

LEVEL C (C1 & C2) on the scale of the Council of Europe
MODULE 1 Reading comprehension and language awareness

November 2014

PART A - CHOICE ITEMS

ACTIVITY 1

Read the text below and respond to the task that follows.

OPINION & LETTERS

Tuesday, August 28, 2007 7

Voyage of emptiness

By Roland Merullo

Making the Atlantic crossing on the Queen Mary II is an experience like no other. After our long Italian vacation, the pretty drive through France, and after the shocking expense of downtown London, it is an almost psychedelic experience to cross the ocean on what amounts to a floating luxury hotel.

Last night was a formal dinner on board. The women were required to wear gowns and the men tuxedos or dark suits. In addition to a team of impossibly friendly waiters ("What would you like, my love?" they say to our daughters), there is a balding, bespectacled sommelier who served us with an unforgettable bottle of Barolo.

We had worried before boarding that we'd be out of our depth when it came to things like a fancy wardrobe and household income. My wife, daughters



and I are here, after all, courtesy of a travel book contract, not thanks to a private income, and will return home to credit card bills, not waiting servants. But the truly rich have their own levels higher up and their own eating places. So we've only occasionally encountered what the writer Ford Madox Ford called "the saving touch of insolence" that goes with great wealth.

We've met some interesting people and seen a whale or two spout, and some dolphins, but I have to say that, for a person used to large helpings of solitude and open spaces, the luxurious crossing has left me feeling claustrophobic and atypically on edge.

But there is, for me, a dimension to the experience that goes beyond the delicious meals and

the small physical discomforts. More than 100 years ago, my mother's mother came to America from London, on a boat without chateaubriand steak and swimming pools. And my father's parents sailed from Naples, in steerage, as teenagers. I have been thinking of them almost every hour we have been on board.

It is the greatest of American clichés to assert that they made their arduous journeys in search of a better life for themselves and their descendants. But it is also true. I imagine that I see my grandparents' spirit in the serving staff, a thousand of them, from places like India, Estonia, Brazil, Ukraine and the Philippines. They are making the kinds of sacrifices that feel unimaginable to me: leaving a mate and young children on the other side of the world for nine months at a time.

Materially, at least, even a middle-class American family like my own already enjoys the life those people on the ship are working toward. With our house, cars, trips, good schools and doctors, we inhabit their dream landscape, and the one my grandparents hoped for. Some of us send up a prayer of gratitude to ancestors who made a much rougher voyage on this same sea, whether 100 or 300 years ago. And others don't. I have seen a few people go from high tea to blackjack, from asparagus risotto to the champagne bar, and the way they eat, the way they speak to the staff and each other, the way they stand at the freshly lacquered rail and stare out at the Atlantic emptiness, seems to me to be sending out a cry not of gratitude but of quiet desperation.

"Is this all there is?" their faces seem to say. And, as Ford Madox Ford put it, that sorrowful emptiness inside the shell of luxury is the saddest story of all.

International Herald Tribune

ATTENTION

- Mark your answers on Answer Sheet 1 [ΑΠΑΝΤΗΤΙΚΟ ΕΝΤΥΠΟ 1].
- You have **2 hours** to complete this part of the exam.
- Provide a single answer for each item.

1.1 On the basis of the text you read, choose the best answer (A, B, or C) for items 1a-5a.

1a. Another possible title for the text is:

- A. My life of luxury. B. Travelling to their dreams. C. Into the unknown.

2a. The text implies that

- A. only the very rich travel on luxury liners. B. emigration does not necessarily result in changing one's life. C. money and wealth do not always bring happiness.

3a. The writer says that, initially, when he was on board the Queen Mary II, he felt

- A. a slightly deviant bewilderment. B. marginal dislike towards the lavishness of it all. C. that this was an outlandish experience.

4a. What does the writer say about travelling on a liner like the Queen Mary II?

- A. The quality of the food is questionable. B. There is peace and quiet when you need it. C. There is plenty to do on a cruise boat.

5a. In the writer's opinion, the serving staff on board the liner are

- A. aspiring to the same ideals as his own ancestors. B. searching for a lifestyle they are never going to find. C. doing something which he does not approve of.

1.2 Decide if, according to the text, statements 6a-10a are True (A), False (B), or Not Stated (C).

STATEMENTS		A	B	C
		TRUE	FALSE	NOT STATED
6a.	The writer and his family are feeling inferior to the wealthier people on board the ship.			
7a.	The writer's grandparents made the perilous journey across the Atlantic together.			
8a.	Many of those who courageously emigrated to America managed to provide a better lifestyle for their descendants.			
9a.	The sea is a place which inspires everyone, especially if they are to write their experiences about their sea journey.			
10a.	Despite the luxury that some of the wealthy people on board have the opportunity to experience, they don't seem to be content.			

ACTIVITY 2

Read the following texts (11a-15a) and decide where they might appear. Use each of the options below (A-F) only once. There is one option you do not need.

