THE ART OF MIME

Words

Look for the following words as you read the passage. Match each word with its correct definition.

Words	Definitions
1. abstract	A. adj., funny, entertaining
2. atmosphere	B. v., to represent, act out
3. conflict	C. adj., not concrete, related to ideas or feelings
4. considerably	D. adj., similar to, reminding of something
5. culminate	E. n., appearance of being real, false impression
6. effectively	F. adv., well, successfully
7. emerge	G. v., to appear, develop
8. exaggerated	H. n., weakness and lack of strength
9. frailty	I. adv., a great deal, noticeably
10. gesture	J. n., a movement to express a feeling or idea
11. humorous[1]	K. n., the feeling of a place
12. illusion	L. adj., important, major
13. literal	M. n., difficulty, opposition
14. merge	N. v., to result in, end with
15. portray	O. v., to improve, perfect
16. prominent	P. adj., following the exact meaning
17. prop	Q. adj., famous
18. reminiscent	R. v., to combine
19. renowned	S. adj., made to seem more or bigger
20. sharpen	T. n., an object used by actors

[1]BrE: humourous

LIVEWORKSHEETS

Reading

The Art of Mime

Miming dates back to the theaters[1] of ancient Greece and Rome. Mimes use movements, gestures, and facial expressions to portray a character or an emotion or to tell a story—all without words. Over the centuries, the art of miming grew to include acrobatics, props, and costumes, culminating in the fine-tuned art form that people recognize[2] today.

Miming can be abstract, literal, or a combination of the two. Abstract miming usually has no plot or central character but simply expresses a feeling such as sorrow or desire. Literal miming, on the other hand, tells a story and is often comedic, using body gestures and facial expressions to present a main character facing some type of conflict in a humorous way, for example, acting out a tug-of-war without the aid of rope or other props.

The twentieth-century style of miming reflects outside influences of the period, most notably silent films, in which actors relied on their ability to communicate thoughts and stories through facial expressions and exaggerated gestures. Two superstars of the silent movie era, Buster Keaton and Charlie Chaplin, sharpened their miming skills in the theater before using them in movies. Both were so successful that they have continued to influence mimes and other live performers long after their deaths. People still consider Chaplin a master of the miming technique, in particular, his tragicomic "little tramp" character, who so effectively portrays human frailty through physical comedy, also known as slapstick.

Another twentieth-century influence on modern miming involves a renowned French mime and acting teacher named Etienne Decroux, who developed what was known as corporeal mime. This art form focused on the body, showing thought through movement, and became the prominent form of the modern mime era. In the 1930s, Decroux founded a mime school in Paris based on corporeal mime. One of his students, a young Frenchman named Marcel Marceau, emerged as what many consider the master of modern mime.

Marceau added his personal touch to the art of miming and presented it to the world for half a century on television and in theaters. Among his well-known illusions are portrayals of a man walking against the wind and a man trapped inside a shrinking box. Marceau also created his own special character, Bip the clown. White-faced and dressed in a striped shirt and floppy top hat with a red flower, Bip is reminiscent of both Chaplin's little tramp and Pierrot, the traditional downtrodden mime character from centuries earlier.

[1]BrE: theatres
[2]BrE: recognise

LIVEWORKSHEETS

Miming is still taught in dance, drama, and acting schools worldwide, although it has changed considerably since the ancient Greek plays and even since the solo performances of Marceau. Group miming is now in fashion, and sounds, lighting, and other special effects are included to help create the desired atmosphere. Current examples include the U.S. dance troupe Pilobolus, which merges modern dance, acrobatics, gymnastics, and mime to create elaborate geometric shapes with their bodies, and the Canadian Cirque du Soleil, which uses lighting, spectacular costumes, and special effects to produce striking illusions.

Answer the questions about **The Art of Mime.**

Questions 1–8

Complete the summary using words from the list below.

Mime is a type of theater performance that uses **1**..... and expressions to tell a story or show a character. There are two types of mime. The first is **2**..... mime, which tells a story and is often **3**..... . It makes people laugh. The second is **4**..... mime, which portrays feelings. Two influential actors **5**..... during the silent film era. They were Charlie Chaplin and Buster Keaton, whose years of experience in the theater **6**..... in miming skills that they were able to use effectively in silent films. Their techniques influenced mimes for many years. The French mime Etienne Decroux developed the form known as corporeal mime. One of his students, Marcel Marceau, became a prominent modern mime. Marceau's **7**..... illusions include a man walking against the wind and a man trapped in a box. Now mimes often perform in groups. They have **8**..... a variety of skills, such as dance, acrobatics, and gymnastics, as well as mime, in their performances.

abstract	gestures	merged	sharpened
conflicts	humorous	props	
culminated	illusion	reminiscent	
emerged	literal	renowned	

LIVEWORKSHEETS

My Words

Write the words that are new to you. Look them up in the dictionary and write their definitions.

Words	Definitions

LIVEWORKSHEETS