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English B – Higher level – Paper 2 – Reading comprehension
Anglais B – Niveau supérieur – Épreuve 2 – Compréhension écrite
Inglés B – Nivel Superior – Prueba 2 – Comprensión de lectura

Monday 10 May 2021 (afternoon)
Lundi 10 mai 2021 (après-midi)
Lunes 10 de mayo de 2021 (tarde)

1 h

Text booklet – Instructions to candidates

- Do not open this booklet until instructed to do so.
- This booklet accompanies paper 2 reading comprehension.

Livret de textes – Instructions destinées aux candidats

- N'ouvrez pas ce livret avant d'y être autorisé(e).
- Ce livret accompagne la partie de l'épreuve 2 portant sur la compréhension écrite.

Cuadernillo de textos – Instrucciones para los alumnos

- No abra este cuadernillo hasta que se lo autoricen.
- Este cuadernillo acompaña a la parte de comprensión de lectura de la prueba 2.

Text A

No exams, no uniform and no football team: Inside the best school in the world

- 1 Welcome to High Tech High, where classes are just as likely to be making skateboards as studying maths, yet 95 % go on to university.
- 2 A group of casually dressed teenagers are chattering about their upcoming lessons. The walls around them are hung with artwork. Subject boundaries are fluid. Maths and physics are taught as one. English and history share time. An art and physics scheme resulted in a school full of life-size wooden staircases which led nowhere.

- 3 High Tech High has achieved fame thanks to a documentary called *Most Likely To Succeed*, which showed the life of the school and has been screened around the world.
- 4 At this school, written exams have been replaced by projects that are displayed to an audience of parents, alumni and locals. The teens don't carry satchels of books and the corridors are locker-free. But everywhere there's an air of purpose and good fortune.
- 5 This is a school that gets results for its pupils. Pupils are not elite: 15% have special educational needs, 50 % are low-income and 44 % of the graduates are the first in their family to go on to higher education.
- 6 High Tech High was envisioned by Larry Rosenstock, who rethought schooling for the 21st century. He looked at all the elements of a child's education and he posed the question: How can a system of education that was set up to produce workers for the factories of the 19th and 20th century be relevant to young people today?
- 7 In previous generations, workers sat in rows in offices or stood in line by conveyor belts*. They needed to learn discipline, patience and an understanding of hierarchy. In the 21st century, employment already looks quite different. With less job security and a fast-changing job market, workers need to learn flexibility, resilience and teamwork. In addition to academic skills, there will also be more focus on technology, politics and language.
- 8 The school teaches children aged 14–18. The youngest and most senior years share the ground floor, with the elders acting as positive role models for the newbies.
- 9 The school's approach to teaching and learning reflects Rosenstock's approach. He discovered that if children made things as they learnt, their comprehension of the topic was improved. Deeper learning is based on encouraging critical thinking, learning to collaborate, and effective presentation skills.

* conveyor belts: a continuously moving strip of rubber or metal which is used in factories for moving objects along

Text B

An Extract from *Boyhood: Scenes from provincial life*

He is healthy, full of life and energy, yet seems always to have a cold. In the mornings he wakes up tight-throated, red-eyed, sneezing uncontrollably, his body-temperature soaring and plunging. “I’m sick,” he croaks to his mother. She rests the back of her hand against his forehead.

There is one more difficult moment to get through, the moment when his father says, “Where’s John?” and mother says, “He’s sick,” and his father snorts and says, “Pretending again.” Through this he lies as quiet as he can, till his father and his brother are gone and he can at last settle down to a day of reading.

Non-essential image removed

He reads at great speed and with total absorption. During his sick spells his mother has to visit the library twice a week to take out books for him: two on her cards, another two on his own. He avoids the library himself in case the librarian asks questions when he brings his books to be stamped.

He knows that if he wants to be a great man, he ought to be reading serious books. He ought to be like Abraham Lincoln or James Watt, studying by candlelight while everyone else is sleeping, teaching himself Latin and Greek and astronomy. He has not abandoned the idea of being a great man; he promises himself he will soon begin serious reading; but for the present all he wants to read are stories.