A.	In a film review	B.	In a novel	C.	In a job advertisement
D.	In the back flap of a book of fiction.	E.	In a charity mail shot leaflet	F.	In an official report on the environment

11a.	Lahiri's elegant stories tell the lives of Indians in exile, of people navigating between the strict traditions they've inherited and the baffling New World they must encounter every day.	
12a.	Through our network of partnership organisations, with your help, we'll overcome obstacles which hold children and young people back.	
13a.	The footage is assembled with consummate professionalism, but the flash, the kinetic energy you'd expect, is simply not there.	
14a.	A national survey of consumer behaviour shows that we are becoming increasingly aware of our carbon footprint.	
15a.	They will be able to demonstrate innovative and realisable ideas on knowledge management and offer hands-on experience to participants.	

ACTIVITY 3

Read the text and match the meaning of each underlined word (16a-20a) with options A-F below. There is one option you do not need.

A.	popular with	B.	surfaces	C.	renowned	D.	high-quality	E.	results	F.	pieces
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The National Gallery

Exhibition of Pompeo Batoni's works
20 February – 18 May 2014

Pompeo Batoni (1708 – 1787)



Portrait of
Charles Crowle
by Pompeo Batoni

Pompeo Batoni was the most (16a) celebrated artist in 18th century Rome. In his day, Batoni was known throughout Europe for his religious and mythological paintings as well as portraiture. He developed an opulent style, achieving dazzling pictorial (17a) effects, visible in his use of dramatic lighting and the (18a) textures of sumptuous fabrics. His work soon attracted the attention of international travellers flocking to the Eternal City.

In this period, Rome was populated with young, upper-class foreigners, primarily British men, making the Grand Tour – an educational rite of passage for the wealthy – to study the art of antiquity. These 'Grand Tourists' collected (19a) works of art to display in their own homes, where they became emblems of the owner's wealth, knowledge and status. For nearly half a century, Batoni's paintings, and above all, his distinctive portraits, were (20a) coveted by emperors, king, popes and princes, becoming synonymous with a cultured way of life.

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Booklet to the Gallery's exhibition, 20/2–18/5/2008

ACTIVITY 4

4.1 Read the text below and choose the best answer (A, B, or C) for items 21a-25a.

'Shortage occupations'

The British government has drawn up an official list of 'shortage occupations'. Jon Henley asks the people who are in those professions about their jobs and how they feel about having chosen them.

1. Physics teacher

Angela Celentano, 31, and her colleague Sabina Ricci, 36, both came into teaching late. Celentano was a City accountant and Ricci a computer software engineer. Both love their job but harbour few illusions about its appeal to the majority. The biggest shock for them both, they admit, was the dawning realisation – as Celentano diplomatically puts it – 'that the natural inclination of any group of children is to be unruly.'



She took a 75% pay cut to do her postgraduate teacher training course, and was two-thirds of the way through it before she began thinking that abandoning accountancy was perhaps not the worst decision of her life after all. 'I just connected with some of my classes, and began to see what the rewards could be,' she says. 'But you just had to get acclimatised to the idea that classroom management

is a huge part of teaching. The rewards only start to come once you've got that. It took me about two years.' The hours are long, though. Celentano is in at 7.45 am, teaches from 8.30 to 3.30 pm, then has marking, meetings, paperwork and more preparation till around 7.00 pm. 'It can be physically and emotionally exhausting,' she says. 'You're dealing with so many people, and there's a responsibility to deal with each student individually. Obviously, that's impossible with 30 students. But you still try.'

And then, there's the bane of all teachers' lives: external interference. 'Added to that, there's an enormous amount of stress,' Celentano says. 'It's all about targets, grade scores, passing exams, not about real education. Syllabuses and exams are constantly changing, and most of the changes are all imposed by people from outside the school.' But once qualified, and with a few years' experience under your belt, it seems that the financial rewards are excellent and the job security is second to none.

2. Work rider

It's not seven on a November morning and the sky over the hills is barely tinged with red. This will be a fine day, but not yet. It's pitch dark and cold.

In Nicolas Bailey's stables, Alice Reader has been at work for an hour, mucking out and watering the five race horses in her care. Like her colleagues, she'll ride four of them out today. After each hour-long outing, they will hose the horses down, dry them off, rug them up and put them in their boxes with a handful of hay. They'll do that till lunchtime when they get three hours off. Then there's more of the same. 'It's a kind of way of life, really, more than a job,'



says Reader, 29. You really have to love it, or I don't think you'd ever do it.'

Alice Reader has a horse of her own, which she rides during her lunch break and hopes to race this season. 'That's partly why I do it,' she says.

