Part 7

You are going to read a magazine article about some young ballet dancers. For questions **43–52**, choose from the people (**A–D**). The people may be chosen more than once.

Mark your answers on the separate answer sheet.

Which person

says that they get their inspiration from different sources?	**43**	
is irritated by the inaccurate ideas people have about ballet dancers?	**44**	
says that the sacrifices they made were worth it?	**45**	
describes how they felt about a change that was forced on them?	**46**	
explains how ballet involves combining several actions simultaneously?	**47**	
says that they have changed their attitude to criticism?	**48**	
believes that their attitude to training makes them untypical?	**49**	
describes how they were put off ballet by seeing the talent of others?	**50**	
says that it took a while for them to demonstrate their potential?	**51**	
says that they have found a way of dealing with their feelings prior to going on stage?	**52**	

LIVEWORKSHEETS

Young ballet dancers

A Maria Duncan

I was four when I reluctantly attended my first ballet class. I didn't take to it initially and there was little sign that I'd ever develop a genuine passion for it. I eventually began to show some promise, but my parents weren't happy with the dance school, and invested time and energy into finding a new one. I didn't see what the fuss was about because I got on well with my teacher and I was disappointed when the new one turned out to be much stricter. For ballet dancers, the reality is that artistic perfection can never be achieved. This used to frustrate me, but I've learnt to respond more positively to negative comments I get. Even people who've never tried ballet know how tough it is. From an early age, my mother instilled in me the importance of discipline and I appreciate that now, because I wouldn't have developed it independently.

B Leon Robson

It's hard to imagine something that makes more demands on your muscles and joints than ballet. Ask anyone who's attended a few classes as a hobby. They'll be aching afterwards in places they didn't know existed – and that includes fitness fanatics! There are lots of rather silly misconceptions about ballet dancers, and I think some things are exaggerated by the media. For a start, we don't all live in isolation, only mixing with other dancers. Anyway, the highlight of any dancer's life is taking part in a performance. I used to get very nervous beforehand, though, to the point where I could barely perform, but I've since learnt a few strategies I can apply, to good effect. And after a show, I take ages to unwind. I'm still buzzing and I tend to relive the excitement of the experience. I don't dwell on my errors too much, though.

C Melanie Haig

I started young, as most ballet dancers do, and seemed to show an aptitude for it more or less immediately. I remember being taken by my teacher to visit a professional ballet school and being intimidated by how good the girls were there, almost to the point of giving up. I sometimes think that the appeal of ballet to audiences is that they understand there's no way to achieve elegance and beauty without exceptional discipline, training and even physical pain. Ballet is challenging because a dancer is doing a number of things at any given moment to create something that seems effortless. Some of these, like lifting the stomach up while tensing leg muscles and relaxing the neck, can feel unnatural, and others, like standing on your toes, can even cause injury if repeated time and time again – as they inevitably are.

D Peter Moreno

While most people, including even the best ballet dancers, might think the routine of having to train for several hours every day is tough, I find it strangely reassuring and comforting rather than boring or restrictive. And it's not as if training ends when I leave the ballet school. At home I find myself doing basic exercises even while I'm watching TV or brushing my teeth. Ballet dominates your whole life – that was certainly my experience. I don't regret missing out on doing sport and not going to parties, though – I'm a far better dancer as a result. I've got loads of videos of top ballet dancers performing, some of them from many years ago and others more contemporary. I don't have a particular role model I'm obsessed with or think stands out for me. I pick up ideas from a range of dancers and styles.

LIVEWORKSHEETS