

## PART 1: READING

Read the text below and answer the questions that follow:

A group of scientists warned last week that Western governments are seriously **underestimating** how long their citizens are likely to live. This could cause problems for the health, welfare and pensions systems of the developed world. Until recently only a few specialist demographers knew that governments were underestimating life expectancy. But the latest report on increasing average lifespans will be difficult to **ignore**. For many years scientists have been advising governments that the increases in life expectancy over the past century, which saw typical British male lifespans rise from 48 years in 1901 to 75 years in 2000, and those of females from 49 to 80 years, will not continue. In the journal *Science* last week, however, two scientists from Cambridge and Rostock in Germany state that life expectancy will probably go on increasing.

By comparing differences in life expectancy between the world's **wealthier** countries, they conclude that as early as 2070 female life expectancy in the United States could be as high as 101 years. The official US forecast for 2070 is only 83.9 years. James Vaupel of the Max Planck Institute for Demographic Research in Rostock, believes that a typical female baby born this year in France or Japan – the two countries with the greatest life expectancy – already has a 50/50 chance of living to be 100. The *Science* paper gives no **forecast** for Britain, but using the same methodology, female life expectancy in Japan would reach 100 in 2060, and would reach 100 in Britain in 2085.

If this is true, the study has **implications** not just for pensions but for healthcare and social services, since there is no guarantee that average healthspan – the time people are free of **chronic** illness – will also rise together with average lifespan. Government figures show that for men, life expectancy went up from 70.9 to 74.6 between 1981 and 1997, but healthy life expectancy went up from 64.4 to 66.9.

A British MP has called for increased retirement ages. "If you look at life expectancy in 1948 when the state pension was introduced, and take that as a reasonable length of time to receive a **pension**, you would have a retirement age of 74 today instead of 65," he said.

Life expectancy is an average figure. In the 1880s many people lived to their 60s and 70s, but almost a quarter of those born died before they were five. The maximum lifespan that any human being has lived is currently 122. During the 20th century a number of scientists declared absolute limits to life expectancy. In 1928 the US **demographer**, Louis Dublin, said that it was unlikely to be more than 64.75 years. In 1990 demographers said it would never be more than 85 years. Six years later, however, life expectancy for Japanese women passed this figure.

The official lower forecasts affect people's decisions about how much to save, and when to **retire**. They also enable politicians to **postpone** difficult decisions about social security and medical care systems.

Professor Alan Walker of Sheffield University, said the paper's conclusions were not news to him but governments were not confronting these problems. "Politicians are now just beginning to recognise the **potential** significance of increased life expectancy" he said.

### Question 1 – Main Idea (3 marks)

Which of the following best expresses the main idea of the paragraph indicated?

#### Paragraph 1

1. Western scientists are worried about growing old.
2. Old people are changing the world.
3. Western governments face problems because of an aging population.
4. The dramatic increase in life expectancy in the last century.



## Paragraph 2

1. The international competition to get to the age of 100 first.
2. Increased life expectancy around the world.
3. Evidence that women live longer than men.
4. American don't live as long as the Japanese.

## Paragraph 5

1. Changing attitudes to life expectancy.
2. The absolute limits of life expectancy.
3. The unlikelihood of Louis Dublin living to the age of 65.
4. The oldest person in the world.

## Question 2 – Details (True or False?) (5 marks)

Answer TRUE or FALSE for the following statements:

- |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|
| 1. Western governments have overestimated life expectancy.  | T | F |
| 2. Typical British male lifespans rose by 27 years in the 20th century.                                 | T | F |
| 3. The official US forecast for 2070 is higher than the forecast in the latest report.                  | T | F |
| 4. According to the report, one in two female babies born this year in Japan will reach the age of 100. | T | F |
| 5. Female life expectancy in Britain should reach 100 by 2085.  | T | F |
| 6. Healthy life expectancy is lower than life expectancy.   | T | F |
| 7. The retirement age is not in step with increasing life expectancy.                                   | T | F |
| 8. Almost 25% of the population died before the age of 5 in the 1880s.                                  | T | F |
| 9. No-one lived beyond the age of 48 in 1901.   | T | F |
| 10. Male life expectancy in Japan reached 85 in 1996.   | T | F |

## Question 3 - Vocabulary in Context (10 marks)

Use one of the underlined words from the text to fill the gaps in these sentences - there is one more word than you need:

1. Another word for 'richer' is \_\_\_\_\_.
2. If you \_\_\_\_\_ something, you do not consider it or pay attention to it.
3. \_\_\_\_\_ are possible effects or results.
4. If you put off or delay something, you \_\_\_\_\_ it.
5. To finish one's working life is to \_\_\_\_\_.
6. If a future outcome is not definite, only possible or likely, it is a \_\_\_\_\_ one.
7. A \_\_\_\_\_ is a kind of prediction.
8. If an illness is very serious, it can be described as \_\_\_\_\_.
9. The income you receive from the state after you have retired is called a \_\_\_\_\_.
10. If you think something is smaller or less important than it really is, you are \_\_\_\_\_ it.