

November 2004 English 12 Provincial Examination

PART A: INFORMATIONAL TEXT

Total Value: 7 marks

Suggested Time: 15 minutes

Read the article "Room With a View." Select the best answer for each question and record your choice.

ROOM WITH A VIEW

Earth's outpost in space gets quite an upgrade.

- 1 Our solitary human outpost in space is growing by leaps and bounds. By this fall a giant air lock will join four other modules already in place, giving the International Space Station nearly the volume of a comfortable home. When the station is completed, its bulk will double again to more than 40,000 cubic feet¹, about the size of a 747. The gleaming lab-in-the-sky already reflects so much sunlight that it has become the brightest "star" in the autumn heavens at nightfall.
 - 2 Some scientists remain unimpressed. "The International Space Station is basically a large-scale federal jobs program that has nothing to do with astronomy," says Robert Naeye, editor of *Mercury* magazine, echoing a sentiment many researchers share but prefer not to voice in public. These criticisms reflect researchers' frustration with the station's questionable scientific return and high cost, which they feel has robbed the research community of innumerable other projects.
- The space station is the brightest of 100 satellites large and low enough to be easily seen. One of them traverses the evening sky every minute or two. At an altitude of 240 miles², the station takes about 10 minutes to cross the sky. Higher satellites appear to move more slowly.
- 3 Advocates of space exploration, meanwhile, often deride the space station as too timid a venture. Circling above Earth's surface at a mere 1/500 000 the average distance to Mars, it is barely in space at all.
 - 4 As a place to live, however, the orbiting outpost earns a glowing evaluation from astronaut Andy Thomas. Thomas, who spent four months aboard Mir in 1998 before going to the station this past March, sees no comparison between the noisy, funky-smelling Russian craft and the calm, odorless American control module. "I love working with the Russians and really liked their food, but I felt a lot safer on the ISS," he says. "On Mir, a fire created smoke



¹ 40 000 cubic feet: approximately 12 000 cubic metres

² 240 miles: approximately 384 kilometres

that circulated for days. Even when it made us nauseated, the Russian fire officer would laugh it off as ‘nothing serious.’ ”

- 5 In contrast with *Mir*, the new station has been generally trouble-free. Glitches have involved minor things like bulky backup software on the new Canadarm, an all-purpose space crane, and a flawed treadmill—needed to maintain astronauts’ muscle strength—whose 160 support slats fell apart and had to be replaced individually. After their workout, crews have to make do with moist towelettes, although Thomas says they’re far superior to the unmanageable shower on *Mir*.
- 6 Astronauts are still adjusting to the psychological effects of a modular spacecraft. Following the lead of others on board, Thomas tried to stay oriented by aligning his floating body with his feet toward the floor. “We’d all float the same way, although sometimes as a prank the others would hover the opposite way so when you’d come in you’d feel confused. And when you’d enter a new module whose wall was aligned with the ceiling of the one you were leaving, you’d do a double take and think, ‘Which way do

³ 20 inches: *approximately 50 centimetres*

I turn to make the floor into the floor?’ ”

- 7 Like dogs riding in the family car, station astronauts never seem to tire of looking out the station’s 20-inch-wide³, optical-quality window. “Auroras would unfold each time we passed near the poles, thunderstorms were little silent flashbulbs going off far below, and an occasional meteor would streak through the air beneath us. Sunset lasts just five to 10 seconds. Suddenly you’d go from blindingly bright daylight to night,” Thomas recalls.
- 8 The tangible benefits of the International Space Station, either scientific or commercial, are yet unseen. But it is easy to see the colossus itself. NASA runs a Web site, liftoff.msfc.nasa.gov, that shows when and where the station will next cross your sky. Add [/realtime/jpass/passgenerator/help.html](http://liftoff.msfc.nasa.gov/realtime/jpass/passgenerator/help.html) at the end of that address, and you can sign up to receive e-mails telling you when the station will be most easily observed. Looking up at the night’s newest star, you can witness highly visible evidence of your tax dollars at work.

1. According to paragraph 1, what will be the newest feature of the International Space Station?
 - A. It will become a star.
 - B. It will increase in size.
 - C. It will reflect sunlight.
 - D. It will lose an air lock.

2. According to the article, why is the International Space Station a subject of controversy?
 - A. Its age is increasing.
 - B. It may have little scientific value.
 - C. It is too far away from earth to be of use.
 - D. It creates only a few job opportunities.

3. Which stylistic device is used in paragraph 2?
 - A. analogy
 - B. statistics
 - C. expert testimony
 - D. emotional appeal

4. For what reason do astronauts seem to prefer the International Space Station?
 - A. The food is more appetizing.
 - B. The showers work efficiently.
 - C. The safety standards are better.
 - D. The software is more advanced.

5. From which effect do the astronauts on board the Space Station suffer most?
 - A. They panic under stress.
 - B. They become disoriented.
 - C. They lose muscle strength.
 - D. They experience motion sickness.

6. What does the term “colossus” suggest about the Space Station (paragraph 8)?
 - A. its great size
 - B. its odd shape
 - C. its unusual colour
 - D. its intense brightness

7. Which statement about the International Space Station is supported by the article?
- A. It is universally acclaimed.
 - B. Its usefulness is not yet proven.
 - C. It can be viewed on the Internet.
 - D. It can explore the outer reaches of space.