FCE READING: EXTRAORDINARY PEOPLE

A Derek Paravicini

Derek Paravicini was born blind, with severe learning difficulties and autism. He has limited verbal skills, poor short-term memory and cannot read even Braille, but he has an amazing talent: he can play any piece of music after only one hearing. He could play a toy organ when he was two, and when he was five his musical genius was recognized by music teacher Adam Ockelford quite by chance when his parents went round the school for the blind, where Adam gave lessons. In the following years, Adam painstakingly taught Derek how to play properly and, at nine, Derek gave his first of many major public performances.

Derek- whose nickname is 'The Human iPod' is able to play any song in any key and in any genre. He does occasionally play the wrong note, but because he is able to improvise, he can cover it up without anyone even noticing.

B Dr Norman Gary

Norman Gary's interest in bees started when he was fifteen. His ambition was to become a professional bee-keeper but instead he ended up becoming an academic, doing research in the field of apiculture (bee keeping). Norman's unique ability is that he is able to cover his body with thousands of bees; he can also control the bees to make them do what he wants using food (a sugar solution) and scent. He acquired these skills after years of practice and is considered to be the leading expert on bees in the United States. As such, his skills were sought by the likes of Hollywood film producer Chris Carter for a scene in the movie The X-Files. Despite having been stung around 75,000 times, Norman does not consider what he does as especially dangerous, explaining that bees only become aggressive when they feel threatened.

C Ron White

Ron White calls himself a 'brain athlete,' but he's not your average memory master, despite earning the title of USA Memory Champion. A high school dropout, Ron discovered his amazing talent when he enrolled in a memory class and noticed than not only did he have a passion for this skill, but that he could also beat everyone in the class. Since then he has trained up to six hours a day to turn his brain into a supercomputer, enabling him to memorize and recall data at record speeds. Ron says the key to his training is to be distracted while memorizing things; this gives his brain incredible focus. For example, to become the USA Memory Champion he memorized cards while snorkelling. Ron currently teaches memory techniques to people all over the United States. During conferences, he manages to learn the names of everyone in the audience that he has shaken hands with up to 200 people.

D Eskil Ronningsbakken

Norwegian Eskil Ronningsbakken is an extreme artist known for the super-human balancing acts he performs in locations around the world. Eskil, whose love for heights stems from a childhood passion for climbing trees in the Norwegian countryside, was fascinated at an early age by a TV programme which featured so an Indian yogi doing balancing acts.

He decided that this was what he wanted to do and joined the circus at the age of eighteen, where he perfected his skills. Yoga and meditation naturally play an important role in what he does, too.

He practises them regularly in order to better his focus and concentration. Eskil's jawdropping acts include doing a handstand on a pile of chairs precariously balanced, above a 300-metre drop. He performs all l his feats without a safety net or harness. One slip and he would fall to his death.

Eskil is well aware of the risks involved in what he does. 'I feel fear, of course I do. We are humans and we have a natural sense of self-preservation,' he admits.

Which person

1. did not complete his education?
2. gets away with the odd mistake?
3. accepts the fact that his career is dangerous?
4. took a long time to develop his abilities?
5. has found success despite having a disability?
6. improves his skill by doing something else at the same time?
7. received tuition to help him improve his talent?
8. doesn't do anything to protect himself?
9. changed his goal in life?
10. passes his skills on to other people?

LIVEWORKSHEETS

READING: WHY DO WE COLLECT?

People have been collecting things for centuries. Their collections range from rare baseball cards worth thousands of dollars to beautiful, brightly-coloured oriental jewels that glisten in display cases, showing their owner's wealth. _____ Even with a valuable collection, it isn't often that a collector sells up and claims the money. Why, then, would someone put so much time and effort into amassing a valuable collection?

Terry Shoptaugh, from Minnesota State University Moorhead, can shine some light on why people collect. In an article, he offers the idea that collecting is based on a need to inspire recollection. _____ 'We use keepsakes to stimulate memory, especially to trigger happy memories' Shoptaugh writes. 'But even if memory cannot be relied upon to faithfully reproduce the past, it remains vital to our understanding of the past. 'This may explain why people collect unattractive, old war memorabilia in an effort to remember the romantic aspects of war while not forgetting the true horror of such times.

Anthropologist Marjorie Akin is also an expert on collecting. She shares Shoptaugh's idea that people collect for a connection to the past and memories. She writes: 'Objects can connect the collector to the historic, valued past.' Akin also gives four other reasons why people collect. The first is to satisfy a sense of personal order and beauty. Some collect to please personal tastes. _____ Another reason is the collector's need for completeness. Akin says she has seen people cry out with relief once their collection is complete.

Kim Herzinger, an English professor and an avid collector, provides yet another explanation for our obsession with collecting. Herzinger says: 'Collecting is a way of dealing with a feeling of incompleteness that many people feel in childhood.' He adds, however, that collecting is also a passion. _____ Herzinger also believes that it's important for collectors to maintain a sense of control over their collection. _____ To avoid this, the collector narrows the field from baseball cards to, for example, the New York Yankees cards.

