ANSWER KEY WITH EXPLANATIONS

Penguin Readers Placement Test 6A

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Explanations

1. We had the first snow of the winter _____ days _____.
✓ **D) a few / ago**
A few means 'a small number', which fits here. **Few** without **a** means 'not many', with a negative feeling. **Ago** counts back from now to a finished moment, used with the past simple: **a few days ago**. Not **since**, which needs a starting point (**since Monday**) and usually the present perfect.

2. He _____ getting into trouble by refusing to be involved.
✓ **B) avoids**
Avoid + -ing means to keep away from something or stop it happening to you: **He avoids getting into trouble.** Not **prevents**, which needs an object and **from** (**prevent someone from doing**).

3. I'm sorry. I _____ you about the change in the dates but I forgot.
✓ **A) should have told**
Should have + past participle expresses regret about something you didn't do in the past. The clue is **but I forgot**. Not **must have told**, which is a deduction (**I'm sure I told you**), not a regret.

4. I knew she was married because she was _____ a wedding ring.
✓ **D) wearing**
We **wear** clothes, jewellery and rings: **She was wearing a wedding ring.** Not **carrying**, which means holding something or having it in a bag.

5. Your wife rang _____ you that you're meeting her after work.
✓ **B) to remind**
The infinitive of purpose (**to** + verb) explains why she rang. **Remind someone** means to make them remember something: **to remind you that…**. Not **to remember**: you remember something yourself, you don't remember another person about it.

6. So far no one has _____ for the job of chief of police.
✓ **B) applied**
Apply for a job means to formally ask to be given it: **No one has applied for the job.** Not **appointed**, which is what the employer does (**appoint someone to a post**), and it needs an object.

7. He wasn't elected, _____ the efforts of his team.
✓ **A) despite**
Despite is a preposition, so it is followed by a noun phrase: **despite the efforts of his team**. Not **although**, which needs a full clause with a verb (**although his team tried hard**). **Nevertheless** and **however** are adverbs and cannot link a noun phrase this way.

8. _____ when there is ice on the roads _____ very dangerous.
✓ **A) Riding / is**
A gerund (**Riding**) can be the subject of a sentence, with no article: **Riding … is very dangerous.** Not **it is**: the subject is already **Riding**, so adding **it** repeats the subject.

9. The method sounds old-fashioned but it works _____ well as _____.
✓ **B) as / ever**
The fixed comparison is **as well as ever**, meaning 'as well as it always has'. In positive comparisons we use **as … as**, not **so … as**. Not **never**: **as well as never** has no meaning.

10. When you've been playing as long as I have, one game is very like _____.
✓ **C) another**
Another here is a pronoun meaning 'any other one': **one game is very like another**. Not **other**, which cannot stand alone in the singular. Not **each other**, which shows that two people or things do something to one another.

11. She seems very keen on discipline but I wonder _____ in class.
✓ **A) what she is like**
What is someone like? asks about character or behaviour. In an indirect question (**I wonder…**) the word order is the same as in a statement: **what she is like**. Not **what is she like**, which keeps question word order. Not **how she is like**, because **like** is used with **what**, not **how**.

12. That's the third time this week that the machine has been out of _____.
✓ **B) order**
Out of order means a machine is not working: **The lift is out of order.** Not **out of work**, which describes a person who has no job.

13. She's still very beautiful. I wish I _____ her when she was young.
✓ **D) had known**
Wish + past perfect expresses regret about the past: **I wish I had known her when she was young.** Not **knew**, because **wish** + past simple is about the present (**I wish I knew her now**).

14. By the time they change the law, the damage _____ been done.
✓ **B) will have**
The future perfect (**will have been done**) describes an action that will be complete before a future time. The clue is **By the time they change the law**. Not **shall have**, which is used mainly with **I/we**, not with a subject like **the damage**.

15. I don't want to stop in the forest but _____ be a village quite near.
✓ **A) there may**
There may be means 'perhaps there is'. **There** introduces the existence of something (**a village**). Not **there can be**, because **can** is not used for a possibility in one specific situation. Not **it may**, because **it** cannot introduce something that exists.

