

READING COMPREHENSION PRACTICE
(B1 IDONEITA')

FACOLTA' DI LETTERE E FILOSOFIA

FREDERIKA GEBHARDT

READING COMPREHENSION GUIDELINES

- Keep in mind the exact amount of time you have to complete the exercise.
- Read the text through quickly without stopping to check your understanding of individual words. The first reading is to get a general understanding of the text.
- Read the text a second time more carefully. This time take time to pause at sections you may find more difficult.
- Scan the questions without looking at the answers. See if you can answer the questions easily by yourself. Skip any questions that you cannot answer immediately.
- Re-read the questions and answer. Skip any question that you find too difficult.
- If you cannot find something close to your original answer to the question, take a look at the text again.
- After you have answered each question, return to the text to find a justification for each of your answers.
- Return to the questions that you were not able to answer immediately and see if you can answer them now.
- If you still have time, check that the other possible answers are not specifically referred to in the text.

B1 Idoneita

The reading comprehension section consists of 1 text with 5 multiple choice questions (3 alternatives) and 1 text with 10 true or false questions. You have **20 minutes** to complete this section. No dictionaries are allowed.

On the following pages you will be able to practice 5 multiple choice practice tests and 5 true or false practice tests with the answer keys.

Read through the text and choose ONE answer for each question.

1. *Pet Doctor*

There's an old saying in the theatre world "Never work with children or animals". It's a pity that Herman Gross has never heard this piece of advice, or if he has, that he didn't pay attention to it. It's not so much that *Pet Doctor* is a bad film, although I can't really find many reasons for saying it's a good one. It's more that it makes me angry. Gross is a good actor. His appearance on the New York stage last winter in Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet* showed that he really can act. So what's he doing in this nonsense?

It's a story about a small town doctor who finds he's making more money by looking after the local children's pets than he is by looking after humans. Then he gets into trouble with the police, because he doesn't have the right sort of licence to do this and, surprise, surprise, the children and their pets find a way to solve his problems. I won't say how, as it's the only part of the film that's even slightly original or amusing. If you have to see it, you'd be annoyed with me for telling you. But my advice is, when it comes to a cinema near you stay in and shampoo the cat.

Questions

1. What is the writer trying to do in the text?
 - a. Compare Herman Gross with another actor.
 - b. Give his or her opinion about using animals in films.
 - c. Give his or her opinion about *Pet Doctor*.

2. The text gives the reader ...
 - a. information about a new film.
 - b. ideas about how animals should be cared for.
 - c. news about the lives of film stars.

3. The writer thinks that *Pet Doctor* is ...
 - a. amusing.
 - b. original.
 - c. not worth seeing.

4. Why did the writer mention *Romeo and Juliet*?
 - a. It's an example of a really good play.
 - b. Gross proved he's a good actor in it.
 - c. The central characters are very young.

5. Which one of these TV guides is describing *Pet Doctor*?
 - a. A doctor is loved by the children whose pets he cures. But everything goes wrong and he is sent to prison.
 - b. A doctor finds he can cure local animals, then discovers this isn't allowed. But it all finishes happily.
 - c. A doctor prefers animals to humans and stops looking after his patients. People are dying, the animals are cured, then the police arrive . . .

Read through the text and choose ONE answer for each question.

2. The Body Shop

When I opened the first 'Body Shop' in 1976 my only object was to earn enough to feed my children. Today 'The Body Shop' is an international company rapidly growing all around the world. In the years since we began I have learned a lot. Much of what I have learned will be found in this book, for I believe that we, as a company, have something worth saying about how to run a successful business without giving up what we really believe in.

It's not a normal business book, nor is it just about my life. The message is that to succeed in business you have to be different. Business can be fun, a business can be run with love and it can do good. In business, as in life, I need to enjoy myself, to have a feeling of family and to feel excited by the unexpected. I have always wanted the people who work for 'The Body Shop' to feel the same way.

Now this book sends these ideas of mine out into the world, makes them public. I'd like to think there are no limits to our 'family', no limits to what can be done. I find that an exciting thought. I hope you do, too.

