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GRAFFITI – A DANGEROUS WAY OF LIFE

Scrawling graffiti is seen as a crime in the UK, yet in the US it has become a recognized art form.

Just a few weeks ago eight graffiti gang members were convicted of causing £5,000 worth of damage on the London Underground. They are among more than 70 hard-core graffiti artists thought to be operating in London today. Most are aged under 20.

Graffiti artists, or “graffers”, operate in many British towns. They often work at night, covering walls, trains and railway stations with brightly painted murals or scrawls in spray paint and marker pen.

Some people regard graffiti as a form of vandalism and a menace. London Underground says that railusers find it ugly and offensive. It spends £2m a year dealing with graffiti, and has even introduced trains with graffiti-resistant paint. “We don’t think it’s artistic or creative – it’s vandalism. It’s a huge nuisance to our customers, and it’s ugly and offensive,” says Serena Holley, a spokeswoman for the London Underground. “It creates a sense of anarchy and chaos,” says Richard Mandel, a barrister who prosecuted the graffiti gang. “Passengers feel as if the whole rail system is out of control.”

British Transport Police has a graffiti unit designed to catch graffers in the act. It spent five months tracking down the recently prosecuted gang.

Graffiti art can also be a dangerous pastime. The London Underground says that some teenagers have died in accidents during nocturnal graffiti "raids".

However, others say that graffiti at its best is an art form. Art galleries in London and New York have exhibited work by increasingly famous graffiti artists. "Of course graffiti is art. There's no question about that," says David Grob, director of the Grob Gallery in London. Even some of those who think graffiti is wrong admit that graffers are talented. "It's just that their artistic talent is channeled in the wrong direction," says Barry Kogan, a barrister who represented Declan Rooney, one of the gang members.

There is a difference between "good graffiti" and vandalism, says Dean Colman, a 24-year-old graffiti artist. "I'd never spray private property, like someone's house. Some graffiti are disgusting. There's a big difference between that and graffiti which can brighten up grey walls."

Dean makes a living as a graffiti artist. His days of illegal spraying are behind him, he says. He has worked on a television programme about graffiti, designed a series of government posters, and decorated nightclubs. He has exhibited his work at Battersea Arts Centre in London, and he has taught graffiti-spraying in youth clubs.

Dean sees himself as an artist, and thinks that graffiti art does not get due recognition. "There's no graffiti art in the Tate Gallery and there should be," he says. "Graffiti is as valid as any other art form."

1. The graffiti artists arrested recently in London were _____.
 - A. put in prison
 - B. fined £5,000
 - C. wrongly accused
 - D. found guilty
2. The attitude of London Underground is that graffiti _____.
 - A. is a kind of art, but a problem because some passengers don't like it.
 - B. is something to be stopped at all cost.
 - C. is irritating but they have more serious problems to worry about.
 - D. is causing the price of tickets to go up and therefore needs to be stopped.

3. The British Transport Police _____
- A. have killed some 'graffers' by accident.
 - B. spent a lot of time trying to catch a group of graffiti artists.
 - C. have recently criticized the behavior of the London Underground.
 - D. don't know what to do about the problem.
4. Bary Kogan, who defended one of the convicted graffiti artists, thinks they _____
- A. should show their work in art galleries.
 - B. should not have been convicted.
 - C. should use their abilities in different ways.
 - D. should be more careful when working in the Underground.
5. Dean Colman _____
- A. has never broken the law.
 - B. is concerned about how little he earns from his work with graffiti.
 - C. would like to see graffiti taken more seriously by the art world.
 - D. is worried about young people taking up graffiti-spraying.
6. The writer _____
- A. is for people who draw graffiti.
 - B. is against people who draw graffiti.
 - C. points his opinion quite unclearly.
 - D. supports the attitude of the London Underground towards graffers.

The Six-o'clock-In-The-Evening-Enthusiastic-Determined-And-Well-Intentioned-Studier-Until-Midnight is a person with whom you are probably already familiar. At 6 o'clock he approaches his desk, and carefully organizes everything in preparation for the study period to follow. Having everything in place he next carefully adjusts each item again, giving himself time to complete the first excuse: he recalls that in the morning he did not have quite enough time to read all items of interest in the newspaper. He also realizes that if he is going to study it is best to have such small items completely out of the way before settling down to the task at hand.

He therefore leaves his desk, browses through the newspaper and notices as he browses that there are more articles of interest than he had originally thought. He also notices, as he leafs through the pages, the entertainment section. At this point it will seem like a good idea to plan for the evening's first break – perhaps an interesting half-hour programme between 8 and 8.30 p.m.

He finds the programme and it inevitably starts at about 7.00 p.m.

At this point, he thinks, "Well, I've had a difficult day and it's not too long before the programme starts, and I need a rest anyway and the relaxation will really help me to get down to studying ..." He returns to his desk at 7.45, because the beginning of the next programme was also a bit more interesting than he thought it would be.

At this stage, he still hovers over his desk tapping his book reassuringly as he remembers that phone call to a friend which, like the articles of interest in the newspapers, is best cleared out of the way before the serious studying begins.

The phone call, of course, is much more interesting and longer than originally planned, but eventually the intrepid student finds himself back at his desk at about 8.30 p.m.

At this point in the proceedings he actually sits down at the desk, opens the book with a display of physical determination and starts to read (usually page one) as he experiences the first pangs of hunger and thirst. This is disastrous because he realizes that the longer he waits to satisfy the pangs, the worse they will get, and the more interrupted his study concentration will be.

The obvious and only solution is a light snack. This, in its preparation, grows as more and more tasty items are piled onto the plate. The snack becomes a feast.

