



Reading 35

For questions 1–5, read the following texts about art. For questions 1–4, answer with a word or short phrase. You do not need to write complete sentences. For question 5, write a summary according to the instructions given.

Text 1

A critic may crush an artist by telling him that what he has just done may be quite good in its own way, only it is not 'Art'. And that same critic may confound anyone enjoying a picture by declaring that what he liked in it was not the Art but something different.

Actually, I do not think there are wrong reasons for liking a statue or picture. Someone may like a landscape painting because it reminds him of home, or a portrait because it reminds him of a friend. There is nothing wrong with that. All of us, when we see a painting, are bound to be reminded of a hundred and one things which influence our likes and dislikes. As long as these memories help us to enjoy what we see, we need not worry. It is only when **some irrelevant memory makes us prejudiced**, when we instinctively turn away from a magnificent picture of an alpine scene because we dislike climbing, that we should search our mind for the reason for the aversion which spoils a pleasure we might otherwise have had. There are wrong reasons for disliking a work of art.

Most people like to see in pictures what they would also like to see in reality. This is quite a natural preference. We all like beauty in nature, and are grateful to the artists who have preserved it in their works.

Question 1. In your own words, explain how, according to the writer, a viewer might react to a critic's comments about a work of art.

Question 2. Explain what the writer means by 'some irrelevant memory makes us prejudiced'.

Text 2

Art has changed over the last few decades. Although continual change is the very essence of art, the most recent changes run far more deeply, and go beyond external appearances. The very concept of art is in fact being questioned. At first glance it might indeed seem to be mainly a matter of ephemeral and non-essential questions. For instance, contemporary art has never before enjoyed such **wide popularity**. Prices are soaring, and private collectors are currently placing an unprecedented number of orders. The prices for modern classics at auctions in London and New York have reached unimaginable heights, as art is increasingly regarded as a sound investment for the future.

Contemporary art has in fact become an integral part of today's middle-class society. Even works of art which are fresh from the studio are met with enthusiasm. They receive recognition rather quickly - too quickly for the taste of the surlier culture critics. Of course, not all works of art are bought immediately, but there is undoubtedly an increasing number of people who enjoy buying brand new works of art. Instead of fast and expensive cars, they buy the paintings, sculptures and photographic works of young artists. They know that contemporary art also adds to their social prestige. Furthermore, since art is not exposed to the same wear and tear as automobiles, it is - in principle - a far better investment.

Question 3. Explain in your own words the evidence given by the writer of the 'wide popularity' of art today.

Question 4. Which phrase suggests new works of art are not always received positively when first displayed?

*Question 5. In a paragraph of between 50 and 70 words, summarise **in your own words as far as possible** the reasons given in the texts for why the public appreciate art.*

Reading 35 — Keys

Possible answers

Question 1. A viewer may be mystified/confused/puzzled/surprised/amazed.

Question 2. The painting reminds them of something negative/bad.

Question 3. high prices / lots of advance orders

Question 4. 'too quickly for the taste of' the surlier culture critics

Question 5. The paragraph should include the following points:

may evoke pleasant memories

reproduce real beauty (e.g. natural world)

are a status symbol in modern society

now seen as a commodity / financial investment / valuable possession