Questions

1. What is the writer's main purpose in writing this text?
 - a. To tell the reader her life story.
 - b. To introduce her ideas to the reader.
 - c. To explain how international companies operate.

2. What would someone learn from this text?
 - a. How to make a lot of money.
 - b. How to write a book about business.
 - c. What the writer's book is about.

3. How does the writer feel about the business she runs?
 - a. She just runs it for her own entertainment.
 - b. It is not like any other company.
 - c. It is likely to become even more successful.

4. What kinds of workers does the writer like to employ?
 - a. Workers who get on well with the public.
 - b. Workers who have the same attitude as she does.
 - c. Workers who have their own families.

5. What kind of person does the writer seem to be?
 - a. She seems to be someone with strong opinions.
 - b. She doesn't seem to be very confident.
 - c. She sees running a business as just a job.

Read through the text and choose ONE answer for each question.

3. The Toy Museum

This museum is in the centre of the town, a few metres from the cathedral, and near the market. It contains dolls, dolls' houses, books, games and pastimes, mechanical and constructional toys. In this collection there are toys made by all sorts of toy manufacturers from the most important to the smallest, including the most ordinary toys and the most precious. There are also records of children's pastimes over the last hundred and fifty years. Most major manufacturing countries of Europe had toy industries in the last century; French and German factories produced millions of toys each year. Many collectors of toys think that the second half of the nineteenth century was the best period for toy production and the museum has many examples of toys from this period which are still in perfect condition. There is now a growing interest in the toys of the 1920s and 1930s and as a result of this the museum has begun to build up a collection from these years. Visitors to the museum will find that someone is always available to answer questions - we hope you will visit us. Hours of opening 10.00-17.30 every day (except December 25 and 26)

Questions

1. This writing is from ...
 - a. an advertisement.
 - b. a school history book.
 - c. a storybook.

2. What is the writer trying to do?
 - a. To give advice.
 - b. To give opinions.
 - c. To give information.

3. The museum has so many toys from the late 19th century because ...
 - a. it is located in the middle of town.
 - b. many consider this period the best for manufactured toys.
 - c. visitors are interested in toys from that time.

4. What period of toy manufacturing is receiving increased attention?
 - a. Every day except in December.
 - b. The 1920s and 1930s.
 - c. The 20th century.

5. Which of the following advertisements would you find outside the Toy Museum?
 - a. Toys of Ancient Civilizations
 - b. BEFORE TV! - a special exhibition of indoor games from 1890 to 1940
 - c. How Children Dressed 1600 - 1900 "*Clothes for all Ages*"

Read through the text and choose ONE answer for each question.

4. Photo printing firm pays out compensation

Charlotte King made a once-in-a-lifetime visit to China last October and took lots of photographs. When she got back she decided to send away her films for printing one at a time. In this way she would more easily be able to match her photographs to the diary she had kept while she was there. It was a good thing that she did, because the first film she sent to the company for printing was lost. Miss King was very upset that she would never see her precious pictures of Shanghai and Souzhou. The company offered her a free roll of film, but Miss King refused to accept this offer and wrote back to say that their offer wasn't enough. They then offered her £20 but she refused this too and asked for £75, which she thought was quite fair. When the firm refused to pay she said she would go to court. Before the matter went to court, however, the firm decided to pay Miss King £75. This shows what can be done if you make the effort to complain to a firm or manufacturer and insist on getting fair treatment.

Questions

1. What is the writer trying to do?
 - a. To complain about photographic printing.
 - b. To give advice on how to complain.
 - c. To inform us about legal problems.

2. This text is from ...
 - a. a diary.
 - b. a letter.
 - c. a newspaper.

3. Before her visit, Charlotte had ...
 - a. been to China once before.
 - b. never been to China before.
 - c. already been to China several times.

4. It was a good thing that Miss King sent her films away one at a time because ...
 - a. not all the films were lost.
 - b. she was offered a free roll of film.
 - c. she was able to complete her diary.

5. When Miss King said she would go to court, the company ...
 - a. offered her £20.
 - b. said their offer wasn't enough.
 - c. made the decision to pay £75.

Read through the text and choose ONE answer for each question.