Having removed this final obstacle the desk is returned to with the certain knowledge that this time there is nothing that could possibly

interfere with the following period of study. The first couple of sentences on page one are looked at again ... as the student realizes that his stomach is feeling decidedly heavy and a general drowsiness seems to have set in. Far better at this juncture to watch that other interesting half-hour programme at 10 o'clock after which the digestion will be mostly completed and the rest will enable him to really get down to the task at hand.

At 12 o'clock we find him asleep in front of the TV. Even at this point, when he has been woken up by whoever comes into the room, he will think that things have not gone too badly, for after all he has had a good rest, a good meal, watched some interesting and relaxing programmes, fulfilled his social commitments to his friends, digested the day's information, and got everything completely out of the way so that tomorrow, at 6 o'clock...

1. The student in fact reads the newspaper in order to _____.
 - A. find out what is on TV.
 - B. avoid beginning work.
 - C. be able to work continuously without a break later.
 - D. keep up-to-date with world events.
2. The student starts planning his first break _____.
 - A. when he sits down at his desk at 6 o'clock.
 - B. after working for a very short period.
 - C. while he is reading the newspaper before starting work.
 - D. at 7 p.m.
3. After he watches television, the student's study period is further delayed because _____.
 - A. he has to make an important phone call.
 - B. he phones a friend to avoid starting work.
 - C. he realizes he won't be able to concentrate unless he calls his friend first.
 - D. he finds what his friend says on the phone very interesting.
4. What does "this final obstacle" refer to?
 - A. the feast he has just eaten
 - B. the pangs of hunger and thirst he was experiencing earlier
 - C. the phone call he made earlier
 - D. feeling tired
5. The text suggests that the next day the person _____.
 - A. will be able to study more efficiently.
 - B. will not attempt to study.
 - C. will do exactly the same thing.
 - D. will feel guilty about wasting a whole evening.

6. Which best describes the writer's attitude to the student he is describing?
- A. He is angry with him.
 - B. He is gently poking fun at him.
 - C. He feels sorry for him.
 - D. He doesn't care about him.
7. The writer thinks that the reader _____
- A. will have had some similar experiences of avoiding studying.
 - B. will be amazed by the behaviour of this lazy student.
 - C. will immediately resolve to be a better student.
 - D. will feel guilty about all the times they have allowed themselves to be distracted.



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POLAR PURPOSE

In 1997, a group of twenty British women made history. Working in five teams with four women in each team, they walked to the North Pole. Apart from one experienced female guide, the other women were all ordinary people who had never done anything like this in their lives before. They managed to survive in an environment which had defeated several very experienced men during the same few spring months of that year. Who were these women and how did they succeed where others failed?

In 1995 an advertisement about a selection for the expedition was put in several British newspapers. Nearly one hundred women took part in the first selection weekend and then, after several training expeditions designed to weed out unsuitable applicants, twenty women

were chosen. The youngest of these was twenty-one and the oldest fifty-one. In the group there was a mother of triplets, a teacher, a flight attendant and even a film producer.

They were a mixed bunch but they all really wanted to take part in the venture and make it a success. Each of the women agreed to raise the £2500 needed for the expenses and the airfare to Canada, where the expedition began. They also committed themselves to following an intensive physical training programme before leaving the UK so that they were fit enough to take part in the expedition without endangering their own or others' lives.

The women set off as soon as they were ready. Once in the ice, each woman had to ski along while dragging a sledge weighing over 50 kilos. This would not have been too bad on a smooth surface, but for long stretches, the Arctic ice is pushed up into huge mounds two or three metres high and the sledges had to be hauled up one side and carefully let down the other side so that they didn't smash. The temperature was always below freezing point and sometimes strong winds made walking while pulling so much weight almost impossible. It was also very difficult to put up their tents when they stopped each night.

In such conditions the women were making good progress if they covered fourteen of fifteen kilometers a day. But there was another problem. Part of the journey was across a frozen sea with moving water underneath the ice and at some points the team would drift back more than five kilometers during the night. That meant that after walking in these very harsh conditions for ten hours on one day, they had to spend part of the next day covering the same ground again. Furthermore, each day it would take three hours from waking up to setting off and another three hours every evening to set up the camp and prepare the evening meal.

So, how did they manage to succeed? They realised that they were part of a team. If any one of them didn't pull her sledge or get her job done, she would be jeopardizing the success of the whole expedition. Any form of selfishness could result in the efforts of everyone else being completely wasted, so personal feelings had to be put to one side. At the end of their journey, the women agreed that it was mental effort far more than physical fitness that got them to the North Pole.

1. What was so extraordinary about the expedition?
 - A. There was no one to lead it.
 - B. The women did not have any men with them.
 - C. It was a new experience for most of the women.
 - D. The women had not met one another before.

2. What did the women who answered the advertisement have in common?
 - A. They were about the same age.
 - B. They had all suffered pain and discomfort.
 - C. They all had plenty of money.
 - D. They all wanted to achieve a goal.
3. What does underlined "these" refer to?
 - A. all the applicants
 - B. the training expeditions
 - C. the women who went on the trip
 - D. the unsuitable applicants
4. What did each woman have to do before the start of the expedition?
 - A. visit Canada
 - B. get fit
 - C. learn to ski
 - D. meet the other women
5. On the expedition, the women had to be careful to avoid _____.
 - A. falling over on the ice.
 - B. being left behind.
 - C. damaging the sledges.
 - D. getting too cold at night.
6. It was difficult for the women to cover 15 kilometres a day because _____.
 - A. they got too tired.
 - B. the ice was moving.
 - C. they kept getting lost.
 - D. the temperatures were too low.
7. What is the main message of the text?
 - A. Motivation and teamwork achieve goals.
 - B. Women can do anything they want.
 - C. It is sometimes good to experience difficult conditions.
 - D. Arctic conditions are very harsh.

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