Test 1 Training Reading and Use of English Part 8

Task information

- In Part 8, there are ten questions.
- You have to read either one long text divided into (usually) four sections labelled A–D or four shorter texts labelled A–D.
- You have to find the text, or section of text, which answers each of the ten questions and write down the appropriate letter.
- Part 8 tests your ability to locate specific information relating to detail, opinion and attitude.

Reading the questions

1 Look at this extract from an exam question. Which words would you underline in it?

In which book review are the following mentioned?

1 a character with a resemblance to a real-life celebrity
2 a story that is partially based on the author's own childhood
3 a book which has not been adapted very successfully to another medium
4 a story that has an unexpected twist at the end
5 a gripping book with an eccentric main character
6 a detective story which holds the reader's attention until the very last page
7 an over-complicated and not totally convincing plot
8 a story which is set in the past but has a modern feel to it

Tip! It is important to read the questions carefully. It can help to underline or highlight key words so that you know what to focus on.

2 The texts are unlikely to use the same words as the questions. Answer these questions about the task in Exercise 1.

1 What phrase might convey the idea of *having a resemblance to*?
2 What adjective might be used to say that a text is based on the author's life?
3 What is the most likely other medium for a book to be adapted to?
4 Which of these phrases might be used to replace *unexpected twist*: *unusual turn of events or surprising location*?
5 Which of these words might a reviewer use to convey a similar idea to *gripping*: *thrilling, amusing, spellbinding, puzzling, engrossing, inspiring*?
6 How might the reviewer convey the idea of an eccentric main character?
7 What phrase could be used instead of *detective story*?
8 What phrase might be used instead of *until the very last page*?
9 What would be another way of saying *over-complicated*?
10 How might the reviewer express the idea that he or she did not find the plot totally convincing?
11 How might a reviewer express the idea of a story being set in the past?
12 How might a reviewer express the idea that a story has a modern feel to it?

Tip! Try to think of synonyms or paraphrases for key words as you read the questions.

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Scanning

1 Take ten seconds to scan this text. What is it about?

Tip! In this part of the test, you should scan the text rather than read it in detail.

Science in Fiction

Science-fiction thrillers have a rich history. Erica Wagner picks her favourites.

By the time of his death in 2008, Michael Crichton had become the giant of the science-thriller genre. He was perhaps best known for his novel *Jurassic Park* – published in 1990 – and the film spin-offs of his books. (I say 'best known' but let's not forget that he was also the man behind the famous story of the little alien ET, who befriends a small boy.)

For my money, however, his finest and most frightening novel was one of the earliest: *The Andromeda Strain*, published in 1969. The novel builds on the premise that if we are ever to encounter aliens from another galaxy, they are much less likely to be little green men than microscopic life forms.

On a slightly jollier note, sticking to alien life, there's Carl Sagan's *Contact*, published in 1985, the tale of a radio astronomer who encounters a signal that could have been sent only by an intelligent life form. On one visit to the Jodrell Bank Observatory in Cheshire, I was heartened to discover that this book (and the 1997 film starring Jodie Foster) was a favourite of the astronomers there.

But back to putting a shiver down your spine. How about Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*? First published, anonymously, in 1818, it shows that even in what the writer and academic Richard Holmes so memorably termed 'The Age of Wonder', the dark side of scientific research was never far from imaginative minds.

2 **Now take one minute and find the answers to these questions about names and numbers. The questions do not follow the order of the text.**

1 Who is the author of this article?
2 Which is the oldest book she mentions?
3 Which is the most modern?
4 What can be found in Cheshire?
5 Which creations bearing Michael Crichton's name are mentioned in the article?
6 Which of these does the reviewer say she likes most?
7 Which of Jodie Foster's films is mentioned in this article?
8 Whose name was on the title page of the first edition of *Frankenstein*?
9 When was the book that the Jodrell Bank astronomers like published?
10 Who coined the phrase 'The Age of Wonder'?
11 Which age does 'The Age of Wonder' refer to?
12 When did Michael Crichton die?

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Action plan

1 Read the introduction to the text(s) to get a general idea of what you are going to read about.
2 Remember that the questions come before the text(s), as you are supposed to focus on these first.
3 In this task, the questions do not match the order in which the answers appear in the text(s).
4 Skim the text(s) to get a quick impression of the content. Do not read it/them in detail.
5 Read each question and scan the text(s) to find the information or opinion that you need.
6 Remember to check your answers. Check the questions against the text(s).
7 The questions usually use different words to communicate the ideas in the text(s), so if you find identical words in the question and the text(s), it does not mean you have found the right answer.

Follow the exam instructions, using the advice to help you.

You are going to read four short articles by people who have climbed Mount Everest. For questions **47–56**, choose from the articles (**A–D**). The articles may be chosen more than once.

