

Sprachmania Wien 2013

Englisch



Aufgabenstellung 2012

22. Wiener Fremdsprachenwettbewerb Englisch 2013

READING COMPREHENSION:

- a) You are going to read a magazine article. For questions 13-19, choose the answer (A, B, C or D) which you think fits best according to the text. Put a circle round the correct letter. There is an example at the beginning.

The Beauties of the Stone Age

Jane Howard views some works of ancient art

I have just come home after viewing some astonishing works of art that were recently discovered in Church Hole cave in Nottinghamshire. They are not drawings, as one would expect, but etchings, and they depict a huge range of wild animals. The artists who created them lived around 13,000 years ago, and the images are remarkable on a variety of counts. First of all, their sheer number is staggering: there are ninety all told. Moreover, fifty-eight of them are on the ceiling. This is extremely rare in cave art, according to a leading expert, Dr Wilbur Samson of Central Midlands University. Wall pictures are the norm/ he says. 'But more importantly, the Church Hole etchings are an incredible artistic achievement. They can hold their own in comparison with the best found in continental Europe/ I am not a student of the subject, so I have to take his word for it. However, you do not have to be an expert to appreciate their beauty.

In fact, it is the wider significance of the etchings that is likely to attract most attention in academic circles, since they radically alter our view of life in Britain during this epoch. It had previously been thought that ice-age hunters in this country were isolated from people in more central areas of Europe, but the Church Hole images prove that ancient Britons were part of a culture that had spread right across the continent. And they were at least as sophisticated culturally as their counterparts on the mainland.

News of such exciting discoveries spreads rapidly, and thanks to the Internet and mobile phones, a great many people probably knew about this discovery within hours of the initial expedition returning. As a result, some etchings may already have been damaged, albeit inadvertently, by eager visitors. In a regrettably late response, the site has been cordoned off with a high, rather intimidating fence, and warning notices have been posted.

An initial survey of the site last year failed to reveal the presence of the etchings. The reason lies in the expectations of the researchers. They had been looking for the usual type of cave drawing or painting, which shows up best under direct light. Consequently, they used powerful torches, shining them straight onto the rock face. However, the Church Hole images are modifications of the rock itself, and show up best when seen from a certain angle in the natural light of early morning. Having been fortunate to see them at this hour, I can only say that I was deeply - and unexpectedly -

moved. While most cave art often seems to have been created in a shadowy past very remote from us, these somehow convey the impression that they were made yesterday.

Dr Samson feels that the lighting factor provides important information about the likely function of these works of art. I think the artists knew very well that the etchings would hardly be visible except early in the morning. We can therefore deduce that the chamber was used for rituals involving animal worship, and that they were conducted just after dawn, as a preliminary to the day's hunting/

However, such ideas are controversial in the world of archaeology and human origins. Dr Olivia Caruthers of the Reardon Institute remains unconvinced that the function of the etchings at Church Hole can be determined with any certainty. When we know so little about the social life of early humans, it would be foolish to insist on any rigid interpretation. We should, in my view, begin by tentatively assuming that their creators were motivated in part by aesthetic considerations - while of course being prepared to modify this verdict at a later date, if and when new evidence emerges.'

To which I can only add that I felt deeply privileged to have been able to view Church Hole. It is a site of tremendous importance culturally and is part of the heritage, not only of this country, but the world as a whole.

b) You are going to read a newspaper article containing reviews of performances. For questions 20-34, choose from the reviews (A-D). Put the correct letter on the dotted line beside the text. There is an example at the beginning.

A Opera Recital

For the first of our 'home performances' we decided on opera, a form of art that especially moves me. The other art form that I adore - ballet - could hardly be performed in the confined space of a normal house, no matter how much ingenuity was employed! My wife and I were particularly looking forward to the performance by Footstool Opera, a touring company that specialises in mounting productions in confined spaces, often coming up with a programme to order as suits the occasion. When I was planning the event, I imagined the opera company would bring with them a high-quality sound system of some sort to provide musical accompaniment, but the manager informed me that all they required was 'a piano in good working order'. I hastily arranged for our ancient upright to be tuned, and to my relief, pianist Antonia Holmes pronounced it entirely satisfactory when she tested the instrument before the performance. We had made it clear that no particular requirements would be imposed upon the performers, so they gave us a medley of familiar pieces from popular operas, and my daughter - who had previously been of the view that opera was unspeakably idiotic - was entranced. If I were to be brutally honest, I would have to say that the performers, apart from one tenor, were not in the top class. But I don't imagine many people would notice this, and it certainly didn't detract from our enjoyment of the evening.

