**Read the following ten short texts. For questions 1-10 choose the best answer A–D.**

**The Big Apple**

Have you ever wondered why New York is called ‘The Big Apple’? Sometime in the 1940s, a pianist in the Tommy Dorsey Band wrote an obscure song called ‘The Big Apple’. It was soon forgotten by everyone except legendary reporter Walter Winchell, who liked the song so much that in his daily column and on the air he began referring to New York City as ‘The Big Apple’, and soon, even though the original song was long forgotten, its title became the great city’s nickname.

(D. Lennox, Now you know:the book of answers, abridged)

1 What did we find out about Walter Winchell from the text?

He was:

A) the author of The Big Apple song.

B) a pianist in the Tommy Dorsey Band.

C) a reporter hardly anyone knew about.

D) a populariser of New York’s nickname.

**Thoughts by Paulo Coelho**

Having written a book about madness, I was forced to wonder how many things we do are imposed on us by necessity, or by the absurd. Why wear a tie? Why do clocks run ‘clockwise’? If we live in a decimal system, why does the day have 24 hours of 60 minutes?

The fact is, many of the rules we obey nowadays have no real foundation.

Nevertheless, if we wish to act differently, we are considered ‘crazy’ or ‘immature’. Meanwhile, society continues to create systems which lose their reason to exist, but continue to impose their rules.

(www.paulocoelhoblog.com, abridged)

2 What is Paulo Coelho’s opinion about rules?

A) They are crazy.

B) They are necessary.

C) They must be obeyed.

D) They are meaningless.

**Moonbow sighting!**

Two fishermen reported seeing what looked like a blue or black rainbow arching from the mountain to the ocean at 9 p.m. at night. Called ‘moonbows’, they coincide with a full moon and are the result of light refracting through water droplets in the atmosphere. If the water vapour is in the right place and if the sky is clear, a bright full moon acts like the sun and you will see a rainbow at night. The rainbow may appear black, but all the colours are there. ‘It’s just that there’s no blue sky to paint it against.’ This is not a common occurrence. The clear skies and moist air of the Hawaiian Islands make this location one of the few places where a ‘moonbow’ can be seen.

(www.colormatters.com, abridged)

3 What is said about moonbows in this news article?

A) They are caused by sunlight.

B) They occur during a full moon.

C) They can be black or colourful.

D) They can only be seen in Hawaii.

**What games did we play?**

A game called ‘Ballsie’ was a game of tag with two bases 60 yards apart from each other.

Usually 20 or 30 boys played at one time. To begin the game we had a race and the last boy to finish was ‘it’. Then the others tried to run from one base to another without being tagged. If the boy who was ‘it’ tagged you and said ‘Ballsie’, you then had to help him to tag the others. It was a great playground honour to be the last one left. But why was the game called Ballsie? I have no idea.

4 What do we find out from the text about the game?

A) The person running slowest at a race was ‘it’.

B) It was a great honour to be tagged during the game.

C) The person who was ‘it’ couldn’t continue in the game.

D)The last one left in the game without being tagged was the slowest.

Historians in England have uncovered evidence that baseball may not be as American as

apple pie. The BBC reports that baseball was played in England in 1755, more than twenty years before America’s independence in 1776. This may come as a shock for the Americans who believe baseball is their creation. A recently discovered diary is ‘proof’ that Englishmen were hitting home runs long before their cousins across the Atlantic. William Bray, the diarist, wrote about the game being popular in the county of Surrey, south of London. The Surrey History Centre confirmed the diary was authentic. Major League Baseball officials are aware of this news.

(www.breakingnewsenglish.com,abridged)

5 What is the best title for the text?

A) English Roots of American Game

B) Baseball Getting Popular in England

C) Shocking News in Major League Baseball

D) Englishmen are Hitting Home Runs in the U.S.

**Science helps**

Worried about getting old? Don’t want to get wrinkles? Wondering how to stop going grey, or white, or silver? Well, help may be at hand because scientists have discovered the substance the body uses to give our hair its natural colour. The goal is to make a shampoo that contains the substance. This would save us a fortune in hair dyes and keep us all looking younger. Unfortunately, the substance only seems to be for hair colour loss and not hair loss. People going bald will have to wait a little longer for the substance that stops their hair falling out.

(www.breakingnewsenglish.com, abridged)

6 How does the newly discovered substance help?

A) It renews hair growth.

B) It recovers broken dyed hair.

C) It prevents hair from falling out.

D) It protects hair from losing its colour.

**Toy-plane trouble**

A judge sentenced a man to six months ‘probation and 50 hours of community service for

using a shotgun to shoot down a neighbour’s radio-controlled model aeroplane. David Nuttle, 41, said his shots only caused two tiny holes in the plane, but the plane crashed when the child who was operating it lost control of it after being frightened by the shots. Nuttle said the planes have long bothered his family and frightened his chickens. ‘I felt I was defending my family and my property from these planes, and I called the police several times,’ he said. Nuttle says he now regrets his actions.

(www.militaryphotos.net, abridged)

7 What do we learn about David Nuttle?

A) He was frightened by the model aeroplanes.

B) He shot at the model aeroplane to protect his family.

C) He wanted to frighten the child operating the model aeroplane.

D) He had never had problems with the model aeroplanes before.

**Quotation of the day**

‘In Italy, for thirty years under the Borgias, they had warfare, terror, murder and bloodshed, but they produced Michelangelo, Leonardo da Vinci, and the Renaissance. In Switzerland they had brotherly love; they had five hundred years of democracy and peace. And what did they produce? The cuckoo clock.’

(Orson Welles, The Third Man)

8 What is the main idea of this quote?

A) Peaceful times lead to great inventions.

B) Great art can never exist in times of violence.

C) Democracy and peace come from times of war.

D) Important creations in history resulted from unrest.

...

Mark Malkoff used to spend most of his day online, browsing and checking Facebook every other minute. He confesses he would sometimes be online from the moment he woke up until he went to sleep. So Mark decided to set a goal of spending five days in his bathroom in an effort to break his addiction. The problem? Mark’s bathroom is smaller than a prison cell –

and it’s pink. But he made the most of it. While there, Mark memorised

all the U.S. presidents, read a novel, learned how to knit, and wrote a love letter to his wife

to keep from thinking about the Internet and being bored.

(www.odditycentral.com, abridged)

9 What is the best title for this article?

A) Man Goes to Prison for His Addiction

B) Man Hides in Bathroom to Use Internet

C) Man Achieves Goal of Learning Knitting

D) Man Chooses Unusual Way to Avoid His Addiction

Dear Miriam,

I love a girl I met online and she seems to be everything to me. Her name is Elena. The problem is that she lives overseas. We’ve talked about her coming to live in Ireland but she looks after her old parents and can’t leave them alone. I’m 40 and she’s 20. The age difference doesn’t bother me but my friends and parents are worried she is a gold-digger... I run my own business but it’s nothing I should depend on for the rest of my life so I could move. My parents are still active and able to do without my help. I know I love Elena, but can I trust her? What should I do?

Liam

(www.blogs.mirror.co.uk,abridged)

10 What does Liam consider a problem?

1. The fact that Elena lives abroad.
2. The fact that Elena is much younger than he.
3. The idea that Elena’s intentions might be dishonest.
4. The idea that he should take care of Elena’s parents.

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