Reading Comprehension Test for 10th Form Students

name	class

Text 1)

THE FATE OF THE DISCOVERERS

(Tutankhamon's tomb)

Curse *– a solemn utterance intended to invoke a supernatural power or inflict harm or punishment on someone or something*

Among the many tales of the curse of the Pharaohs one deserves close attention. After Tutankhamon's tomb had been discovered everyone could read the inscription on the outside of the tomb: "Death shall come on swift wings to him who disturbs the peace of the King."

After visiting the tomb in 1922 Lord Carnarvon, the patron of the discovery expedition, died of high fever caused by an infected mosquito bite on his cheek. As he died, an unexpected power cut struck Cairo and the city was in darkness. In England, his pet dog, Susie, started barking and by the morning she had died too. Back in Cairo, a cobra ate Carnarvon's pet canary – the cobra being considered the protector of the Pharaohs. Later, a small blemish was found on Tutankhamon's cheek in the same spot as the infected mosquito had bitten the archaeologist.

The curse of the Pharaoh has remained the subject of much speculation over the years, fueled by unexplained occurrences and tragic deaths. Of all the members of the expedition to uncover Tutankhamon's tomb, by 1969 only two members of the team had avoided the curse. In the 1970s when an exhibition of the treasure of Tutankhamon's tomb was being held in Britain a successor of one of the original teams died the same night as he finished packing the treasures. Two men who were organizing the exhibition and who were flying the treasures from Egypt died from heart attacks.

There are theories to explain these occurrences. One scientist put forward the theory that the floors of the tomb were covered with radioactive substances, for example, uranium.

However, to this day, no one has managed to explain satisfactorily the occurrences surrounding the strange events following the opening of Tutankhamon's tomb. And perhaps

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the strangest fact of all is that the man who discovered the tomb, Howard Carter, survived the curse and died of natural causes at the age of 66. Why did the man who made the famous discovery escape the curse while many of his colleagues met untimely and tragic deaths? Only the Pharaohs can say.

Statements 1 through 10 (on your answer sheet circle + if the statement is true, - if it is false)

	1. The inscription on Tutankhamon's tomb was kept in secret for safety measures.
	2. The inscription on Tutankhamon's tomb frightened away the members of the expedition.
	3. The inscription on Tutankhamon's tomb was a warning for posterity.
	4. Tutankhamon's death was caused by a blemish on his cheek.
	5. The cause of Lord Carnarvon's demise could not be explained.
	6. Very strange coincidences were happening one by one in a row after Lord Carnarvon's death.
	7. The exhibition of Tutankhamon tomb's treasures in Britain was accompanied by unexpected tragic deaths of its organizers.
	8. Not a single theory managed to give a thorough explanation of the weird occurrences around the famous discovery.
	9. The curse affected all the members of the team; they all had died by 1969.
	10. It can be easily explained why Howard Carter, the man who had discovered the tomb, escaped the curse.

Text 2)

Learning Foreign Languages

A friend of mine once told the story of his first lesson as a newly qualified foreign language teacher. At the end, full of enthusiasm, he asked for questions and was pleased to see a hand go up. The question, however, was not what he expected. "Why are we learning Spanish, Sir?", asked the 12-year-old pupil slightly aggressively.

Amusing as it may be to imagine the young teacher's introduction to the real world, the question is worth asking, and requires an answer. In a climate where subjects compete to demonstrate their usefulness in the marketplace and demand spending on resources, how can foreign language learning justify its place in the timetable?

Outside the English speaking world the value of learning English is almost taken for granted. For English speaking students, however, the value is less easy to describe,

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precisely because the use of English for international communication is so widespread. Native English speakers often express amazement at the level language ability reached by foreigners, sometimes even assuming that they have some natural 'gift' for language learning or that English is somehow easy to learn.

Neither, of course, is true. Learning another language needs a lot of time and hard work, and for many native English speakers these attitudes are simply an excuse for not making the necessary effort. After all, why bother to learn someone else's language when they are so good at yours?