If his father likes Shakespeare, then Shakespeare must be bad, he decides. Nevertheless, he begins to read Shakespeare, in the yellowing edition with the tattered edges that his father inherited, trying to discover why people say Shakespeare is great. Besides Shakespeare, his father owns the poems of Keats. His mother owns the poems of Rupert Brooke. These poetry books have pride of place on the mantelshelf in the living-room.

One day his father comes to his room with the Wordsworth book. “You should read these,” he says, and points out poems he has ticked in pencil. A few days later he comes back, wanting to discuss the poems. “The sounding cataract haunted me like a passion,” his father quotes. He refuses to meet his father’s eye, to play the game. It is not long before his father gives up.

He is not sorry about his churlishness. He cannot see how poetry fits into his father’s life; he suspects it is just pretence. When his mother says that in order to escape the mockery of her sisters she had to take her book and creep away in the loft, he believes her. But he cannot imagine his father, as a boy, reading poetry, who nowadays reads nothing but the newspaper.

He watches his father reading the newspaper. He reads: flipping through the pages, cracking and slapping the pages as he turns them. When he is done with reading he folds it into a narrow panel and does the crossword puzzle.

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Text C

Inside the world of India’s cyborg artists

One evening, Harshit Agrawal started thinking about *The Anatomy Lesson of Dr. Nicolaes Tulp*, an oil on canvas masterpiece painted by Rembrandt in 1632.

5 Rembrandt’s painting was done at a time when medical technology was nascent and the general public saw it with fear and fascination. The portrait planted germs of an idea in Agrawal’s mind.

Agrawal started trawling the web for images and videos of human surgeries being performed. He was getting out of the artists’ frame of mind to slip into the engineer’s mind.

Non-essential image removed

10 In the next few days between his day job as a human-computer interaction designer, the feverish 26-year-old curated a dataset of 60 000 images of human surgery, fed it to an algorithm he patched together on remote servers somewhere on the cloud, and waited for the machine to do its magic. Agrawal’s labour of love
15 was a set of disquieting images he named: “The anatomy lessons of Dr Algorithm”.

Welcome to the world of Cyborg Artists, where emerging artists use artificial intelligence (AI) to create art. Fewer than 100 such artists exist in it and just a handful of them are in India. AI-powered art is all the buzz in the art world these days and that makes Agrawal special and his set of images an early work.

20 “There’s an interesting back and forth between an artist and a technologist,” Agrawal says. “You have to think possibilities and how that may translate into an algorithm and the data that feeds into it.”

25 According to Cyborg Artists, art is being challenged. “We call this the ‘photography moment’ of our time since this is the second existential crisis that art is facing,” says Raghava KK, artist and curator of Nature Morte, a contemporary art gallery where Agrawal’s work was showcased.

Photography challenged the purpose of art at a time when artists mostly used real-life imagery. Early photographs mimicked art: perfect symmetry, portraits and so on. Later on, however, photography became an art form of its own and, in turn, influenced artists.

30 Like Agrawal, Raghava is a Cyborg Artist. Raghava’s early works involved using a tablet computer as a medium, but he has focused on using AI for the last few years. It all started off as a fun project. At first, it was mostly technologists rigging up their own algorithms, but then came artists who were comfortable with technology. The movement is now on the cusp of a major expansion with more and more artists starting to use the medium.

35 Raghava’s work is underpinned by a belief that the definition of what it means to be human needs to change. This is also the genesis of a thesis these artists have begun to propose: a new way of thinking about human evolution. “We’re already augmented humans. We’re not just humans. We think of ourselves as cyborgs,” Raghava comments over filter coffee at his family home in Jayamahar.

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References:

Text A Lambert, V., 2019. No exams, no uniform and no football team: Inside the best school in the world. Available at: <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/education/0/no-exams-no-uniform-no-football-team-inside-best-school-world/> [accessed 16 July 2020].

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