

Directions: *There are 2 passages in this section. Each passage is followed by some questions or unfinished statements. For each of them there are four choices marked A), B), C) and D). You should decide on the best choice and mark the corresponding letter on Answer Sheet 2 with a single line through the centre.*

Passage One

Questions 46 to 50 are based on the following passage.

The U.S. and China don't agree on much these days. Germany and France share a border and a currency but are frequently at odds. The U.K. and India like to march to their own drum. But there's one issue on which all these countries see eye to eye: Technology companies are too big, too powerful, and too profitable. And that power is only likely to intensify, leaving governments with no choice but to confront it head-on by taking the companies to court, passing new competition laws, and perhaps even breaking up the tech giants.

China is the latest to implement an anti-trust crackdown, unveiling anti-monopoly rules last month. The draft rules followed the surprise suspension of a \$37 billion stock offering by billionaire Jack Ma's Ant Group Co., making clear that no company can evade the government's regulation. The moves in China coincide with accelerating efforts in the U.S. and Europe to rein in Amazon.com, Apple, Facebook, and Google.

"The big get bigger and bigger but without being better," says Andreas Schwab, a German member of the European Parliament who championed a 2014 resolution to break up Google. "Growing economic power, growing influence on local markets all over the world, and a growing concern of competitors and consumers altogether have made it happen now."

In this new anti-trust era, the old focus on pricing power no longer applies, because several of the biggest tech companies have established trillion-dollar monopolies by charging consumers next to nothing. Tech giants are increasingly assuming powerful positions in banking, finance, advertising, retail, and other markets that force smaller businesses to rely on their platforms to reach customers.

For years, Europe alone confronted the power of digital giants. Governments were alarmed that European companies were failing to match Silicon Valley's innovations or to stop Google and Facebook from vacuuming up personal data and, with that, advertising revenue. Led by Margrethe Vestager, the European Union's competition chief, countries have sought to police the market and encourage fair play.

In China the crackdown has been driven at least partly by fear that the homegrown tech industry is becoming too powerful. The country has long championed Alibaba and Tencent, but their massive accumulation of data on the Chinese citizenry is a growing concern for Beijing.

In the U.S., a new breed of anti-trust experts argues that consideration should be given to privacy, control over data, workers' rights, and the overall impact on smaller companies. And the public in general has grown increasingly skeptical of social media companies. More than 60% say the sector has a negative effect on the country, and almost half want more regulation for social media, according to a 2020 Pew Research Center study.

46. What does the author say is the issue all major economic powers have to address?
- A) How to ensure the sustainable growth of their tech giants.
 - B) How to keep the competitiveness of their tech companies.
 - C) How to break up the powerful giant tech companies.
 - D) How to stop tech companies from gaining monopoly.
47. What does the suspension of Ant Group Co.'s stock offering suggest?
- A) All attempts to evade regulation are doomed to failure.
 - B) All attempts to monopolize sales must be cracked down.
 - C) All companies must be regulated by the government.
 - D) All companies, domestic or foreign, are created equal.
48. How are smaller companies impacted by tech giants' business expansion?
- A) They can no longer do business independent of tech giants.
 - B) They are frequently denied access to tech giants' platforms.
 - C) They have to change marketing strategies to keep customers.
 - D) They no longer have the power to price their own products.
49. What have EU countries done to confront the power of digital giants?
- A) They have imposed strict regulation over digital giants' advertising.
 - B) They have considered regulatory action to promote fair competition.
 - C) They have limited sales of digital giants' products.
 - D) They have sought to protect consumers' privacy.
50. What do Americans generally think of social media companies according to the author?
- A) They are invading people's privacy.
 - B) They are increasingly influential.
 - C) They are becoming untrustworthy.
 - D) They are growing out of control.