**《阅读理解——说明文》 拓展提升任务**

**Test 1**

If you want to disturb the car industry, you’d better have a few billion dollars: Mom-and-pop carmakers are unlikely to beat the biggest car companies. But in agriculture, small farmers can get the best of the major players. By connecting directly with customers, and by responding quickly to changes in the markets as well as in the ecosystems (生态系统), small farmers can keep one step ahead of the big guys. As the co-founder of the National Young Farmers Coalition (NYFC, 美国青年农会) and a family farmer myself, I have a front-row seat to the innovations among small farmers that are transforming the industry.

For example, take the Quick Cut Greens Harvester, a tool developed just a couple of years ago by a young farmer, Jonathan Dysinger, in Tennessee, with a small loan from a local Slow Money group. It enables small-scale farmers to harvest 175 pounds of green vegetables per hour—a huge improvement over harvesting just a few dozen pounds by hand—suddenly making it possible for the little guys to compete with large farms of California. Before the tool came out, small farmers couldn’t touch the price per pound offered by California farms. But now, with the combination of a better price point and a generally fresher product, they can stay in business.

The sustainable success of small farmers, though, won’t happen without fundamental changes to the industry. One crucial factor is secure access to land. Competition from investors, developers, and established large farmers makes owning one’s own land unattainable for many new farmers. From 2004 to 2013, agricultural land values doubled, and they continue to rise in many regions.

Another challenge for more than a million of the most qualified farm workers and managers is a non-existent path to citizenship—the greatest barrier to building a farm of their own. With farmers over the age of 65 outnumbering (多于) farmers younger than 35 by six to one, and with two-thirds of the nation’s farmland in need of a new farmer, we must clear the path for talented people willing to grow the nation’s food.

There are solutions that could light a path toward a more sustainable and fair farm economy, but farmers can’t clumsily put them together before us. We at the NYFC need broad support as we urge Congress to increase farmland conservation, as we push for immigration reform, and as we seek policies that will ensure the success of a diverse and ambitious next generation of farmers from all backgrounds. With a new farm bill to be debated in Congress, consumers must take a stand with young farmers.

1. The author mentions car industry at the beginning of the passage to introduce .

A. the progress made in car industry B. a special feature of agriculture

C. a trend of development in agriculture D. the importance of investing in car industry

2. What does the author want to illustrate with the example in paragraph 2?

A. Loans to small local farmers are necessary.

B. Technology is vital for agricultural development.

C. Competition between small and big farms is fierce.

D. Small farmers may gain some advantages over big ones.

3. What is the difficulty for those new farmers?

A. To gain more financial aid. B. To hire good farm managers.

C. To have farms of their own. D. To win old farmers’ support.

4. What should farmers do for a more sustainable and fair farm economy?

A. Seek support beyond NYFC. B. Expand farmland conservation.

C. Become members of NYFC. D. Invest more to improve technology.

**Test 2**

**California Condor’s Shocking Recovery**

California condors are North America’s largest birds, with wing-length of up to 3 meters. In the 1980s, electrical lines and lead poisoning (铅中毒) nearly drove them to dying out. Now, electric shock training and medical treatment are helping to rescue these big birds.

In the late 1980s, the last few condors were taken from the wild to be bred (繁殖). Since 1992, there have been multiple reintroductions to the wild, and there are now more than 150 flying over California and nearby Arizona, Utah and Baja in Mexico.

Electrical lines have been killing them off. “As they go in to rest for the night, they just don’t see the power lines,” says Bruce Rideout of San Diego Zoo. Their wings can bridge the gap between lines, resulting in electrocution (电死) if they touch two lines at once.

So scientists have come up with a shocking idea. Tall poles, placed in large training areas, teach the birds to stay clear of electrical lines by giving them a painful but undeadly electric shock. Before the training was introduced, 66% of set-free birds died of electrocution. This has now dropped to 18%.

Lead poisoning has proved more difficult to deal with. When condors eat dead bodies of other animals containing lead, they absorb large quantities of lead. This affects their nervous systems and ability to produce baby birds, and can lead to kidney (肾) failure and death. So condors with high levels of lead are sent to Los Angeles Zoo, where they are treated with calcium EDTA, a chemical that removes lead from the blood over several days. This work is starting to pay off. The annual death rate for adult condors has dropped from 38% in 2000 to 5.4% in 2011.

Rideout’s team thinks that the California condors’ average survival time in the wild is now just under eight years. “Although these measures are not effective forever, they are vital for now,” he says. “They are truly good birds that are worth every effort we put into recovering them.”

1．California condors attract researchers’ interest because they \_\_\_\_\_.

A．are active at night

B．had to be bred in the wild

C．are found only in California

D．almost died out in the 1980s

2．Researchers have found electrical lines are \_\_\_\_\_.

