

READING

Time: 30 minutes

Task 1. You are going to read a magazine article about a woman who works for the film industry.

Choose the most suitable heading from the list **A – I** for each part **1 – 8** of the article. There is one extra heading which you do not need to use.

Write your answers on the answer sheet.

- A** Initial career move
- B** The purpose of an audition
- C** Huge effort to attend auditions
- D** Determination is essential
- E** Looking good on the screen
- F** Choosing an alternative career
- G** Chance of stardom in future
- H** Turning down promising actors
- I** The pressures in holding auditions

MY KIND OF LIFE

Fiona Bartlett is a talent scout for a film company.

It is her job to find the right faces for the right film.

She has spent the last month selecting the final cast for a new soap opera for teenagers.

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I studied Theatre Arts at university and had intended to end up working as a stage manager in a theatre. However, during one summer holiday I did some voluntary work with a children's theatre group and I met a number of casting agents – people whose job it is to look for children to take part in any new production. They do this by holding auditions – which are rather like interviews – where they can assess a child's acting ability.

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It was fascinating sitting in on the auditions. Children whom I thought were brilliant, who could sing and dance and had such confidence were not always the ones who got the parts. The casting agents would explain that one of the things they were looking for was how photogenic the child would appear in front of the camera, so each audition is videoed and watched on a monitor at the

same time as the child is performing live.

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Three people usually sat in on each audition and the director made the final decision. The schedule was always very tight and auditions were held in a different place each day for a period of up to two weeks at a time. So they were constantly on the move and might audition up to a hundred young hopefuls in one day. I spent two days accompanying children to these auditions, and it was that experience that attracted me to the profession.

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However, when I first left university I worked as a personal assistant to the Production Manager of a children's animation and cartoon company. It was my job to look after his diary, arrange meetings, book actors and musicians for recording sessions and so on and in that way I met hundreds of different people. Then one day I heard that a TV company was looking for a casting agent and I applied for and got the job.

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I was prepared for the hard work and the travel but one thing that I was completely unprepared for was the emotional strain of the job. You arrive at the hall where the auditions are being held to be greeted by hundreds of young people all desperate to be chosen. And sometimes, however good they are, they are simply not right for the part, so you end up disappointing the vast majority of these kids.

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Obviously they've all worked and rehearsed enormously hard to get as far as the first audition. Most of them are accompanied by their teachers or a parent, they may have travelled miles to reach the place on time and spent money on fares and new clothes and so on. And they've got probably no more than five minutes to show us what they can do. Some of them are so nervous they just freeze, others are over-confident and burst into tears when you have to tell them they are not what you're looking for.

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In an ideal world you'd like to be able to offer everyone a job. But it is a very competitive world and if you can't survive these knocks early on when you're still a teenager, the chances are you've picked the wrong profession. But if you believe in yourself and you can cope with these setbacks, it is worth auditioning over and over again. Sometimes people wait years before they get through an audition and there are no guarantees that you'll succeed in this business.

But on the positive side there's enormous job satisfaction to be gained from choosing the right actors for a new production. I know that all the hours I've spent this last month will have been worth it when the first episode of this new soap is broadcast, and perhaps some of these new young faces will go on to become big names in the years ahead.

Task 2. Read the passage and choose the correct answer (**A, B, C** or **D**) to the questions (**9 – 15**) that follow.

GRAFFITI ART

Is graffiti an art form? Most of us associate it with scribbles on walls: names, slogans, limericks, drawings - sometimes witty, sometimes obscene, but surely without aesthetic appeal, and not what anyone would call 'art'. The word graffiti simply means words or drawings scratched or scribbled on a wall and has been around since humans have lived in societies. It has been found on ancient Egyptian monuments and preserved on walls in Pompeii. However, most people now agree that art in the form of graffiti originated in New York in the 1960s – and it has been developing ever since. However, it is not readily accepted as being art, like those works that we go to galleries or museums to see. It is not denied the status of genuine art because of a lack of form or other basic aesthetic elements. In fact, most of the opposition to graffiti art is due to its location and bold, unexpected and unconventional presentation; but the criticism of illegality, incoherence and nonstandard presentation does not necessarily disqualify it as art.

Suppose that Picasso, or any of the recognised artists of Western European culture, were to paint a masterpiece on the side of your house or on your front door or on a wall in your neighbourhood, would it be art or graffiti or vandalism? Some would claim that it would be art in the form of graffiti – it would only qualify as vandalism if it appeared on private or public property without permission. But for some graffitiists that is the point.

