

Olympiáda v anglickom jazyku, 26. ročník, krajské kolo 2015/2016, kategória 2D
– riešenia a úlohy

LISTENING TAPESCRIPT
(Please read twice)

You will hear someone talking about Sylvia Plath, an American poet.

Today we're gonna look at the life and some of the works of one of America's finest modern female poets, Sylvia Plath.

At the time of her death in 1963, Sylvia Plath was on the verge of the critical success and recognition that she had sought for most of her life. Her first novel, *The Bell Jar*, had just been published and the publication of her collection of poems, *Ariel*, had just been agreed.

These poems, which were mostly written during the last year of her life, chronicle the traumatic developments taking place in her personal life and were to make for her a reputation as a first rate poet. But it wasn't until 1982, almost twenty years after her death, that her posthumously published *Collected Poems* won the Pulitzer Prize for literature. Since this time the fascination and intrigue with her work has continued to grow. Very few modern poets have captured the popular imagination as much as Plath, even to the extent that in 2003 a movie was made about her life and her intense relationship with husband and fellow poet Ted Hughes.

To understand the continued growth in interest in her work, we have to look at the issues which her life and work address. As Susan Bassnett writes in her book on women writers:

‘Dying as she did in 1963, Sylvia Plath never knew that so soon afterwards the problems of what and how women write was to become such a crucial matter and was to be debated by so many other women’.

So, Sylvia Plath was a woman writing about women's issues before they were recognised as being of any importance.

Sylvia Plath was born at Robinson Memorial Hospital in Boston on 27 October 1932. She was the first born child of Otto and Aurelia Plath, both highly educated academic people. Her father Otto was a professor of biology at Boston University, but her mother had been subjugated into a domestic role as housewife despite her level of education. Her father was not too pleased with the birth of his daughter and demanded that his wife have a son within the next two years. Amazingly enough, his wife obliged him by giving birth to a son almost exactly two years later.

This domineering father figure became a common theme that recurred throughout Plath's writing. With the birth of her brother, Sylvia had to work much harder to win her father's attention and approval. When in 1936 Plath's father became ill, access to him became even more restricted, and Plath's main means of getting attention from her father was by achieving academic success. This meant that from an early age she began to equate love with success.

When her father died, this left the family in a very difficult financial situation. They were forced to move away from the seaside home that they had enjoyed so much and into a suburb of Boston, and her mother had to take a part-time job to support the family.

In 1950 Plath graduated from Bradford High School and won a scholarship to Smith College. In the same year she published a short story entitled *And Summer Will Not Come Again* and a poem called *Bitter Strawberries*.

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LISTENING TAPESCRIPT (continued)

Plath's time at Smith was difficult as she had very high expectations of herself. She wanted to achieve immaculate grades, but she also wanted to be accepted by her peers and an important part of being accepted was being popular and dating lots of boys. This was difficult because as a scholarship girl she had only a very small allowance to spend on clothes and going out, and each year's continued scholarship was dependent on the level of her grades.

In 1953 Plath won a fiction contest sponsored by the women's magazine *Mademoiselle* and was offered the opportunity to go to New York as a guest editor. She relished this opportunity to spend a month working in a professional publishing environment, but Plath returned from New York feeling exhausted and after hearing news that her application to a creative writing course had been rejected, she fell into what was to become one of many depressions.

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ROLEPLAY

Student

You want to go to England to work as an au-pair and you are now being interviewed by the agency interviewer. You want this job very much and you are trying to sound perfect - you love children, you want to improve your English, you have worked with kids in a summer camp. Talk about your character qualities, skills, and reasons for choosing this job.

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ROLEPLAY

Teacher

You are an interviewer interviewing a student who wants to work abroad as an au-pair. You are not sure about him/her. You want to make sure he/she has enough experience, personal qualities and skills, and that he/she will work hard for the family in England.

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PICTURE STORY

Make up a story about the people in the picture.



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A N S W E R K E Y

GRAMMAR - 15 points

- | | |
|--|-----------------------|
| 1. was visiting | 7. will / 'll be able |
| 2. decided | 8. the |
| 3. had already stayed / had already been staying | 9. didn't have |
| 4. for | 10. was staying |
| 5. had / 'd told | 11. were |
| 6. lot | 12. the |
| | 13. either |

(13 pts)

14. a single
15. no cake
16. until
17. the worst film

(½ pt each – 2pts)

VOCABULARY - 10 points

- | | |
|------|-------------|
| 1. C | |
| 2. D | 7. custody |
| 3. A | 8. death |
| 4. C | 9. wig |
| 5. D | 10. assault |
| 6. B | |

READING COMPREHENSION - 10 points

- | | |
|------|----------------|
| 1. A | 6. tremulously |
| 2. A | 7. late |
| 3. C | 8. doggedly |
| 4. B | 9. affronted |
| 5. C | 10. muggings |

LISTENING COMPREHENSION - 5 points

- | | |
|------|-------|
| 1. T | 6. F |
| 2. F | 7. F |
| 3. T | 8. T |
| 4. F | 9. T |
| 5. F | 10. T |

(½ pt each)

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