A．blocking condors’ journey home

B．big killers of California condors

C．rest places for condors at night

D．used to keep condors away

3．According to Paragraph 5, lead poisoning \_\_\_\_\_.

A．makes condors too nervous to fly

B．has little effect on condors’ kidneys

C．can hardly be gotten rid of from condors’ blood

D．makes it difficult for condors to produce baby birds

4．This passage shows that \_\_\_\_\_.

A．the average survival time of condors is satisfactory

B．Rideout’s research interest lies in electric engineering

C．the efforts to protect condors have brought good results

D．researchers have found the final answers to the problem

**Test 3**

Languages have been coming and going for thousands of years, but in recent times there has been less coming and a lot more going. When the world was still populated by hunter-gatherers, small, tightly knit (联系) groups developed their own patterns of speech independent of each other. Some language experts believe that 10,000 years ago, when the world had just five to ten million people, they spoke perhaps 12,000 languages between them.

Soon afterwards, many of those people started settling down to become farmers, and their languages too became more settled and fewer in number. In recent centuries, trade, industrialisation, the development of the nation-state and the spread of universal compulsory education, especially globalisation and better communications in the past few decades, all have caused many languages to disappear, and dominant languages such as English, Spanish and Chinese are increasingly taking over.

At present, the world has about 6,800 languages. The distribution of these languages is hugely uneven. The general rule is that mild zones have relatively few languages, often spoken by many people, while hot, wet zones have lots, often spoken by small numbers. Europe has only around 200 languages; the Americas about 1,000; Africa 2,400; and Asia and the Pacific perhaps 3,200, of which Papua New Guinea alone accounts for well over 800. The median number (中位数) of speakers is a mere 6,000, which means that half the world’s languages are spoken by fewer people than that.

Already well over 400 of the total of 6,800 languages are close to extinction (消亡), with only a few elderly speakers left. Pick, at random, Busuu in Cameroon (eight remaining speakers), Chiapaneco in Mexico (150), Lipan Apache in the United States (two or three) or Wadjigu in Australia (one, with a question-mark): none of these seems to have much chance of survival.

1. What can we infer about languages in hunter-gatherer times?

A. They developed very fast. B. They were large in number.

C. They had similar patterns. D. They were closely connected.

2. Which of the following best explains “dominant” underlined in paragraph 2?

A. Complex. B. Advanced. C. Powerful. D. Modern.

3. How many languages are spoken by less than 6,000 people at present?

A. About 6,800. B. About 3,400. C. About 2,400. D. About 1,200.

4. What is the main idea of the text?

A. New languages will be created.

B. People’s lifestyles are reflected in languages.

C. Human development results in fewer languages.

D. Geography determines language evolution.

**Test 4**

We may think we’re a culture that gets rid of our worn technology at the first sight of something shiny and new, but a new study shows that we keep using our old devices (装置) well after they go out of style. That’s bad news for the environment—and our wallets—as these outdated devices consume much more energy than the newer ones that do the same things.

To figure out how much power these devices are using, Callie Babbitt and her colleagues at the Rochester Institute of Technology in New York tracked the environmental costs for each product throughout its life—from when its minerals are mined to when we stop using the device. This method provided a readout for how home energy use has evolved since the early 1990s. Devices were grouped by generation. Desktop computers, basic mobile phones, and box-set TVs defined 1992. Digital cameras arrived on the scene in 1997. And MP3 players, smart phones, and LCD TVs entered homes in 2002, before tablets and e-readers showed up in 2007.

As we accumulated more devices, however, we didn’t throw out our old ones. “The living-room television is replaced and gets planted in the kids’ room, and suddenly one day, you have a TV in every room of the house,” said one researcher. The average number of electronic devices rose from four per household in 1992 to 13 in 2007. We’re not just keeping these old devices—we continue to use them. According to the analysis of Babbitt’s team, old desktop monitors and box TVs with cathode ray tubes are the worst devices with their energy consumption and contribution to greenhouse gas emissions (排放) more than doubling during the 1992 to 2007 window.

So what’s the solution (解决方案)? The team’s data only went up to 2007, but the researchers also explored what would happen if consumers replaced old products with new electronics that serve more than one function, such as a tablet for word processing and TV viewing. They found that more on-demand entertainment viewing on tablets instead of TVs and desktop computers could cut energy consumption by 44%.

1. What does the author think of new devices?

A. They are environment-friendly. B. They are no better than the old.

C. They cost more to use at home. D. They go out of style quickly.

2. Why did Babbitt’s team conduct the research?

A. To reduce the cost of minerals.

B. To test the life cycle of a product.

C. To update consumers on new technology.

D. To find out electricity consumption of the devices.

3. Which of the following uses the least energy?

A. The box-set TV. B. The tablet. C. The LCD TV. D. The desktop computer.

4. What does the text suggest people do about old electronic devices?

A. Stop using them. B. Take them apart. C. Upgrade them. D. Recycle them.