

Directions: In this section, you are going to read a passage with ten statements attached to it. Each statement contains information given in one of the paragraphs. Identify the paragraph from which the information is derived. You may choose a paragraph more than once. Each paragraph is marked with a letter. Answer the questions by marking the corresponding letter on **Answer Sheet 2**.

Are We in an Innovation Lull?

- A) Scan the highlights of this year's Consumer Electronics Show (CES), and you may get a slight feeling of having seen them before. Many of the coolest gadgets this year are the same as the coolest gadgets last year—or the year before, even. The booths are still exciting, and the demos are still just as crazy. It is still easy to be dazzled by the display of drones(无人机), 3D printers, virtual reality goggles(眼镜) and more "smart" devices than you could ever hope to catalog. Upon reflection, however, it is equally easy to feel like you have seen it all before. And it is hard not to think: Are we in an innovation lull(间歇期)?
- B) In some ways, the answer is yes. For years, smartphones, televisions, tablets, laptops and desktops have made up a huge part of the market and driven innovation. But now these segments are looking at slower growth curves—or shrinking markets in some cases—as consumers are not as eager to spend money on new gadgets. Meanwhile, emerging technologies—the drones, 3D printers and smart-home devices of the world—now seem a bit too old to be called "the next big thing."
- C) Basically the tech industry seems to be in an awkward period now. "There is not any one-hit wonder, and there will not be one for years to come," said Gary Shapiro, president and chief executive of the Consumer Technology Association (CTA). In his eyes, however, that doesn't necessarily mean that innovation has stopped. It has just grown up a little. "Many industries are going out of infancy and becoming adolescents," Shapiro said.
- D) For instance, new technologies that are building upon existing technology have not found their footing well enough to appeal to a mass audience, because, in many cases, they need to work effectively with other devices to realize their full appeal. Take the evolution of the smart home, for example. Companies are pushing it hard but make it almost overwhelming even to dip a toe in the water for the average consumer, because there are so many compatibility issues to think about. No average person wants to figure out whether their favorite calendar software works with their fridge or whether their washing machine and tablet get along. Having to install a different app for each smart appliance in your home is annoying; it would be nicer if you could manage everything together. And while you may forgive your smartphone an occasional fault, you probably have less patience for error messages from your door lock.
- E) Companies are promoting their own standards, and the market has not had time to choose a winner yet as this is still very new. Companies that have long focused on hardware now have to think of ecosystems instead to give consumers practical solutions to their everyday problems. "The dialogue is changing from what is technologically possible to what is technologically meaningful," said economist Shawn DuBravac. DuBravac works for CTA—which puts on the show each year—and said that this shift to a search for solutions has been noticeable as he researched his predictions for 2016.
- F) "So much of what CES has been about is the cool. It is about the flashiness and the gadgets," said John Curran, managing director of research at Accenture. "But over the last couple of years, and in this one in particular, we are starting to see companies shift from what is the largest screen size, the smallest form factor

or the shiniest object and more into what all of these devices do that is practical in a consumer's life." Even the technology press conferences, which have been high-profile in the past and reached a level of drama and theatrics fitting for a Las Vegas stage, have a different bent to them. Rather than just dazzling with a high cool factor, there is a focus on the practical. Fitbit, for example, released its first smartwatch Monday, selling with a clear purpose—to improve your fitness—and promoting it as a "tool, not a toy." Not only that, it supports a number of platforms: Apple's IOS, Google's Android and Microsoft's Windows phone.

- G) That seems to be what consumers are demanding, after all. Consumers are becoming increasingly bored with what companies have to offer: A survey of 28,000 consumers in 28 countries released by Accenture found consumers are not as excited about technology as they once were. For example, when asked whether they would buy a new smartphone this year, only 48 percent said yes—a six-point drop from 2015.
- H) And when it comes to the hyper-connected super-smart world that technology firms are painting for us, it seems that consumers are growing more uneasy about handing over the massive amounts of consumer data needed to provide the personalized, customized solutions that companies need to improve their services. That could be another explanation for why companies seem to be strengthening their talk of the practicality of their devices.
- I) Companies have already won part of the battle, having driven tech into every part of our lives, tracking our steps and our very heartbeats. Yet the persistent question of "Why do I need that?"—or, perhaps more tellingly, "Why do you need to know that?"—dogs the steps of many new ventures. Only 13 percent of respondents said that they were interested in buying a smartwatch in 2016, for example—an increase of just one percent from the previous year despite a year of high-profile launches. That is bad news for any firm that may hope that smartwatches can make up ground for maturing smartphone and tablet markets. And the survey found flat demand for fitness monitors, smart thermostats(恒温器) and connected home cameras, as well.
- J) According to the survey, that lack of enthusiasm could stem from concerns about privacy and security. Even among people who have bought connected devices of some kind, 37 percent said that they are going to be more cautious about using these devices and services in the future. A full 18 percent have even returned devices until they feel they can get safer guarantees against having their sensitive information hacked.
- K) That, too, explains the heavy Washington presence at this year's show, as these new technologies intrude upon heavily regulated areas. In addition to many senior officials from the Federal Trade and Federal Communications commissions, this year's list of policy makers also includes appearances from Transportation Secretary Anthony Foxx, to talk about smart cities, and Federal Aviation Administration Administrator Michael Huerta, to talk about drones.
- L) Curran, the Accenture analyst, said that increased government interest in the show makes sense as technology becomes a larger part of our lives. "There is an incompatibility in the rate at which these are advancing relative to the way we're digesting it," he said. "Technology is becoming bigger and more aspirational, and penetrating almost every aspect of our lives. We have to understand and think about the implications, and balance these great innovations with the potential downsides they naturally carry with them."
36. Consumers are often hesitant to try smart-home devices because they are worried about compatibility problems.
37. This year's electronics show featured the presence of many officials from the federal government.
38. The market demand for electronic devices is now either declining or not growing as fast as before.

39. One analyst suggests it is necessary to accept both the positive and negative aspects of innovative products.
40. The Consumer Electronics Show in recent years has begun to focus more on the practical value than the showiness of electronic devices.
41. Fewer innovative products were found at this year's electronic products show.
42. Consumers are becoming more worried about giving personal information to tech companies to get customized products and services.
43. The Consumer Technology Association is the sponsor of the annual Consumer Electronics Show.
44. Many consumers wonder about the necessity of having their fitness monitored.
45. The electronic industry is maturing even though no wonder products hit the market.