

Reading

Part 1 Themed texts

1 Quickly read the three extracts which are all concerned in some way with performing in public. What different types of 'performance' are mentioned?

2 Read the three extracts again and choose the best answer (A, B, C or D) for questions 1–6. The tip box will help you.

tip

If necessary, use the context to help you with unfamiliar words or phrases.

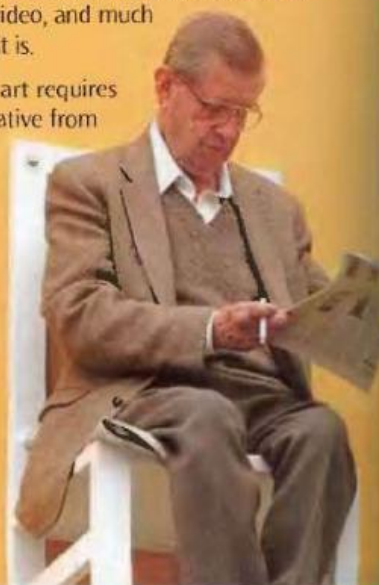


is it art?

The little boy on the bike is screaming: "He's a nutter! He's wearing tights on his head!" But Danny McCarthy walks on, his round glasses poking through the black stockings that cover his face, a battered suitcase in one hand, a brown paper parcel in the other. What the screaming child doesn't realise is that he is witnessing performance art. McCarthy, who lives in Ireland, is walking around London as part of an ongoing performance entitled *What Do You Do When You Get There and There is No There There?* which centres on the Irish experience of emigration.

Performance art became accepted in the 1970's, when conceptual art was in its heyday. Conceptual artists saw ideas as more important than the finished product. Performance became the execution of those ideas. Performance artists want to take their art directly to a public forum. They believe that looking at something on a wall in a gallery has an adverse affect on people because it puts them in a passive position. Performance art, therefore, is live, is not for sale, has no rules, and may entertain or shock. It can include painting, dance, video, and much more. It is art because its creator says it is.

Unlike conventional art, performance art requires an audience to construct its own narrative from the cues it gives. So perhaps that boy on the bike will make up a story about the 'nutter' with tights on his head. Maybe the story will impress a girl. Maybe he's already forgotten about it. Maybe it'll stay with him for ever. Maybe that's the mystery.



- 1 In the first paragraph, we learn that Danny McCarthy is
 - A a successful artist.
 - B down on his luck.
 - C not what he seems.
 - D a recent immigrant.
- 2 What does the writer suggest about performance art?
 - A The effects are hard to predict.
 - B It asks too much from an audience.
 - C It promises more than it gives.
 - D The appeal is a lasting one.

Giving a speech

You know the feeling. Your heart is running a marathon but the rest of you is standing still. There are butterflies in your stomach and you have an ominous feeling that something bad is going to happen. And the speech you've got to give is a few hours away!

If the idea of public speaking reduces you to a jelly, here are four steps you can follow to reduce your anxiety.

- 1 Be the first person to arrive at the venue.
- 2 Greet as many audience members as possible and exchange a few words with them. This will provide your audience with a vitally important initial impression; the speaker they have come to hear is interesting, accessible and warm. It will help you to know that here and there in your audience are listeners who already have a positive attitude towards you.
- 3 Picture in your mind a real two-way conversation. Don't stare blankly at the ceiling. Use gestures and facial expressions. You may think that there are 25 or 250 people watching you but, in terms of real communication, there are only two people in any room. The speaker and a single listener.
- 4 Ask questions during your speech, to individuals, to maintain a participatory feeling. One-quarter to one-half of your speech should literally be a discussion with the audience. That way it will not look or feel like a 'speech'.

Finally, remember that it isn't a 'speech' at all that you're delivering. It's an 'expanded conversation' with every person in the room.



- 3 What is one technique recommended for dealing with an audience?
 - A ask people who are well disposed towards you to join the audience
 - B find out in advance what kind of speaker the audience prefer
 - C get the support of the audience before you start
 - D do what you can to make your audience feel at home
- 4 According to the writer, public speakers should try to
 - A spend time answering questions.
 - B give a one-sided point of view.
 - C forget people have come to hear a speech.
 - D engage directly with the audience.



