

AUDIO SCRIPT

Listening

Task 1

For items **1-10**, listen to part of a lecture about reading in Great Britain. The lecture was delivered in 1995. Decide which of the statements (**1-10**) are **True** according to the text you hear (**A**) and which are **False** (**B**). You will hear the text **TWICE**. You have **20 seconds** to look through the items.

(pause 20 seconds)

Now we begin.

Although the British are comparatively uninterested in formal education, and although they watch a lot of television, they are nonetheless enthusiastic readers.

Many people in the literary world say that British literature lost its way at the end of the twentieth century. The last British author to win the Nobel Prize for literature was William Golding, in 1983. Many others disagree with this opinion. But what is not in doubt is that a lot of the exciting new literature written in English and published in Britain in recent years has been written by people from outside Britain. The Booker Prize is the most important prize in Britain for a work of fiction. Starting with Salman Rushdie in 1981, nine of its next fourteen winners were writers from former British colonies such as Canada, India, Ireland and Nigeria.

Although many of the best 'serious' British writers manage to be popular as well as profound, the vast majority of the books that are read in Britain could not be classified as 'serious' literature. Britain is the home of what might be called 'middlebrow' literature. (That is, mid-way between serious, or 'highbrow' literature and popular, or 'pulp' fiction.) For example, the distinctly British genre of detective fiction (the work of writers like Agatha Christie and Ruth Rendell) is regarded as entertainment rather than literature - but it is entertainment for intelligent readers. There are many British authors, mostly female (for example, Norah Lofts and Rumer Godden), who write novels which are sometimes classified as 'romances' but which are actually deeper and more serious than that term often implies. They are neither popular 'blockbusters' nor the sort of books which are reviewed in the serious literary press. And yet they continue to be read, year after year after year, by hundreds of thousands of people.

In 1993 more than half of the hundred most-borrowed books from Britain's public libraries were romantic novels. Many were of the middlebrow type. The rest were more simplistic stories about romance (she is young and pretty, he is tall, dark and handsome with a very firm jaw; whatever happens during the story, they end up in each other's arms - forever). The British publisher which sells more books than any other is Mills & Boon, whose books are exclusively of this type.

It is more than 200 years since poetry stopped being the normal mode of literary self-expression. And yet, poetry at the end of the twentieth century is surprisingly, and increasingly, popular in Britain. Books of poetry sell in comparatively large numbers. Their sales are not nearly as large as sales of novels, but they are large enough for a few small publishers to survive entirely on publishing poetry. Many poets are asked to do readings of their work on radio and at arts festivals. Many of these poets are not academics and their writing is accessible to non-specialists. Perhaps the 'pop' idiom and the easy availability of sound recording have made more people comfortable with spoken verse than they were fifty years ago.

For the really scholarly reader, the British Library (a department of the British Museum) has more than 10 million volumes, occupying 320 kilometres of shelf space. At present, the library is obliged to house a copy of every book published in the country. This obligation, however, will probably disappear in the future. It is just too difficult to organize. By 1993, its collection was expanding at the rate of 150 centimetres of books per hour. It possesses more than 6,000 different editions of Shakespeare's plays and more than 100 different editions of most novels by Charles Dickens. The result of all this is that it can take up to two days to find a particular book!

You have 20 seconds to check your answers.

(pause 20 seconds)

Now listen to the text again.

(text repeated)

You have **20** seconds to check your answers.

(pause 20 seconds)

For items **11-15** listen to an episode of Pushkin House Podcast and answer the questions. Choose the correct answer (**A, B** or **C**) to answer questions **11-15**. You will hear the text only **ONCE**.

You now have 25 seconds to study the questions.

(pause 25 seconds)

Now we begin.

Interviewer: Hello, I'm Frenkie Shalom, a volunteer at Pushkin House, London. I've had interest in Russia since 2015. I love travelling there, reading about Russia. And when I came across your book "A Brown Man in Russia: Lessons Learned on the Trans-Siberian", I thought we could have a good conversation about it. Vijay, would you mind introducing yourself to our listeners.

Vijay Menon: Good to meet you! I'm Vijay Menon. I'm the author of "A Brown Man in Russia: Lessons Learned on the Trans-Siberian" published in 2018. The book is based on my experiences back in the winter of 2013 backpacking through Russia. I'm originally from San Francisco and The Bay Area. I obviously came from a perspective of being American and a person of colour. In my day job I work in technology, I'm the founder of a small software company called Butter Payments in San Francisco.