5. Alternative medicine

Alternative medicine is, by definition, an alternative to something else: modern, Western medicine. But the term 'alternative' can be misleading, even off-putting for some people. Few practitioners of homeopathy, acupuncture, herbalism and the like regard their therapies as complete substitutes for modern medicine. Rather, they consider their disciplines as supplementary to orthodox medicine. The problem is that many doctors refuse even to recognize 'natural' or alternative medicine, to do so calls for a radically different view of health, illness and cure. But whatever doctors may think, the demand for alternative forms of medical therapy is stronger than ever before, as the limitations of modern medical science become more widely understood.

Alternative therapies are often dismissed by orthodox medicine because they are sometimes administered by people with no formal medical training. But, in comparison with many traditional therapies, western medicine as we know it today is a very recent phenomenon. Until only 150 years ago, herbal medicine and simple inorganic compounds were the most effective treatments available. Despite the medical establishment's intolerant attitude, alternative therapies are being accepted by more and more doctors, and the World Health Organization has agreed to promote the integration of proven, valuable, 'alternative' knowledge and skills in western medicine.

Questions

1. The term 'alternative' is ...
 - a. not entirely appropriate.
 - b. rejected by Western medicine.
 - c. very recent.

2. Alternative therapy is often rejected by conventional doctors because ...
 - a. it is not beneficial.
 - b. it is misleading.
 - c. practitioners are often not qualified.

3. Few practitioners of alternative medicine think their therapies should ...
 - a. substitute modern medicine.
 - b. complement modern medicine.
 - c. be accepted by the medical establishment.

4. Western medicine ...
 - a. is based on many traditional therapies.
 - b. has existed for a comparatively short time.
 - c. is practised by people with no formal medical training.

5. The World Health Organization ...
 - a. has an intolerant attitude towards alternative therapies.
 - b. will support effective knowledge and skills.
 - c. will support all alternative medicine.

Read through the text and say whether the following statements are True or False.

1. Norwich

Norwich, the capital of the part of Britain known as East Anglia, has existed as a place to live for more than two thousand years. It began as a small village beside the River Wensum.

The first cathedral was built in 1095 and has recently celebrated its 900th anniversary, while Norwich itself had a year of celebration in 1994 to mark the 800th anniversary of the city receiving a Royal Charter. This allowed it to be called a city and to govern itself independently.

Today, in comparison with places like London or Manchester, Norwich is quite small, with a population of around 150,000, but in the 16th century Norwich was the second city of England. It continued to grow for the next 300 years and got richer and richer, becoming famous for having as many churches as there are weeks in the year and as many pubs as there are days in the year.

Nowadays, there are far fewer churches and pubs. With its fast growing university student population and its success as a modern commercial centre, the city now has a wide choice of entertainment: theatres, cinemas, nightclubs, busy cafes, excellent restaurants, and a number of arts and leisure centres. Now the city's attractions include another important development, a modern shopping centre called 'The Castle Mall'. The people of Norwich lived with a very large hole in the middle of their city for over two years, as builders dug up the main car park. Lorries moved nearly a million tons of earth so that the roof of the Mall could become a city centre park, with attractive water pools and hundreds of trees. But the local people are really pleased that the old open market remains, right in the heart of the city and next to the new development.

Questions

1. The River Wensum flows through East Anglia. T/F
2. People have lived by the River Wensum for at least 2,000 years. T/F
3. In the 11th century Norwich was a small village. T/F
4. Norwich has been a city since its first cathedral was built. T/F
5. Norwich has always been one of the smallest English cities. T/F
7. The number of students in Norwich is increasing. T/F
8. The Castle Mall took more than two years to build. T/F
9. Norwich people still like shopping at the old market. T/F
10. The city park surrounds the Mall. T/F

Read through the text and say whether the following statements are True or False.

2. Carnival Safety Success

This year's Notting Hill Carnival, Europe's biggest street festival, was the best ever. Despite the cloudy skies, the carnival brought the streets to life in its own unique way with record numbers and little reported crime. After the two murders in 2009, there had been major safety worries concerning this year's carnival. To deal with these fears several changes were made. Firstly, the route for the carnival was changed to avoid the narrowest streets in Notting Hill, a residential area with many small roads. Secondly, the carnival organisers provided more stewards and they received better training. Finally, the organisers ensured that the ending time, 9 p.m., was closely observed.