'There aren't many jobs that would let me ride for myself every day.' She knows about other jobs; she worked in an office once. 'They were the most miserable six months of my life,' she says. 'My day would begin at 5.00 pm when I ran home to go riding. So why is there such a shortage of people like her? 'It's tough. And it's a really harsh world,' she concedes. 'If you do something wrong, you don't half hear about it.'

Watching his charges come steaming up the gallop, Bailey says pay isn't the big issue. More important are the physical demands (riders can't be too big or heavy, but racehorses –especially jumpers– can be very hard to handle). 'I've been in this business 28 years and never employed a married rider,' he says. 'The job is hard enough on relationships; impossible on families.' And the world has changed. When Bailey began, most stable lads were Irish. 'Now, they can make more money staying at home and working on a building site. It's a vicious circle: the fewer people who come into the job, the harder it is for those who do. A stable lad used to look after three or four horses, maximum,' says Bailey. 'In some stables now, it's eight or nine.'

World of Work | No. 70, September Issue

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'PHYSICS TEACHER' TEXT

21a. Both Celentano and Ricci started their professional lives

- | | | |
|--|---|--|
| A. as educators with dreams and hopes. | B. without illusions as to what people thought of them. | C. in jobs that were not related to education. |
|--|---|--|

22a. What surprised Celentano and Ricci most about working in the teaching profession was

- | | | |
|--------------------------------------|--|---------------------------------------|
| A. how much they enjoyed their work. | B. how disruptive young people can be. | C. how low the financial rewards are. |
|--------------------------------------|--|---------------------------------------|

23a. What comment does Celentano make about her initial training as a physics teacher?

- | | | |
|---|---|---|
| A. She knew it would be a rewarding experience. | B. She eventually realised that she had done the wrong thing. | C. She had no regrets about changing her career path. |
|---|---|---|

'WORK RIDER' TEXT

24a. What does Alice Reader like about her job so much?

- | | | |
|--------------------------------------|--|---------------------------------------|
| A. It's not a 9.00-5.00 kind of job. | B. She feels free to do other types of work too. | C. It allows her to ride for herself. |
|--------------------------------------|--|---------------------------------------|

25a. What does Bailey say about working with racehorses?

- | | | |
|---|--|--|
| A. Present-day workers are resentful of how little they are paid. | B. Most people would not have the energy needed to do the job. | C. Good relationships between staff are essential to the business. |
|---|--|--|

- 4.2** Read one more text about a profession in shortage and choose the best answer (A, B, or C) for items 26a-28a.

3. Geologist



Jason Carson, 32, is managing director of two associated companies. He did maths, physics and geology at school ('I was just interested in earth processes. Looking at rocks, walking round muddy fields with your mates'), and he applied to do geology at Newcastle University. That course was full so he took the engineering geology course instead.

He doesn't regret the early specialisation in a more applied field. 'The appeal to me,' he says, 'is in finding answers to the questions sites pose. I was on a site this morning, a place that's being redeveloped by a housing association and sits on top of some quite extensive mine workings. There

are foundation problems, contaminated land problems – and you're really bringing solutions.' 'Sometimes the work's more geo-technical,' he says.

'If you're on a motorway extension, you'll be more focused on things like the design of earthworks, slope and rock-face stability, soil compacting, that kind of thing. Every job is different'.

I also enjoy the involvement with other professions: architects, ecologists, archaeologists, civil engineers. And you're in the open air. You do this job because you like that.' Part of the present shortage, Carson reckons, is down to the 'massive explosion' in environmental and geo-technical work. 'Contaminated land work, for example. That hardly existed 20 years ago,' he says. 'Now it's probably 50% of what we do'.

Much of the work these days is driven by environmental legislation and planning laws, with environmental legislation attached. It's a whole industry. Then there's the fact that nowadays people take a general geology degree and specialise later. It's one more hurdle, and with the profession so diversified, the knowledge base is just much more watered down. It's very hard to find the right people.'

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'GEOLOGIST' TEXT

- 26a.** Why did Jason Carson decide to study engineering geology?
- A.** He enjoyed solving challenging technical problems.
 - B.** He didn't manage to get onto the course he had chosen.
 - C.** He wanted to work in a more specialist field.
- 27a.** What comment does Carson make about working as a geologist nowadays?
- A.** The work has changed significantly from what it used to be.
 - B.** Geologists have little contact with people in other professions.
 - C.** Every job presents geologists with similar kinds of problems.
- 28a.** In what way is geology work different today?
- A.** It is less interesting than it used to be.
 - B.** It has been restricted because of legislation.
 - C.** It deals more with environmental issues than it used to.

ACTIVITY 5

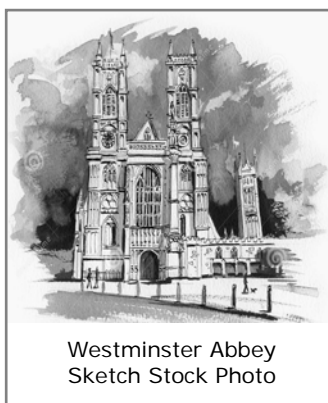
Choose the best option (A-F) with which to complete the missing parts (items 29a-33a) of the text below. There is one option you do not need.

