



Reading 26

You are going to read an essay about poetry. For questions 1–7, choose the answer (A, B, C or D) which you think fits best according to the text.

POETRY RECITALS

At any given time in history the literary scene will seem confused to those who are living through it, and it is the selectivity of posterity that makes the pattern and orders of eminence appear clearly defined to the retrospective view. It is fairly safe to say that, at the present time, there is an especially bewildering complexity of poetic tendencies, of kinds of poetry being written, of warring factions, of ways of presenting, criticising and teaching poetry, and of conflicting beliefs about the role of the poet in society.

Very broadly speaking, the present debate in contemporary poetry concerns the reciprocal mistrust and disapproval shown by the seriously committed 'literary' writers, whose poems are intended to be printed and read on the page, and the 'popular', performing poets who, while they will probably publish their verses in magazines and collections, are happier declaiming them to an audience. Of course, this division is far from absolute.

The practice of promoting public poetry readings has been steadily increasing over the past twenty years or so, in many different forms. Small literary societies in provincial towns conduct them in village halls or the sitting rooms of their members; schools and colleges invite poets to read and talk to audiences of students; arts festivals often advertise poetry readings by well-known authors on their programmes. The consequences of all these events, and of poets being more or less obliged to become public performers, are manifold and of uncertain benefit to them as artists.

For the 'pop' poets, whose work has been composed expressly for the purpose of recital to live audiences, the issue is plain. They can only profit from public performance. Their verses are often very simple in both form and content, and can be assimilated at a single hearing; it is on the printed page that the deficiencies of thought, technique and imagination become clear. Poets who are dedicated to their craft, and are doing their best to continue and develop what is finest in the traditions of poetry - which involves compressing the maximum amount of passion, thought, wit and vision into the smallest possible space and achieving rhythmic effects of great variety and subtlety - are unlikely to be appreciated by

an audience which is probably encountering their work for the first time. The danger here is, not that they will be **tempted** to emulate the content and style of the **entertainers**, but that they might, in the effort to achieve instant **communication**, read only their most readily accessible work which is quite likely to be their **slightest** and least characteristic.

Attendance at poetry reading cannot be a substitute for reading poetry on the page, though it can be an enjoyable and instructive adjunct. To hear good poets read their work aloud, even if they are not accomplished public speakers, is a valuable guide as to where the precise emphases are to be placed, but it is desirable that the audience should either follow the reading with the text before them or have a prior knowledge of the poems being spoken. The principal justification for popular recitals of poetry, where the readings are sometimes interspersed with musical items (jazz and poetry used to be a very popular mixture), is that audiences will come to associate poetry with pleasure and not feel that it is an art available only to an initiated minority.

1. What general observation about poetry does the writer make in the opening paragraph?

- A The present literary climate is not conducive to good poetry.
- B Modern poems appear unplanned and chaotic to him.
- C The greatness of poets only emerges in retrospect.
- D Today's poetry compares unfavourably with that of previous generations.

2. What does the writer think about the present conflict in poetry?

- A He blames it on the serious poets.
- B The distinction between 'serious' and 'popular' is seldom clear cut.
- C It stems from the attitude of the audience.
- D The popular poets take pleasure in criticising the serious poets.

3. According to the writer, how might a serious poet feel about a public recital?

- A uneasy about the practical arrangements
- B bound to accept for financial reasons
- C pleased to reach a wider audience
- D under pressure to take part

4. The writer feels that the work of some popular poets

- A does not stand up to close analysis.
- B is part of a long poetic tradition.
- C is undervalued by experienced audiences.
- D benefits from being written down.

5. Which word is used to refer disparagingly to the popular poets?

A tempted

B entertainers

C communication

D slightest

6. The writer concedes that public performances

A are an introduction to poetry for some people.

B may lead some people to acquire a taste for more serious poetry.

C can be instructive as regards public speaking.

D can be a good supplement to serious, written poetry.

7. In the text as a whole, the writer's purpose is to

A foster greater unity among poets.

B give advice to would-be poets.

C persuade us of the value of poetry recitals.

D analyse a current debate in the world of poetry.

Источник задания: CPE Practice Tests (old format)

Reading 26 — Keys

1. C
2. B
3. D
4. A
5. B
6. D
7. D

EXPLANATION

1 At any given time in history the literary scene will seem confused to those who are living through it, and it is the selectivity of posterity that makes the pattern and orders of eminence appear clearly defined to the retrospective view. It is fairly safe to say that, at the present time, there is an especially bewildering complexity of poetic tendencies, of kinds of poetry being written, of warring factions, of ways of presenting, criticising and teaching poetry, and of conflicting beliefs about the role of the poet in society.

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7. The author compares serious and popular poets throughout the article thus analysing the current situation in the world of poetry.