

Read the text below and answer Questions 1–3 on the question paper.

### TEXT 1

Extract from '127 Hours: Between a Rock and a Hard Place' by Aron Ralston (2004), an American climber.

Ralston goes hiking and climbing in a canyon. While climbing down a narrow canyon, a boulder crushed his right hand against the canyon wall. He had not informed anyone of his hiking plans.

Just below the ledge where I'm standing is a stone the size of a large bus tyre, stuck fast in the channel between the walls, a few feet out from the lip. If I can step onto it, then I'll have a nine-foot height to descend, less than that of the first overhang. I'll dangle off the stone, then take a short fall onto the rounded rocks piled on the canyon floor. Stemming across the canyon at the lip of the dropoff, with one foot and one hand on each of the walls, I traverse<sup>1</sup> out to the stone. I press my back against the south wall and lock my left knee, which pushes my foot tight against the north wall. With my right foot, I kick at the boulder to test how stuck it is. It's jammed tightly enough to hold my weight. I lower myself from the chimneying<sup>2</sup> position and step onto the stone. It supports me but teeters slightly. After confirming that I don't want to chimney down from the stone's height, I squat and grip the rear of the lodged boulder, turning to face back up canyon. Sliding my belly over the front edge, I can lower myself and hang from my fully extended arms, akin to climbing down from the roof of a house. 5 10

As I dangle, I feel the stone respond to my adjusting grip with a scraping quake as my body's weight applies enough torque<sup>3</sup> to disturb it from its position. Instantly, I know this is trouble, and instinctively, I let go of the rotating boulder to land on the round rocks below. When I look up, the backlit stone falling toward my head consumes the sky. Fear shoots my hands over my head. I can't move backward or I'll fall over a small ledge. My only hope is to push off the falling rock and get my head out of its way. 15

The next three seconds play out at a tenth of their normal speed. Time dilates, as if I'm dreaming, and my reactions decelerate. In slow motion: The rock smashes my left hand against the south wall; my eyes register the collision, and I yank my left arm back as the rock ricochets<sup>4</sup>; the boulder then crushes my right hand and ensnares my right arm at the wrist, palm in, thumb up, fingers extended; the rock slides another foot down the wall with my arm in tow, tearing the skin off the lateral side of my forearm. Then silence. 20 25

My disbelief paralyses me temporarily as I stare at the sight of my arm vanishing into an implausibly small gap between the fallen boulder and the canyon wall. Within moments, my nervous system's pain response overcomes the initial shock. Good Christ, my hand. The flaring agony throws me into a panic.

<sup>1</sup> cross

<sup>2</sup> shuffling with your back against one wall and your feet against the other

<sup>3</sup> rotating force

<sup>4</sup> bounces off

Read the text below and answer Questions 4–7 on the question paper.

## TEXT 2

Extract from 'Return of Shackleton from Weddell Sea' by the American Geographical Society (1916).

This is an extract from a journal, the *Geographical Review*, about Sir Ernest Shackleton's return from his attempt to cross the Antarctic. The journal gives details of his return after his ship, *Endurance*, sank.

The daily press of June 1 reported the arrival, on May 31, at Port Stanley in the Falkland Islands, of Shackleton and five men of his expedition. The practical absence of summer weather had prevented him from carrying out his plan of crossing the Antarctic Continent. When near the land, his vessel, the *Endurance*, was caught in the ice. It was impossible to release her; nor was it possible to land. From that time on, for eight months, the vessel drifted until she was crushed by the ice and finally sank. That the expedition was ultimately saved from disaster is due to the leader's determination and skill. The following account is based on his cablegram<sup>5</sup> to the *New York World*, published in its issue of June 2.

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On December 6, 1914, the expedition left South Georgia. On the 8th, heavy pack ice was encountered off the Sandwich Islands...and Coats Land was sighted on January 10, 1915. Subsequently a new land was discovered, with two hundred miles of coast line and large glaciers discharging into the sea. This was named Caird Coast in honor of James Caird, one of the supporters of the expedition...

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...Abnormal weather conditions prevailed. Contrary to all expectations the temperature was below zero (Fahrenheit) in early February. By the end of the month it fell to minus 49 degrees, and the old and the young pack were cemented together. Even the animal life was affected by the severe weather, the seals migrating northward in great numbers.

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The *Endurance* drifted in a southwesterly direction along the coast as far as what is probably the head of Weddell Sea, as indicated by Filchner's discovery in 1912 of the junction here of the main land-mass and the ice barrier...From here the drift took on a northwesterly course.

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In June began the menace of ice pressure. During the following months the vessel experienced a foretaste of her final fate. On several occasions she was lifted bodily out of the ice; at first she stood the strain, but finally the screwing motion of the floes<sup>6</sup> caused the ship's sides to open. The end came on October 27. The terrific pressure culminated in tearing out the stern and rudder posts, the main deck breaking upward and icebergs piercing the ship. She finally sank on November 20.

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After a futile attempt to proceed, the party camped on the floe after saving all the provisions, equipment, and scientific data. From the place where the *Endurance* was crushed...the drift continued slowly northward. At the end of the year another attempt was made to go forward. In five days the party advanced only nine miles; the boat, which had to be hauled over the ice, would sink in because of the rotten surface. So the attempt was given up.

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<sup>5</sup> a message sent by cable

<sup>6</sup> sheets of floating ice