A.	the supply was limited and polluted	B.	an area surrounded by ditches
C.	that formed one of the city's boundaries	D.	Westminster Abbey and the Guildhall being the outstanding remnants of this age
E.	as stone buildings were the privilege of the rich and the church	F.	lasting roughly from the eleventh to the fifteenth century,

Middle Ages



The Mayor of London, William Walworth, killing the leader of the peasants' revolt.



Westminster Abbey
Sketch Stock Photo

Dirty, noisy and smelly, London hasn't changed much in the last thousand years. Political intrigue, backstabbing royalty and corrupt monks; it all happened back in the Middle Ages.

Modern London's politics, religion and trade, all have their roots in developments that took place during the Middle Ages. Throughout Medieval times, **(29a)** _____, fires were a constant hazard. Most buildings were made of wood and the city burnt merrily **(30a)** _____.

Another serious health hazard was the rubbish and excrement thrown onto the streets by uncaring householders. Although water was provided in cisterns at Cheapside and elsewhere, **(31a)** _____. Most of the rivers that provided London's water were also the sewers. Houndsditch was called so because London residents threw their livestock into the ditch **(32a)** _____. Matters were brought to a head by the Black Death in 1348, which killed approximately 35,000 people out of a population of 50,000. Outside the City walls, the areas which were developed most were Southwark and Westminster. Because much of London was marshland, Westminster was based on Thorney Island, **(33a)** _____, where Westminster Abbey now stands. The importance of Westminster was confirmed when William the Conqueror chose it as the venue of his coronation in 1066. Meanwhile, Southwark gained notoriety as the centre for prostitution, drinking and gambling.

ACTIVITY 6

Choose the best option (A-H) for items 34a-39a in the text below. There are two options you do not need.

A.	significant	B.	point	C.	strange	D.	take
E.	drift	F.	join	G.	right	H.	compared

PUBLIC OPINION

October 2014

Phones distract drivers, studies show



Drivers were more likely to (34a) _____ out of their lane and miss a right turning if they were using a hands-free mobile phone than if they were talking to someone in the car or not speaking at all, a study reveals. The finding builds on recent work that suggests younger people's reactions become as slow as those of pensioners if they are talking on a hands-free set while driving. David Strayer, at the University of Utah, used a driving

simulator to see how conversations affected people's driving. He asked 41 men and women to (35a) _____ part in 10-minute journeys during which they either chatted to a passenger, sat in silence with them, or drove alone but took a call from a person on a hands-free set. Drivers had to negotiate two-lane roads with traffic moving in both directions, a multi-lane motorway, and were asked to (36a) take a _____, and exit to finish the test.

'When there is a passenger in the car, almost everyone exits, but half the people talking in the cell phone fail to,' says Strayer. 'A driver conversing with a passenger is not as impaired as a driver talking on a cell phone. You see bigger lane deviations for someone on a cell

phone (37a) _____ with a driver talking to a passenger,' he added.

Analysis of the drivers' conversations revealed that they used simpler speech, with fewer syllables, when driving was more demanding. The finding was (38a) _____ enough for the researchers to urge people not to call drivers who would need to use a hands-free set to talk to them.

The risk of having an accident was greater if the driver was alone, the study found. 'If there is a passenger in the vehicle, they help the driver because they remind them of where to take an exit and they (39a) _____ out hazards,' Strayer says.

ACTIVITY 7

7.1 Read the interview on the next page and choose the best answer (A, B, or C) for items 40a-43a.

40a. One example of consumer behaviour determined by accessibility and affordability is when people can afford organic products but

- A.** these may not be accessible where they live. **B.** may be unwilling to spend it on such commodities. **C.** may be ideologically against doing so.

41a. The main internal factor for consumer behaviour, according to Reisch, is wanting

