

My kind of Life – The man who broke the pound – Conman who sold the Eiffel Tower

You are going to read a magazine article about a woman who works for the film industry. Choose the most suitable heading from the list A-I for each part 1-7 of the article. There is one extra heading which you do not need to use. There is an example at the beginning (0).

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| A Initial career move | F Choosing an alternative career |
| B The purpose of an audition | G Chance of stardom in future |
| C Huge effort to attend auditions | H Turning down promising actors |
| D Determination is essential | I The pressures in holding auditions |
| E Looking good on the screen | |

My Kind of Life

Fiona Bartlett is a talent scout for a film company. It is her job to find the right faces for the right film. She has spent the last month selecting the final cast for a new soap opera for teenagers.

0 B

I studied Theatre Arts at university and had intended to end up working as a stage manager in a theatre. However, during one summer holiday I did some voluntary work with a children's theatre group and I met a number of casting agents - people whose job it is to look for children to take part in any new production. They do this by holding auditions - which are rather like interviews - where they can assess a child's acting ability.

1

It was fascinating sitting in on the auditions. Children whom I thought were brilliant, who could sing and dance and had such confidence were not always the ones who got the parts. The casting agents would explain that one of the things they were looking for was how photogenic the child would appear in front of the camera, so each audition is videoed and watched on a monitor at the same time as the child is performing live.

2

Three people usually sat in on each audition and the director made the final decision. The schedule was always very light and auditions were held in a different place each day for a period of up to two weeks at a time. So they were constantly on the move and might audition up to a hundred young hopefuls in one day. I spent two days accompanying children to these auditions, and it was that experience that attracted me to the profession.

3

However, when I first left university, I worked as a personal assistant to the Production Manager of a children's animation and cartoon company. It was my job to look after his diary, arrange meetings, book actors and musicians for recording sessions and so on and in that way I met hundreds of different people. Then one day I heard that a TV company was looking for a casting agent and I applied for and got the job.

4

I was prepared for the hard work and the travel but one thing that I was completely unprepared for was the emotional strain of the job. You arrive at the hall where the auditions are being held to be greeted by hundreds of young people all desperate to be chosen. And sometimes, however good they are, they are simply not right for the part, so you end up disappointing the vast majority of these kids.

5

Obviously they've all worked and rehearsed enormously hard to get as far as the first audition. Most of them are accompanied by their teachers or a parent, they may have travelled miles to reach the place on time and spent money on fares and new clothes and so on. And they've got probably no more than five minutes to show us what they can do. Some of them are so nervous they just freeze, others are over-confident and burst into tears when you have to tell them they are not what you're looking for.

6

In an ideal world you'd like to be able to offer everyone a job. But it is a very competitive world and if you can't survive these knocks early on when you're still a teenager, the chances are you've picked the wrong profession. But if you believe in yourself and you can cope with these setbacks, it is worth auditioning over and over again. Sometimes people wait years before they get through an audition and there are no guarantees that you'll succeed in this business.

7

But on the positive side there's enormous job satisfaction to be gained from choosing the right actors for a new production. I know that all the hours I've spent this last month will have been worth it when the first episode of this new soap is broadcast, and perhaps some of these new young faces will go on to become big names in the years ahead.

How to make a fortune

2 The following sentences have been removed from the article. Read the article again and put each sentence in the correct numbered gap. There is one extra sentence which you do not need to use.

- A One of his strongest memories is of being envious of the cat because it got sardines for breakfast and he did not.
- B Its initial investment of \$4.8m has grown to nearly \$6 billion, one third of which is the personal stake of Soros.
- C Out of the \$250m he plans to donate in the next two years, \$100m has gone to set up an International Foundation for Science in Russia and \$50m to the Humanitarian Initiative in Bosnia
- D His simple \$60 watch and patterned tie could have been picked up at an airport shop.
- E In 1978 he met Susan Weber, a 22-year-old art history documentary maker, at a dinner party.
- F He and his elder brother were doted on by their parents, particularly by their father, who worked very little when he came back from the war, spending most of his time with his sons.
- G That evening, in his Fifth Avenue apartment, he enjoyed a simple supper, cooked by his French chef, before retiring to bed
- H Some time later, in 1973, he parted company with his employers.

THE MAN WHO BROKE THE POUND

When George Soros was a child he thought he was God. Today he is a legend: the Man who Broke the Pound, the ultimate gambler who bet \$10 billion on Black Wednesday and won. Soros has also made his name as the billionaire benefactor of the eastern bloc.

At 5.30 p.m. (10.30 p.m. in London) on September 15, 1992, George Soros was sitting in his Manhattan office, perched on the 33rd floor of a mirrored skyscraper overlooking Central Park. Confident that sterling could not stay in the Exchange Rate Mechanism, Soros instructed his head trader, Stanley Druckenmiller, to sell \$10 billion -worth of sterling, taking a giant gamble that it would have to be devalued overnight.

(1—) Next morning he was woken at 7 a.m. by a call from Druckenmiller telling him he had just made \$958m. Later he learned he had made further gains by siding with the French authorities against speculators attacking the franc. All in all, from the events of what became known as 'Black Wednesday', he had made close to \$2 billion.

