



GIA SƯ CHUNG CƯ

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Education is an important issue for many people in the UK as well as around the world. In most countries pupils who attend secondary schools take an exam to get a school leaving certificate. One particular worry is why boys are doing so badly. Some twenty years ago, exam

scores of girls and boys in a class were compared. Boys got better results in exams, so various steps were taken to improve the results of girls, including having single sex girl-only classes. Now, the situation is reversed, with girls getting better scores than boys.

So, what has gone wrong with boys, and what can be done about it? John Dunsford, leader of the Association of Head Teachers in Secondary Schools, says that the fact that boys do not achieve much academically has its roots in society rather than the classroom. Girls, more than boys, see education as a passport to a good job. On the other hand, according to Penny Lewis, a head teacher, young men are not confident enough and are often uncertain about their place in society. Some boys grow up in families where there is no father, which means no male role model to follow.

Moreover, boys learn in a different way to girls, preferring small amounts of work with short deadlines rather than large projects extended in time. And education is not seen as "cool". As someone on a BBC website put it, "Girls achieve more at school because they are watching the future while the boys are watching the girls." This is not just a problem in Britain. In a study by the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development and UNESCO, girls did better than boys at reading at the age of 15 in all 45 countries. The UK took the ninth place among the 45 countries in reading skills, although pupils in the UK spend less time reading than in most other countries. Interestingly, the study suggested that British children read for pleasure more often than those in other countries.

(Adapted from www.bbc.co.uk)

1. Twenty years ago _____.
A. boys didn't do very well in exams.
B. school authorities decided to change the situation.
C. girls had very good results in exams.
D. all pupils went to single-sex classes.
2. Girls have better exam results than boys because _____.
A. boys are too sure of themselves.
B. girls think that a good education will help them find a job.
C. boys come from a different place in society than girls.
D. girls grow up in complete families.
3. Boys differ from girls in _____.
A. the number of books they read.
B. the time spent surfing the Internet.
C. the way they spend their free time.
D. the way they learn.

4. The study by UNESCO showed that British children at the age of fifteen _____.

- read a lot although they don't have to.
- spend more time reading than children in other countries.
- are the best at reading.
- can't read very well.

5. The text is mainly about _____.

- the kind of exams pupils take.
- boys' and girls' success in education.
- the educational system in Britain.
- what pupils read for pleasure.



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Leanne Beetham's work is surprising. But what makes her art truly exceptional is that her paintings are all done with a brush that she holds in her mouth. Since birth the girl has been unable to use her arms or legs, but her talent and enthusiasm have allowed her to become a successful artist.

Leanne was born with a serious genetic disease. The prospect was so depressing that her mother could not learn to live with it. However, she didn't want to put the baby up for adoption, so eventually, she gave Leanne's grandparents the right to look after Leanne.

Despite her young age, Leanne's work has already been shown at the Royal Academy of Arts. Last week one of her paintings was sold at Christie's auction house in London. Leanne was the youngest artist in the auction, which was organised to raise funds for the David Shepherd Wildlife Foundation for endangered wildlife.

When Leanne was two, she began drawing with a pencil in her mouth. Her talent was discovered at the age of 13 when she painted a reindeer on a school Christmas card. It was even published in the local newspaper. As a 19-year-old she says: "I was able to hold a pen in my mouth quite naturally. I started drawing before I started writing. I paint because I like it. Although many people say I am very talented, I have never thought about myself in this way. I don't want to impress anybody or win a competition, but to feel better. It's something I do without thinking and I can't imagine my life without it."

Her talent brought her to the attention of a famous landscape artist, Shepherd, who occasionally paints flowers. And crime writer Frederick Forsyth is also among the people who admire her enthusiasm for portraying elephants, horses and dogs. This famous writer, who has a large collection of portraits, came to the gallery and saw three of her pictures on sale for £250. He sent her a note, with a four-figure cheque for each one, telling her she was underselling her talent.

Leanne's artistic talent shows her attitude to life. "If you say I can't do something, I'll go out of my way to prove you wrong," she said.

