

ESAME DI STATO DI ISTRUZIONE SECONDARIA SUPERIORE

SECONDA PROVA SCRITTA

Indirizzo: LI04 – LICEO LINGUISTICO

Tema di: LINGUA E CULTURA STRANIERA 1: INGLESE

PART 1 – COMPREHENSION AND INTERPRETATION

Read the texts for Question A and Question B and answer the questions below.

Question A

22 August 1972

In yesterday's *Sunday Times*, a report from Francistown in Botswana. Sometime last week, in the middle of the night, a car, a white American model, drove up to a house in a residential area. Men wearing balaclavas¹ jumped out, kicked down the front door, and began shooting. When they had done with shooting they set fire to the house and drove off. From the embers the neighbours dragged seven charred bodies: two men, three women, two children.

The killers appeared to be black, but one of the neighbours heard them speaking Afrikaans² among themselves and was convinced they were whites in blackface. The dead were South Africans, refugees who had moved into the house mere weeks ago.

Approached for comment, the South African Minister of Foreign Affairs, through a spokesman, calls the report 'unverified'. Inquiries will be undertaken, he says, to determine whether the deceased were indeed South African citizens. As for the military, an unnamed source denies that the South African Defence Force had anything to do with the matter. The killings are probably an internal ANC³ matter, he suggests, reflecting 'ongoing tensions' between factions.

So they come out, week after week, these tales from the borderlands, murders followed by bland denials. He reads the reports and feels soiled. So this is what he has come back to! Yet where in the world can one hide where one will not feel soiled? Would he feel any cleaner in the snows of Sweden, reading at a distance about his people and their latest pranks? How to escape the filth: not a new question. An old rat-question that will not let go, that leaves its nasty, suppurating wound. Agenbite of inwit.⁴

'I see the Defence Force is up to its old tricks again,' he remarks to his father. 'In Botswana this time.' But his father is too wary to rise to the bait. When his father picks up the newspaper, he takes care to skip straight to the sports pages, missing out the politics – the politics and the killings.

His father has nothing but disdain for the continent to the north of them. *Buffoons* is the word he uses to dismiss the leaders of African states: petty tyrants who can barely spell their own names, chauffeured from one banquet to another in their Rolls-Royces, wearing Ruritanian uniforms festooned with medals they have awarded themselves. Africa: a place of starving masses with homicidal buffoons lording it over them.

35	<p>‘They broke into a house in Francistown and killed everyone,’ he presses on nonetheless. ‘Executed them. Including the children. Look. Read the report. It’s on the front page.’ His father shrugs. His father can find no form of words spacious enough to cover his distaste for, on the one hand, thugs who slaughter defenceless women and children and, on the other, terrorists who wage war from havens across the border. He resolves the problem by immersing himself in the cricket scores. As a response to a moral dilemma it is feeble; yet is his own response – fits of rage and despair – any better?</p> <p>(513 words)</p> <p style="text-align: right;">J.M. Coetzee, <i>Summertime</i> (2011)</p> <p>Balaclavas: headwear designed to only leave part of the face exposed, usually the eyes and the mouth. ² Afrikaans: one of the official languages in South Africa, typically spoken by white people of Dutch descent. ³ ANC: African National Congress, a social-democratic, anti-apartheid party once led by Nelson Mandela. It was one of the primary forces of resistance during apartheid years and it has been in power since apartheid ended in 1994. ⁴ Agenbite of Inwit: remorse of conscience.</p>
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Read the following statements and say whether each one is True (T) or False (F)

1. It is unclear whether the killers were black or white. **T / F**
2. South African institutional organs have provided full and detailed accounts of the killings. **T / F**
3. The killings are described as shocking and untypical. **T / F**

Answer the questions below. Use complete sentences and your own words.

4. This text describes South Africa in the 1970s, when apartheid violence was at its apex. The narrator is a white South African man who has come back to his country after many years spent abroad. How would you describe the narrator’s feelings towards his country?
5. How does the narrator’s father react to shocking news, and what might we understand about him from such reactions?
6. How does the narrator feel about his own reaction to violence, compared to his father’s?
7. What do you think the main theme of this text is? Provide reasons to justify your answer.