Following these changes, Carnival 2010 saw more than a million people party in the streets of Notting Hill. More than 3,000 people dressed in spectacular colourful costumes and paraded and danced through the streets, crowds of four and five people deep lined the route to try and see the event. Residents partied on apartment balconies and even the police took part. Apart from the carnival parade, the local area was filled with sound systems pumping out music of all different kinds – Samba, Reggae and Rap music being the most common.

Police yesterday said that 56 arrests were made over the weekend, which included 30 arrests for pick-pocketing and three for robbery. The chairman of the Notting Hill Carnival Trust, Chris Mullard, yesterday said, "The criticism of the event has been ill-founded and I hope people will now see the carnival for what it is; a wonderful opportunity to project the multiculturalism that is metropolitan London."

Questions

1. In Europe, there is a bigger festival than Notting Hill Carnival. T/F
2. The weather was very good at this year's Carnival. T/F
3. The carnival parade went a different way this year. T/F
4. Many activities continued till midnight. T/F
5. Over a million people wore special costumes. T/F
6. For some people, it was difficult to see the parade. T/F
7. Some police danced and partied. T/F
8. There were many kinds of music. T/F
9. More than half the arrests were for theft. T/F
10. The carnival represents only one group or community in London. T/F

Read through the text and say whether the following statements are True or False.

3. The Western Alphabet

The Western alphabet, which is used in Europe, the Americas, Africa, Australia and New Zealand as well as in other countries, originated in the Middle East. The people who gave the world this alphabet were the Phoenicians, a people who established colonies all over the Mediterranean, including Carthage in Africa and Gades in Spain. In their alphabet, the letters were represented by little pictures which represented sounds. The Phoenician A was *aleph*, which means "bull". and it was made from a little picture of a bull's head. The letter B was *beth* which meant "house", and showed the round-roofed buildings which you can still see today in Syria.

The Phoenicians had contact with another nation of sailors, the Greeks, with whom they fought and traded. The Greeks also started to use the Phoenician alphabet. They changed the names so *aleph* and *beth* became *alpha* and *beta*. The shapes of the letters are the same but they have been turned sideways. Of course, the first two letters of the alphabet give it its name. Over the years there have been changes. Latin developed an alphabet with some different letters to the Greeks, and other letters have been added since. But really westerners are using the same system of writing which has served them so well for thousands of years.

Questions

1. The purpose of this text is to tell something of Phoenician history. T/F
2. The information in the text is meant to be funny. T/F
3. The Phoenicians came from Carthage. T/F
4. The Phoenicians were a nation of sailors. T/F
5. The Phoenician alphabet was composed of individual signs. T/F
6. The Greeks turned the letters in a different direction. T/F
7. The Greeks developed the alphabet from Latin. T/F
8. There were fewer letters in the original alphabet than there are now. T/F
9. Three letters compose the name of the alphabet. T/F
10. Our modern system of writing is similar to the Phoenician alphabet. T/F

Read through the text and say whether the following statements are True or False.

4. The Battle of Bannockburn

Robert the Bruce, King of Scotland, is one of the great heroes of Scottish history. At that time the English king Edward II wanted to rule the whole country, but Robert the Bruce helped the Scots to resist and to form a large army which attacked Stirling castle. King Edward's army came to help the soldiers in the castle, and the two armies met at the small town of Bannockburn on June 24, 1314.

At that time the strongest part of the English army was bowmen. These bowmen, with their long bows had won many victories for the English in France. The Scots did not have many bowmen, so when the English archers attacked they could not defend themselves or fight back. However, Robert the Bruce was ready for this, and he called for his cavalry, (his soldiers on horseback). The horses were too quick for the bowmen, and the Scots knights chased them from the battlefield.

As the English knights advanced, Robert the Bruce ordered the Scots to put sharp sticks in front of their soldiers, and to dig holes in the ground for the English cavalry to fall into. As a result, the English were discouraged by what happened and they did not fight very well.

