

Reading

Questions 1–13

1 Work in groups. Discuss the statement below.

'Installation art is a legitimate and exciting art form.'

2 Work in groups. The following words and phrases 1–10 all appear in the Reading Passage below. Match the words to meanings a–j.

1 commission	a speed up
2 parameters	b beaten by hammering
3 wing	c slight
4 endorsed	d job
5 expedite	e limits
6 congruent	f evocative
7 tenuous	g corresponding
8 wrought	h agreed
9 reminiscent	i annex
10 palette	j colour scheme

3 Scan the Reading Passage for the words from exercise 2.

READING PASSAGE

You should spend about 20 minutes on **Questions 1–13**, which are based on the Reading Passage below.

Fern Garden — an art installation

At the beginning of 1996 Mary Eagle, then the National Gallery's Senior Curator of Australian Art, approached Fiona Hall to consider a commission for a work to be placed in the Sculpture Garden. The artist proposed instead that she would create a discrete garden on a site at the eastern side of the building, outside the parameters of the Sculpture Garden. This formerly out-of-sight and unused 'courtyard' space, approximately 20 metres square, bounded by the Gallery's 23-metre high bush-hammered concrete walls on three sides, and its planned temporary exhibitions wing on the fourth, was to become exposed to the public gaze and re-defined through the window wall of the foyer of the new galleries looking onto the space.

The commission was endorsed at the December 1996 meeting of the National Gallery Council and made possible by funding from the Painting and Sculpture budget of the Department of Australian Art along with a generous donation from the Friends of Tamsin and Deuchar Davy. Council members were able to actually observe the design intent through a detailed model that the artist produced to expedite planning for the commission.

During 1997 Hall refined the design and made drawings describing specific features within the garden. The logistical challenges were many. The design involved a planting of 58 mature *Dicksonia Antarctica* tree ferns 2.6 metres tall, with a system of paths, water channels, grates, fountains, seating and a fence and gate. Expert horticultural, engineering, hydraulic and lighting advice was sought to confirm the mechanical requirements and ensure the congruent relationship between the elements comprising the design.

Construction began in January 1998. After initial preparatory excavation and concreting, Fiona Hall and two assistants decorated the main 1.5-metre wide, 55-metre long pathway and fountains with white silica and quartz pebbles quarried from a streambed at nearby Collector in New South Wales. Pebbles of the required size were sorted from a stockpile



and laid into a base of dry mortar which was watered to make the cement set. The ferns were planted to a strict grid, and work continued at a pace to be completed by the beginning of March to coincide with the opening of the new Exhibitions Wing. Botanical references and particularly humankind's tenuous relationship with nature have been central to Fiona Hall's expression and illustrated through works such as her *Genesis* series of 1984, *Paradisus Terrestris* 1989–90, *Historia Non-natural/s* 1991 and *Paradisus Terrestris* entitled 1997.

The garden, based on the spiral form of the fern frond, a symbol of healing and rejuvenation, is the artist's first opportunity to realise a major permanent installation.

The *Dicksonia Antarctica* tree fern is found in Tasmania and along the east coast of Australia. Those planted in the garden, estimated to be at least two hundred years old, have stood witness to the arrival of the settlers in Australia and the gradual disappearance of the Aboriginal peoples and their culture. The scant number of extant Aboriginal languages recognising the word for the *Dicksonia Antarctica* are represented on tombstone-like plaques embedded in the main path. The artist approached the local Ngunnawal people for approval to construct the garden.

There is a wrought steel gate at the entry to the Fern Garden. The main path is decorated in vortex patterns much like the movement of the eddying stream from which the pebbles originated. The path unfolds in the shape of a frond, and curves down a gentle ramp to the central fountain. There is space to walk around the fountain, which is set below the surrounding ground level, or to sit on the ledge while a circle of 101 thin jets of water is projected upward and falls in a parabolic pattern similar to the fronds of the *Dicksonia Antarctica*. Surrounding the edge of the fountain, there is a copper membrane. Auxiliary pathways formed in plain white concrete provide options for navigating the garden and lead to seats of austral verde granite with wrought steel spiral bases, or to the central recessed area. The water from three smaller fountains is channelled inwards towards the main fountain in a manner reminiscent of Islamic garden design.

The palette for the garden is refined and austere. The hard surfaces are rendered homogeneous with the surrounding architecture – white concrete and pebbles/white bush-hammered concrete walls. The fibrous dark brown trunks of the ferns and the tanbark mulch are almost indistinguishable, while the frond canopy imbues the garden with a verdant green cast. Viewed from above, from the galleries of Australian art or the foyer of the Exhibitions Wing, the Fern Garden is all curves and a resolute foil to the straight linear geometry of the surrounding architecture

Questions 1–9

Complete the summary using the list of words, A–Q, below.