Question B

5	<p>VS NAIPAUL FINDS NO WOMAN WRITER HIS LITERARY MATCH – NOT EVEN JANE AUSTEN Nobel laureate says there is no female author whom he considers his equal</p> <p>VS Naipaul, no stranger to literary spats and rows, has done it again. This time, the winner of the Nobel prize for literature has lashed out at female authors, saying there is no woman writer whom he considers his equal – and singling out Jane Austen for particular criticism.</p> <p>In an interview at the Royal Geographic Society on Tuesday about his career, Naipaul, who has been described as the “greatest living writer of English prose”, was asked if he considered any woman writer his literary match. He replied: “I don’t think so.” Of Austen he said he “couldn’t possibly share her sentimental ambitions, her sentimental sense of the world”.</p>
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10	<p>He felt that women writers were “quite different”. He said: “I read a piece of writing and within a paragraph or two I know whether it is by a woman or not. I think [it is] unequal to me.”</p> <p>The author, who was born in Trinidad, said this was because of women’s “sentimentality, the narrow view of the world”. “And inevitably for a woman, she is not a complete master of a house, so that comes over in her writing too,” he said.</p>
15	<p>He added: “My publisher, who was so good as a taster and editor, when she became a writer, lo and behold, it was all this feminine tosh. I don’t mean this in any unkind way.”</p> <p>The criticism from the author is unsurprising. Naipaul is no stranger to criticism. In the past Naipaul has criticised India’s top female authors for their “banality” on the topic he is best known for writing about, the legacy of British colonialism.</p>
20	<p>He also had a long-running feud with US travel writer and author Paul Theroux.</p> <p>Their 30-year friendship came to a sudden end, after Theroux discovered that a book he gave Naipaul had been put on sale for £916. The comments were dismissed by the Writers Guild of Great Britain, which said it would not “waste its breath on them”. Literary journalist Alex Clark said: “Is he really saying that writers such as Hilary Mantel, AS Byatt, Iris Murdoch are sentimental or write feminine tosh?”</p>
25	<p>Literary critic Helen Brown described them as “arrogant, attention-seeking. He should heed the words of George Eliot – a female writer – whose works have had a far more profound impact on world culture than his.” (409 words)</p>
30	<p style="text-align: right;">[<i>The Guardian</i>, Thu 2 Jun 2011]</p> <p style="text-align: center;">https://www.theguardian.com/books/2011/jun/02/vs-naipaul-jane-austen-women-writers</p>

Read the following statements and say whether each one is True (T) or False (F)

8. V.S. Naipaul was known to be quarrelsome. **T / F**

9. V.S. Naipaul was often described as a famous but mediocre writer. **T / F**

10. V.S. Naipaul claimed that it takes very little time to figure out whether a written piece was authored by a male or female writer. **T / F**

11. The article does not say what V.S. Naipaul typically wrote about. **T / F**

Answer the questions below. Use complete sentences and your own words.

12. What did V.S. Naipaul think of Jane Austen?

13. What did V.S. Naipaul think of his editor’s decision to become a writer?

14. What happened between V.S. Naipaul and Paul Theroux?

15. How did the literary community react to V.S. Naipaul’s statements about the difference between male and female writers?

PART 2 – WRITTEN PRODUCTION

Task A

History will be kind to me, for I intend to write it.

This famous quote by Winston Churchill highlights the way propaganda, individual points of view and biases shape the way news is shared, stories are told, and history is passed on to the next generations.

Discuss the quotation in a 300-word essay. Support your ideas by referring to your reading and your personal experience.

Task B

You have seen this advertisement in an international magazine.

Gender-based discrimination does not just generate large-scale, blatant inequality; it also manifests itself in small acts that often go unnoticed: pay disparity is an indisputable fact; inappropriate compliments may not be equally easy to recognize and deal with. What do you think are the most overlooked examples of gender-based discrimination in everyday life, and how do you think they should be fought?

Write an article for our magazine in which you express your views on the matter. The best five articles will be published in the next issue.

Write your article in about 300 words.

La Parte 1 e la Parte 2 della prova devono essere svolte interamente.

Durata massima della prova: 6 ore

E' consentito l'uso dei dizionari monolingue e bilingue.