

Task 26

You are going to read an article taken from *The Economist*, a British magazine. Some parts are missing from the text. Choose the appropriate part from the list (A-L) for each gap (1-10) in the text. There is one extra part which you do not need to use. Write your answers in the boxes after the text. There is an example at the beginning (0).

The Hermitage

Up the Neva

ST PETERSBURG

RUSSIA'S finest art gallery is in as much trouble as the country's economy. The Winter Palace (0) _____ that house the Hermitage look as opulent as ever, but appearances are misleading. The buildings are decaying (1) _____ that the Hermitage cannot afford. Its budget is not large enough even to meet its running costs.

With over 3m artefacts, the Hermitage has one of the richest collections in the world. It contains (2) _____. French paintings from the 19th and 20th centuries fill one floor, Dutch and Italian Old Masters fill another. Its Post-Impressionists are the envy even of Paris. Display cabinets (3) _____ and English silver. As Mikhail Petrovski, its director, puts it: "We are part of the mafia of the world's great museums."

The collection is made up of the Imperial collection amassed by the tsars from

Peter the Great onwards (4) _____ expropriated from private collectors by the Bolsheviks after the 1917 revolution. During the communist era the gallery's directors were Communist party leaders. May Day celebrations always included a party in the Winter Palace, at which communist leaders (5) _____ Catherine the Great.

Since the closure of the Soviet Ministry of Culture at the end of 1991, the Hermitage has been through turbulent times. It had to wait nearly a year before the Russian parliament (6) _____. In the interim, its finances were in a chaotic state (7) _____ state pensioners.



Although it now at least has a budget, the Hermitage's financial troubles remain acute. This year it will get 500m roubles (\$870,000) from central government for its running costs, which Mr Petrovski reckons (8) _____. The state has provided a further 350m roubles for repairs, which he says is also inadequate.

The security system at the Hermitage is antiquated and requires upgrading. The museum's two Leonardos stand, next to the window, in a room (9) _____ – an easy target for any half-way competent art thief; fortunately, the fame of these pictures makes them unsellable. There (10) _____ of pilferage and vandalism. At the end of last year a pair of 18th-century Dutch porcelain falcons was stolen. How long will it be before a more spectacular theft occurs?

The Economist

- A agreed to designate it a state institution
- B and all the best works of art
- C and in urgent need of repair
- D and its curators lived off less than
- E and other tsarist palaces on the river Neva
- F are stuffed with Meissen porcelain
- G dined off plates once used by
- H have already been instances
- I is about half of what it needs
- J is more than enough
- K more than a score of Rembrandts
- L guarded by an elderly woman