

READING COMPREHENSION

TEXT A

You are going to read an article about fantasy literature. For questions 1-6, choose the answer (A, B, C or D) which you think fits best according to the text.

A GENRE OF BRIGHT CONTRASTING COLOURS

Some people may think that after the unexpected success of *Harry Potter* it will be difficult to come up with anything just as attractive in fantasy literature. But they seem to be wrong. The New York Times bestseller lists show that a fantasy novel by a teenager from Paradise Valley, Montana, has taken over the number one place that *Harry* used to occupy, while in France, a 14-year-old girl has just had a very successful fantasy debut. In fact, from Australia to Europe to America enthusiasm for fantasy is more intense than ever.

It is always hard to explain why something is liked by many at a certain point of time, but definitely fantasy literature meets a need of the moment. At first glance, it looks as if it is just escapism: this kind of reading helps in forgetting about bad, difficult, boring and worrying aspects of everyday life. Magic, strangeness, and the unexpected take readers into a totally different world, and, as a result, they do not think about other things.

But closer inspection shows that fantasy has its origins in myth, legend and fairytale, and escapism is not the whole story. Similarly to these three, fantasy offers explanation of some basic and crucial aspects of human existence, as fairy stories of all kinds are rich in psychological meaning. The point is then that such stories teach us about death and life, about the world's terrors and hopes, about what is good and bad.

It should be pointed out that fantasy literature offers readers a moral universe in which what is good and what is bad is very clearly defined. Readers know who or what is good and evil and they know whose side they are on. In real life, things are almost never black or white but they come in different shades of grey, so reading about a world in which there is clear moral order is a source of true psychological comfort.

It should not come as a surprise then that two fantasy books that have recently made it to the top of bestseller lists were written by teenagers: the chaos and instability of the period of growing up create a need for order and certainty. Besides, who will have a more vivid, creative and fresh imagination than very young writers?

Adapted from *Financial Times*, 31.01-1.02.2004

1. The author suggests that fantasy literature
 - A) is gaining in popularity.
 - B) is most popular on three continents.
 - C) cannot be popular with everyone.
 - D) appeals mostly to adolescents.
2. According to the author, fantasy literature seemingly offers
 - A) unexpected endings.
 - B) a relief from real-life problems.
 - C) relatively easy and enjoyable reading.
 - D) a key to solving everyday problems.
3. The deeper value of this kind of literature is that it helps readers
 - A) understand better the world they live in.
 - B) see how myths, legends and fairytales function.
 - C) closely inspect myths, legends and fairytales.
 - D) identify the origin of other literary genres.
4. In the world of fantasy decisions about what is right and wrong are
 - A) difficult to make.
 - B) easy to make.
 - C) meaningful for the reader.
 - D) frequently arbitrary.
5. The recent success of teenage fantasy writers shows that
 - A) almost anyone can create imaginary worlds.
 - B) older writers lack imagination.
 - C) chaos and instability can be used well.
 - D) in this way teenagers' needs are satisfied.
6. The author of the text
 - A) is worried that so many people read fantasy books.
 - B) thinks that fantasy may explain human existence.
 - C) wants to encourage readers to start writing fantasy.
 - D) offers explanation why fantasy literature is widely read.

TEXT B

You are going to read an article about the ways music affects different people. Six sentences have been removed from the article. Choose from the sentences A –G the one which fits each gap (7-12). There is one extra sentence which you do not need to use.

Music's beneficial effects on mental health have been known for thousands of years. **7.** Military bands use music to build confidence and courage. Sporting events provide music to rouse enthusiasm. Schoolchildren use music to memorize their ABCs. Shopping malls play music to keep consumers in the store. Dentists play music to help calm nervous patients. Modern research supports well-known wisdom that music improves mood and confidence.

Despite differences in tastes, there are some common responses to music. Babies love lullabies. Certain kinds of music make almost everyone feel hostility, sadness, tension, and exhaustion. On the other hand, pop, rock, oldies and classical music help people feel happier and more optimistic, friendly, relaxed, and calm.

Everyone who has learned their ABCs knows that it is easier to memorize a list if it is set to music. Scientific research supports common experience that pairing music with rhythm and pitch enhances learning and remembering. **8.** First, it can be used as a reward for desired behaviour. For example, for paying attention to homework for 10 minutes, a child can be rewarded with the opportunity to listen to music for 5 minutes. Second, it can be used to help enhance attention to "boring" academic tasks such as memorization, using songs, rhythms, and dance or movement to enhance the interest of the lists to be memorized. Instrumental baroque music is great for improving attention and reasoning. For students, playing background music is not distracting. Third, musical cues can be used to help organize activities – one kind of music for one activity (studying), another for a different activity (eating), and a third kind for heading to bed. Fourth, studies show that calming music can promote pro-social behavior and decrease impulsive behavior.