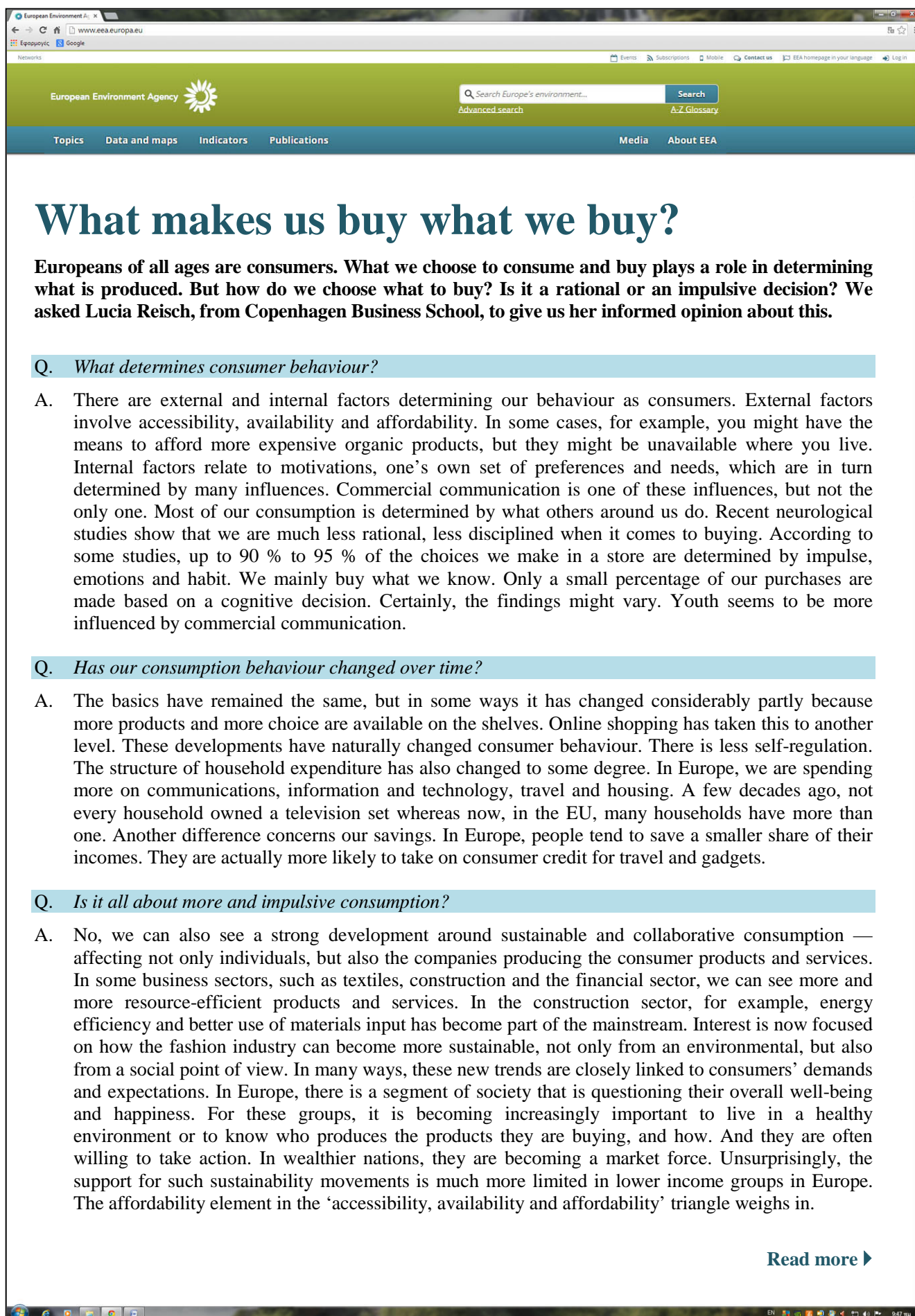
- A.** to buy now rather than later. **B.** to 'belong' by doing what others do. **C.** to be *in* –not old-fashioned.

42a. Consumerism is more sophisticated nowadays because of the

- A.** abundance of commodities. **B.** the internet which has made processes more elaborate. **C.** people not wanting to reduce expenditure.

43a. The changes in consumer habits are not only negative but positive too, as they involve

- A.** production of more products and services. **B.** the growth of the economy in wealthier countries. **C.** the creation of products which are resource efficient.



The screenshot shows the EEA website with a green header and a blue navigation bar. The main content area is white and features the article title 'What makes us buy what we buy?' in a large, bold, dark blue font. Below the title is a summary paragraph in bold black text. The article body consists of three questions (Q.) in light blue boxes, each followed by an answer (A.) in a standard black font. The questions are: 'What determines consumer behaviour?', 'Has our consumption behaviour changed over time?', and 'Is it all about more and impulsive consumption?'. The answers provide detailed insights into consumer behavior, mentioning factors like accessibility, motivations, and the influence of commercial communication. At the bottom right of the article, there is a 'Read more' link with a right-pointing arrow.

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What makes us buy what we buy?

Europeans of all ages are consumers. What we choose to consume and buy plays a role in determining what is produced. But how do we choose what to buy? Is it a rational or an impulsive decision? We asked Lucia Reisch, from Copenhagen Business School, to give us her informed opinion about this.

Q. *What determines consumer behaviour?*

A. There are external and internal factors determining our behaviour as consumers. External factors involve accessibility, availability and affordability. In some cases, for example, you might have the means to afford more expensive organic products, but they might be unavailable where you live. Internal factors relate to motivations, one's own set of preferences and needs, which are in turn determined by many influences. Commercial communication is one of these influences, but not the only one. Most of our consumption is determined by what others around us do. Recent neurological studies show that we are much less rational, less disciplined when it comes to buying. According to some studies, up to 90 % to 95 % of the choices we make in a store are determined by impulse, emotions and habit. We mainly buy what we know. Only a small percentage of our purchases are made based on a cognitive decision. Certainly, the findings might vary. Youth seems to be more influenced by commercial communication.