Mark your answers **on the separate answer sheet.**

In which article is the following mentioned?

a remarkable coincidence	47
a suggestion that other climbers sometimes take risks	48
a determination to continue climbing despite a problem	49
an awareness of the dangers of the descent	50
an obsession the climber briefly experienced	51
the temporary nature of the sense of achievement	52
the fact that the writer made the climb without some support that could have been used	53
the appeal of climbing to one of the senses other than sight	54
something that failed to live up to expectations	55
a claim that the writer rejects	56

Advice

47 This answer should stand out, as it is based on a surprising anecdote.

48 It should be straightforward to pick up the references to other people, as most of the texts are focusing on the writer's own intense feelings.

49 Several of the texts refer to a problem, but only one does so in a way that matches the whole phrase.

50 The reference to going back down the mountain may be indirect as long as it is unarguably in the text.

51 You will see the word 'obsessed' in one of the texts but, in fact, this makes it the least likely text to contain the answer to this question.

52 What verb is often used to describe the gradual disappearance of a feeling (or a colour)? If you see this word in a text, it will take you to the answer.

53 The support that most climbers use might refer to sherpas, oxygen or types of equipment – which text refers to managing without one of these?

54 The other four senses are hearing, smell, touch and taste – which of these is commented on specifically in one of the texts?

55 How do you feel if something 'failed to live up to expectations'? You are likely to find that word, or something very similar, in the text.

56 What is another word for 'rejecting' another person's claim or belief? Bearing in mind other possible ways of expressing this idea may help you to locate the answer.

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How I felt on conquering Everest

Four climbers who succeeded in climbing the world's highest mountain write about how they felt when they reached the summit.

A Roddy Mackenzie

It has occasionally been claimed that people climb for the smell of it. Air at very high altitude smells completely different. When I reached the South Summit, I was suffering from a lack of Spanish olives. I was preoccupied with thoughts of a tin of them sitting in my tent at base camp. This was the result of a very intense dream about olives that was interrupted by the alarm summoning me to our summit attempt. At the South Summit, the view of the main summit fascinated me from a mountaineering point of view and all dreaming of olives evaporated. On the summit, I felt a mixture of apprehension and curiosity. It seemed to me that the curvature of the Earth was apparent, and I spent some time trying to think of a means to test if this was a real observation or an illusion. Many people on the Indian subcontinent believe that the ascent of Everest confers on the climber a greater wisdom in manifold subjects. That is something I do not agree with but never dispute.

B Anna Czerwinska

When I reached the South Summit, I looked back at the mists rising from the valleys and I could feel their damp touch on my face. They prevented me from looking down on the long painful way up, but it was not only that. The curtain of mist had closed over my past. My oxygen was running out, and common sense demanded that I return, but before long I was climbing on an exposed ridge to the foot of the Hillary Step. A crampon had come undone and I painfully put it on again. Everest was doing everything to discourage me. I registered that dreamily and, as if dreaming, conquered the final metres of the snowy slope. Suddenly the clouds above me lifted in one blue moment and, very low down, I saw a rugged precipitous ridge. The wind was growing stronger and it was snowing lightly. I did not get the beautiful view as a reward and I felt fleetingly disappointed. However, those few minutes on the highest spot on Earth were worth every effort and have given me joy ever since.

C Andy Politz

On the summit, I set out to get some sponsor photos, which at 8,850 metres without oxygen gives a unique insight into hypoxia. At one point, I looked down at Nepal and the South East Ridge only to be surprised by another climber coming up through the clouds. He was startled to see someone looking down at him. He was also climbing without oxygen and was tiring. The other thought I had, remembering six years of attempting to climb Everest, was 'He could take my picture'. Through scudding cloud, I saw that the colour and design of his clothing were unmistakably French. I do not speak French. As this Frenchman was taking his last steps to the summit, I made the international hand sign for 'Stop and I'll take your picture'. While I was struggling to focus the camera, he looked hard at me and exclaimed 'Andy!' To my amazement, it was my close friend Ed Viestours on his second ascent of the mountain.

D Frits Vrijlandt

I approached Everest with respect and was well aware of being just a small human being. An excellent preparation is very important but far from a guarantee that you'll reach the summit. You have to be mentally ready to go for it, sufficiently experienced and a brave and careful climber. Before our summit bid, our team agreed that returning without injuries was our main objective. Some people can be blindly obsessed by Everest. I reached the top after eight hours of climbing. After I contacted base camp and they had congratulated me, I replied, 'Thank you, but first I have to get back down safely.' After my return to Kathmandu, I felt like a super-being because I had stood on the top of the world. I still had this feeling when I came back home but it soon faded away. The world or your life doesn't change because you climbed a mountain, even if it is the highest. But climbing Everest was a spiritual experience for me. It puts your feet back on the surface of mother Earth.

Follow-up

How could you improve your performance in this kind of task in future?

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