Attractive, with thick wavy grey hair, apple cheeks and appraising eyes behind aviator glasses, Soros bears none of the accoutrements of a tycoon. (2—) 'I have a very very abstract mind,' he says, 'and as a result I don't really take pleasure in material possessions. If I were a different person I'd buy old masters, but I don't like to collect.'

Born in 1930 in Budapest he was the beloved younger son of a Hungarian Jewish lawyer, Tivadar, I who had been a prisoner of war in Siberia between 1917 and 1921. I (3—) Soros often credits his success as a trader to the inflated sense of self his father gave him.

In 1947 Soros, aged 17, escaped the communist regime, leaving his parents behind in Hungary and emigrating to London. His only source of income was money given to him by an aunt who had already fled to Florida. It was a desperately lonely period: he made few friends, partly because he couldn't speak the language properly, partly because he had no money. (4—) In 1949 he became a student of economics at the London School of Economics and then, later, in 1956, aged 26, he moved to New York with \$5000, his share of the profit he had made on £1000 given to him by a relative to invest. Then in 1957 George's parents also left Hungary for the States but, apart from one disastrous attempt to open an espresso stand on Coney Island, they did not work and George had to support them. He was still poor and when his father developed cancer in the early 1960s George was forced to ask the husband of a friend to help him find a surgeon who would treat him free of charge.

The turning point came in 1963. He was hired by Arnhold and S. Bleichroeder to advise American institutions on their European investments. (5—) It was then that he set up the Soros Fund which, by the late 1970s, was already beginning to make large profits. (6—)

Since 1979, Soros, a native Hungarian, has ploughed more than \$100m of his speculation profits into finding an 18-strong network of foundations spanning central and eastern Europe and Russia. (7—) in 'The Man Who Broke The Pound', a Thames Television documentary shown in December, Soros said the money he had made represented the equivalent of £12 for every man, woman and child in Britain, who, he said, really ought to have contributed it to the transformation of eastern Europe. 'But I am happy to do it for them.'

THE GREAT PERSUADERS

Conman who sold the Eiffel Tower - twice!

If there is indeed a fool born every minute, for every fool there seems to be a conman ready to make him a little **wiser**¹.

Two of the most extraordinary conmen of all time were Count Victor Lustig, an Austrian who worked in the French Ministry of Works, and Daniel Collins, a small-time American criminal. Together they managed to sell the Eiffel Tower - not once, but twice.

The count set about arranging the deal by booking a room in a Paris hotel in the spring of 1925 and **inviting**² five businessmen to meet him there. When they arrived, he swore them to **secrecy**³, then told them that the Eiffel Tower was in a **dangerous**⁴ condition and would have to be pulled down. He asked for tenders for the scrap metal contained in the famous landmark. The count **explained**⁵ the hotel meeting and the need for secrecy by saying that his ministry wanted to **avoid**⁶ any public anger over the demolition of such a well-loved national monument.

Within the week, all bids were in and the count accepted that of scrap merchant, Andre Poisson. The deal was made, and a banker's draft was handed over at a final meeting at which the count **introduced**⁷ his 'secretary', Collins. Then the conmen played their best card. They asked Poisson for a bribe to help the deal go **smoothly**⁸ through official channels. The dealer agreed willingly, and gave the money in cash. If he had ever had any **suspensions**⁹, they were now put to rest. After all, a demand for a bribe meant that the two men must be from the ministry.

Lustig and Collins were out of the country within 24 hours. But they only stayed abroad long enough to realise that the outcry they had expected to follow their fraud had not happened. Poisson was so ashamed at being taken in that he never reported them to the police.

The count and his partner returned to Paris and **repeated**¹⁰ the trick. They sold the Eiffel Tower all over again to another gullible scrap merchant. This time the man did go to the police, and the conmen quickly left the country. They were never brought to justice, and they never revealed just how much money they had got away with.

2 Read the text again and decide if the following statements are **True** or **False**.

- 1 The businessmen promised not to tell anyone that the Eiffel Tower was going to be pulled down.
- 2 The businessmen all offered money to buy the Eiffel Tower.
- 3 Poisson finally paid the conmen more than he had originally offered for the Eiffel Tower.
- 4 Poisson became rather suspicious of the two men before they left France.
- 5 Poisson didn't tell the police because he didn't realise what had happened.
- 6 The conmen did finally go to jail.

3 Put **the numbered words** from the text in the following sentences **in the correct form**.

(Number 1 - sentence 1,
number 2 - sentence 2, etc)

EXAMPLE: 1 **Wisdom** is not necessarily something which comes with age.

- 2 Have you had an to Sarah's party?
- 3 Please don't tell anyone that I'm pregnant. It's still a
- 4 There is no of anyone finding out.
- 5 I'm afraid thatis just not good enough!
- 6 I'm really sorry we were late, but it was absolutely
- 7 There is a very good to this book.
- 8 I love the way babies' skin is so
- 9 He is being very nice to me. It's making me rather
- 10 I promise there won't be any of this behaviour.