(Adapted from *The Daily Mail*, May 2, 2007)

1. Leanne's mother _____.
A. allowed strangers to bring her daughter up.
B. accepted her daughter's health problem.
C. learned how to look after her daughter.
D. let her relatives take care of her daughter.
2. The aim of the auction at Christie's was to _____.
A. promote Leanne's paintings.
B. collect money for the protection of animals.
C. attract young artists' attention.
D. exhibit the paintings showing wild animals.
3. Leanne paints because she _____.
A. wants to show how good she is.
B. would like to be better at it.
C. has a contract with a local paper.
D. has always enjoyed doing it.
4. Leanne loves painting _____.
A. landscapes B. portraits
C. animals D. flowers
5. Frederick Forsyth _____.
A. bought some of her paintings.
B. did not recognize her talent.
C. offered her regular financial help.
D. sold three of her paintings.
6. In the article, the author _____.
A. encourages people to take up painting as a hobby.
B. suggests that everyone has a talent for painting.
C. proves that disability doesn't always prevent success.
D. invites art collectors to buy disabled artists' paintings.



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SHYNESS

Shyness may not seem to be a serious complaint, but for some who suffer from it, it can become unbearable. Even talking to a small group of people you know can seem like an ordeal – it can feel as if you've been asked to give a speech on a topic you know very little about to a number of experts. You start to feel hot and shaky, your heart beats faster, your knees feel weak, you begin to stutter and the whole experience seems to last forever.

The fact of the matter is that shyness is something we often recognise in others: blushing (going red) is one of the more visible signs, for example. Yet we don't judge someone harshly because of this. But shyness does mean you're harder to approach, so you become more isolated. As one shy person put it, "It's like being in a prison, and it's very hard to break out."

Experts on the subject have come up with various possible solutions, and one has been singled out as being the key to success – namely, finding an interest in common with other people. Spending a lot of time on the sidelines watching other people and envying them because they are much more outgoing doesn't help; remembering that some of the people you envy most are probably shy themselves, does. The secret is how you deal with it. And experts have come up with four things you can do today to help.

Firstly, you can start by listening to other people. You will find yourself getting interested in what they're talking about and asking questions – and before you know it, you'll be having a conversation.

Secondly, you could try asking neighbours if you can walk their dog. Like children, pets can be excellent icebreakers for conversations with passers-by.

Thirdly, try joining a class to learn something like tap-dancing or flamenco, where people are likely to laugh a lot. You'll feel relaxed, and also you'll be much too busy concentrating on what you're doing to feel shy.

Lastly, try telling yourself that it doesn't matter if you say or do something silly. Most people make a fool of themselves every so often – and it's not the end of the world if you do!

1. One of the symptoms of shyness in a stressful situation is _____.
 - A. sweating a lot.
 - B. an increased heart rate.
 - C. pain in the knees.
 - D. excessive talkativeness.
2. Why do shy people become more reserved?
 - A. Their social unease makes them more difficult to talk to.
 - B. They see that others are shy too.
 - C. Other people lack the patience to talk to them.
 - D. They dread being judged by others.
3. What do experts believe is the most essential measure to be taken?
 - A. Studying others' behaviour in social situations.
 - B. Discovering shared interests with others.
 - C. Comparing yourself to other people.
 - D. Finding out what makes other people shy.
4. How can listening to others prove helpful in combating shyness?
 - A. You develop useful psychological skills.
 - B. It is the first step to getting into conversation.
 - C. People will see you care about their interests.
 - D. It is a visible sign of becoming less shy.
5. It is suggested in the text that a shy person should _____.
 - A. learn to laugh more.
 - B. learn to relax.
 - C. take up a "social" hobby.
 - D. help other people in the community.
6. Shy people should realise that everybody _____.
 - A. says stupid things sometimes.
 - B. makes jokes sometimes.
 - C. is foolish.
 - D. is self-conscious.
7. The major aim of the author of the text is to _____.
 - A. give important advice on how to deal with shy people.
 - B. raise the readers' interest in shyness as a social problem.
 - C. present recent findings about the nature of shyness.
 - D. offer useful hints on how shy people can help themselves.