

Task 1

- Read this article about some British parliamentary traditions and then read the statements (1-9) following it.
- Your task is to decide if the statements are true or not.
- Mark a statement **A** if it is true according to the article.
- Mark it **B** if it is false according to the article.
- Mark it **C** if there is not enough information in the text to decide if the sentence is true or not.
- An example has been given for you.
- **A = TRUE B = FALSE C = THE TEXT DOES NOT SAY**

AFTER NEARLY SEVEN HUNDRED YEARS, A WOMAN IS BLACK ROD

The Queen has appointed Sarah Clarke, a former director of the Wimbledon tennis championships, as Black Rod. She will be the first woman ever to hold the largely ceremonial parliamentary post in its almost seven-hundred-year history.

Clarke, who will formally be known as Lady Usher of the Black Rod, will take over early next year from David Leakey, who has been Gentleman Usher of the Black Rod since 2011.

Originating from a role created by Edward III to guard the door outside meetings of his advisory council, the Order of the Garter, Black Rod is now a senior official in the House of Lords. The post is most visible at the annual state opening of parliament, when Black Rod is sent to the Commons to call MPs to the House of Lords for the Queen's speech. The ceremony involves the door to the Commons being slammed in Black Rod's face. This is to symbolize the Commons' independence of the Sovereign. The ceremonial staff, a long black stick made of ebony with a golden lion at the top, is used to knock three times on the door to gain admittance.

Black Rod also organises other ceremonial events and is responsible for controlling access to and maintaining order in the Lords Chamber. Apart from the doorkeepers to the Chamber, the House of Lord's department also includes Black Rod's deputy, the Yeoman Usher.

Before organising the Wimbledon championships, Clarke worked for the 2012 Olympic Games, the London marathon and UK sport. She said she was "deeply honoured and delighted" to be offered the post. "I am truly looking forward to starting work." The Speaker of the House of Lords, Lord Fowler, said: "The Lords has a great record of women taking on senior political roles. Five of the last seven leaders of the Lords and the current leader of the opposition have been women, as well as both my predecessors."

(The Guardian Weekly)

- 0) Sarah Clarke comes to Parliament from the world of sport.
- 1) No other person has held the title Lady Usher of the Black Rod before.
- 2) Sarah Clarke will work in association with the Gentleman Usher of the Black Rod.
- 3) Originally, the Black Rod was a member of the king's advisory council.
- 4) The king's advisers were known as the Order of the Garter.
- 5) It is the Black Rod's task to tell MPs to come to the state opening of parliament.
- 6) The Black Rod is allowed into the House of Commons only after the third knock.
- 7) The Black Rod is sometimes referred to as the Yeoman Usher.
- 8) The Queen's attention was called to Clarke by her contribution to the 2012 London Olympics.
- 9) Lord Fowler thought Sarah Clarke was an excellent choice for the post of Black Rod.

Task 2

- Read this part of an interview with an Australian writer and then read the gapped summary.
- Your task is to fill the gaps (10-17) with one word only based on what the article says.
- Write your answers on the dotted lines.
- An example (0) has been given for you.

MEET THE AUTHOR

In this interview with Kidsreads.com's Sarah Wood, John Flanagan – author of the bestselling Ranger's Apprentice series – describes how he created these stories as a way of encouraging his young son to read. He also discusses his interest in history, and shares what readers can look forward to in future instalments, following the recently-released new volume of the series, *The Icebound Land*.

SW: Sarah Wood: Slavery is an important plot element to *The Icebound Land*. Why did you make it a main plot point?

JF: John Flanagan: The concept of having slaves was pretty commonplace during the Middle Ages. But I'm not sure I'd agree that slavery is a main plot element. I think the drug addict storyline is much stronger.

SW: Evanlyn learns so much during the course of the book. Can you talk a little about her?

JF: I love Evanlyn and I love her role in this book. It's far too easy to have a female character who exists solely for the purpose of being rescued by the hero. In spite of her privileged upbringing, Evanlyn has a core of steel and a courageous and practical spirit. As times get tough, that inner strength becomes more apparent and she tries to accomplish things for which she has little or no training, and her persistence helps her to succeed.

SW: One of the things I really enjoyed about the previous volume, *The Burning Bridge*, was your vivid descriptions of combat and fighting techniques. Readers could practically reconstruct the fights from your descriptions.

JF: I appreciate your saying that the battle scenes are vivid. It's what I try to achieve when describing a battle or a single combat. And some years ago I was a keen participant in archery, along with my son Mike, so I know a bit about the subject.

SW: The world of the Ranger's Apprentice seems to be very clearly based on the geography and history of our world. Is there any reason you decided to base your fantasy world on a European model?

JF: Well, I could hardly base it on an American or Australian medieval model because nobody really knows what was going on in either of these two countries at that time. I'm more familiar with European history, so I'm more comfortable with that setting.

(<https://www.kidsreads.com>)

In this (0) **interview** for Kidsreads.com, conducted by Sarah Wood, John Flanagan says that he started Ranger's Apprentice in the hope of making his son more interested in (10) Wood met Flanagan shortly after the (11) of *The Icebound Land*. Flanagan says that although (12) plays a large part in his new book, the central theme is (13) . Talking about the characters he says he didn't want (14) to have only a passive role. In the reporter's opinion in *The Burning Bridge*, the previous volume in the (15) , fights and battles are presented in a particularly lifelike manner. The writer explains that his familiarity with (16) comes from having practised it with his son. He also says his model for life in the Middle Ages had to be (17) as there were no records of those times on other continents.

