

Listening and Reading

Time: 1 hour 30 minutes

LISTENING

Task 1

For items **1-10** listen to the talk about how playing an instrument benefits your brain and decide whether the statements (**1-10**) are **TRUE (A)**, or **FALSE (B)** according to the text you hear. You will hear the text **TWICE**.

1. When playing an instrument musicians look as if there's a party going on.

A. True

B. False

2. New technologies have allowed a real time study of the brain.

A. True

B. False

3. When scanning how people read the researchers saw fireworks.

A. True

B. False

4. Playing music makes all parts of the brain work simultaneously.

A. True

B. False

5. Listening to music requires fine motor skills.

A. True

B. False

6. Motor skills are controlled in the left hemisphere of the brain.

A. True

B. False

7. Playing music improves musicians' problem-solving skills.

A. True

B. False

8. Music composers are good at planning and strategizing.

A. True

B. False

9. To retrieve their memories faster musicians use multiple tags in their brain.

A. True

B. False

10. Playing music as well as performing other arts makes people smarter.

A. True

B. False

Task 2

For items **11-15** listen to the interview with an American singer-songwriter Billie Eilish. Choose the correct answer (**A, B** or **C**) to answer questions **11-15**. You will hear the text **only ONCE**.

11. How many Instagram followers does Billie have?

A. 9.6 million.

B. 6.3 million.

C. 1.13 million.

12. Billie DOES NOT think that being sad

A. ruins a lot of things.

B. is amazing.

C. is a waste of time.

13. To handle pressure Billie

A. creates new songs.

B. posts her feelings on her social media wall.

C. writes her feelings on her wall at home.

14. Billie DOES NOT regret about

A. being mistreated.

B. knowing her worth.

C. being an adult.

15. When writing songs Billie wants to

- A. write something no one has ever heard.
- B. use a well-known approach.
- C. please her fans.

INTEGRATED LISTENING AND READING

Task 3

Read the abstract of a film review below, then listen to part of an interview with the actress playing the main part. You will notice that some ideas coincide and some differ in them. Answer questions **16-25** by choosing **A** if the idea is expressed in **both** materials, **B** if it can be found **only in the reading text**, **C** if it can be found **only in the audio-recording**, and **D** if **neither** of the materials expresses the idea.

Now you have 10 minutes to read the text.

“Spencer”, the new film about Princess Diana, is very definitely not “The Crown”. “Spencer”, the imagined story of which takes place over three ghastly days at Sandringham in 1991, veers far more gothic. In “Spencer”, which is set over the royal family’s three-day Christmas get-together, we see the princess desperately wielding wire-cutters in a ballgown; breaking into her crumbling childhood home; and, weirdly, clutching so ferociously at her string of pearls during a terrible Christmas Eve dinner that the beads clatter into her bowl, which she then spoons up with her soup and has a good chew on. The film, in case it isn’t already clear, leaves the borders of realism far, far behind. I am not sure it is recommended viewing for the real Diana’s sons; although, the one place of stability for the protagonist is her tender relationship with her children.

Kristen Stewart spent some months perfecting her Diana, she says, coming up with an evocation of the princess’s whispery, rushed diction and wry little laugh that was pitch-perfect enough to allow her to feel a sense of freedom in the role. Her dialect coach was William Conacher, who turns out to be all the Dianas’ coaches: Emma Corrin (The Crown) and Naomi Watts (Diana) also worked with him. The accent, she says, was important, but more so, the whole manner: “She had such a particular way of talking, and she makes me feel something so specific to her,” she says. “It was like a full-body exercise – the most muscular, unintuitive, yet extremely instinctive thing. It was weird: I needed to master it in order to kind of mess it up.” Stewart continues: “I don’t know

if I believe in anything. I don't believe in ghosts, but I don't not believe in ghosts. I believe in a lingering energy. I took her in, whether or not it was my idea of her or there was some actual literal remnant of her."

It must have been strange to immerse oneself in the world of this most famous, loved and vulnerable of women. "I guess the difference between playing somebody who existed in real life versus in someone's imagination exclusively, is talking about it afterwards and wondering how people are going to receive it," Stewart says. "Because when you are creating a character from scratch you still create a mythology, a list of facts that are true to the person you construct so that that person feels whole to you. "I'm not actually Princess Diana, I can't know everything about her. She's in our movie. She is a character: she exists in this story as something that I feel to be whole," she adds.

In "Spencer", the viewer is edged into seeing events from Diana's off-kilter perspective: she is completely lost, physically and spiritually, and gets more so as soon as she enters the gloomy portals of Sandringham.

The film is inviting us to see the food here not as an accurate rendering of Christmas dining at Sandringham, but, as something that, viewed through the lens of Diana's eating disorder, becomes tempting, threatening and overwhelming. This all plays out particularly twistedly during that Christmas Eve dinner scene.

Now listen to part of an interview with the author of the book and then do the tasks (questions 16-25), comparing the text above and the interview. You will hear the interview TWICE.

16. The movie shows how Diana ate her pearl necklace.
17. The actress thinks that Diana believed in ghosts.
18. The movie shows that Diana had eating problems.
19. The movie shows three days of Diana's life.
20. The actress found it very demanding to study the materials about Diana's life.
21. The film director did a great job.
22. The actress worked with a coach on her pronunciation for the movie.
23. The actress thinks Diana's life resembled a gothic horror.
24. In her personality Diana combined the incompatible.
25. The actress thinks the princes should watch the movie.