Many people in the area knew that a great battle was being fought, and when they heard that the Scots army was winning, they came to watch the battle. The English soldiers saw them appear on the top of a nearby hill, and they thought that they were another Scottish army arriving. The English were terrified that they would be caught between two Scots armies and they ran away. Now the Scots cavalry returned to the battle and the horsemen killed many English soldiers as they ran away. After this, the English army never really succeeded in conquering Scotland, also because they had to fight wars in other countries, such as France and Holland.

Questions

1. The battle of Bannockburn was in the 14th Century. T/F
2. The battle took place in winter. T/F
3. At the time of the battle the English were in Stirling Castle. T/F
4. Many Scots at Bannockburn were killed by arrows. T/F
5. The English bowmen were the weakest part of the English army T/F
6. The English horsemen chased the Scots horsemen away. T/F
7. It was very difficult for the English to attack the Scots army. T/F
8. The English were frightened when another Scottish army appeared. T/F
9. The English soldiers won the battle. T/F
10. Scotland was also fighting with the French. T/F

Read through the text and say whether the following statements are True or False.

5. Facebook

Do you use any of the social networking websites which are so popular these days, the places where you can connect up with friends and relatives and meet people who share the same interests as you? If you're younger you may use MySpace, young adults are more likely to be found on Facebook and busy professionals may prefer something like LinkedIn. But at least two of these sites have one thing in common: apart from being social spaces where you can meet and chat to people, share photos and other things, they've all added new verbs and nouns to the language in the past couple of years. Let's take a look at some examples. You can facebook your holiday photos (upload them to your Facebook page), facebook someone to see who they are (look him up in Facebook), facebook someone about a party (contact someone through their Facebook page) and ask permission to facebook someone (add them as a Facebook friend).

As you can see, 'facebook' is a pretty versatile word, and you could say the same about 'myspace', which you will find being used in much the same way all over the Net. LinkedIn (being a more adult, professional community) has not been used in the same way. While you're 'facebooking' or 'myspacing' you may also find yourself 'commenting' (writing a comment on someone's Facebook or MySpace page), as in this example: 'I commented Mary that she should come to the pub on Saturday and she commented me that she couldn't because she was going away for the weekend'.

Questions

1. People who use Myspace are generally not as old as people who use Facebook. T/F
2. LinkedIn is for people with good jobs. T/F
3. Sites like these have given new words such as adverbs and adjectives to the language. T/F
4. Myspace has proven to be a less versatile word than Facebook. T/F
5. All three of the sites mentioned have provided some new words. T/F
6. In this Internet context, 'to comment' means to leave a message for someone on their site. T/F
7. You can use Facebook for different purposes. T/F
8. The new terms have been in use for ten years. T/F
9. The word 'facebook' has various uses. T/F
10. You need someone's authorisation to add their name to your facebook page. T/F

ANSWER KEY

READING COMPREHENSION - MULTIPLE CHOICE

1. *Pet Doctor*: 1) c 2) a 3) c 4) b 5) b.
2. The Body Shop: 1) b 2) c 3) c 4) b 5) a.
3. The Toy Museum: 1) a 2) c 3) b 4) b 5) b.
4. Photo printing firm pays out compensation: 1) c 2) c 3) b 4) a 5) c.
5. Alternative medicine: 1) a 2) c 3) a 4) b 5) b.

READING COMPREHENSION – TRUE OR FALSE

1. Norwich: 1) T 2) T 3) F 4) F 5) F 6) F 7) T 8) T 9) T 10) F
2. Carnival Safety Success: 1) F 2) F 3) T 4) F 5) F 6) T 7) T 8) T 9) F 10) F.
3. The Western Alphabet: 1) F 2) F 3) F 4) T 5) F 6) T 7) F 8) T 9) F 10) T.
4. The Battle of Bannockburn: 1) T 2) F 3) T 4) T 5) F 6) F 7) T 8) F 9) F 10) F.
5. Facebook: 1) T 2) T 3) F 4) F 5) F 6) T 7) T 8) F 9) T 10) T.