



Write your name

## ESB C2 Level 3 Reading (Part One)

Read the following text about **ikigai**. For questions 21 – 27, choose the correct answer A, B, C or D.

### The Japanese Art of Purposeful Living

Many people in today's world struggle to find a purpose in life. Some choose to follow a passion and stay true to the dreams of their youth which, while possibly being satisfying in its own right, does not necessarily provide a sufficient level of income. In contrast, there are those who dedicate their lives to achieving money and status by any means possible, unconcerned about whether what they do is enjoyable or even of any value. Both of these paths may eventually lead to feeling a loss of purpose, something which researchers have found can have negative consequences on the health of individuals. One international study found that those who do have a purpose in life often lead healthier lifestyles and are more motivated and resilient, and these factors protect them from stress and burnout. As a consequence, they are at lower risk of early death and heart disease.

From Japan, the land of the rising sun, and the nation famous for such things as the samurai warriors, sushi and J-pop, comes a concept known as **ikigai**. This has no direct translation into English, but it means something like "the reason to get out of bed in the morning", although there is more to it than that. **Ikigai** is best thought of as the balance of lifestyle that incorporates both the spiritual and the practical, where the things that the world is willing to pay for intersect with your talents and passions. For example, if you can find the common ground between what you love to do, what you are good at doing, what the world needs, and what you can get paid for, you have found your **ikigai**.

There are some differences between **ikigai** and the western notion of following one's dreams. For example, your **ikigai** should be challenging and lead to personal growth and mastery in a certain field. It should be your choice and you should feel a sense of freedom in its pursuit. It should also make you feel better and more energised. It need not be something that will change the world. Everyone will find their **ikigai** in different areas of life and it may take some time and self-exploration and self-reflection to find, but it is almost certainly worth it.

As such, finding one's **ikigai** is a personal journey. You may not know what your skills actually are, and the internet will almost certainly prove a fruitless source. You may have to ask for advice from friends and family as to where your talents lie. It is entirely possible you have not yet discovered the thing you are adept at. It is also important to be honest with yourself. You might have an image in your head that does not conform to reality. There is what is described by the author Neil Parischa

as 'The Saturday Morning Test'. What do you do on Saturday morning when you have nothing to do? This might be where your ikigai is hiding. Once you have found it, see if it feels right to you and test it.

It is important to remember that if your ikigai is your career, then you must make time for family and friends. Not every moment of every day need, nor should, be committed to ikigai. Take some time for other activities too. Also, remember that pursuit of ikigai does not mean that every moment of every day will be rosy. There will be many challenges and obstacles on the road. You will doubtless need to make compromises along the way, but the experts say that as long as you let your ikigai guide you, it will more often than not steer you in the right direction.

21. Paragraph one suggests that people in the modern world often
  - A. have unrealistic aspirations.
  - B. question the reason for their existence.
  - C. have more money than sense.
  - D. prioritise a career at the expense of their youth.
22. The writer implies that finding your ikigai
  - A. can protect against serious illness.
  - B. is a very religious endeavour.
  - C. requires physical coordination.
  - D. necessitates cooperation.
23. What aspect of Japan is NOT mentioned?
  - A. Cuisine.
  - B. Music.
  - C. War.
  - D. Weather.
24. The word 'intersect' in paragraph two can best be replaced with
  - A. blend.
  - B. converge.
  - C. fuse.
  - D. mingle.
25. According to the text, following your ikigai
  - A. will never make you rich.
  - B. might be exhausting.
  - C. can be a lengthy procedure.
  - D. definitely will not change the world.
26. What is recommended in the search for ikigai?
  - A. Seeking help from online sources.
  - B. Staying open-minded about different options.
  - C. Spending Saturday mornings testing yourself.
  - D. Reading the works of Neil Parischa.
27. Which word best describes the author's attitude to ikigai?
  - A. Patronising.
  - B. Puzzled.
  - C. Intrigued.
  - D. Disrespectful.