

BEC Practice Test – Vantage

READING TEST PART FOUR

Questions 19 – 33

- Read the article below about a company boss.
- Choose the best word to fill each gap from **A**, **B**, **C** or **D** below.
- For each question **19 – 33**, mark one letter (**A**, **B**, **C** or **D**).
- There is an example at the beginning, **(0)**.

Breaking Records

Woody Allen once joked ‘if my films don’t show a profit, I know I’m doing something right’. For most other people, in most other **(0)** ... , profit is a mark of success, and in most countries corporate profits are currently **(19)** ... Last year, America’s after-tax profits **(20)** ... to their highest for 75 years; the shares of profit in the euro area and Japan are also close to their highest for at least 25 years. UBS, a Swiss bank, **(21)**... that, in many world economies, the share of profits in national **(22)** ... has never been higher. So, are **(23)** ... profit margins sustainable? Are they fair?

Corporate profits may be inflated in various ways. If firms put money aside for the future **(24)** ... costs for the over 65s or whatever, their earnings would be smaller. Nevertheless, the impressive **(25)** ... of American firms to increase productivity and cut costs are genuine, **(26)** ... some claims to the contrary in the press. Firms elsewhere, notably in Japan and Germany, are also **(27)** ... aggressively. The share of profit in GDP always goes up sharply after a downturn, but in the United States a bigger slice of the increase this time has gone to profits than in any **(28)** ... post-war recovery.

If the share of wages in GDP **(29)** ... to slide, there could be a reaction from workers. Yet the chances of this are lower than before. The old **(30)** ... between ‘them’ and ‘us’ is becoming unclear: many workers also own company **(31)** ..., which sooner or later will give them some of the profits. In any **(32)** ..., there are good reasons to believe that the **(33)** ... in profits will soon slow sharply.

Adapted from The Economist by Louise Pile

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0	A conditions	B circumstances	C surroundings	D states
19	A elevating	B boosting	C booming	D lifting
20	A raised	B raise	C rise	D rose
21	A judges	B evaluates	C estimates	D assesses
22	A money	B income	C pay	D earnings
23	A current	B present	C actual	D up-to-date
24	A grant	B redundancy	C allowance	D pension
25	A demands	B efforts	C trials	D tests
26	A despite	B however	C nevertheless	D although
27	A reconstructing	B redecorating	C regenerating	D restructuring
28	A previous	B early	C beforehand	D sooner
29	A maintains	B carries	C continues	D stays
30	A break	B disconnection	C partition	D divide
31	A dividends	B shares	C premiums	D bonuses
32	A state	B situation	C case	D instance
33	A extension	B development	C expansion	D growth