You are going to read an article about the loss of darkness from our everyday lives. For questions **31–36,** choose the answer **(A, B, C** or **D)** which you think fits best according to the text.

Mark your answers **on the separate answer sheet.**

Bright nights, big problems

Author Paul Bogard discusses why we should turn off the lights and appreciate the dark.

Astronomers rate the darkness of our skies on a scale of 9 (brightest) to 1 (darkest). Most of us spend our lives in the radiance of levels 5 to 8, only rarely venturing into areas ranked 3 or darker. Because of the rapid growth of light pollution over recent decades, most Americans under 40 have never known real darkness. All over the globe our nights are growing brighter, and almost nowhere are they growing darker. We are just beginning to learn the true cost of all this light. Studies increasingly link our overuse of light at night with health concerns such as sleep disorders and disease. Other studies report the damaging ecological consequences, the tremendous waste of energy, and even the decrease in safety and security. But the steady loss of darkness from our lives is not easily measured, for like the similarly endangered qualities of solitude and quiet, the true value of darkness is something we are barely aware of.

Take a brilliantly starry sky. Since the beginning of time, a sky plush with stars was part of the common human experience. Everywhere on Earth, on most nights, our predecessors came face to face with the universe. This experience influenced their beliefs, mythologies, art – their very understanding of their place in the world. Today, because of light pollution, many of us live under skies which are polluted by light. For the tens of millions who live under a night sky showing 25 stars or fewer, it is nearly impossible to imagine a natural sky of some 2,500 individual stars backed by great swathes of uncountable billions. Our night sky continues to shape us, but now it is the absence of the universe around us that influences our beliefs, our myths, our impulse to create. We are being shaped by a diminished experience of darkness, and most of us don't even know what we are missing.

Our Milky Way galaxy is home to several hundred billion stars, and the universe home to several hundred billion other galaxies. A sky wiped clear of stars encourages us to exaggerate our importance, to imagine humanity as the centre of all things. Face to face with the endless immensity of the universe, we have the chance to know how insignificant we really are. But we might also realise the true largeness of our living on this planet, and realise that we have an enormous responsibility to care, that there is no other place to go, that home is here.

line 26

And what of beauty? 'Everyone needs beauty as well as bread,' wrote John Muir, American naturalist and author, and varied degrees of darkness are rich with this. Lighting designers in Paris understand that without darkness, there is no 'city of light', and work constantly to create their city's atmospheric beauty by subtly mixing artificial light with darkness. And with night's moonlit geographies, its scents of desert rain and autumn fires, its pulsing insect symphonies punctuated by a bird's solo call on a northern lake, natural darkness has many offerings of its own.

Yet we live immersed in artificial light. Much of this lighting is wholly unnecessary, born of habit and lack of awareness. So let us become aware: simply by shielding our existing lights we could significantly reduce their negative effects on our body, our mind, our soul. Artificial light at night is a miracle, a wonder, a quality that enriches our lives. But the same has always been true of darkness, and can be again.

31 What does the writer say about lack of darkness in the first paragraph?

A It is impossible to reverse its effects.
B It is something that many people are unhappy about.
C Its effects are something that need to be studied further.
D It can be compared with other things that people often fail to appreciate.

32 In the second paragraph, the writer says that because of light pollution we

A are considerably less creative than our ancient ancestors were.
B experience the world in a different way to previous generations.
C are aware that we are missing out on a great natural phenomenon.
D need a great deal of imagination in order to understand the universe.

33 What does the writer think about us/humans in the third paragraph?

A We ignore the need to look after our planet.
B We have an over-confident belief in our own value.
C We behave as though nothing exists apart from ourselves.
D We prefer to avoid thinking too deeply about our role on Earth.

34 What does 'this' refer to in line 26?

A beauty
B darkness
C variety
D lighting

35 Why does the writer include references to rain, fires and wildlife in the fourth paragraph?

A to describe what he enjoys least about night-time
B to explain why he some people think that lighting is necessary at night
C to provide an example of the attractive qualities of night-time
D to highlight the differences between urban and natural environments

36 In the final paragraph, we understand that the writer is

A irritated by people's lack of interest in darkness.
B understanding of the reasons why artificial light is essential.
C keen to draw comparisons between artificial light and darkness.
D hopeful that people are becoming aware of the negative impact of light.