Interviewer: When was the first time you felt like a "Brown man in Russia"? Had you ever felt that way before?

Vijay Menon: My initial experience landing in the airport, going to the subway, and frantically looking for someone who looks a little bit like me – hey maybe he knows English, maybe he'll help me out? People were very dismissive, and that was the moment when I realized: Wow, ok, I am "other." But it was also walking through the subway later and feeling sort of like a celebrity. You feel like you're magnetic. People in St. Petersburg and Moscow were a bit more used to that, but as you go more east, they aren't. And I'd never really had that experience: you feel trapped and you feel good, but you don't know whether they're laughing at you or with you.

Interviewer: One thing I've personally noticed is that it's not always that you look different – it's that the way you behave is different. Was there any point you started to feel a bit less foreign than before?

Vijay Menon: One of the things I noticed about uniquely being Russian is how not to attract attention to yourself, and one of the unique things about being American is attracting attention to yourself – being loud, purposefully being loud – embracing individuality and “I’m going to have a loud conversation because I want the person to hear it.”

Interviewer: Your book includes many lessons throughout your trip, and what you got to know about Russians. What do you think the world can learn about Russia from your experience?

Vijay Menon: There were experiences that make me feel uncomfortable, but the majority of my experiences are actually filled with super nice people, and I wouldn’t have been able to make it through that trip by myself without the help of other people. I think Russian people are less gregarious and less outgoing than American people, but they want to help. That’s the main takeaway.

You have 1 minute to complete your answer.

Integrated listening and reading

Task 3

Read the text below, then listen to a talk on the same topic. 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 in the **reading** text only, **C** – if it can be found in the **audio recording** only, **D** – if **neither** of the materials expresses the idea.

Now you have 10 minutes to read the text below.

(pause 10 minutes)

Now **listen** to a talk on the same topic and then do the tasks (**16-25**), comparing the text above and the talk. You will hear the talk **TWICE**.

I have spent my entire life either at the schoolhouse, on the way to the schoolhouse, or talking about what happens in the schoolhouse. Both my parents were educators, my maternal grandparents were educators, and for the past 40 years, I’ve done the same thing. And so, needless to say, over those years I’ve had a chance to look at education reform from a lot of perspectives. Some of those reforms have been good. Some of them have been not so good. And we know why kids don’t learn. It’s either poverty, low attendance, negative peer influences... We know why. But one of the things that we never discuss or we rarely discuss is the value and importance of human connection. Relationships.

Some people think that you can either have it in you to build a relationship, or you don't. I think Stephen Covey had the right idea. He said you ought to just throw in a few simple things, like seeking first to understand, as opposed to being understood. Simple things, like apologizing. You ever thought about that? Tell a kid you’re sorry, they’re in shock. I taught a lesson once on ratios. I’m not real good with math, but I was working on it. And I got back and looked at that teacher edition. I’d taught the whole lesson wrong. So I came back to class the next day and I said, "Look, guys, I need to apologize. I taught the whole lesson wrong. I’m so sorry." They said, "That’s okay, Ms. Pierson. You were so excited, we just let you go." For years, I watched my mother take the time at recess to review, go on home visits in the afternoon, buy combs and brushes and peanut butter and crackers to put in her desk drawer for kids that needed to eat, and a washcloth and some soap for the kids who didn’t smell so good. And so she kept those things in her desk, and years

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later, after she retired, I watched some of those same kids come through and say to her, "You know, Ms. Walker, you made a difference in my life. You made it work for me. You made me feel like I was somebody, when I knew, at the bottom, I wasn't. And I want you to just see what I've become." Can we stand to have more relationships? Absolutely. Will you like all your children? Of course not. And you know your toughest kids are never absent. Never. You won't like them all, and the tough ones show up for a reason. It's the connection. It's the relationships. So teachers become great actors and great actresses, and we come to work when we don't feel like it, and we teach anyway.

We teach anyway, because that's what we do. Teaching and learning should bring joy. How powerful would our world be if we had kids who were not afraid to take risks, who were not afraid to think? Every child deserves a teacher, who will never give up on them, who understands the power of connection, and insists that they become the best that they can possibly be. Is this job tough? Oh God, it is. But it is not impossible. We can do this. We're educators. We're born to make a difference.

You'll hear the talk again in 30 seconds.

(pause 30 seconds)

Now listen to the talk again.

(Text repeated)

Now you have five minutes to finish the task and transfer your answers to the answer sheet.

This is the end of the integrated task. Now you can start working on your reading task.