16. It's a dangerous occupation. I don't do it for the _____ of my health.
✓ **D) sake**
Not for the sake of my health is an ironic idiom meaning 'not because I enjoy it or it's good for me'. Here it means the speaker does the job for another reason, such as money. **For the sake of** = for the benefit of. The other nouns don't form this phrase.

17. She _____ the cloth and put it away in the drawer.
✓ **A) folded**
To **fold** cloth or paper means to bend it over on itself so it is flatter and smaller: **She folded the towel.** Not **bent**, which is used for hard things like metal or your arm.

18. I _____ expecting a storm like this _____ several days now.
✓ **C) have been / for**
The present perfect continuous (**have been expecting**) describes something that started in the past and continues now. The clue is **now**. **For** + a period of time shows how long: **for several days**. Not **during**, which means 'at some point within' a period, not its length.

19. We've appealed for witnesses but _____ has come forward.
✓ **B) no-one**
No-one (= nobody) refers to people. **Come forward** means to offer information, usually to the police. Not **anyone**, which needs a negative verb (**hasn't**). Not **nothing**, which is for things, not people.

20. He _____ to me for the mistake.
✓ **D) apologised**
The pattern is **apologise to someone for something**: **He apologised to me for the mistake.** Not **excused**, **forgave** or **pardoned**, which take a direct object (**forgave me**) and describe what the other person does.

21. If he'd worked as hard as we have, he _____ tired.
✓ **D) would feel**
This is a mixed conditional: an unreal past condition (**If he'd worked**) with a present result (**he would feel tired** now). Not **had felt**, because the main clause of a conditional needs **would**.

22. I can't find my glasses. I _____ them at the office.
✓ **C) must have left**
Must have + past participle expresses a confident deduction about the past: **I must have left them at the office.** Not **can have left**, because positive deductions use **must**. **Can't have** is used only in negative deductions.

23. You've had a lot to drink so you _____ better let me drive.
✓ **C) had**
Had better + infinitive without **to** gives strong advice: **You'd better let me drive.** Not **should** or **ought**: they don't combine with **better** in this pattern (**ought** would also need **to**).

24. They aren't going to raise taxes – at _____, that is what they promised.
✓ **A) least**
At least can add a limitation or correction to what was just said: **they aren't going to raise taxes – at least, that's what they promised** (it may not be true). Not **at last**, which means 'finally, after a long wait'.

25. Come on! I don't want _____ the start of the match.
✓ **B) to miss**
Want is followed by a **to**-infinitive, not a **that**-clause: **I don't want to miss…**. We **miss** an event when we are not there for it. Not **lose**: you lose a game or your keys, not the start of a match.

26. My neighbours are a bit _____. They believe in ghosts and magic.
✓ **A) weird**
Weird means very strange or unusual: **He has some weird ideas.** Not **wicked**, which means evil or morally bad.

27. If you don't do what the boss tells you, you'll be _____ from the firm.
✓ **D) sacked**
To be **sacked** (informal, British) means to lose your job because your employer dismisses you. Not **resigned** or **retired**, which describe leaving a job yourself and are not used in the passive this way.

28. Those boys climbed up the _____ tower last night.
✓ **C) church**
When one noun describes another, we use it like an adjective, in the singular and without an apostrophe: **the church tower**, **the school gate**. Not **churches'** or **churchs'**, which are plural possessive forms or misspellings.

29. They made a serious mistake and their opponents took _____ of it.
✓ **C) advantage**
Take advantage of something means to use a situation to help yourself: **Their opponents took advantage of the mistake.** Not **profit** or **benefit**: these nouns don't go with **take … of**. We say **profit from** or **benefit from** a mistake.

30. She _____ at me and then went on reading.
✓ **A) glanced**
To **glance at** someone means to look at them quickly: **She glanced at the clock.** The clue is **and then went on reading**. Not **viewed** or **regarded**, which take a direct object without **at**.