

TRANSKRYPCJA TEKSTÓW

TASK 1.

SPEAKER A

Wind in your hair, your arms flapping like crazy, the feeling like you're the king of the world. What draws so many young people to extreme sports is adrenaline. The young want to push the limits of physical capability and mental endurance, to put their lives at stake and feel that nothing can stop them. When asked why they do it, many teenagers also say that they don't want to end their days regretting what they haven't done. In my opinion, everyone has an adventurous, wild side, but the need to challenge the threat of the elements and experience the thrill of conquering them comes more naturally to adolescents.

SPEAKER B

The thrill of extreme sport can be addictive. Our unappealing day-to-day lives make us want to go beyond the stereotype of a modern lifestyle, and crave that adrenaline rush that we can get from extreme sports. For me, it was a skydive that made me realise the absolute breathtaking enormity of our universe. The moment before the dive, your stomach flips and your heart pounds because you're absolutely petrified that the safety mechanism may fail. At this very moment success comes down to one thing – clearing the mind and being able to keep your mental focus, your physical strength actually being much less relevant. Then you take the dive and the first thing you feel is the freedom of flying at an amazing speed. Then it's over, you've landed, and all that's left is the desire to do it again!

SPEAKER C

Extreme sports are popular because they offer so much more than just adrenaline and cheap thrills. They require physical discipline and intense concentration. People who engage in extreme sports don't deserve the widely perceived image we have of them as thrill seekers mindlessly throwing themselves into harm's way. My experience shows they train themselves on a par with Olympic athletes, with hundreds of hours of practice. Naturally, when you get involved in something that risky, death is always a remote possibility, but you can either take precautions and accept the risk or give up. From my experience, what appeals to young people about extreme sports is the amazing physical strength and skills required, not the possible danger.

www.helium.com

TASK 2.

Text 1

Radio presenter: Intelligence has been the subject of research for decades. Today Professor Jenkins will comment on one of the studies of this topic conducted by Susan Trent. Why is this particular study interesting?

Professor Jenkins: Well, for years, before Trent's study, the overwhelming consensus in psychology had been that intelligence was essentially a fixed trait. In 2008, she published an article which challenged this view, thus renewing many psychologists' long-forgotten enthusiasm about the possibility that intelligence was trainable – with precisely the kind of tasks that are now popular as games.

In Trent's study, the first stage of the experiment was to have all participants complete a reasoning test to measure their "fluid" intelligence, which is the ability to draw connections between things, solve novel problems and adapt to new situations. Then some of the participants received up to eight

hours' training in a difficult cognitive task that required them to pay careful attention to two streams of information. Others were assigned to a control group and received no such training. And finally, all of the participants took another version of the reasoning test.

The results were startling! The author reported that the trained participants showed a larger gain in the reasoning test than the control group did, and despite the relatively brief period of training, this gain was large enough to substantially improve performance in everyday life.

Radio presenter: And what is your personal opinion? Do you really believe we can train intelligence so easily?

Professor Jenkins: Despite the promising results, the conclusion still sounds to me like an extraordinary claim. In my opinion, it's too early to judge how reliable the findings are. In the years that followed Trent's experiment, there have been many other attempts to demonstrate large, lasting gains in intelligence through educational tasks, each without any spectacular success. Even when gains in intelligence have been achieved, they have been relatively modest. So, we shouldn't be surprised if the extraordinary claim of rapid gains in intelligence turns out to be unfounded. But we shouldn't be totally discouraged, either. A wider body of research is necessary to find a definite answer to your question.

Radio presenter: Thank you very much for your comments Professor Jenkins.

adapted from www.nytimes.com

Text 2.

Interviewer: Our guest today, Janice Kamrin, has a PhD in Egyptian Archaeology from the University of Pennsylvania and has lectured about ancient Egypt at a number of universities. Janice, how did you first get involved with the study of Egyptology?