Herzinger admits that while the collection brings much joy to the collector, there will always be disappointment. 'I once had a very good friend, a record collector, who was showing me around his collection of valuable American jazz records. _____ Many people feel they have a special bond with their collection and can't help feeling frustrated if no one else seems to appreciate it as much as they *do.'*

A simpler explanation for the popularity of collecting as a hobby is suggested by Kurt Kuersteiner, who says, 'I believe the main reason people collect things is a basic interest in the topic.' Can it really be that simple?

Six sentences have been removed from the article. Choose from the sentences A-G the one which fits each gap (1-6). There is one extra sentence which you do not need to use.

A After showing me his favourite items, he became silent, apparently disappointed with my lack of response.

B And, like most similar obsessions, it lets you live in another world for a while.

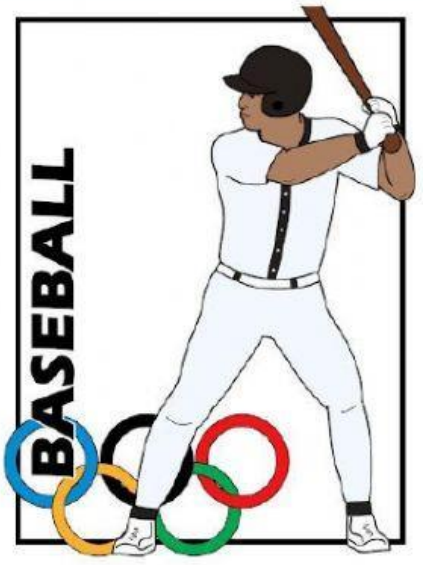
C Despite this, she believes that some people collect for money and profit.

D However, more collections consist of oddities that have nothing more than sentimental value for the col lector.

E In other words, people collect in an effort to remember and relive the past.

F Others collect items that are weird or unusual to show their individualism.

G To collect every baseball card would be impossible, leaving the collector with a feeling of always being overwhelmed.



Reading for the FCE
LIVEWORKSHEETS

USE OF ENGLISH

BLOGAHOLICS

Read the text below and think of the word which best fits each gap. Use only one word in each gap.

The word 'blog' is short for 'weblog' and is a frequently updated internet Journal that is intended for general public to read. Blogs are popular because they give their authors, bloggers, own voice on the internet. It's a place ordinary people can share interests - whether through a political commentary, a personal diary, a list of links to favourite websites.

Professional as as amateur journalists often use blogs to publish breaking news, while personal bloggers may prefer to share their inner thoughts the rest of the world.

For many people, blogging is just a hobby, but for others it can become an obsession. Bloggers fall into this group can feel compelled to write several times a day and become anxious if something prevents them blogging. As with other addicts, these people spend more and more of their time on their obsession and may end neglecting their families, their friends and their jobs.

For questions 1-6, complete the second sentence so that it has a similar meanings to the first sentence, using the word given. Do not change the word given. You must use between two and five words, including§ the word given.

1. Jason adds up figures well for someone his age. **GOOD**

Jason figures for someone his age.

2. We were in too much of a hurry to eat before we left. **TIME**

We to eat before we left.

3. It is certain that she will pass her music exam. **BOUND**

She her music exam.



4. I am meeting my tutor at 2 o'clock this afternoon. **ARRANGED**

I with my tutor at 2 o'clock this afternoon.

5. Many countries have introduced a new law to ban smoking in public places. **BROUGHT**

In many countries, a new law to ban smoking in public places.

6. It's improbable that we'll ever go there again. **UNLIKELY**

We there again.

7. Dan learned Russian when he lived with a family in Moscow. He didn't study it formally. **PICK**

Dan didn't study Russian formally. He living with a family in Moscow.

8. He said he was sorry that he had told so many lies. **APOLOGISED**

He so many lies.

9. We try to phone our cousins regularly. **TOUCH**

We try to our cousins by phone.

10. You will have to help us tidy up. **GET**

You can't helping us tidy up.

LIVEWORKSHEETS

FCE: LISTENING

You will hear people talking in six different situations. For questions 1-6, choose the best answer A, B or C.

1 You hear an athlete being interviewed on the radio. What kind of athlete is he?

A a sprinter

B a long jumper

C a pole-vaulter

2 You hear a footballer being interviewed. How does he feel?

A anxious

B angry

C disappointed

3 You hear someone giving instructions to some children. What are the children about to do?

A run a race

B perform a play

C take part in a competition

4 You hear a woman on the radio talking about a comedian. Why does she think he has been so successful?

A because he is multi-talented

B because he has an unusual sense of humour

C because both men and women like him

5 You overhear a conversation between a husband and wife. What does the woman want her husband to do?

A help more around the house

B support what she says

C take more responsibility

6 You hear someone explaining how to do something. What are they explaining?

A how to toss a pan cake

B how to walk on your hands

C how to do a party trick

You will hear five short extracts in which women are talking about their relationships with their brothers. For questions 1-5, choose from the list (A-H) what speaker says. Use the letters only once. There are three extra letters which you do not need to use.

A. Her brother had more freedom than she did.

B. She never sees him because he's studying away from home.

C. Her parents preferred her to her brother.

D. She became good friends with her brother in her teens.

E. She doesn't keep in touch with her brother because he lives abroad.

F. She doesn't make the effort to see her brother nowadays.

G. She used to like her brother but doesn't now.

H. When she was younger, she was proud of having an older brother

Speaker 1

Speaker 2

Speaker 3

Speaker 4

Speaker 5



LIVEWORKSHEETS