Perhaps another personal story will help to answer this. Returning from a school trip to France, my teenage son, who had never been very good at languages, described going into a shop and trying to buy something. His lack of ability to say what he wanted and having to resort to a mixture of simple English and sign language left him, he said, 'feeling stupid'. Part of our responsibility as international citizens, in other words, is to deal with people from other countries on equal linguistic terms.

Questions 11 through 15 (on your answer sheet circle the correct letter A, B, C, or D)

11. What does the writer think about the student's question?

A. It can't be answered.
B. It shows imagination.
C. It is a valid one.
D. It is irrelevant.

12. What does the writer say about the learning of English in most countries?

A. It is rarely questioned.
B. It is easily described.
C. It is usually valuable.
D. It is time-consuming.

13. What are native English speakers always surprised by?

A. The ease with which others learn English.
B. The natural language skills of foreigners.
C. The standard of English that foreigners have.
D. The effort foreigners put in learning English.

14. What does the writer suggest about English speakers' views on language learning?

A. They are excusable in the circumstances.
B. They are reasonably simple to explain.
C. They are often motivated by laziness.
D. They do not care about it.

15. What important reason for learning another language by the final story?

A. to increase self-respect.
B. to buy things in shops.
C. to improve intelligence.
D. to become international citizens.

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Text 3)

My Life in Football

Rounders *– a ball game similar to baseball, played chiefly in British schools*

Since I was a child, all I've ever wanted to do was to kick a football about. I was programmed by my dad to some extent and he encouraged me to play. It wasn't imposed on me, though, and I'm grateful for that.

I had a friend who used to come to the park with us and his dad was really pushy. He was always saying, "You can't do this, you can't do that" My mate could have been a good player, but he just stopped wanting to play and has never been involved in football since. I'm glad it didn't turn out the same way for me, but I realized that things could have easily been so different.

When I score a heart-stopping goal from a long way out, people often say that it's just luck, but it isn't. I have worked on taking shots at goal from a distance since I was a kid. It's only by practicing that you get to score the spectacular goals which give you such a buzz. The best players in the world, who obviously have amazing natural talent, would never have achieved what they have without year and years of practice. Sometimes you see young players **crashing into each other,** but I was taught technique. If I'm teaching kids, the most important thing I try to get across is to enjoy learning skills.

I used to do every sport going to school. I'd get involved in anything, from rounders and baseball to athletics and basketball. I know now it's important to get a good education, but football was the only thing on my mind then the teachers were doing a pretty good job, but I wasn't aware of it at the time. I don't want it to be like that for my son. We're already trying to read him books even though he's far too young to sit still for long enough. I hope the fact that he usually wants to kick them around on the floor doesn't mean that he takes after me in that way.

At the beginning of my professional football career, the manager made big sacrifices so that some of us young players could move up to play for the first team, but he never made a big deal about it. He never called us together and said, "This is your big chance to move yourself" but we all knew we had to. Although I scored in the opening game of the season,

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we lost, and a respectful TV presenter famously said, "You can't win anything with kids". That really made us aware of how we had to do. You always have a few doubts, but we had faith in ourselves as a team despite what he said.

I rely on close friends and family a lot. But having so much money can sometimes cause problems. For example, people sometimes say to me, "I can't believe you let your mother carry on working". Of course, I've helped out my family financially. I paid off the loan on their house and I bought them a car last Christmas. My family is strong individuals and I think they would be offended at the idea that they would somehow be on the payroll. My mum doesn't earn much as a hairdresser but she loves what she does. On the other hand, it gives me a lot of pleasure to use my money to make things a bit easier for the people around me. I have a lot of money, though not as much as people say, but that doesn't give me all the answers

After I've stopped playing, I'll have a year off or perhaps even longer, doing the things I haven't been able to do all these years. I want to go skiing the day after I stop playing. I can't do that now because I wouldn't be covered by my insurance if I were to break a leg on the ski slopes.

