Check these words

ancient times, hanging, lantern, grand, start out, fiery, ribbon, kaleidoscope, sharp, high-pitched, crowd, gather, fall in love with, acrobatics, emotion, gallop, whip, somersault, reveal, loyalty, bravery, warrior, wild, cruelty

2e Amazing performances

Chinese OPERA

If you want to watch a music performance that combines song, dance, and striking design, just forget about the latest pop video. Take a look at a truly original style of musical performance: Chinese opera. Last month I was on a trip in Shanghai. I was staying with my Chinese friend Mai-Li. She insisted that we go to the Chinese opera and I have to admit the experience was amazing from beginning to end.

Opera has a long history in China. In ancient times, actors performed the operas on the streets on **temporary** stages with only hanging lanterns for lighting. It's funny to think that such grand art started out like that!

We arrived at the theatre just before the lights went down. As the curtain rose, the actors came on stage in their beautiful costumes, the fiery reds and ribbons of gold and silver were like a kaleidoscope of colour! The costumes go all the way back to the street show days, when the actors used to wear bright colours to **stand out** in the dark.

The singing was quite strange – very sharp and high-pitched. Just like the costumes, the singing style was really ancient. The street performers used to sing that way so that their voices could **carry** over the crowds who gathered to watch.

The opera we saw was 'Lady White Snake'; a classic Chinese folk tale. A white snake changes into a beautiful girl, and then falls in love with a human. But the actors didn't only tell the story through song; the dancing and acrobatics were fantastic, too. The actors used not only their faces but also their whole bodies to act out the story and show their emotions. These actors train very hard at opera schools for years from about the age of 7 or 8. There weren't a lot of stage props or scenery because the actors use a lot of symbols to help tell the story. An actor galloping with a whip, for example, means they are riding a horse. Doing somersaults from a table or a pile of chairs means they are running down a mountain.

The actors' make-up was incredible. Each colour has a special meaning and **reveals** something about their character; red means loyalty and bravery, black shows a warrior or a wild character, blue means cruelty and gold and silver means mystery. At the finale, it was **breathtaking** to see them all on stage together in their bright costumes and make-up. I didn't think that opera was **for me**, but I can't believe how much I enjoyed it. You must all see a Chinese opera one day!

2 a) Read the text again. For each question (1-5), choose the correct answer *A*, *B*, *C* or *D*.

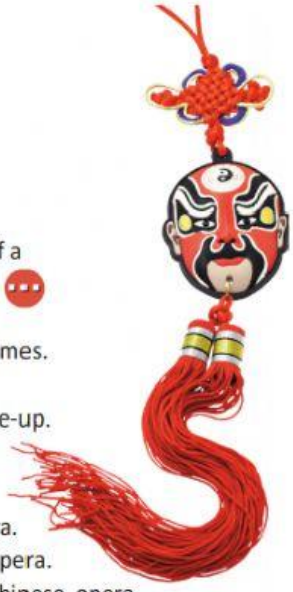
1 When Chinese opera first started,
- **A** it didn't have any lighting.
- **B** performances took place outside.
- **C** there was no stage or costumes.
- **D** it wasn't very popular.

2 In the past, the actors wore costumes that were
- **A** very simple.
- **B** only red, gold, and silver.
- **C** easy to see.
- **D** easy to wear.

3 The actors sang in a high-pitched voice because they wanted to
- **A** help the audience hear.
- **B** follow tradition.
- **C** make the audience laugh.
- **D** attract more attention.

4 The audience mainly follow the story of a Chinese opera through the singing and
- **A** a lot of props and scenery.
- **B** the colours on the characters' costumes.
- **C** changes in the lighting.
- **D** the characters' movement and make-up.

5 At the end, we learn that Iris was
- **A** planning to see the opera again.
- **B** surprised that she enjoyed the opera.
- **C** not interested in going to another opera.
- **D** unsure if her readers would enjoy Chinese opera.



Write the sentence form the text to prove your answer:

1)

2)

3)

4)

5)

2 b) Match the words in bold in the text with their meanings: CHECK

temporary	stand out	carry
reveals	breathtaking	for me

amazing & impressive = _____

something I like = _____

be clear = _____

shows = _____

there for a short time = _____

be heard = _____

3 Match the highlighted words in the text with their descriptions (1-7).

stages | lighting | curtain | actors
costumes | props | scenery

1 The people who take part in the performance.

2 This rises at the beginning of the performance and comes down at the end.

3 The actors & actresses wear these.

4 The objects or furniture used in a performance.

5 The performances take place on these.

6 The painted backgrounds that show where the story takes place.

7 The use of lights to give different effects during the show.