Q. *Has our consumption behaviour changed over time?*

A. The basics have remained the same, but in some ways it has changed considerably partly because more products and more choice are available on the shelves. Online shopping has taken this to another level. These developments have naturally changed consumer behaviour. There is less self-regulation. The structure of household expenditure has also changed to some degree. In Europe, we are spending more on communications, information and technology, travel and housing. A few decades ago, not every household owned a television set whereas now, in the EU, many households have more than one. Another difference concerns our savings. In Europe, people tend to save a smaller share of their incomes. They are actually more likely to take on consumer credit for travel and gadgets.


Q. *Is it all about more and impulsive consumption?*

A. No, we can also see a strong development around sustainable and collaborative consumption — affecting not only individuals, but also the companies producing the consumer products and services. In some business sectors, such as textiles, construction and the financial sector, we can see more and more resource-efficient products and services. In the construction sector, for example, energy efficiency and better use of materials input has become part of the mainstream. Interest is now focused on how the fashion industry can become more sustainable, not only from an environmental, but also from a social point of view. In many ways, these new trends are closely linked to consumers' demands and expectations. In Europe, there is a segment of society that is questioning their overall well-being and happiness. For these groups, it is becoming increasingly important to live in a healthy environment or to know who produces the products they are buying, and how. And they are often willing to take action. In wealthier nations, they are becoming a market force. Unsurprisingly, the support for such sustainability movements is much more limited in lower income groups in Europe. The affordability element in the 'accessibility, availability and affordability' triangle weighs in.

[Read more ►](#)

7.2 Read the rest of the interview below and choose the best answer (A, B, or C) for items 44a-46a.

- 44a.** Among the measures that some governments are taking to shape new consumer attitudes is
- A.** taxing people more on services and products they buy.
 - B.** boosting the market by selling products with a short life.
 - C.** changing the infrastructure and providing sustainable options.
- 45a.** Ms Reisch thinks that in order for consumers to change their behaviour
- A.** strategic plans are needed.
 - B.** collaborative consumption is required.
 - C.** campaigning must take place.
- 46a.** One of the questions to be answered by the EU funded project that Ms Reisch is involved in is
- A.** How can we share best practices regarding collaborative consumption?
 - B.** How can we make young people eat more organic food?
 - C.** How can we ditch the habit of constantly upscaling –our house, our clothing, our car?




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Q. *Policy interventions: can policies influence behaviour?*

A. Policies can certainly influence consumer behaviour. We have to bear in mind that in democratic societies, policies need the backing of voters. Imposing taxes on unsustainable options would increase the price, and price is an important factor for many when buying goods and services. Public authorities are also buyers—a market force for some products. For example, a decision to buy only organic food or fair trade coffee for all public institutions, or to favour sustainable vehicles for public services, can boost the market share of sustainable products and services. Public policy also plays a role in transforming the infrastructure, to offer more sustainable options. This goes back to the question of accessibility and availability. If there are no bicycle paths, one cannot expect extensive use of bicycles as a transport mode. The key to public policy's success is to offer healthy and sustainable defaults along with the freedom to opt out.



Q. *When is behaviour more likely to change?*

A. Information campaigns can help raise awareness. But for any kind of behaviour change to happen at a large scale, the offer has to be accessible, reliable and easy to use. Some car-sharing schemes are extremely successful. Well-designed and organised schemes, like the 'Car-to-Go' scheme in Stuttgart, Germany are very successful, even in a car-producing city like Stuttgart. There are some biases that are hardwired. For example, we are interested in our own relative status compared to our peers. We are also social imitators. When designing an initiative or a policy, we should not try to change the hardwiring. On the contrary, the best results are achieved when we take these elements into account and work with them. If the offer is attractive, and your peers are doing it, you are more likely to get on board. I am involved in an EU-funded research project looking at how to develop user-integrated innovation as well as collaborative consumption. What are the user needs? How can sustainable choices be promoted? How can initiatives where communities share resources be applied more extensively? How can nudging be used to promote healthier food among the youth? There are many good ideas out there for sharing resources, be it borrowing clothes from fashion libraries or borrowing tools from neighbours. Upscaling such niche-ideas might require facilitation or support by public bodies.

ACTIVITY 8

Read an excerpt from the short story entitled *House No. 451* by Gyrðir Elíasson, translated from Icelandic by Victoria Crib, and choose the best answers (A, B, or C) for items 47a-50a.