Questions 16 through 20 (on your answer sheet circle the correct letter A, B, C, or D)

16. What do we learn about the footballer's childhood? A. He only started playing football in order to please his father. B. He sometimes resented his father's ambition for him. C. He saw the negative effect fathers could have. D. He realized not all fathers were interested in sport.	**19. The footballer uses the TV presenter's remark about using young players to underline** A. How unwise the manager had been to choose them. B. How difficult their task would be. C. How much the comment damaged their confidence. D. How angry the team was about the criticism.
17. The footballer uses the phrase 'crashing into each other' to suggest that A. The players are deliberately injuring their opponents. B. The players are shouting loudly to each other. C. The players are deliberately wasting time.	**20. Speaking about the money he was paid, the footballer is** A. justifying the large amount of money he earns. B. explaining why his family means so much to him. C. responding to negative comments made about him.

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D. The players are not demonstrating their skills.	D. defending his family for wanting to share in his financial success.

18. What do we learn about the footballer's education?

A. He thinks his school put too much pressure on students to do sport.
B. He acknowledges that he didn't appreciate it enough.
C. He now realizes he made some poor choices at school.
D. He believes it would have been better with different teachers.

Text 4)

'The Wild Boy of Aveyron'

Scavenging *– search for and collect something usable from discarded waste*
Confinement *– restriction of a person in space, time, quantity etc.*
Erstwhile *– former*
Transgression *– an act that goes against the rule or code of conduct*

Not many years after the French philosopher Rousseau promulgated the idea of the 'noble savage', which embodied his idea that a man in his natural state, unsullied by civilization or education, was innately good, there walked out of the woods a living specimen who, it was hoped, would prove the point. It happened in the village of Saint-Sernin in southern France, on January 9, 1800. A strange creature from the forest was caught scavenging for food, and though it appeared to be a wild animal, it walked erect. As soon as those who captured the creature realized it was human, a boy of about twelve years in fact, they attempted to care for him.

The 'Wild boy of Aveyron' as he became known, had been in the forest for six years. He was virtually naked and very dirty, with no apparent awareness that he was human, no modesty and no ability to relate in any way to his captors. He could not speak and was intolerant of confinement. When his rescuers tried to clothe him, he tore the garments off and ripped them to pieces. Offered white bread, he spat it out immediately, and seemed familiar only with potatoes. He bit anyone who approached too close. It was time to alert the scientists. Here, apparently, was the noble savage in person.

Over the next two months, attempts were made to bring the boy back to the human race. (When he was found he wore the remnants of a tattered shirt, which indicated that he had

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been lost or abandoned some years before). He had the benefit of a patient tutor and a woman who grew to love him with a mother's devotion, yet he never learned to speak or return affection. With some optimism, he was given the name Viktor, but the experiments to which this poor wretch was subjected met with repeated defeat, while he longed to return to his freedom and his woods. His only pleasure was sipping a slow glass of water as he stared through the imprisoning window at the sky and the moon, erstwhile companions of his solitary life. He did not, could not, understand civilization.

Most importantly, did Viktor bring from his natural state of innocence an inherent goodness, which would put his civilized captors to shame? Invited to dinner at the salon of Madame Recamier, he stole everything small enough to grab and clambered up a tree, which left the astonished guests resentful that Rousseau was not alive to see his theories disproved. But were they disproved? Theft is a transgression against a specific moral rule, but does not, in itself, denote badness if the rule has no significance for the thief. What was infinitely more telling was the fact that Viktor was never able to see the world through the eyes of anyone but himself and had no capacity for empathy. He certainly learned how people could hurt, for his tutor, having bestowed love, would unwarrantably remove it to see how the boy reacted, which was, of course, with terrified disappointment. But he never learned to recognize that other people existed except as satisfiers of his needs. The Wild Boy of Aveyron did not prove that the primitive state was one of essential goodness, but he did not prove that it was irremediably selfish or self-centered. Which is not to say that it was not also innocent (literally harmless): the boy showed no malice or cruelty, did not seek revenge, did not direct hostility against individuals. He was not so much immoral as pre-moral.