Task 3

- In this article about the effects of social media some parts of sentences have been left out.
- Your task is to fill the gaps from the list below.
- Write the letters (A-L) next to the numbers (18-25) as in the example (0).
- There are two more letters than you need.

SOCIAL MEDIA COPIES GAMBLING METHODS TO CREATE PSYCHOLOGICAL CRAVINGS

Social media platforms are using the same techniques as gambling firms to create psychological dependencies (0) , experts warn. These methods are so effective (18) , create psychological cravings and even simulate "phantom calls and notifications" where users feel the buzz of a smartphone, even when it isn't really there.

"Facebook, Twitter and other companies use methods similar to the gambling industry to keep users on their sites," said Natasha Schüll, the author of *Addiction by Design*. In her book, she reported (19) to lock users into a cycle of addiction. "In the online economy, profit depends on continuous consumer attention – (20) ." Whether it's Snapchat streaks, Facebook photo-scrolling, or playing CandyCrush, Schüll explained, you get drawn into repeated cycles of uncertainty, anticipation and feedback – and the rewards are just enough to keep you going.

Like gambling, (21) and makes people more likely to suffer from depression and anxiety, social media use has been linked to depression. Its potential to have a negative psychological effect on users cannot be overlooked or underestimated. For instance, phone dependency, driven by high social media usage, can lead us to think our phone is vibrating, or (22) , even when this is not the case.

"Phantom calls and notifications are linked to our psychological craving for such signals," said Professor Daniel Kruger, an expert in human behaviour. "Social media messages can activate the same brain mechanisms as cocaine does – and this is just one of the reasons to do more research into those mechanisms in the future."

Once a habit is formed, (23) like a notification, email, or any sort of ring or ding, this is no longer needed. It is replaced by an internal trigger, meaning that we form a mental connection between wanting to use this product (24) . These sites are built to be engaging, (25) is addictive for others.

(bbc.co.uk)

- A which is measured in clicks and time spent on the page
- B that we have received a message
- C and establish their products in the lives of their users
- D who don't allow their children to use it
- E and what's engaging for some
- F which was previously provoked by an external trigger
- G that they can activate similar mechanisms as cocaine in the brain
- H which physically changes the brain's structure
- I how people become attracted to social media
- K how slot machines and other systems are designed
- L and trying to satisfy an emotional need

Task 4

- Read this article about the future of car driving and then read the sentences (26-30) following it.
- Your task is to choose the answers (A-D) that best correspond to what the article says.
- Write your answers in the white boxes.
- An example has been given for you (0).

OWNING A CAR WILL SOON BE A THING OF THE PAST

If ours is an age in which no end of institutions and conventions are being disrupted, it shouldn't come as a surprise that one of the most basic features of everyday life seems under serious threat. That four-wheeled metal box, which may well be equipped with every technological innovation imaginable, now shows distinct signs of being on the decline.

After a century in which the car has sat at the heart of industrial civilisation, the age of the automobile – of mass vehicle ownership, and the idea (in the western world at least) that life is not complete without your own set of wheels – looks to be drawing to a close.

The sale of diesel and petrol cars is to be outlawed in the UK from 2040. Oxford has announced that it is set to be the first British city to ban all petrol and diesel cars and vans – from a handful of central streets first, extending to the entire urban centre by 2030.

General Motors has announced that it will soon begin testing autonomous cars in the challenging conditions of New York City, apparently the latest step in the company's move towards building a fleet of self-driving taxis.

I am aware that the idea that we will soon surrender our vehicles can look far-fetched. But deep social trends do point in this direction. In 1994 75% of 21-to-29-year-olds had driving licences. By 2016 this figure had dropped to 66%. If you buy most of your stuff online, the need to drive to a shopping centre dwindles to nothing; if you keep in touch with distant friends and family online, might a time-consuming visit to see them feel a bit less urgent? The need and therefore the demand for car ownership is bound to decline. Also, the rising global emergency focused on fatal levels of air pollution confirms the motor industry's catastrophic environmental impacts.

The prospects are amazing. Mobility will no longer depend on a huge cash outlay, the mundane term "public transport" will take on a new vitality and the environmental benefits will be self-evident.

(The Guardian Weekly)

0) Ours is an age of A

- A) transition.
- B) high-priced cars.
- C) daily threats to life.
- D) technological innovation.

28) General Motors

- A) is ready to use driverless cars.
- B) plans to introduce driverless taxis.
- C) wants New York to be the first city with driverless taxis.
- D) considers New York a particularly dangerous place.

26) Cars

- A) were first produced a hundred years ago.
- B) have made industrial civilisation possible.
- C) are essential for people to live a full life.
- D) are likely to lose their central role.

29) Younger people seem to

- A) dislike shopping centres.
- B) be less interested in driving cars.
- C) maintain daily contact with family and friends.
- D) be particularly worried about the environmental impact of cars.

27) Diesel and petrol cars

- A) can only be bought illegally in the UK.
- B) have been banned from Oxford.
- C) will be banned from central Oxford after 2030.
- D) will disappear from the UK in 2040.

30) Public transport

- A) will become much cheaper.
- B) will be better organised than now.
- C) will replace privately owned cars.
- D) puts less strain on the environment