

## S4 ENGLISH HOLIDAY WORK 2015

### SUMMARY AND COMPREHENSION

**Read the following passage carefully and answer the question that follows.**

Though the television is one major tool used for communication today, there are many other possibly more important issues for us, which only the good newspapers write about. For example that our schools lack teachers, thousands of high school students are drug users. Money set aside for HIV/AIDS has been stolen. Powerful politicians import cheap goods in the country and many students are hard-core criminals and arm pushers.

Yet such matters are never discussed seriously on television or radio channels. So, if you rely on only these media for your information, you will not get proper information. This may be the reason why many Ugandans show neither concern nor indignation about these issues, although they seriously affect their lives. The point is that reading makes one more intelligent and willing to take action, while addiction to television retards one's intellectual capacity.

Reading strengthens the habits of analysis, questioning, comprehension, and reasonableness. Television, on the hand, does not contribute to these key skills, because it depends on emotions, image and speed. A research carried out by McBeth, a development psychologist in 1986 proved that, people who read a lot are better to relate with than those who are fervent watchers of television. This is regardless of whether such people are intellectual workers, like teachers, professors and journalists, or physical workers such as sportspeople, dancers and saw millers. Good readers often exhibit deep, reflective and serious attitudes.

It is no wonder that the American Department of Education recommends that children watch less and less television. Instead of watching television, children should play, read, do homework and talk with other children and adults for development.

Tim Kaiser in his book, *The High Price of Materialism*, argues that, television makes people pathetic, obsessively materialistic, envious and dissatisfied with their lot. It also gives them a longing for imaginary and unrealistic happiness, which can only be obtained through reckless adventurism. This perhaps explains why many people today are living the great television lie: that in order to be happy you must live like the characters seen on television, using the product advertised thereon. But what you see is not real and can never be. So you keep wondering, 'Why cant I be like other people and have better stuff- a better house, better car, better clothes , a better body .....' Such desires make you a permanently miserable person.

Honestly when was the last time you read a decent book? On the other hand, when did you last watch a patently trashy and irrelevant television show? Ultimately if you need television for news, it's a sign that you do not read enough. Believe me; you lose nothing by being 'deprived' of television. It's not for nothing that television is called 'the idiot box'. Parents should encourage their children to read good books, which give a true and serious picture of the realities of their country. Being addicted to television will only turn young people into vegetables and couch potatoes. Parents and teachers however cannot persuade their young charges to be good readers if they themselves do not read. The elders should lead by example.

*(Source: Head Start Secondary English.)*

**In not more than 110 words summarise the author's views about reading and watching television**

**2. Read the following passage and answer the questions that follow:**

### **LEARNING TO LOVE ONESELF**

Ask an American schoolchild what he or she is learning in school these days and you might even get a reply, provided you ask it in Spanish. But don't bother, here's the answer: Americans nowadays are not learning any of the things that we learned in our day, like reading and writing. Apparently these are considered rusty old subjects, invented by white males to oppress women and minorities.

What are they learning? I found the answer sitting in a toy store book rack in a teacher's guide called 'Happy to be Me', subtitled 'Building Self Esteem'.

Self-esteem, as it turns out, is a big subject in American classrooms. Many American schools see building as important as teaching reading and writing. They call it "**whole language**" teaching. No one ever spent a moment building my self-esteem when I was in school. In fact, from the day I first stepped inside a classroom my self-esteem was one big demolition site. All that mattered was "the subject," be it geography, history, or mathematics. It was praised when I remembered that "nearer", "fit", "friendly", "pleasing", "like" and their opposites took the dative case in Latin. I was reviled when I forgot what a cosine was good for. Generally I lived my school years beneath a torrent of castigation so consistent I eventually ceased to hear it, as people who lived near the sea eventually stop hearing the waves.

Schools have changed. Reviling is out, for one thing. More important, subjects have changed. Whereas I learned English, modern kids learn something called "language skills". Whereas I learned writing, modern kids learned something called "communication". Communication, the

book tells us, is seven per cent words, 23 per cent facial expression, 20 per cent tone of voice, and 50 per cent body language. So this column, with its carefully chosen words, would earn me at most a grade of seven per cent. That is, if the school even gave out something as oppressive and demanding as grades.

The results is that, in place of English classes, American children are getting a course in How to Win Friends and Influence People. Consider the new attitude toward journal writing: I remember one high school English class when we were required to keep a journal. The idea was to emulate those great writers who confided in diaries, searching their souls and honing their critical thinking on paper.

‘Happy To Be Me’ states that journals are a great way for students to get in touch with their feelings. Tell students they can write one sentence or a whole page. Reassure them that no one, not even you, will read what they write. After the unit, hopefully all students will be feeling good about themselves and will want to share some of their entries with the class.”

There was a time when no self-respecting book for English teachers would use “great” or “hopefully” that way. Moreover, back then the purpose of English courses was not to help students” feel good about themselves.” This is good, because all that reviling didn’t make me feel particularly good about anything.

***(Source: Adapted from the South China Morning Post, 13.08.95)***

### **Questions**

- 2.1 In paragraph 3 “whole language” teaching is in inverted commas because:
  - A. the writer is using direct speech
  - B. the writer is questioning the concept
  - C. the words quoted are a translation
  - D. the writer is quoting from another source
- 2.2 Which of the following is the writer implying in paragraph 5?
  - A. self-criticism has gone too far
  - B. evaluating criteria are inappropriate nowadays
  - C. communication is a more comprehensive category than language skills
  - D. this column does not meet the demanding evaluating criteria of today
- 2.3 Which of the following does the writer NOT suggest:
  - A. subjects are no longer taught seriously
  - B. academic standards in schools nowadays are no longer high enough
  - C. kids nowadays are encouraged to be self-critical
  - D. the use of language has changed for the worse
- 2.4 The writer’s intention is to get us to:
  - A. confirm current trends
  - B. rethink educational strategies

- C. think about what constitutes communication
  - D. reassure parents
- 2.5 Which of the following could best replace '**emulate**' in paragraph 6?
- A. Improve upon
  - B. Imagine
  - C. Imitate
  - D. Impersonate