

READING COMPREHENSION

Read the text carefully. Complete the task on the next page.

THE PROBLEM WITH POSH VOICES

Why no one has a good word to say about a privileged accent,
by Hollywood dialogue coach Joan Washington

What does a voice tell you about a person? Most people would say class, education (mainly from grammar and vocabulary rather than accent), sex, age, personality and ethnicity. Some might even make assumptions about physical appearance just from a phone conversation, although these can often be incorrect – large American men sometimes have tight, high-pitched voices, while the little-girl voices of many French women may tell us nothing about their physical properties.

A ‘posh’ accent, in particular, can be interpreted in many ways, often unfavourably and unfairly. George Bernard Shaw, in his preface to *Pygmalion*, wrote: “It is impossible for an Englishman to open his mouth without making some other Englishman hate or despise him.” Prejudice against upper-class accents still seems acceptable in an age when expressing bias against sex, age, religion, or colour is not. Many younger members of the upper classes now either talk in a minor key, so as to sound less dogmatic, while upper class girls often use ‘up talk’, rising at the end of utterances as if asking a question. This is not simply the result of watching too much Australian and Californian television, as many believe; it comes from not wanting to sound too opinionated.

Accent is a dynamic concept and children seldom speak like their parents. The Royal Family is a familiar example. The Queen has the cut-glass accent of her Fifties generation – nasal, precise and exacting. Her children are far more ‘plummy’, with those sudden bursts of volume. Princes William and Harry are the first generation of royals to use ‘glottal stops’ (the sudden closing of the throat to substitute for a ‘t’).

Accents are not only affected by historical roots (such as the similarities between Norfolk and New England or, thanks to their Viking history, Newcastle and Aberdeen) but also by climate and landscape. Flatter areas have flatter accents and less range of tune. Norfolk is a perfect example, with the narrowest range of intonation of any English county. South Wales, North Yorkshire and the highlands of Scotland are the opposite – hilly areas with a wide range of tune. The effect of climate is even more obvious. Cold, polluted and windy areas result in tighter jaws, and a tight jaw leads to increased nasality.

The key in which we speak, whether major or minor (on the positive white notes of the piano versus more plaintive black notes, that is), affects how people perceive us. The most important element of a successfully communicative voice is that it is transitive, reaching out from one person to another to elicit a response and an ensuing dialogue. Major-key speakers with bright and balanced resonance and transitive endings to utterances are attractive and persuasive – think of politicians such as Tony Blair and David Cameron.

READING COMPREHENSION – TASK

Task: Based on what you have read in the article, decide whether the statements below are true (T) or false (F). Circle one of the two letters. Be careful, sentences do not follow in the same order as the information in the article.

1. **T / F** The Scottish Highlands have modified its inhabitants' accent as regards variation and tone.
2. **T / F** Young upper-class females are currently using "up talk" intonation in order not to sound dogmatic.
3. **T / F** The topography of particular countries doesn't play a significant role in the development of various accents.
4. **T / F** People often assume inaccurately what a person looks like based on their voice.
5. **T / F** According to the article, a transitive voice is the one that enhances dialogue.
6. **T / F** G. B. Shaw states that an English person's distinct pronunciation will always evoke negative emotional reactions in some people.
7. **T / F** Nasal pronunciation can be a result of having lived in breezy and low-temperature areas.
8. **T / F** "Glottal stops" in pronunciation means omitting a specific sound while speaking.
9. **T / F** In the majority of cases, bulky men from the United States have high-frequency and piercing voices.
10. **T / F** Young people stick to their parents' accents.

_____ / 10 pts

V O C A B U L A R Y

Task 1: Fill in the gaps in the following sentences with one of the idiomatic phrases from the box (there are four extra phrases).

<i>out of the blue</i>	<i>high-handed</i>	<i>offhand</i>	<i>in the black</i>
<i>underhand</i>	<i>in the red</i>	<i>short-handed</i>	<i>once in a blue moon</i>

1. I think you were rather in dismissing him without consulting me.
2. Tourists often go to the Louvre but most Parisians only go there
3. The company is It owes a lot of money.
4. I'm afraid I don't know her address I'll tell you tomorrow after I've looked it up.

Task 2: Fill each blank space in the article below with the correct form of the word in capital letters.

NORTH AMERICAN FREE TRADE AGREEMENT (NAFTA)

Signed by Canada, Mexico and the U.S., NAFTA created the world's largest free-trade area. The agreement immediately lifted tariffs on the majority of goods produced by the (5) nations, and it called for the gradual elimination of most of the remaining barriers to cross-border (6) and the movement of goods and services between the three countries. Critics claim that NAFTA has led to job loss in the U.S. due to the (7) of maquiladoras, which are factories run by U.S. companies in Mexico to take advantage of cheap labour. NAFTA has two (8) – the North American Agreement on Environmental Cooperation and the North American Agreement on Labor Cooperation. The leaders of the three countries met (9) in San Antonio, Texas, in 1992 to sign NAFTA. The proposed Canada-U.S. trade Agreement was very controversial and (10) in Canada.

SIGN**INVEST****PREVAIL****SUPPLY****CEREMONY****DIVIDE**

_____ / 10 pts

G R A M M A R**Task 1: Fill each of the numbered blanks in the passage with one suitable word.**

CHANGES IN EDUCATION

EXAMPLE: (0) all

There is a problem that will touch us (0) – men, women and children – in the not too distant future, a problem that resolves (1) into a question: what is education for? At the moment most of us can answer that fairly practically and without (2) much soul-searching. On the lowest level, education is for enabling us to cope in an adult world (3) money must be added up, tax forms filled (4), numbers looked (5) in telephone directories, maps read and street signs understood. On the next level it is for getting some kind of job (6) will pay a living wage. But we are already peering (7) a future so different from anything we (8) now recognize as familiar patterns in education. Basic skills (reading, writing and arithmetic) will continue to be necessary but (9), after all, can be taught to children from one to two years during their childhood. But education with a view to working for a living, (10) least in the sense of earning daily bread, may well be on its way out right now for the majority of us. Then the question ‘What is education for?’ becomes (11) more complex.

_____ / 11 pts

Task 2: Complete each sentence in such a way that it means exactly the same as the sentence above it. Use the words given to start a new sentence.

12. ‘I never told anyone about my project,’ he said.

He denied

13. She’s likely to leave before the letter arrives.

By the time

14. The window cleaners haven’t called for six months.

The last time

15. The suitcase was extremely heavy but he managed to lift it easily.

Despite

_____ / 4pts

_____ / 15 pts

L I S T E N I N G

You will hear a radio programme in which author and psychologist Susan David describes five ways to lead a happier life. Below you can read ten statements, of which five are related to her advice. In the gaps provided, write a number 1 – 5 next to the statement which refers to a particular piece of advice. There are five extra statements – write X in the gaps provided. You will hear the programme twice.

THE PATH TO SUCCESS AND HAPPINESS

- | | |
|--|-------|
| 1. Make choices that suit your beliefs. | ..... |
| 2. Don't get disappointed. | ..... |
| 3. Be compassionate towards yourself. | ..... |
| 4. Choose courage over comfort. | ..... |
| 5. Be empathetic towards others. | ..... |
| 6. Don't get stuck in thoughts. | ..... |
| 7. Choose a rational approach. | ..... |
| 8. Communicate your innovative ideas. | ..... |
| 9. Be more extroverted. | ..... |
| 10. Accept the feeling of anxiety as part of your active life. | ..... |

_____ / 5 pts