Fiction section

Apocalypse***House No. 451***

by Gyrðir Elíasson

It's old and dilapidated, with dirty, tattered curtains covering the windows, the roof on the verge of collapse and the antenna dangling from the gable on its wire. There are cracks in all the outside walls and the paint, once white, is now stained brown and flaking off in many places. The garden is a jungle: trees and hedges growing unchecked, moss in the grass on the lawn, dandelions and daisies everywhere, and an ancient swing hanging from a tree. One of its ropes has frayed through, leaving it to trail on the ground, not moving except in gales, when it drags over the grass with a mournful creaking.

No one has lived here for a long time. The rusty roof rises against the rust-red backdrop of the mountain. I've asked many people who lived in this house but no one seems to have heard of it ever being occupied. It's as if it was simply built and then abandoned without ever becoming anyone's home. I notice that the glass in the living-room window is cracked right across and the pane in the front door is broken. The wind gusts in through the gap in bitter weather.

Yet someone must at least have intended to live there. On the wall by the living-room window there is a green copper plaque bearing the inscription "Built 2010". Now, as I write this, it is 2072. That's sixty-two years. Not such a long time in the life of a house, yet no one knows anything. Last summer I bought the house next door, hence my curiosity, but I can't find any information. When I glanced from the antenna dangling against the wall to the big satellite dishes sprouting like huge mushrooms on my own roof, I couldn't help smiling.

"Dad," say my daughters, "why is the house next door so ugly?"

"I don't know, girls," I reply and carry on writing. I'm always writing. Yet writing has

become obsolete, a bit like an old house built in 2010, where no one now lives.

"Can't you just give it up?" asks my wife, meaning my writing. She finds it bizarre; no one does it, especially not in a town like this.

"You know no one publishes books anymore," she adds.

"It doesn't matter. I have to write." I say it defiantly.

"Oh well," she says with a sigh and carries on watching the 200-inch screen that covers almost the entire wall of our living room. No books are allowed on these walls.

I sit in my little room writing. I write by hand on paper, as people used to before. I've put aside my featherlite-computer; it will soon be obsolete anyway, like everything else. Every day something becomes obsolete. It's a word we live in fear of nowadays. Every time the word is invoked people shrink with secret dread.

Dusk is falling. I look out of the window, through the super-glass that they use in spacecraft; everyone has it now. The sycamores in the garden are beautiful, yet many people regard them as obsolete and won't have any trees on their plots. I gaze through the foliage at the derelict house. The curtains in the window facing me look as if they're made of canvas, hanging any which way from their rings, spotted with grime.

All of a sudden I think I glimpse a faint glow behind them, as if someone has gone into the house and turned on a light or even lit a candle in spite of the safety ban.

I decide to go out into the garden and, rising from my desk with all its papers, recall some words I once read: Why sit down to write if you haven't lived?

I walk through the living room. The bluish glare from the giant screen dominates the room, filling our wall with huge, sinister human forms.

- 47a. The house being described by the writer is most likely
- A. a representation of absolution. B. a metaphor for a haunted house. C. a symbol of everything being supplant.
- 48a. The metaphor 'mournful creaking' (end of the first paragraph) adds to the image
- A. of the mournful atmosphere in the house itself. B. that nothing around the house has been attended to. C. that sad sounds can be expected from a derelict house.
- 49a. The narrator's need to write seems to be connected with his urge
- A. to generate some kind of permanence. B. to live in the past. C. to do away with destitution.
- 50a. By relating the phrase 'Why sit down to write if you haven't lived?' (in the paragraph just before the end), the narrator seems to be saying that
- A. people shouldn't write about something they haven't experienced themselves. B. life today is more or less terrifying. C. virtual reality is superseding actual reality.

PART B - SHORT ANSWERS

ACTIVITY 1

1.1 Here is another part of Gyrðir Elíasson's short story. Fill in each gap 1b-5b with the missing word.

As I put on my jacket I wish I could go back at least sixty years in time, to the year 2012. That would have been two years after the house was built, and there would have been nothing but grass here where I'm standing now in the **(1b) hall** _____. But I don't know how to time-travel.

My jacket is gray, made of some strange artificial fibre that glitters in the dusk. I don't find it **(2b) particularly** _____ but my wife wants me to wear it. Apparently it's the fashion. Once out in the garden I walk among the sycamores and wonder how long I'll be allowed to keep them. Most people want the trees removed.

Why has the house next door never been **(3b) knocked** _____? It's been allowed to remain distinct from all the other houses; the straight rows, all similar in character or, rather, **(4b)** _____ of character.


Because I haven't erected a fence between the gardens, I can walk **straight (5b)** _____ on to the other lawn. The grass there is very high; it's never mown, and the moss is soft as a carpet underfoot. As I step up on to the mouldering concrete pavement outside the front door, I seem to hear something, like the whispering of many voices.

- 1.2** Here's information about the author and the translator of House No. 451. Fill in each missing gap with an appropriate word.

