Part 3

Questions 11-15

For each question, choose the correct answer.

The Way to do Science

14-year-old Jim Doherty tells us the secret to be a good scientist

Whenever you want to know the right way to do something, it's always best to ask an expert. So last week I met with Doctor Watson, a successful scientist who has recently published a book on how to be a good scientist. As I would love to go to university to study science when I'm older, I was really interested to hear what he had to say. Here I'll try to give you his most useful advice.

First, and most important of all, never do things that bore you. If you're really interested in what you're doing, you'll probably produce valuable results, but if you're not, you will only waste your time, and probably discover nothing new at all.

Next, and rather strangely, Watson says you should always try to work with people who are cleverer than you are. 'It's a bit like learning to play tennis,' he says, 'you know you only really get better when you're playing someone who makes you work harder and try to reach that higher level.'

It sounds like hard work to me!

Thirdly, you have to be ready to take risks. You can't stay in the 'safety zone' all the time, feeling comfortable and knowing all the answers. Instead, science is about the difficult questions we haven't answered yet, and it's also about making some mistakes.

Last, and this is Watson's secret, you must always be willing to let others examine your work and ideas and listen to their views and opinions. Of course, you don't have to agree with every opinion you hear, but informed judgement from other scientists is the best way to check your work is correct and of value. If other experts approve of your work, it will make you more confident, and their doubts will certainly help your thinking.

By the time I left our meeting, I was beginning to see myself as another Galileo or Einstein. Of course, that's foolish, but I'm sure they would agree with the rules for science I had learnt from Dr Watson!

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11 The writer met with Dr Watson to

A give him some advice.
B write a book about him.
C find out how to be a good scientist.
D get a job as a scientist.

12 Watson believes that if you are not interested in your subject

A other people will see that you are bored.
B you will not be able to persuade people to help you.
C people will think you are wasting their time.
D your discoveries will look old and out of date.

13 Watson says that a scientist should

A only spend time with intelligent people.
B use sport to get to a higher level of work.
C avoid taking too many risks.
D not be worried about making mistakes.

14 According to Dr Watson, other scientists' opinions

A can help you check your work is correct.
B will make you less confident.
C are always correct.
D will make you doubt their work.

15 Which of the following best describes the writer of this article?

A A curious young scientist who is keen to learn.

B A friendly writer who is happy to share what he learns.

C A scientist who dreams of success instead of working for it.

D A writer who believes we have to work hard to understand science.

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