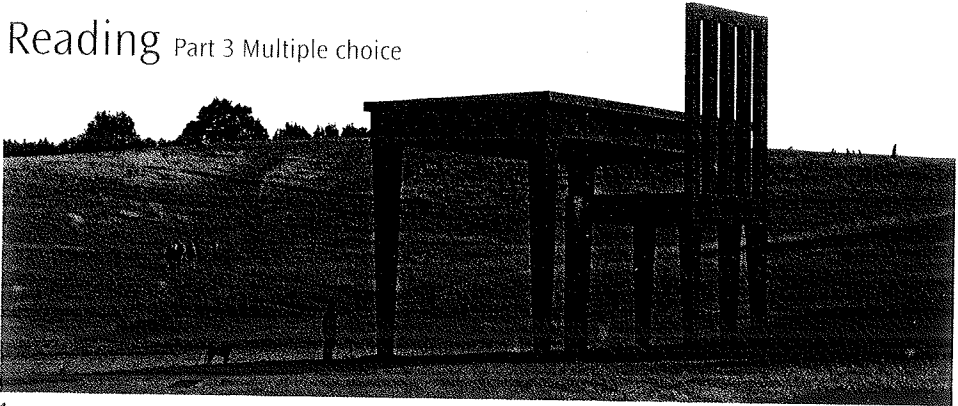


Entertainment or art?

Reading Part 3 Multiple choice



- 1 Read the article about the artist Giancarlo Neri and find out
 - a the title of his piece of work.
 - b where the artist rented his first studio.
 - c who Augusto Nunzi was.
- 2 Read the article again and choose the best answer (A, B, C or D) to questions 1–6.
 - 1 What do we learn initially about this example of Neri's art?
 - A It was designed for people exercising their dogs.
 - B The inspiration for it came when he was in Italy.
 - C Its creation has been a rather slow process.
 - D It was originally created for a different site.
 - 2 Neri believes that his piece of art
 - A is believed from a particular bench in the park.
 - B would have been equally effective in several locations.
 - C reflects the history and culture of its location.
 - D has been greatly admired by local inhabitants.
 - 3 What happens whenever Neri tries to install his works of art?
 - A He gets upset when people object to his ideas.
 - B He comes up against opposition from local artists.
 - C He refuses to talk to people who disapprove of the idea.
 - D He makes sure he complies with local rules and regulations.
 - 4 What inspired Neri's first artistic creation?
 - A the football stadium in Naples
 - B what he could see from his New York studio
 - C his football career with a New York team
 - D a visit to a local prison.
 - 5 It appears as if Neri's creation 'The Writer'
 - A is made from an unusual variety of hazelwood.
 - B was based on a design by a local ironmonger.
 - C had to be constructed in a field because of its size.
 - D surprised even its creator when completed.
 - 6 How does Neri sum up his feelings about art?
 - A People fail to appreciate the most beautiful art of all.
 - B Artists are capable of far more than they realise.
 - C Only art can portray the real beauty of our surroundings.
 - D True art is only represented in our memories.

suffering for his art

Endless nuts and bolts have been screwed into place. Like a giant piece of flat pack furniture, a table and chair has been assembled on the rolling slopes of Parliament Hill in London by a team of engineers directed by Italian artist Giancarlo Neri. It towers skywards and makes dog walkers look Lilliputian in size. Neri, fifty, has been planning this moment for an incredible four years; from when he first laid eyes on Parliament Hill, the Neopolitan knew he had found the perfect spot for 'The Writer'. And this giant piece of public art has instantly become a new landmark.

The site was chosen when Neri spoke to a friend who lives nearby. He described the project he was working on and she said three places would suit: Primrose Hill, Richmond, and the Heath. As soon as he saw Primrose Hill, his mind was made up. 'I sat on a bench and looked across the fields. I just knew it was the right place,' he says. However he doesn't suggest viewers should find that particular bench which told him he had found the right place. 'Stand back and admire it – find your own spot.' Neri believes the theme of the sculpture fitted in with the area, because 'it is a statement on the loneliness of art. When you read a book, you rarely think of the person behind it, sitting alone at their table for years. This place has inspired hundreds of writers and I think that is why it was accepted, because there was a heritage intertwined with literature.'

But it nearly didn't happen. As with all of Neri's art (he has been doing similar pieces for twenty-four years) he has had to overcome a tangle of bureaucracy to make his vision become reality. He says, 'The enemy of my work is bureaucracy. Obtaining permits takes more time and trouble than anything else.' He has previously battled with authorities when trying to install a Trojan Horse in Naples Harbour and giant footballs installed on bridges in New York. Although he did find that the local Council and the Corporation of London were alive to the idea. 'I tried talking to the committee so they could see what I was about,' he remembers. 'One member objected at first, but then he came to see me and told me how impressive he finds it.' Others refused to even talk to him. But he believes the complaints were from a small minority. 'I'm not hurt by negative reactions. Should people who do not want to see it here have the final say over whether it will go up? I don't know. I went through the proper avenues and contacted the right people; I haven't put it up in the middle of the night.'

