

# Reading Comprehension Practice

## POINTS FOR DISCUSSION

- Do you enjoy attending cultural or artistic events? Why / Why not?
- How do you usually find out about the events you attend?
- Where do cultural and artistic events usually take place?

**A**

Read the texts below. Match choices (A-H) to (1-6). There are two choices you do not need to use.

**1**

The Colón Theatre is located in the centre of Buenos Aires, Argentina. It is one of the best opera houses in the world because of the way it is designed and the quality of sound it offers to audiences. Famous singers, such as Maria Callas and Luciano Pavarotti, as well as important composers, such as Igor Stravinsky, have performed there.



**2**

The National Centre for the Performing Arts in Beijing, China, has got a funny nickname because of its design: 'The Giant Egg'. Even though this magnificent building is located in the heart of the city, the man-made lake and the trees around it create a peaceful atmosphere. There, you can attend opera, dance, musical and theatrical performances, as well as traditional Chinese opera.

**3**

One of the most famous theatres in Kyiv is the Taras Shevchenko National Opera and Ballet Theatre of Ukraine. It is named after the important Ukrainian poet, Taras Shevchenko. Concerts, ballets and operas are staged there. The building first opened its doors in 1901, and has since been reconstructed twice; today it can hold 1304 people.



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Radio City Music Hall in New York City is the largest indoor theatre in the world. It is an impressive venue that can hold 5,900 people. Popular concerts and shows are held there. In addition, films like *Mary Poppins* and *The Lion King* (1994) were shown there for the first time. Some film premieres still take place at Radio City today, but not as often as in the past.

5

The Royal Opera House is located in London's Covent Garden. You can visit it to enjoy opera and ballet, or just to have a bite and a drink at one of its many restaurants and cafés. The theatre is home to the world-famous Royal Opera and the Royal Ballet. Their performances are often broadcast online or through radio and TV around the world.

6

The Oslo Opera House in Norway is impressive to look at, as it seems to be floating on the waters of Oslo Fjord. The architects used stone, wood and metal to create this modern building. Apart from the main stage, there are two smaller performance halls. Visitors can walk on the roof of the building and enjoy amazing views!

Which venue \_\_\_\_\_?

- A. has functioned as a cinema
- B. gives you the chance to see shows without being there
- C. looks like something that can be eaten
- D. welcomes poets on its smaller stages
- E. provides an excellent listening experience
- F. allows you to enjoy a meal near the water
- G. has seen significant changes in design
- H. allows visitors to stand on top of it



## B

Read the text below. For questions (1-5) choose the correct answer (A, B, C or D).



## Here comes Mr Bean!

He's a comedian, he's an actor, he's British and the whole world knows him as the silent, black-haired, tweed-jacket-wearing character Mr Bean. That's right, he's Rowan Atkinson.

Atkinson was born in Newcastle, England, and was educated at Newcastle University and Oxford. While at Oxford, he met the writer Richard Curtis, who was studying there too, and they became friends. Curtis was the opposite of Atkinson. He had a great love for words while Atkinson enjoyed non-verbal comedy. Together they began writing comedy reviews for the Oxford Playhouse. Shortly afterwards, Atkinson began appearing in smaller theatres in Edinburgh. After a show at the Hampstead Theatre in 1978, he was offered a part in the BBC series *Not the Nine O'Clock News*. This series got off to a slow start, but soon became a huge success, with Atkinson winning a BAFTA award for his work. While this series showed some of Atkinson's physical comedy, it also showed what he could do with the spoken word. However, being a very sensible man, Atkinson saw the whole acting job as a hobby, along with his growing interest in car racing.

His big-screen debut came in 1983's unofficial James Bond film, *Never Say Never Again*. That same year Atkinson appeared in a BBC series called *The Black Adder*. The main hero, a cowardly and cunning Tudor prince named Edmund Blackadder, tries unsuccessfully to become King of England after accidentally killing his uncle Richard III during a battle. The first series was followed by three hugely successful sequels, each set in a different era of England's history. The fourth and final *Blackadder* series was awarded the BAFTA for Best Comedy Series in 1990. Atkinson then went on to create Mr Bean. A walking disaster, Bean was purely physical comedy, the opposite of Edmund Blackadder. This clumsy character was a huge success and became another national treasure. In 1997 *Bean* came to the big screen. A few years later, *Scooby Doo* became a box-office hit in the US, followed in 2003 by *Johnny English*, a hilarious parody of James Bond films.

In his spare time Atkinson collects classic cars and takes part in races. He also writes for the British magazine *CAR*. He is a very shy man, and has managed to keep his private life private.

- What is true about Richard Curtis?
  - He is Atkinson's childhood friend.
  - He has nothing in common with Atkinson.
  - He starred in the same series with Atkinson.
  - He went to the same university as Atkinson.
- What did the BBC series *Not the Nine O'Clock News* do for Atkinson?
  - He became immediately successful.
  - It showed some of his weaknesses as an actor.
  - It brought him fame.
  - It made him give up physical comedy.
- What did Atkinson do at the beginning of his career?
  - He started car racing.
  - He wrote comedies.
  - He had an argument with Curtis about comedy.
  - He only worked as an actor occasionally.
- What is true about Mr Bean?
  - He was not a successful character.
  - He is different from Blackadder.
  - He is similar in many ways to Johnny English.
  - He was originally created for the theatre.

- Which of the following is **NOT** mentioned as one of Atkinson's leisure activities?
  - collecting car magazines
  - collecting cars
  - writing articles
  - taking part in car races

### POINTS FOR DISCUSSION

- Do you prefer watching a film at the cinema or at home? Why?
- What's your favourite form of entertainment? What do you like about it?

