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

[1]BrE: humourous

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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 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.

(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.

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

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(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.

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

Questions 1–7

Complete the summary using words from the list below.

abstract	gestures	literal	renowned
conflicts	humorous	merged	sharpened
emerged	illusion	props	

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.

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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 ..... .

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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

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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.

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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.

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Listening

Track 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** .....

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Writing (Task 1)

The chart[1] below shows information about ticket sales for performances at the National Theater over a six-month period.

Summarize[2] 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	*Carmen*	2,500
National Symphony Orchestra	"Works of Beethoven"	3,000
City Ballet	*Swan Lake*	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?

[1]BrE: table
[2]BrE: summarise

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