B Puppet Show

Having grown up with that curiously British phenomenon of puppet theatre, the Punch and Judy show, I was determined to find one of the traditional practitioners of the art and secure his services. Alas, times have changed. There was once a time when no seaside resort in the country was complete without a Punch and Judy show on the pier, but today puppet theatre of this sort can hardly compete with video games at holiday resorts. Besides, who can afford to work only during the summer months? Consequently, there are, according to the theatrical agencies I contacted, none of the old-fashioned puppeteers left. However, I did manage to find a puppet theatre company called Little Man Theatre that included traditional Punch and Judy shows in its repertoire, so I went ahead and booked them. They arrived with a surprising number of boxes and cases. Naively, I had expected a miniature theatre to require a minimal amount of equipment. In this case, the size of the venue did indeed present a problem, though the nature of the difficulty was the reverse of what I had feared. We actually had some trouble making out the words of the crocodile character, largely - I suspect - because William Daniels, one of the two puppeteers, was suffering from a terrible cold, complete with high fever and a voice virtually reduced to a croak. Like a true pro, though, he struggled through the performance bravely. And once the first act was under way, I began to appreciate why so many props were needed. This wasn't Punch and Judy as I remembered it but a twenty-first century version of the story, requiring a staggering number of scene changes. A breathtaking performance, and though I felt sad at the demise of the old-time favourites, our children enjoyed it immensely.

C Jazz Concert

I had initially set myself the task of finding performers of whom I knew absolutely nothing, simply by sitting down with the Yellow Pages, when a colleague of my wife's started raving about a particular jazz ensemble. It seemed churlish to do otherwise than engage them and The Hot Jazz Quintet turned out to be a group of highly professional musicians who appeared to make a point of being scrupulously polite and tidy. It was as though the stereotype image of the egocentric musician were being overturned in front of my very eyes: a surprising experience for anyone old enough to have seen The Who smash their instruments live onstage several decades ago. Despite being in such close proximity to the musicians, it had not occurred to me that we would be required to adopt a more active role until the saxophone player handed my son a set of bongo drums and invited him to join in. As luck would have it, Mike is a percussionist with his school orchestra, and he was able to acquit himself creditably, to the delight of the professionals performing for us. Not being a connoisseur of this type of music myself, I had frankly not been prepared to enjoy this evening as much as the other members of my family. This perhaps makes it more of a tribute to the Quintet that I found myself getting quite carried away by the intricate rhythms and spectacular solos.

D Murder Mystery Theatre

We invited Murder Incorporated, a theatre company that specialises in murder mysteries, to perform *Death Calls* for us, and to those of you who have not been initiated in the workings of 'murder mystery theatre', a word of explanation is needed. This is no ordinary production. In fact, one could claim that it doesn't really come under the category of theatre at all, and it is not normally presented on a stage, either. The basic idea is that a murder is 'committed' just out of sight of the audience. After the 'body' is found, the task of the audience is to work out who the murderer is by following up on certain clues.

A few moments after the actors had arrived, when we were still under the impression that preparations were being made for the performance, a piercing scream caused us all to rush out into the hall. There we stumbled - literally - over a body oozing fake blood that was so convincing it almost caused my wife to faint. Yes, it had started. As we followed the actors around the house for scenes in various locations, we tried to work out who the murderer could be. It was a fascinating experience, and I have to report that my wife proved to be a brilliant sleuth, solving the mystery in record time. *Death Calls* was a masterpiece of condensed theatre that had me fondly recalling a production of *2001, A Space Odyssey* at the Edinburgh Fringe Festival, which featured a cast of two, an audience of two and an old car as the venue. Highly recommended.

WRITING:

The British newspaper, THE INDEPENDENT, independent.co.uk, has asked its international teenage readers to present their opinions on what history means to them. You have decided to present your opinion in an essay to the newspaper.

So you will deal with the following:

- **Explain how interesting history lessons at school are**
- **Describe what you do to inform yourself on history in the making**
- **Present suggestions to make more young people interested in historical developments**

Now write your text in 250 words (+/- 10%)

NUMBER OF WORDS: