

Test 1. Reading Comprehension 1.a

1. Read the following text and do the tasks:

In the **scorching** heat of the Sahara Desert a celebration is getting started. But this isn't just a party, it's a competition - one that the entrants take very seriously indeed.

A → The **preparations** for the beauty **contest** are underway. The **contestants** are **putting on** **colourful** **outfits**, fixing their **make-up** and **doing** **their hair**. Excitement is in the air and everyone is **busy**, but this is a beauty contest with a difference. The **contestants** **aren't** **women**, they're men.

B → I'm in Niger, in West Africa, staying with the Wodaabe tribe, a group of about 45,000 nomadic cattle herders who travel through the Sahara Desert trading cows for supplies. They **protect** themselves from the **harsh** African sun by wearing a chech, 13 metres of cotton wrapped around their heads like a turban, and a large straw hat. But perhaps what people know them best for is the high **importance** they place on physical beauty. The Wodaabe are not **ashamed** of being thought to be **vain** and they consider themselves the most beautiful people in the world.

C → Every year the Wodaabe hold a beauty contest, called 'Gerewol', to celebrate the rainy season. It's an important time for people who live in the desert and many Wodaabe gather together. Groups of young men dance for hours to impress a **selection** of female judges. **Characteristics** that the Wodaabe look for are height, a long nose and bright white teeth and eyes. I'm here to witness this year's dance and like everyone else, I can't wait for it to start. There's nothing like it anywhere else.

D → Getting ready for the contest can take days. The men have to make **eye-catching** **outfits** from ostrich feathers, beads and brightly-coloured materials. They also paint their faces to better **show off** their looks. For example, a long line painted from the forehead to the chin makes the nose seem longer and more **attractive**.

E → Soon the dance begins. The men stand in a circle, shoulder to shoulder, and move round as they dance. The women stand behind them and when their favourite competitor comes past they **tap** him on the shoulder. **Whirling** in circles for hours on end under the desert sun can be **exhausting**, but the Wodaabe men are **strong** and as the contest goes on **the atmosphere becomes more highly charged**.

F → Even though I'm not taking part, I find myself dancing along to the music as well. It's great fun, but before long I'm tired. By the end of the dance there are three winners. The losers have to wait until next year's Gerewol to try again. The physical **endurance** needed to dance and sing all day is very impressive to see. It may be a beauty contest, but it certainly isn't typical. This **exciting** **festival** **highlights** not only the men's looks, but also their **strength**, fun-loving nature and **creativity**. I hope that the Wodaabe continue this fantastic celebration for some time to come.

A) Read the text. For each question, choose the correct answer A, B, C or D.

1. What does the writer suggest about the Wodaabe people in the second paragraph?

A) They have a high opinion of themselves.

- B) The men want to impress each other.
- C) They get everything they need from their animals.
- D) They care most about the clothing they wear.

2. The writer is excited to see the festival because

- A) he has been waiting for it to start for a long time.
- B) he has travelled a long way to see it.
- C) he thinks everyone else seems too serious.
- D) he wants to witness a unique event.

3. In the fourth paragraph, what is the purpose of describing the preparations?

- A) To show how beautiful the contestants become.
- B) To give examples of Wodaabe beauty preparations.
- C) To express the difficulty of costume-making.
- D) To emphasize how stressful the Wodaabe find the Gerewol.

4. The phrase ‘atmosphere becomes more highly charged’ in lines 40-41 suggests that

- A) the dancers do not notice the excitement of the crowd.
- B) the contestants are dancing harder despite being tired.
- C) the dancers think the contest is getting more difficult.
- D) the hot weather is starting to make the dancers tired.

5. What do we learn about the writer’s feelings towards the festival?

- A) He feels the competition isn’t fair on the losers.
- B) He thinks the tradition is worth keeping.
- C) He believes the competition is nothing special.
- D) He thinks it’s too tiring for the Wodaabe men.

B. Match the words/phrases in bold in the text to their synonyms.

- Para A: participants, lively, plans//
Preparations, contestants, busy
- Para B: embarrassed, defend, value, rough//
Protect, harsh, importance, ashamed
- Para C: qualities, shiny, variety//
Selection, characteristics, bright

- Para D: striking, appealing, display//
Eye-catching, show off, attractive
- Para E: spinning, tiring, tough, lightly hit//
Tap, whirling, exhausting, strong
- Para F: imagination, power, features//
Endurance, highlights, creativity

C. Match the highlighted words to their opposites.

- modest • dull • freezing • weakness • boring

2. Fill in: nomadic, native, homeland, show off, whirl, entrant.

1. Each in the beauty contest must make their own costume.
2. The locals talk to each other in theirlanguage.
3. The tribe are proud of their..... and don't want to leave.
4. The festival is a chance for the men totheir dancing skills.
5. The dancers around in a circle while the women watch.
6. The tribe are giving up their..... lifestyle and settling in a big town.

3. Fill in: winners, herders, region, elaborate, circle, effort, judges, contestants.

The Wodaabe are a nomadic tribe of 45,000 people who live in the Saharan 1)..... of Niger in Africa. Most of the time they are cattle 2)..... but once a year they get together to celebrate the rain coming with a contest called a Gerewol. The men are the only 3).....and they can spend many days preparing 4).....outfits to wear. At the Gerewol, the men have to dance next to each other in a 5)..... while female 6).....decide who is the best-looking and who has the best makeup and clothes. The dancing can be very tiring in the hot sunlight so it takes a lot of 7).....to compete. At the end of the competition there are only three 8).....and everyone else has to wait until next year to compete again.