Neri was born in Naples in 1955, a stone's throw from the San Paolo football stadium, home of Napoli FC. And football was one of his first loves; he played professionally with the New York Apollo team in the 1970s. He later turned his back on football to go to art school and his first installation came about because of the garret he was living in. He had a small studio in Manhattan, by Union Square – 'it was the size of a prison cell' – to paint in. Whilst the views were great, it was too small to hang work. So he had an idea. 'I was looking out of the window, and saw these marvellous rooftops. I thought: I should hang my art there – that way, my window can become a work of art.' He got his neighbour's permission and started making canvases on the facades facing his studio. It was the start of a career that has seen him take his work to outdoor spaces across the world.

'The Writer' was created and built in Italy. After coming up with the concept Neri had to find an ironmonger able to put the plans into action. He searched for the right foundry, and discovered it in an unusual place. On the outskirts of Rome lie fields of hazelnut trees and driving through them one day, he came across Augusto Nunzi's workshop, which normally makes parts for hazelnut-harvesting equipment. He built the chair and table in his yard following Neri's designs and the artist clearly remembers driving back weeks after the designs had been handed over, 'It had a 'wow' factor. Even though I knew how big it was going to be, I didn't realise how impressive it would look. I was taken aback, and I hope people walking here will feel the same.'

He is far from being troubled by the transient nature of his art and explains that 'because they are temporary, it means I can get away with doing things I otherwise would not be able to. Sometimes you wonder if it is worth the effort. But that is part of it; it's a snap shot. Hopefully it will stay in the memories of people who have seen it.' One of the points of his philosophy is that art is all around us and is rarely noticed. Standing at the foot of Parliament Hill and looking at the willow trees that dot the banks of the wildfowl pond, he agrees it would make a great painting. But he believes the true beauty of the scene could never really be captured by the human eye and hand. 'It's as beautiful as it can be; no reproduction can do a view like that justice. It's like the sea and the moon – amazing, natural art.' ●

WORD FORMATION

Drawing: Talent or Skill?

To many people, the (0) ... **ability** ... (**able**) to draw seems (1)
(**explain**), an innate talent reserved only for the (2) (**choose**) few. For
this reason artists are usually revered, sometimes (3) (**deserve**)
so. That is not to belittle their (4) (**admire**) ability, but they
themselves do little to dispel the mystery surrounding the skill of drawing. For skill it is: one
which can be taught and learnt when you go about it in the right way.

If you ask an artist how he draws so well, she is liable to say, "Well, I just look at something
and draw what I see". This (5) (**natural**) does nothing to help the
uninitiated and the mystery is perpetuated. Yet on (6) (**reflect**),
the artist's words define the process of drawing precisely, although (7)
(**simple**). For the secret of drawing lies in the artist's ability to see – not so much what he
sees, but *how* he sees it. It is the art (8) (**teach**) job, then, to teach
students how to change their way of looking at things, and the student in turn must learn to
adjust her (9) (**perceive**) of things.

CHARLES SCHULZ

The cartoonist Charles Schulz created the daily lives of Charlie Brown, Snoopy, Lucy and the
(0) *other* inhabitants of the *Peanuts* strip. Schulz, (1) to his friends as 'Sparky', drew
the daily strip for almost 50 years. (2) distinctly American culture (3) nothing to
hamper its universal success. It was said to have 355 million readers in 75 countries, and it
(4) Schulz very rich, (5) an income eventually of perhaps 20 million a year. There
are *Peanuts* enthusiasts (6) over the world, and no American politician (7)
dream of saying he did not much like the strip.

Schulz insisted he had (8) systemised psychological or philosophical insights, but he
displayed unflinching sharp observation and a fairly gentle, if sometimes downbeat, humour.
He was given (9) anxiety and low spirits, and (10) was an underlying sadness
in his stories, (11) bitter-sweet quality that clearly fascinated many of his fans. In the
1950s, the strip had a vogue following (12) intellectuals, but Schulz was happy to
point (13) that he himself had flunked algebra, Latin, English and physics at school.
When someone (14) him an existentialist, he had to ask (15) the word meant.

HOME ASSIGNMENTS

Phrasal verbs

E Write one word in each gap so the second sentence has a similar meaning to the first sentence.