There are three main (and distinct) levels and types of graffiti. First, there is the 'tag' – the stylised writing of a name - which, while it might suggest a flair or style of writing, has little or no aesthetic appeal. In fact, the tag or individual mark is not produced for aesthetic purposes, but is basically a means of indicating the writer's presence - the age-old statement of "I was here". Gang markings of territory also fit the definition of graffiti, and they mainly consist of tags and messages that provide news of happenings in the neighbourhood. Murals for community enhancement and beautification are also a form of graffiti, even though they are not thought of in this way because most murals are commissioned. These are more colourful and complex. They take a considerable

amount of skill to complete, and murals can be done in a graffiti art style or as a traditional pictorial scene. The last form of graffiti is graffiti art, which is the creative use of spraypaint to produce an artwork that is graffiti or done in a graffiti-like style.

The reasons and values for why one might engage in graffiti art are as varied as the artists who produce it. A chief reason is the prospect of fame and recognition of one's artistic talent. Graffiti is also a form of self-expression. The art as 'writing' is a creative method of communicating with other writers and the general public. What it communicates is the artist's identity, expression and ideas. Judgments are based solely on one's artistic ability. This type of communication is of value because it links people regardless of cultural, linguistic or racial differences in a way that nothing else can. In addition, producing graffiti art with a crew builds team work in that the crew works together for the accomplishment of a common goal. Some graffitiists view their art as a political protest, others as a protest against the established art market and gallery system, in that art is not only that which appears in a gallery as determined by the curator. Some also view their creations on public and private spaces as statements against private property. Of course, the majority of graffitiists enjoy what they do and find it to be fun, rewarding and exciting. Although these reasons are valid, they do not conclusively settle the matter as to why graffiti art is art or why it is a valid art form despite its illegal origins.

Furthermore, graffiti art has a function of not only communicating to others, but also of beautifying the community by appearing on areas that would normally be eyesores, such as a wall in a vacant lot, or on an abandoned building. Also, all of the aesthetic properties and criteria, from the base element of colour to the complex issue of artistic intention which are ascribed to other works in order to characterise them as art - all of these can be found in examples of spraycan art. The only difference between those works in a gallery or museum and graffiti art, in terms of how and why the latter is not readily accepted as art, is due to its location and presentation. Indeed, the issues of location and presentation are the most significant obstacles to a wholehearted acceptance of spraycan art as art. Graffiti art cannot be disregarded simply because it is not presented in the conventional manner - that is, framed and placed in a museum or gallery. The location of it on a wall or subway train without permission only makes it unsolicited art. Another objection to graffiti art is that it is forced on the public because people have no say in its production (despite the fact that public funds are used to remove it). Graffitiists counter with the argument that buildings, billboards, campaign ads and flyers are also forced on the public in a similar manner.

Graffiti can be analysed according to the elements of lines, colours and structures that are present in the work in order to produce a narrative about it. Artistic intention must also be considered: graffitiists intend their work to be apprehended as art that can communicate feelings and ideas to their audience.

стр. 5 из 6

So, while it is difficult to formulate a theory of necessary rules or conditions specifying when graffiti art is art, it is sufficient to draw on already established aesthetic theories and criteria to point out that some forms of graffiti do qualify as art.

Questions 9-15

9. It is suggested in paragraph 1 that graffiti
 - A** is a late artistic development.
 - B** is an ancient art form.
 - C** is not an art form at all.
 - D** should be considered an art form.

10. Some graffitiists believe that
 - A** graffiti is vandalism.
 - B** Picasso painted graffiti art.
 - C** illegality is part of graffiti art.
 - D** permission is needed to do graffiti.

11. 'Gang' graffiti is sometimes used
 - A** to pass on information.
 - B** as a way of showing off.
 - C** as a way to earn money.
 - D** to paint traditional scenes.

12. Graffiti murals are considered art because
 - A** they are not thought of as graffiti.
 - B** they enhance the neighbourhood.
 - C** they are bright and decorative.
 - D** they are commissioned.

13. The writer suggests that the main value of graffiti art is
 - A** it makes the artists famous.
 - B** its display of artistic ability.
 - C** that it always involves teamwork.
 - D** as a unique method of communication.

14. The main objection to graffiti art is
 - A** it is not found in galleries.
 - B** how and where it is exhibited.
 - C** it vandalises public property.
 - D** it has no aesthetic appeal.

стр. 6 из 6

15. The writer thinks graffiti art should be judged
- A** in the same way as conventional art.
 - B** by how well it provides a narrative.
 - C** by finding out the artist's intentions.
 - D** by finding a new theory to explain it.

TRANSFER YOUR ANSWERS TO THE ANSWER SHEET