Many people find familiar music comforting and calming. In fact, music is so effective in reducing anxiety, it is often used in dental, preoperative, and radiation therapy settings to help patients cope with their worries about procedures. Music helps decrease anxiety in the elderly, new mothers, and children too. Any kind of relaxing, calming music can contribute to calmer moods. **9.**

An analysis of 5 studies on music for depression concluded that music therapy is not only acceptable for depressed patients, but it actually helps improve their moods. Music has proven useful in helping patients with serious medical illnesses such as cancer, burns, and multiple sclerosis who are also depressed. **10.**

Many people listen to soothing music to help them fall asleep. **11.** Just don't try listening to lively dance music or rousing marches before you aim to fall asleep. However, if you're trying to wake up in the morning, go for the fast-tempo music rather than lullabies.

Since ancient times, it has been known that certain kinds of music can help soothe away stress. **12.** Knowing that certain kinds of music can alleviate stress is one thing; being mindful in choosing what kind of music to listen to is another. Choose your musical intake as carefully as you choose your food and friends.

- A. It can be combined with cognitive therapy to lower anxiety even more effectively than conventional therapy alone.
- B. This practice is supported by studies in a variety of settings.
- C. If it can help in these situations, it may be able to help you and your loved ones experience more positive moods.
- D. Music helps children and adolescents with attention problems in several ways.
- E. Adults are thought to perceive music differently altogether.
- F. On the other hand, every parent of a teenager knows that certain kinds of music, particularly at high volumes, can induce stress.
- G. It has been used to help soothe stress.

TEXT C

Read the article below and find words and phrases that mean the same as the words and expressions in 13-24.

Is Too Much Technology Bad For Students?

A few weeks ago, I was in the middle of a random conversation with my mother; she said something interesting that sparked a debate in my head. “Technology has made life so easy,” she said, “but too much technology is turning kids lazy.”

While I do think that technological advancements have made our lives much easier compared to the hardships faced by our previous generations, I wondered out loud if there is such a thing as “too much technology”.

We need to acknowledge that we do live in a world of tech overdose. Just compare your current day-to-day routine with the one you followed 5 years ago. It is surprising how dependent we are on modern technology.

We live in the world of iPhones, laptops, fitbits, Facebook, Amazon, Uber, Netflix, tons of food delivery apps, etc. Most students today spend long hours staring at their mobile phones either hooked to social media or some other app. Such a dependency on technology is excessive but I’m not an old school cynic or tech hater; I love Edtech and always rely on technology to make lessons interesting for students.

Excessive technology in our lives is not necessarily a bad thing. It can make our lives easier by saving time, money, and energy. But there are some negative aspects of being over-reliant on technology.

Spending long hours on social media makes children vulnerable to cyberbullying, trolling and they can waste precious hours just scrolling up and down their timelines.

Many health experts have stated more than once that excessive use of tech gadgets can have harmful effects on children’s physical and mental health.

Since most tech tools have a visual interface, there is a risk of eyesight-related issues associated with it. The growing rates of obesity, hypertension, and diabetes are a consequence of a sedentary lifestyle powered by the addictive nature of technology.

Apart from physical health issues, there has been a steep rise in cases of depression, anxiety, and bipolar disorder, thanks to the overuse of mobile phones, laptops, social media, and internet in general.

Technology has made us great communicators... online. We don’t hesitate or fumble before talking to a stranger or expressing our views and technology has turned many of our students into armchair activists!

But when it comes to conversing with someone in real life, basic skills of communication are lacking.

Some students are so engrossed in their smartphones they ‘detach’ from reality; they are unaware of what’s happening around them, both literally and figuratively. They might like a post about depression on social media or tweet about the war in Syria, but they are increasingly turning blind to people who are suffering around them.

Over-utilising Edtech in the classroom can overwhelm students and hinder their learning process.

For example: if a teacher uses a PowerPoint presentation, writes on the board and encourages students to check out a Maths app while teaching a lesson, students will find it difficult to juggle between visual cues from all the three different platforms.

Technology combined with education is a very powerful tool that can change the way we learn, think, and see the world. But, it is also essential to strike a perfect balance between Edtech learning and traditional learning so that we can ensure the overall development of our students.

<https://www.teachertoolkit.co.uk/2018/06/19/too-much-technology/>

13. Made, done, or happening without a method or conscious decision.

14. The process of promoting a cause or plan.

15. Severe suffering.

16. Accept or admit the existence or truth of.

17. A sequence of actions regularly followed.

18. Addicted.

19. More than is necessary, normal, or desirable; immoderate.

20. Too dependent on someone or something.

21. Exposed to the possibility of being attacked or harmed, either physically
or emotionally.

22. (of a person) tending to spend much time seated; somewhat inactive.

23. Do something clumsily.

24. Make certain that something will occur or be the case.

WRITING

YOU MUST ANSWER THIS QUESTION. WRITE YOUR ANSWER IN 200-250 WORDS IN AN APPROPRIATE STYLE.

In your English class you have been talking about the role of friendship and friends in people's lives. Now, your English teacher has asked you to express your opinion in writing. Use all the notes below and give your own point of view.

There is a saying that best friends are the people in your life who make you laugh louder, smile brighter and live better. Do you agree?

Notes:

1. Describe your best friend's features that you appreciate most of all
2. Mention the ways these features of your friend make you live better
3. (your own idea)

After writing the paper, count the words and put the number below the work.

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