correct alternatives to complete the sentences.

They hadn't _____ there being so much traffic and missed their plane.
✓ **C) bargained on**
Bargain on/for means to expect or allow for something, and it is usually used in the negative: **They hadn't bargained on so much traffic.** **Caught on** means understood or became popular. **Dreamed up** means invented. **Set out** means started a journey.

18. The conference was going well until a new manager gave a speech that was _____ and boring.
✓ **D) long-winded**
Long-winded describes speech or writing that is too long and tedious, which fits **and boring**. **Loose-lipped** means indiscreet, careless about secrets. **Off the order** is not an expression, and **overtime** refers to extra working hours.

19. The holiday didn't _____ to their expectations.
✓ **A) come up**
Come up to (someone's) expectations means to be as good as expected. It is very often used in the negative: **The holiday didn't come up to their expectations.** The other phrasal verbs don't combine with **to their expectations**.

20. I'm afraid Joe is _____ of a nervous breakdown.
✓ **C) on the verge**
On the verge of means very close to something happening. It is often used with negative states: **on the verge of a nervous breakdown / of tears**. **On the blink** is used for machines that are not working properly. The correct form of the other phrase is **in jeopardy**, which does not fit here.

21. We'll have to _____ the many candidates and see who is the most suited for the job.
✓ **C) sift through**
Sift through means to examine a large number of things carefully to choose the useful ones, which suits reviewing many candidates. Not **see through**, which means to recognise a lie or deception.

22. After losing the contract, the company decided to _____ on inefficiency.
✓ **D) crack down**
Crack down on something means to start dealing with it in a much stricter way: **crack down on inefficiency/crime**. **Get rid** would need **of**. **Come down on** is normally used with people (**come down hard on staff**).

23. At the moment, there is little _____ of the manager resigning.
✓ **D) likelihood**
Likelihood means probability, and it collocates with **little** and **of + -ing**: **There is little likelihood of him resigning. Probably** is an adverb and cannot follow **little … of**. **Trace** and **means** do not express probability.

24. Their state-of-the-art website _____ thinking it was a reputable company.
✓ **A) fooled us into**
Fool someone into doing something means to trick them into believing or doing it, and it is followed by an **-ing** form (**fooled us into thinking**). Not **caused us to**, which would need an infinitive (**caused us to think**), not **thinking**.

25. Mark suddenly started insulting the customer. It was so out of _____ that everybody was shocked!
✓ **C) character**
Out of character means unlike someone's usual behaviour. **Suddenly** and **everybody was shocked** show this was not typical of Mark. Not **out of bounds**, which describes a place you are not allowed to enter.

26. They decided to celebrate by going out and _____.
✓ **C) painting the town red**
Paint the town red means to go out and celebrate in a lively way, usually at bars or clubs. The other idioms are distorted: the real expressions are **be on cloud nine** and **be over the moon** (very happy), not **get…**. **See the light at the end of the tunnel** means to see an end to difficulties.

27. Oh no! It looks like the rain has _____ for the day.
✓ C) set in
When bad weather **sets in**, it begins and seems likely to continue: **The rain has set in for the day.** Not **broken out**, which is used for wars, fires or diseases starting suddenly.

28. Don't worry! I know the speech _____.
✓ B) by heart
To know something **by heart** means to have memorised it completely, so the speaker is not worried. Not **on the tip of my tongue**, which means almost but not quite able to remember something.

29. Japanese courtesy _____.
✓ C) was thought to be an innate quality
Paragraph 1 says courtesy **used to be thought of as second nature** to the Japanese, i.e. people believed it came naturally and was part of their character. Not **was used naturally**: the text is about how courtesy was perceived, not how it was used. The examples of elderly or pregnant people are not presented as the only people who received courtesy.

30. Which of the following statements is correct?
✓ B) Not giving up seats to those in difficulty is only one example of the general decline of good manners in Japan.
Paragraph 1 says that **other behaviour that illustrates Japan's decline in good manners** includes phone chatting, make-up and leaky headphones. So seat behaviour is just one example. The other options overgeneralise: the text never says **everybody** does these things or that the rudeness happens **only** on the underground.

31. The 'manners police' will above all attempt to ensure that _____.
✓ C) a certain way of life is not lost
Paragraph 2 says the patrols are **an attempt to prevent the disintegration of the 'Japanese way'**, i.e. to protect a traditional way of life. Giving seats to needy passengers is the practical task. The underlying aim is to preserve these values. **The underground will not break down** misreads **disintegration**.

32. Which of the following will the Smile-Manner Squadron be able to do?
✓ B) Shame people into giving up their seats.
Paragraph 3 says the officers **will have no legal authority to fine or punish**. They must **rely on persuasion or mortification** to make someone give up a seat. **Mortification** means shame or embarrassment, so all they can do is **shame people into giving up their seats**. Not **Issue fines**, which the text clearly rules out. The text also never mentions physical force or evicting people from the train.

33. The squadron _____.
✓ C) will have uniforms which can be recognised immediately
Paragraph 3 describes the officers' **unmistakable bright green uniforms**, which means uniforms that can be recognised immediately. They were **handpicked**, not chosen randomly. The bodyguards protect the officers, not the unwilling passengers.

34. The squadron will _____.
✓ C) patrol in pairs
Paragraph 4 says the members **will patrol the underground two by two**, which means in pairs. The squadron will be made up **mostly** of people over sixty, not entirely. The companions are younger bodyguards, not police officers.

35. The presence of bodyguards is another indication of _____.
✓ B) how standards of politeness have fallen
Paragraph 4 says: **As yet another sign of decaying manners, each couple will be accompanied by a younger bodyguard** to protect them from enraged passengers. So the bodyguards show how far standards of politeness have fallen.

36. According to the psychologist, _____.
✓ A) the need for the squadron is symbolic of the state of Japanese mentality
Paragraph 5 quotes the psychologist: the **necessity** for the squadron **symbolises the collapse of the Japanese mentality**. It is the need for the squadron, not the squadron itself, that is symbolic. Option 2 is therefore tempting but inaccurate.

37. Nobuhiko Obayashi believes _____.
✓ C) parents are too lenient with children
Paragraph 6 says Obayashi blames **parents who are not severe enough with their children**, which means they are too **lenient** (not strict enough). Not **self-confident**: he says young people are too **self-conscious** (shy). He also blames parents, so society is not **wholly** to blame.

38. Which statement is true?
✓ C) Some see the squadron as a threat to free choice.
The last paragraph quotes an 81-year-old: **Vacating seats is a matter of each passenger's free will**. So some people see the squadron as interfering with free choice. Option 4 overgeneralises from one person's opinion to all 81-year-olds, and the text mentions **numerous volunteers**, so recruitment was not difficult.