- You'll have to improve your general knowledge before you go on that quiz show.
You'll have to up on your general knowledge before you go on that quiz show.
- The car was so badly damaged it had to be destroyed.
The car was so badly damaged it had to be off.
- One of the poems is particularly noteworthy due to its interesting use of imagery.
One of the poems particularly out due to its interesting use of imagery.
- If attendance doesn't improve soon, the play will probably have to close.
If attendance doesn't up soon, the play will probably have to close.
- I've heard a new gallery has opened in St Ives, so I'm going to see what it's like.
I've heard a new gallery has opened in St Ives, so I'm going to it out.
- Susan only just passed her history of art course.
Susan through her history of art course.
- The photo's got a couple of marks on it, so I'll scan it and make it look better with some software I've got.
The photo's got a couple of marks on it, so I'll scan it and it up with some software I've got.
- On the show today, we're going to completely change the look of the Simpsons' spare bedroom.
On the show today, we're going to completely over the Simpsons' spare bedroom.

F If a word is in the wrong sentence, write the correct word on the line. If it is correct, put a tick.

- The party was a bit boring to start with but everyone **livened** up when Rod got out his guitar.
- I'm not very pleased with this drawing actually as I think I've **papered** up the perspective a little.
.....
- I've only **wasted** this up for now – I won't be able to fix it properly until we get home.
- Julie and Simone have **messed** over their differences while they get their business set up, but I'm sure they'll start arguing again pretty soon.
- The Prime Minister responded that it was the previous administration which had **patched** the film industry down.
.....
- Luckily, the weather **brightened** up in the afternoon so we were able to hold the reception outside after all.
.....
- As kids, we always **ran** ourselves up when our grandparents came to visit.
- The holiday at the health farm was awful. They only gave us a few vegetables every evening – I almost **smartened** away!

Phrases, patterns and collocations

G Circle the correct word.

- I want this mess cleared up right now. Did I **make** / **do** myself clear?
- It's **nice** / **good** and warm in here.
- Off the top of my **brain** / **head**, I'd say this diamond's worth at least a million euros.
- You're cutting it **fine** / **well**. The meeting starts in about two minutes.
- To the **top** / **best** of my knowledge, there aren't any Picassos on the market at the moment.
- That Ferrari Craig's just bought is **brand** / **model** new. It must have cost him a fortune!
- Lee's his own worst **friend** / **enemy**. He complains he hasn't sold any of his paintings, but he won't show them to anyone.

- 8 There's been bad **blood / mood** between them ever since Trevor accused Charlton of sabotaging his opening night.
- 9 That's the last time I lie to a client for Mrs Richards. I'm not going to do her dirty **job / work** for her any more.
- 10 My mum's got organising her Christmas card list **round / down** to a fine art.

H For each question, write one word which can be used in all three sentences.

- 1 The caterers didn't turn up and the guest of honour was late so we had to make the of a rather disastrous situation.
I know you're not very keen on art, but just do your in the exam.
I didn't get the job in the end, but it's probably for the
- 2 I'm afraid we're out of that CD.
As soon as I get out of prison, I'm determined to make a start.
And now, from their blockbuster tour of the USA, here's ... *The Goldsmiths!*
- 3 She wants to make a break and leave the publishing industry completely.
The doctors have given me a completely bill of health.
This term, you all start again with a sheet, so I won't hold anything you did wrong last term against you.
- 4 Is long hair back in ?
I actually don't know much about that of architecture.
If I was a rock star, I'd make sure I was treated with wherever I went.
- 5 I bumped into an flame of mine in Woolworth's this morning.
Dave's an hand when it comes to doing the carnival disco - he's been doing it for years.
I'm afraid we're going to have to consider putting Mum in an people's home.
- 6 They think I'm stupid but I'm not going to let them get the of me.
We could stay at a hotel near the festival or, yet, camp in the grounds.
Yes, I'm certainly all the for two weeks in the sun.

I Write one word in each gap.

Contemporary Art

There is a widely held view that artistic standards have got (1) over the last 100 years or so and that contemporary art is (2) a bad way, the clichéd response being 'my three-year-old child could have done better than that'. Yet many pieces sell for millions of dollars within the art world. How can we get to the (3) of this seeming contradiction?

Those new (4) contemporary art should be forgiven for this kind of response, but it is largely a matter of their ignorance rather than the reality. What needs to be (5) clear is that contemporary art is at the cutting edge; painting a lifelike picture of a racehorse is no longer an option for an artist attempting to break new ground. Were contemporary artists to produce pictures like this, we would actually have the (6) of all worlds - a stagnant and backward-looking artistic tradition.

Having said that, some contemporary art is of poor (7) , but that's true of every art (8) at any point in history. We can only decide that novels are great, for example, by having mediocre or bad novels to compare them to.

However, those (9) the top of the contemporary art world are producing innovative and challenging pieces. At (10) best, contemporary art is as exciting and productive as it's possible for art to be.

There is, of course, a (11) line between quality contemporary art and pseudo-art. Abstract pictures produced by cats, for example, have no real place in the contemporary art world. They merely relieve the gullible and the ignorant of their money.