Questions 21 through 25 (on your answer sheet circle the correct letter A, B, C, or D)

21. When the Wild Boy was first found, he

A. had broken into a house to steal food.
B. was mistaken for an animal.
C. had been alone in the forest for twelve years.
D. demonstrated that Rousseau's theories had been correct.

22. The boy's captors handed him over to scientists because

A. it was considered he would be of considerable interest to them.
B. they feared he might be a cannibal.
C. they were unsure of what to give him to eat.
D. he needed to be taught to speak.

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23. The writer implies that the name Viktor

A. was chosen because he had managed to survive alone for so long.
B. reflected the hopes and aspirations of his carers.
C. matched his physical strength.
D. was inappropriate because the boy had lost his freedom.

24. The writer suggests that the boy's behavior at dinner

A. demonstrated that moral codes are not inborn.
B. showed that he was dishonest.
C. indicated that he wanted to return to the forest.
D. proved that the theories of Rousseau were wrong.

25. The story of the Wild boy of Aveyron would appear to indicate that man, in his primitive state, is innately

A. aggressive.
B. dishonest.
C. egocentric.
D. good.

Text 5)

The Benefits of Tourism

We are often told about the benefits that tourism brings, to the point where its positive influence has become an assumption. Perhaps the most common belief is that tourism brings wealth to local people. The reality, though, is often quite opposite: tourism makes a small number of people in the host country extremely rich, while the poor majority lose their land, their resources and identity, receiving little, if anything, in return.

The loss of land and resources is easy to see. Hotels, resorts and safari parks spread relentlessly across previously untouched natural areas. Water is diverted from local needs to providing tourist luxuries like hotel showers and golf courses. The loss of identity is harder to measure, but is, perhaps best summed up by the words of an African tribesman who said: "We are no longer what we are, we are becoming what we seem".

Tourists are hungry for the exotic, for worlds that are different from their own, but at the same time most of them are not keen to experience the realities of that difference. So, they usually view it from behind barriers, coach windows, hotel doors or camera lenses. Hunger for the exotic can never be satisfied in a tourist context – as soon as you touch it, it disappears. Whether tourists like it or not, the local culture and tradition they observe will have altered itself to fit in with the expectations of those who pay for it.

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Travel, the old saying says, broadens the mind. Yet, as the masses of tourists spread across the world, treating countries and their inhabitants like a huge theme park, even this idea is debatable. Tourists are, as one writer put it, 'the aristocracy of the New World Order' protected from reality everywhere they go, treated with outward respect, their motives almost never questioned. At best, the opinion they arrive at will be an uninformed idea that 'the natives are really friendly and welcoming'. If they are occasionally surprised by reality, it will usually be a negative experience, and they will return home surer than ever that 'foreigners can't be trusted'.

Questions 26 through 30 (on your answer sheet circle the correct letter A, B, C, or D)

26. What does the writer say about poor people?

A. They are in the majority in most countries.
B. They don't usually benefit much from tourists.
C. They become rich from tourism in a few cases.
D. They do not travel at all.

27. Why does the writer use the words of an African tribesman?

A. To explain what is meant by loss of identity.
B. To summarize the main point of the text.
C. To show how he feels about the people.
D. To prevent people from traveling.

28. According to the article, how do most tourists relate to the countries they visit?

A. They are usually disappointed by the reality of what they see.
B. They fail to get a true impression of how people there live.
C. They find experiences that are different from their normal life.
D. They look for the exotic.

29. What common belief about travel has been repeated for a long time?

A. It is turning many countries into theme parks.
B. It will increase continuously in the future.
C. It makes people more open to different areas.
D. Tourists are 'the aristocracy of the New World Order'.

30. In the writer's opinion, what reaction applies to most tourists?

A. They are not really changed by their experiences.
B. They rarely question their motives for travelling.
C. They tend to have negative experiences abroad.
D. They wonder if the local culture and tradition ever changes.

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