Gyrðir Elíasson

He is one of the best (6b) _____ authors in Iceland. Born in northern Iceland in 1961, he has written ten volumes of poetry and five books of prose. He is also a translator with an interest in works about the indigenous (7b) _____ of the Americas. Elíasson won the prestigious Nordic Council's Literature Prize in 2011 for the short-story collection *Milli trjáanna*. His collection, *The Yellow House*, was awarded the Icelandic Literature Prize and the Halldor Laxness Prize for Literature in 2000. He currently lives in Reykjavík with his wife and three children.

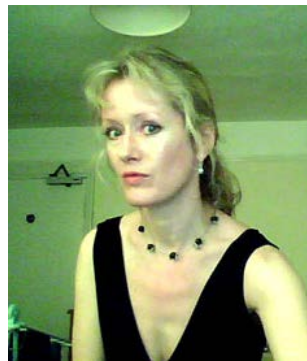
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Victoria Cribb

Victoria Cribb is a freelance translator of Icelandic literature. Her translations of Icelandic authors, (8b) _____ in English, are crime novels by Arnaldur Indriðason, *The Blue Fox* and *From the Mouth of the Whale* by Sjón, and *Stone Tree* by Gyrðir Elíasson. With an MA in Icelandic and Scandinavian literary (9b) _____ from University College London and a BPhil in Icelandic from the University of Iceland, she has lived and worked in Reykjavík for a number of years as a publisher, journalist, and translator. She is currently (10b) _____ a PhD in Old Icelandic at the University of Cambridge.

» More by this translator



- 1.3** Here's the last part of by Elíasson's short story. Think of words that could replace those which are underlined. The word(s) in each case must have a similar meaning, but also fit the context.

I could be (11b) mistaken. But now I notice that behind the living-room curtains there is a glow from a small flashlight or candle. Quite (12b) suddenly, the curtains appear new, the pavement no longer mouldering, the house freshly painted, and it is 2012 again. I stand there on the steps as if I live in the house now and have just come out for a breath of fresh air before going back inside to talk to my family by the fire.

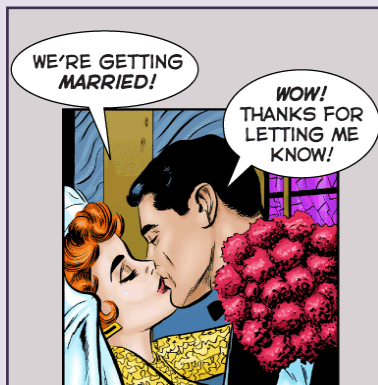
I stand there for some time before the year 2072 returns. As one would say of (13b) a vintage, it's not a good year. There's been no real fermentation. I feel I'd rather live in 2012. There's a slight breeze and I see the rope of the swing stirring, though it would take a much stronger gust to make it (14b) drag over the grass with that creaking sound that I've come to know so well.

I hear the whispering again from inside. After glancing over at my house, which now seems to belong to someone else, I (15b) take hold of the front door handle. It's locked. At this point I do something strange; I reach into my pocket and take out a key which I insert in the lock, though it's hard to locate in the dusk. The key fits. I open the door and step inside. There's no smell of damp as I was expecting, and now I can clearly see the glow lighting up the hall from the living room. I call out in a low voice:

"Is there anybody there?"

ACTIVITY 2

In English, as in some other languages, there are several expressions for 'marriage' and each has a special meaning. Think of a two-word expression for each of the sentences below (16b-20b), suitable for the language used in each, and fill in the missing word(s).



- 16b.** Shoot! Why d's the dude wanna _____ hitched? He has it good now – two broads taking care of him and all he does is protect us all from falling into the hands of the mob. (*Use an expression with a word that also means to be 'fastened' to one another or to be 'hooked' to each other*).
- 17b.** After a long exciting life, and all her travels, she's decided to give up the merry-go-round, and to _____ to a quiet and stable life, have a couple of kids maybe, and stop looking for Mr. Right.
- 18b.** Martha Brisbank, Executive Director of AMF Electronics and M.F. Greenberger of the Sarf Restaurant Chain _____ their vows at the Cleveland City Synagogue, Thursday, 29 October. A reception followed at the Ohio Green Country Club for their 250 guests.
- 19b.** They both finished college, found good paying jobs and stopped seeing other people. They're getting really serious about each other and they both want to have children, so why not _____ the knot.
- 20b.** They decided to walk down the _____ together. They're going all out with a big wedding at St Mary's and a grand reception afterwards. Then off to Greece for their honeymoon.

**ΣΑΣ ΥΠΕΝΘΥΜΙΖΟΥΜΕ ΟΤΙ ΠΡΕΠΕΙ ΝΑ ΜΕΤΑΦΕΡΕΤΕ ΟΛΕΣ ΤΙΣ ΑΠΑΝΤΗΣΕΙΣ ΣΤΟ ΕΝΤΥΠΟ 1
ΤΕΛΟΣ ΜΗΝΥΜΑΤΟΣ**