

THE ART OF MIME

Words

Write the letter of each definition with the word it defines. If you don't know the definition, use the context of the reading passage to help you. Look for the words in bold as you read the passage.

PARAGRAPH 1

| Words | Definitions |
|--------------------------|--|
| 1 gesture | A v., to result in; end with |
| 2 portray | B n., a movement to express a feeling or idea |
| 3 prop | C v., to represent; act out |
| 4 culminate | D n., object used by actors |

PARAGRAPH 2

| Words | Definitions |
|--------------------------------------|---|
| 5 abstract | E adj., not concrete; related to ideas or feelings |
| 6 literal | F n., difficulty; opposition |
| 7 conflict | G adj., funny; entertaining |
| 8 humorous ¹ | H adj., following the exact meaning |

PARAGRAPH 3

| Words | Definitions |
|-----------------------------|--|
| 9 exaggerated | I adv., well; successfully |
| 10 sharpen | J adj., made to seem more or bigger |
| 11 effectively | K n., weakness and lack of strength |
| 12 frailty | L v., to improve; perfect |

¹BrE: humourous

PARAGRAPHS 4–5

| Words | Definitions |
|---------------------------|---|
| 13 renowned | M v., to appear; develop |
| 14 prominent | N n., appearance of being real; false impression |
| 15 emerge | O adj., important; major |
| 16 illusion | P adj., famous |

PARAGRAPHS 5–6

| Words | Definitions |
|------------------------------|---|
| 17 reminiscent | Q n., the feeling of a place |
| 18 considerably | R adv., a great deal; noticeably |
| 19 atmosphere | S v., to combine |
| 20 merge | T adj., similar to; reminding of something |

Reading

The Art of Mime

- (1) Miming dates back to the theaters¹ 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 recognize² today.
- (2) 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.

¹BrE: theatres

²BrE: recognise

(3) 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.

(4) 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.

(5) 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.

(6) 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 1-7

Complete the summary using words from the list below.

abstract
conflicts
emerged

gestures
humorous
illusion

literal
merged
props

renowned
sharpened

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 culminated 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 6..... illusions include a man walking against the wind and a man trapped in a box. Now mimes often perform in groups. They have 7..... a variety of skills, such as dance, acrobatics, and gymnastics, as well as mime, in their performances.

Word Families**A**

Complete each sentence with the correct word from the word family chart. Make nouns plural where necessary. Use the correct form of verbs.

| adjective | adverb |
|--------------|--------------|
| considerable | considerably |

- 1 It takes skill to perform mime.
- 2 The mime's audiences grew as word of his skill spread.

| noun | verb | adjective | adverb |
|--------|--------|-----------|-------------|
| effect | effect | effective | effectively |

- 3 He worked hard to change.
- 4 A really mime performance makes the audience believe in the illusion.
- 5 His skilled performance was the of years of experience.
- 6 A skilled mime can perform a variety of illusions.

| noun | verb | adjective |
|--------------|------------|-------------|
| exaggeration | exaggerate | exaggerated |

- 7 The gestures of a mime are used for humorous effect.
- 8 A mime uses to create illusions.
- 9 A mime may certain gestures.

| noun | adjective |
|---------|-----------|
| frailty | frail |

- 10 Humans are, and mimes can make us laugh at this.
- 11 Mimes can make us laugh at our own

| noun | noun | verb |
|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| portrayal | portrayer | portray |

12 Marcel Marceau was the of Bip the Clown.

13 Charlie Chaplin is renowned for his of the Little Tramp character.

14 Mimes common situations in humorous ways.

| noun | verb | adjective |
|--------------|-------------|------------------|
| reminiscence | reminisce | reminiscent |

15 Marcel Marceau's clown character was of characters performed by earlier mimes.

16 People like to about the great performers of the past.

17 of the early days of film would include stories of stars such as Charlie Chaplin and Buster Keaton.

Word Families

B

Choose the correct word family member from the list below to complete each blank.

| | | |
|-----------------------|--------------|-------------|
| 1 exaggeration | exaggerate | exaggerated |
| 2 effect | effective | effectively |
| 3 considerable | considerably | |
| 4 portrayal | portrayer | portray |
| 5 frailties | frail | |
| 6 reminiscence | reminisce | reminiscent |

Everyone enjoys watching mimes perform. A really good mime makes the job look easy, but in reality it is impossible to **1**..... the skill

required to perform mime **2**..... . It takes a **3**..... amount of time to develop techniques and learn to perform them well. Mimes need to be able to **4**..... characters who will interest their audience, as well as perform a variety of illusions. The best mimes can show us our **5**..... while making us laugh at ourselves at the same time. Although mime has changed over the years, people still **6**..... about some of the popular mimes of the past, who have inspired today's performers.

Paraphrases

Read the sentence from the reading passage. Then, choose the sentence that has the same meaning.

1 *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 down-trodden mime character from centuries earlier.* (paragraph 5)

A Bip brought back interest in the old tradition of mime.
B Bip was more successful than the characters that came before him.
C Bip reminds us of famous mime characters from the past.

2 *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.* (paragraph 6)

A Dancers and actors around the world also learn how to perform mime.
B People are still interested in mime, although it is very different from the mime of the past.
C Opinions about mime have changed over time, and it has become very popular.

Dictionary Skill

DIFFERENT MEANINGS

Many words have more than one meaning.

Read the definitions below. Then read the sentences and write the letter of the correct definition for each sentence.

QUESTIONS 1–2

at-mo-sphere [AT-mu-sfeer]

A noun. the feeling of a place

B noun. the mixture of gases surrounding some planets

..... 1 Earth's *atmosphere* helps hold warmth from the sun.

..... 2 The bright lighting in the theater created a happy *atmosphere*.

QUESTIONS 3–4

ef-fect [i-FEKT]

A noun. result

B noun. special sound or lighting in a theater or movie

..... 3 The *effect* of watching Charlie Chaplin's Little Tramp character is a mixture of sadness and laughter.

..... 4 Modern mime performances often include special *effects* as part of the illusions they create.

ListeningTrack
12

*Listen to the talk. Complete the notes below.
Write **NO MORE THAN ONE WORD** for each answer.*

Mime

Performed without **1**

2 of everyday activities

- climbing stairs
- opening a window

Use **3** to show presence of objects

Act out stories

- **4** different characters
- Show the characters in **5**

Unit 4

Writing (Task 1)

The chart¹ below shows information about ticket sales for performances at the National Theater over a six-month period.

Summarize² the information by selecting and reporting the main information and making comparisons.

Write at least 150 words.

**National Theater
Ticket Sales: January–June**

| Performers | Performance title | Number of tickets sold |
|-----------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------------|
| National Mime Troupe | “Humorous Situations” | 5,000 |
| City Opera | <i>Carmen</i> | 2,500 |
| National Symphony Orchestra | “Works of Beethoven” | 3,000 |
| City Ballet | <i>Swan Lake</i> | 4,750 |
| Rock Stars Rock Band | “Rock Stars Live!” | 4,750 |

Speaking

Talk about the following topics:

When you see a live performance, do you prefer humorous types of performances or more serious types? Why?

Who are some of the more renowned performers in your country?

Do you enjoy movies that portray real people and events, or do you prefer movies with made-up stories?

¹BrE: table

²BrE: summarise