READING

Task 4

Read the text and answer questions **26-40** below.

'A letter tells someone they still matter': the sudden, surprising return of the pen pal

In the pandemic, many have rediscovered the sheer pleasure of writing to strangers, with new schemes spreading hope and connection around the world.

(A) Liz Maguire is a 27-year-old American expat living in Dublin. Though undoubtedly a celebrity in her chosen field, she is not a professional, but that is simply because she is not paid to do what she loves, which is to write letters to strangers. At last count, Maguire had 88 pen pals on the go, scattered throughout Europe, Canada, the US and Singapore. She keeps track of their letters using a binder system sorted by month. She also collects historical letters, which she keeps in folders. This January she started sending birthday cards to strangers, too. By mid-February, she had already sent 60.

(B) Pen-palling is “an endurance sport”, says Liz, who on one morning has already sent seven handwritten letters. “Evenings and weekends are my busiest time. Then, if I apply myself, my hand can get about five or six four-pagers out. So that’s twenty-five pages a day. It feels like a good workout. That’s a lot – especially as our generation aren’t usually able to write like this.” To write in that quantity, you need the right pen, Maguire explains. She prefers rollerballs (cheap, less smudging), which bear the names of various corporate venues related to her marketing day job. “My company’s official branded merchandise comes in handy”, says Liz.

(C) Like most of pen-pallers, she won’t reveal much about her correspondents (this seems to be a code of honour), but “connection” is at the heart of what she does. Liz Maguire and her pen pals share stories, thoughts, books, Post-it notes, stickers and poetry. It’s upbeat stuff; the virus knits them together, yet is rarely mentioned. “It’s not easy finding people,” says Liz. “I tried to solicit some on social media ages ago but there is a hesitancy, naturally, to give out your details on the internet.” Many of her pen pals came through a new online scheme called *Penpalooza*, set up by the writer Rachel Syme last March. By January, the number of users had grown to 10,000.

(D) The pandemic has been good for pen pals. Before 2020, written correspondence was as good as dead; what the telephone had weakened, the internet finished off. Yet a year later, this very thing that promised to broaden our world and nourish connection has left us feeling more isolated and eventually frustrated. WhatsApp is good for gossip, FaceTime for countering family alienation and Skype for when all else fails. Email is invaluable but there is something about the immediacy that crushes any thoughtfulness or intimacy. Phone calls are wonderful, but once you hang up, that's it, you cannot hold them in your hands or go over them again.

(E) Letters are real. The crisp sounds of the unfolding, the slight indentations where you pressed a bit harder with the pen, and the smell of paper all contribute to not just a message, but an experience. A handwritten letter is something you can touch – something that engages our senses in a way that technology currently cannot. The recipient can tuck the letter into a book or slide it into a drawer. They can display it on a shelf or keep it on the nightstand. It is a material reminder of its author, their thoughts forever etched onto a physical object. Your reader will not soon forget you. Besides, letters are generally good for us – humans thrive on activity and connectivity, and feel thwarted in the absence of those things. Letters offer a break from the sameness of lockdown, which made us simultaneously time rich and connection poor.

(F) For Jill Stevens's generation, writing to pen pals was part of growing up. She remembers being ghosted by her first and only correspondent, possibly because she sent him a card covered with lipstick kisses. She was eight at the time. Jill says "I still remember the thrill of receiving a letter about what he'd seen on *He-Man* or *Live & Kicking* series. After that, I mostly wrote to my family. Now, separated for several reasons, my mother and I often write each other long letters. An artist, she paints watercolour ducks on hers, and I feel so touched and cry reading them, usually smudging the ducks".

(G) Now Jill writes to lots of people. "They've been helpful during the lockdown when I got seriously ill, was diagnosed with cancer and left all to myself. Neighbours, friends, friends of friends and complete strangers who've learnt of my condition. Weeks after recovery, my own letters started as thank you letters. I would reply shortly to texts late at night, but on paper, words coiled out of me. Thank you for the flowers. For the frozen and freshly cooked meals. For the medicines. For the get better cards. For being part of my life. And we have become pen pals".

(H) Then Jill started sending cards to people she didn't know well, but who are suffering from the same disease. She believes this type of support was key to her

survival after having cancer. “I simply cannot imagine going through treatment alone, so if I can let someone know that they still matter, even if it’s a faceless somebody, that is the catalyst. Letters feel appropriate, less intrusive than a text message or a phone call.” Jill is about to meet up with one of her pen pals when the latter gets better. “I recently sent a photo of an empty bench and said, ‘One day we’ll be drinking tea here, laughing about all this, you’ll see.’”

Questions 26-30

In which part of the text is the following mentioned?
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- 26. feelings of appreciation that initiated ongoing correspondence
- 27. tangibility and physical reality of a means of communication
- 28. the writer’s ideas permanently fixed on paper
- 29. an unwritten rule followed by a group of people
- 30. the amount of writing done on average per day
- 31. a certain way of organizing and monitoring correspondence
- 32. a positive plan of action about the time to come
- 33. physical stamina required by a seemingly simple daily activity
- 34. a romantic childhood experience of written communication
- 35. the main provider of tools for the person’s pastime
- 36. the destructive effect of instant communication
- 37. providing support to those experiencing a similar medical condition
- 38. reluctance about sharing one’s personal information virtually
- 39. feeling sentimental about receiving letters
- 40. the counter effect of the global computerized system

TRANSFER ALL YOUR ANSWERS TO YOUR ANSWER SHEET