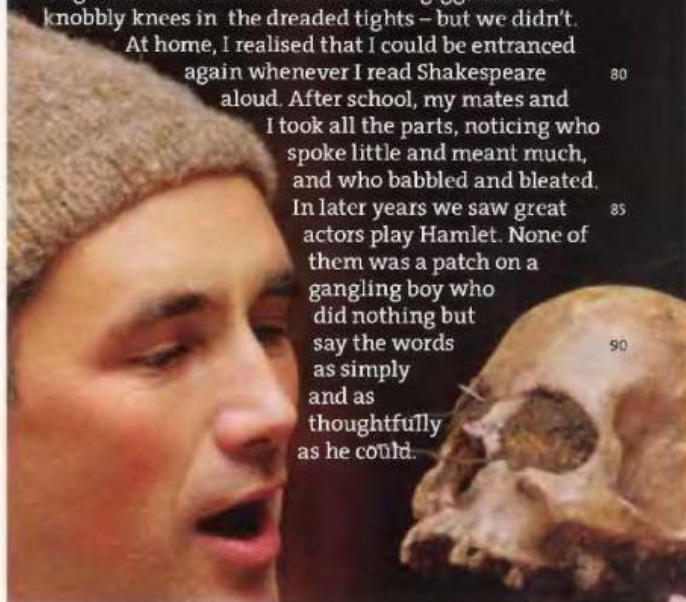
What I think of Shakespeare

A schoolchild watching a play by the Royal Shakespeare Company might think that a performance by such expert actors would be as good as it gets. But this is not always so. Because English is the first language of only some of the audience, no one – neither director nor actors – dare rely on Shakespeare's words. Instead they play the fool, doing anything to blur the line's delivery. In a production of *Romeo and Juliet* I once saw, the actors threw an orange to each other during the balcony scene.

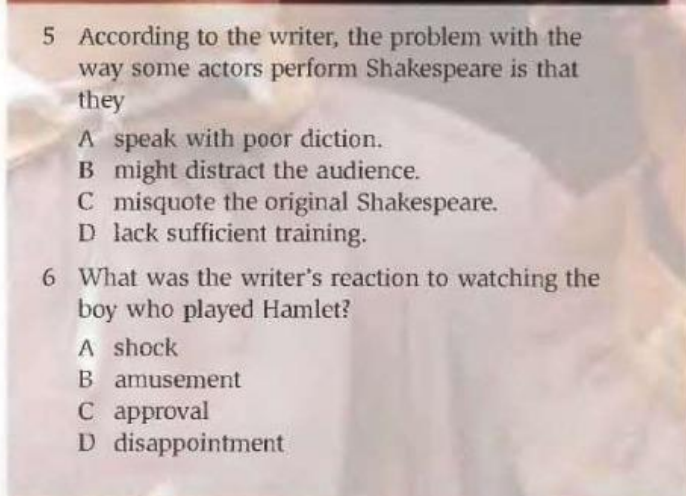
Shakespeare's theatre must be got off the page to be experienced fully, but not as in the mannered performances of today's leading actors. I remember going, as a 16-year-old, to a performance of *Hamlet* at a nearby school. Hamlet was a tall, fair boy of excruciating thinness. He had no technique, but he had Hamlet's words. He seemed hypnotised by the poetry. He listened to himself, as actors rarely do. What came through him, like sunlight through glass, was the strenuousness of Hamlet's struggle with disgust and disbelief. We could have giggled at his knobbly knees in the dreaded tights – but we didn't.

At home, I realised that I could be entranced again whenever I read Shakespeare aloud. After school, my mates and

I took all the parts, noticing who spoke little and meant much, and who babbled and bleated. In later years we saw great actors play Hamlet. None of them was a patch on a gangling boy who did nothing but say the words as simply and as thoughtfully as he could.



- 5 According to the writer, the problem with the way some actors perform Shakespeare is that they
 - A speak with poor diction.
 - B might distract the audience.
 - C misquote the original Shakespeare.
 - D lack sufficient training.
- 6 What was the writer's reaction to watching the boy who played Hamlet?
 - A shock
 - B amusement
 - C approval
 - D disappointment



Listening

Part 2 Sentence completion

- 1 Why do you think animated films appeal to both children and adults?
- 2 Read the exam task below about Pixar, a film studio which makes animated films, and decide what types of words are missing, e.g. nouns, adjectives, numbers, etc.
- 3  Listen to the radio programme and complete sentences 1–8.
- 4 What do you think makes an Oscar-winning film? Is it always the 'best' films that win Oscars?



The PIXAR animated film studio

'Renderfarm' is the name of a 1 at the Pixar film studios in San Francisco.

Pixar's rivals have found the film studio's success 2.

Pixar studios have been awarded 3 Oscars since 1995.

The qualities needed to produce good animated films are childishness and a lot of 4.

Pixar has found that it is not worthwhile trying to make animated characters which are 5.

It seems that Pixar have found a 6 for their films.

The most surprising thing in *The Incredibles* is the 7.

Occasionally, the 8 in the films are not understood by younger audiences.

