Task 1

Read two texts connected with obeying social norms. For questions 4.1.–4.7., choose the answer that best matches the text and circle the appropriate letter (A, B, C or D).

Text 1

AN EVENING AT THE OPERA

On a January evening in the early seventies, Christine Nilsson was singing in *Faust* at the Academy of Music in New York. It was Madame Nilsson's first appearance that winter, and what the daily press described as "an exceptionally brilliant audience" had gathered to hear her.

Though there was already talk of the erection of a new Opera House which would compete in costliness and splendour with those of the great European capitals, the world of fashion was still content to reassemble every winter in the shabby red and gold boxes of the sociable old Academy. Conservatives cherished it for being small and inconvenient, and thus keeping out the "new people" whom they were beginning to dread and yet be drawn to; the sentimental clung to it for its historic associations, and the musical for its acoustics, always so problematic a quality in halls built for the hearing of music.

When Newland Archer opened the door at the back of the club box, the curtain had just gone up on the garden scene. There was no reason why the young man should not have come earlier, for he had dined at seven, alone with his mother and sister, and had lingered afterward over a cigar in the Gothic library with glazed black-walnut bookcases and ornately carved chairs. But New York was a metropolis, and he was perfectly aware that in metropolises it was "not the thing" for a man of his standing to arrive early at the opera; and what was or was not "the thing" played a part as important in Newland Archer's New York as the inscrutable totem terrors that had ruled the destinies of his forefathers thousands of years ago.

Newland was one of those people for whom thinking about a pleasure to come provided a subtler satisfaction than its realisation. This was especially the case when the pleasure was a delicate one, and on this occasion, the moment he looked forward to was particularly rare and exquisite in quality. If he had timed his arrival in accord with the prima donna's stage manager he could not have entered the Academy at a more significant moment than just as she was singing: "He loves me--he loves me not--HE LOVES ME!--" and sprinkling the falling daisy petals with notes as clear as dew.

She sang, of course, "M'ama!" and not "he loves me," since an unalterable and unquestioned law of the musical world required that the German text of French operas sung by Swedish artists should be translated into Italian for the clearer understanding of English-speaking audiences. This seemed as natural to Newland Archer as all the other conventions on which his life was moulded: such as the duty of using two silver-backed brushes with his monogram in blue enamel to part his hair, and of never appearing in society without a flower (preferably a gardenia) in his buttonhole.

adapted from The Age of Innocence by Edith Wharton

LIVEWORKSHEETS

4.1. Which of the following sentences is NOT true?

A. There was a general consensus that opera needed a more prestigious venue than the Academy.

B. Regular operagoers still delighted in the familiar atmosphere of the Academy.

C. The Academy concert hall was appreciated by some for its acoustics.

D. Conservatives had ambivalent feelings about the "new people".

4.2. Why did Newland Archer arrive late at the opera house?

A. A family dinner he had attended coincided with the beginning of the performance.

B. He wanted to manifest his lack of regard for Madame Nilsson.

C. Engrossed in a book, he had lost track of time in the library.

D. In his social circle it was considered appropriate.

4.3.

> She sang, of course, "M'ama!" and not "he loves me," since an unalterable and unquestioned law of the musical world required that the German text of French operas sung by Swedish artists should be translated into Italian for the clearer understanding of English-speaking audiences.

The above sentence is an example of the narrator's

A. prejudice.

B. sense of humour.

C. anxiety.

D. lack of knowledge.

LIVEWORKSHEETS

Task 2

Read the article. Four fragments have been removed from the text. Complete each gap (5.1.–5.4.) with the fragment which fits best and put the appropriate letter (A–E) in each gap. There is one fragment which you do not need to use.

BANKSY AUCTION STUNT LEAVES ART WORLD IN SHREDS

The art world experienced shockwaves on 5th October 2018, as the dramatic news broke. The mysterious street artist known as Banksy made history when one of his paintings, *Girl with Balloon,* partially shredded itself minutes after being purchased for $1.4 million at a Sotheby's auction. **5.1.** _____ Did the painting become worthless? What was the point of this prank? The event has opened a range of questions which still remain unanswered.

Until that memorable evening, the world's most famous self-destructing work of art had been Jean Tinguely's *Homage to New York*. The Swiss artist's sculpture − a motorized contraption which was twenty-seven-feet tall and incorporated a bathtub, a self-playing piano, drums, a go-kart, a weather balloon, and much more − went up in smoke in the garden at *MOMA* in 1960, as a couple of hundred people looked on. Before the piece was able to fully destroy itself, the fire department stepped in. **5.2.** _____ It would be interesting to know if anyone ever paid it.

The self-destruction of Banksy's *Girl with Balloon*, like that of Tinguely's sculpture, was halted before the job was complete. The stunt could have been intended to mock the spectacle of art being reduced to a price tag. **5.3.** _____ The fact that he immediately posted on Instagram a video of the stunt which received nearly nine million views within a week is arguably another proof of his attention seeking. The clip, which also purports to show Banksy concealing a shredder inside the painting's thick frame years ago when the painting was completed, is captioned with the quote, "The urge to destroy is also a creative urge."

While a buyer would normally be disappointed, to say the least, after a new purchase self-destructed, it wasn't the case on this occasion. **5.4.** _____ At the same time the enigmatic artist confirmed his legendary status, creating rabid demand for his works. Sheer genius! Everybody gains. And on top of that a new verb has entered the English lexicon — to "Banksy" – which means to make a creative leap that breaks the mold and begins a remarkable new conversation.

adapted from https://www.newyorker.com; https://eu.freep.com

LIVEWORKSHEETS

A. By letting his work burn, the artist made a powerful statement in a perfectly set stage. Although this critique of art-world commerce set tongues wagging, it is debatable whether it could rise above an empty gesture and actually change anything.

B. An eyewitness later related what followed. "Out of the audience stepped a man who presented the artist with a document the latter took to be an expression of artistic enthusiasm, but which turned out to be a fine for disturbing the peace and violating the health and safety regulations."

C. This dramatic finale to the evening sale, which took place during the climax of the busiest week in the London art market, left the art world stunned, but at the same time also puzzled.

D. Banksy's *Girl with Balloon* had been increasing in value by about 20% a year and the stunt at the auction would only propel this further, thus ensuring the new owner a significant return on their investment.

E. But since it was clearly also a bid for more notoriety, a cynic might rather call this Banksy's most successful artwork yet. For an artist allegedly bent on maintaining anonymity, Banksy does not shy away from the limelight.

LIVEWORKSHEETS