Dr Kamrin: I was always interested in archaeology because my parents were passionate about it and when I was still a child they used to take me to many archaeological sites. Yet, at that time I was too young and carefree to be bitten by the archeology bug. When I was in college I was drawn by lots of things, wanted to try everything. I took some time off and volunteered at the University Museum where I glued together pots from an excavation in Syria. During that period I also met Zahi Hawass, who is a world-famous Egyptologist. He taught me my first hieroglyph and thanks to him I got to know other archaeologists and researchers and the discussions I had with them made me realize it might be something for me. Soon I transferred to Bryn Mawr College, which has one of the best archaeology departments in the country, and was captivated by the excavation works and the magic of hieroglyphs.

Interviewer: So what do we know about the origin of hieroglyphs?

Dr Kamrin: Writing appeared in Mesopotamia and Egypt at about the same time. And in both countries, it appears to have started for administrative reasons. As agriculture evolves, you get surpluses of crops and you have to monitor their quantity and distribution. That's what, in both cultures, seems to have been the impetus for some sort of writing system to start. This development in agriculture also stimulated changes in society which, as a result, got more complex, more hierarchical than it used to be.

Interviewer: In the introduction to your book you describe hieroglyphs as “elegant and beautiful.” Could you elaborate a bit on that?

Dr Kamrin: Well it’s just how I feel about them! They’re beautiful pictures of fish and birds and people but they are something more – to be precise, a means of communication. In fact, you could take it a step further and say that all Egyptian art is really a means of communication. If you look at Egyptian reliefs on walls, even statues, they are themselves elaborate hieroglyphs with specific, very clearly thought out messages. In Western art, except for abstract art of course, we use perspective and realism and try to make things look like what they are. In Egyptian art, it was much more important to get the message across. You’ll have a box and instead of showing what the box looks like, you draw necklaces on top of it to communicate what is actually inside the box. It was about squeezing in as much information as possible, not depicting pictures realistically.

Interviewer: Thanks a lot for being with us today and sharing your passion...

adapted from www.blogs.smithsonianmag.com

TASK 3.

I never thought that entomology might interest so many of you! That’s good news and welcome aboard! With so many insects already classified, some of you may wonder whether there’s anything left to discover. Well, as a collections manager at London’s Natural History Museum I’ve travelled the world in search of rare and previously undiscovered insects. But last March my five-year-old son took a break from a picnic lunch in the museum’s garden and returned with an insect in his hand. I couldn’t have guessed then that his simple question – “Mummy, what’s this?” – would lead to a global detective hunt that has so far stumped the world’s entomologists.

Despite working with an insect collection of more than 28 million specimens, my colleagues and I have been unable to identify the almond shaped creature, about the size of a grain of rice, which has in the past year made itself at home in the sycamore trees in central London. And in fact, it shouldn’t be surprising at all. Some scientists estimate that we have managed to identify only a fraction of the insect world so far. The rest, like my son’s bug, are perfectly happy to crawl along without any christening. That’s why I’d advise you to be alert at all times!

In recent years, several foreign insects, among them spiders and beetles, have been discovered in Britain, a trend many attribute to the ability of such species to survive warmer winters. Already in 2005, Edinburgh Zoo issued a public notice after several panicked Scots reported seeing a spider called a False Widow, which has the disconcerting behaviour of rushing toward people who approach it. The spider turned out to be quite common but in the Canary Islands. How did it come to Britain? The answer is not clear.

Many scientists are trying to find out. Most of them blame climate change but I’m not convinced that it is the factor responsible for Britain’s new inhabitants. For me, European integration may be a more plausible cause. People traverse the continent more freely and in the past decade or so we have been importing a lot more from Italy and Southern France, which are much warmer countries. We might have imported more than we bargained for. Anyway, I’ll soon be asking you to conduct your own analysis for my seminar – so I look forward to finding some interesting theories shedding light on the problem in your dissertations.

adapted from Time, July 2008