The Fern Garden was created in an open space 20 metres square, which would be 1 to visitors to the proposed galleries for 2 The Commission for the garden was 3 by the National Gallery Council and was funded by money from 4 The 5 for the garden, which was refined in 1997, 6 planting 58 mature fern trees that were several metres tall and it contained 7 including paths and water features. 8 were consulted to ensure the whole design would 9 together.

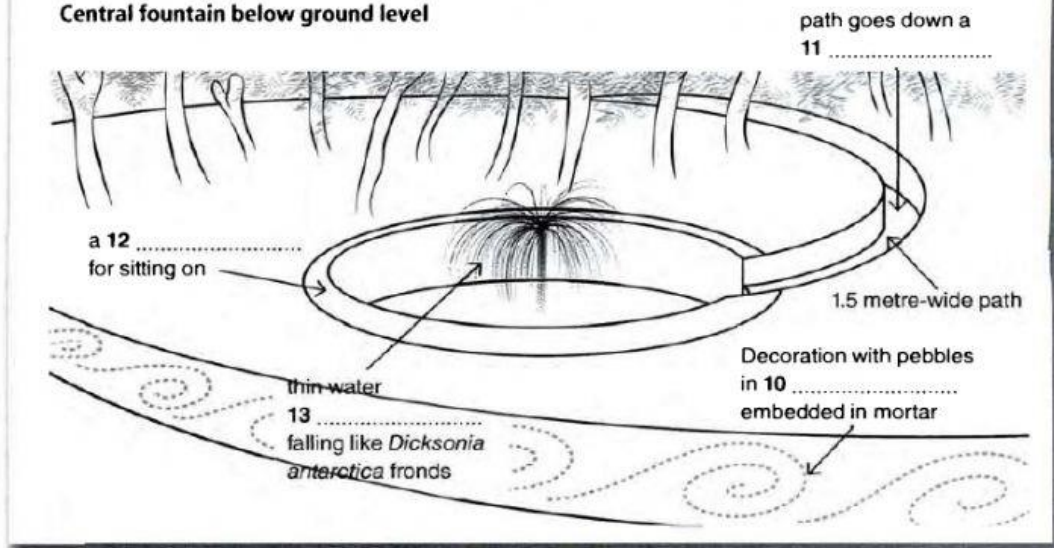
A government bodies	B different sources	C experts from different fields
D temporary exhibitions	E various officials	F avoided
G show	H fit	I design
J various elements	K operated	L detectable
M rejected	N painters	O visible
P included	Q approved	

Questions 10–13

Label the diagram below.

Choose **NO MORE THAN TWO WORDS** from the passage for each answer.

Central fountain below ground level



- 4 Do you think cities and towns would benefit from having more public art such as statues, installation art for each answer and murals or wall paintings? Give reasons and examples.

Language focus: Defining and non-defining relative clauses

- 1 Defining relative clauses provide information which cannot be left out, as they identify what is being referred to. They do not have commas at the beginning and end of the clause.

Council members were able to actually observe the design intent through a detailed model that the artist produced to expedite planning for the commission.

Non-defining relative clauses provide additional information, which can be left out. They have commas at the beginning and the end.

There is space to walk around the fountain, which is set below the surrounding ground level, or ...

- 2 Scan the Reading Passage and find other examples of relative clauses.

Read more about defining and non-defining relative clauses in the Grammar reference on page 224.

- 3 Work in groups. For each pair of sentences 1–5 below, underline the relative clauses. Explain in your own words what effect using a defining and non-defining clause has on the meaning of the sentence.

- 1 a A new play by Shakespeare, which the playwright wrote when he was young, has just been discovered.
b The play that he wrote at the age of 21 has just won a major prize.

- 2 a Part of the soundtrack in the film, which is taken from Beethoven's 9th symphony, is my favourite piece of music.

- b A pop song that I heard on the car radio yesterday was very familiar.

- 3 a The artist that I would like to talk about is Kandinsky.

- b The artist, who is still alive, has influenced my own paintings.

- 4 a A museum I go to regularly has my favourite café on its roof.

- b Modern museums, which often have interactive displays, attract many children.

- 5 a The arts subjects that need to be taught at school are painting and drama.

- b The arts, which include painting and drama, need to be taught at school.

- 4 Work in pairs. Complete each gap with a suitable relative pronoun where necessary. More than one pronoun may be possible.

- 1 The book _____ he gave me as a present was really exciting.

- 2 The actor, _____ name I have forgotten now, was in the shop this morning.