



Reading 424

Task 1. You are an editor of a magazine. You have come across an interesting article but some parts of the article have been mixed up. Use the headline and the initial paragraph of the article and put the parts to the title and in the right order so that you should receive the original article.

Article 1

THE CROWN IS LOSING ITS SHINE

The Crown has never been a straightforward drama series. Like its central figure, Queen Elizabeth II, the long-running Netflix show juggles two roles at once. The first is to provide a sumptuously staged history lesson of key moments in the United Kingdom's past; the second is to offer a behind-the-scenes study of the royals' relationships with one another. For four seasons, the creator, Peter Morgan, has deftly blended fact with fiction and truth with gossip, arguing that the family's personal lives are **inextricably** linked to the country's national identity — for better or for worse.

A) But just as the show starts to examine the consequences of the king's careless phone call, it cuts away to a scene of him delivering a speech on behalf of his charity. These baffling moves soften any potential blows and prevent the show from pursuing more provocative threads: how the royals are insulated from public humiliation, how Camilla's and Diana's reputations were damaged in comparison with Charles's, how sex as a subject was received differently by the family than by the public.

B) As it turns out, they needn't have worried so much. Yes, the balance that the show long maintained has tipped in favor of portraying the melodramatic **turmoil** within the family, but it's done to tepid effect. Even with an impressive and capable new cast anchoring the proceedings, the director's approach to the personal lives of the royals is too sympathetic to ever be criticizing. The new season of *The Crown* never risks challenging anyone's reputation. Instead, it merely risks its own as a compelling show.

The season about the most salacious era in recent royal history shouldn't feel so **sedate**. Yet, again and again, Season 5 pulls its punches. In the second episode, Diana (played by Elizabeth Debicki) secretly participates in Andrew Morton's explosive biography of her, but rather than interrogate the family's response to her revelations, the hour ends with the book's publication. The fifth episode devotes considerable screen time to reenacting the embarrassing leaked phone call between Charles (Dominic West) and Camilla (Olivia Williams).

C) *The Crown* of the fifth season is more of a soap opera than ever before, it does not touch the problem of changes. The director seems aware that the novelty of watching the royal family's consistent troubles — their lopsided marriages, their power struggles, their need for the British public's adoration (and funding) — has worn off, but he can't think of how else to further the drama other than by meticulously re-creating scandal after scandal and introducing figures such as Diana's eventual boyfriend, Dodi Fayed (Khalid Abdalla), who won't play a significant role in her life until the sixth and final season. If anything, *The Crown* has become like the Queen in her final decades: pristine-looking, dutiful to a fault, and searching for a kind of significance that's long been out of reach.

D) This **reluctance** to provoke the audience yields the show's most inelegant and inconsistently paced season yet, recycling familiar themes while sacrificing the character development it has so carefully honed since its debut in 2016. Philip (Jonathan Pryce) in particular languishes from muddled writing: In one episode, he vehemently supports every decision Elizabeth (Imelda Staunton) makes; in another, he's spiteful, rehashing his grievances from seasons past about needing to have his own separate interests.

The Crown has firmly established Philip and Elizabeth as one of the royal family's most durable marriages, yet it can't help but repeat the same conflicts. Even Philip's unexpected friendship with the young Penny Knatchbull (Natascha McElhone), the wife of Philip's godson, goes nowhere; *The Crown* drops the story line just as it begins to make a point about the restlessness that comes from spending decades as a consort. The series struggles, too, with offering more insight into Elizabeth: The season is bookended by episodes about her beloved royal yacht, the Britannia, being decommissioned, but —with apologies to the late Queen — the retirement of a ship does not make for the most interesting television. All it becomes is a far-too-obvious metaphor for the monarch's age. Two years ago, I praised the series for finally taking a stance and criticizing the Queen. The show used its invented scenes to illustrate how out of touch she was with the rest of her family, and how her ignorance reflected the institution's own stuffiness. The approach gave the fourth season shape, and the historical moments it reproduced felt carefully chosen to show the monarchy's difficult **pursuit** of modernity.

E) Members of the royal family and their allies have never been ardent fans of the show, closely following this mixture of truth and gossip. And as *The Crown* launches its newest installment only months after the Queen's death, they seem more concerned than ever. Season 5, which started streaming this week, depicts the tabloid turbulence of the 1990s, including the breakdown of Charles and Diana's marriage and various related scandals, such as Diana's BBC interview with the now-disgraced journalist Martin Bashir. In the weeks leading up to the season's release, Prince William reportedly complained about the series, the former Prime Minister John Major criticized the show's inaccuracy, and even Dame Judi Dench called for Netflix to add a disclaimer.

The order of the paragraphs (A-E):

1 _____

2 _____

3 _____

4 _____

5 _____

Task 2. Use the headline and the initial paragraphs of the article and put the parts to the title (A-E) and in the right order so that you should receive the original article.

Article 2

THE PETULANT KING AND HIS MOTHER

A difficult labor—30 hours! Right there in a Buckingham Palace bedroom, with mother and child etherized upon the table.

A boy!

Posted on the gates of the palace, a handwritten announcement:

Her royal highness the princess Elizabeth, duchess of Edinburgh, was safely delivered of a prince at 9.14 o'clock this evening. Her royal highness and the infant prince are both well.

They are both children of empire, princess and prince, though as they lie there recovering, their empire is **receding**, the long, melancholy roar audible even above the cheers of the crowds outside the palace.

They have been chosen for the same fate, but only one at a time can live it out. This will at once draw them together and complicate what will be a strange and mutually disappointing relationship. In just three years, Elizabeth will become the 25-year-old Queen of the United Kingdom, but Charles won't be King until he's 73. What must it be like to watch yourself fade into a middle-aged man and then an old one, but still your life's work has not begun?

When he finally became King in September, not even a week passed before the tabloids were talking about his poor hands looking as red as lobster claws, perhaps because never before had so many people wanted to shake them. Things were not going perfectly! But they were going well.

There was the appropriate hand-shaking—undertaken, however painfully, with his mother's famous **commitment** to duty —and there was the successful first speech to his people, with him sitting in Buckingham Palace doling out sinecures to all the good little kittens (Queen Consort for Camilla; Princess of Wales for well-behaved Kate; Meghan, who had dragged Harry off to the non-realm of California). Had he struck the right note when he referred to the late Queen as “my darling mama” rather than “my mother”? Everything he'd waited so long to do was happening so quickly and smoothly, and it was difficult to stay calm.

A) But we're ahead of ourselves! Let's leave Northern Ireland and return to 1948. It's Elizabeth who's got to get out of that birthing bed and take the first shaky steps down the long corridors. The health of her father, George VI, is failing. Already, she has been performing some of his duties. Once she takes the throne, she'll head off on many, many royal tours —some months long —leaving Charles, who will spend his childhood pining for her, behind.

During the first half of her reign, Elizabeth will preside —in her wholly symbolic, yet powerful way —over the final dismantling of the empire. She will be the last face of a centuries-long fiction of ownership, in which human beings, gold, precious gems, rubber —anything that could be chained up, prized from the Earth, grabbed from villages and palaces, or literally cut out of rock —was transformed into property of the British empire or its NGO, the unfathomably brutal East India Company.

B) But it was during a hop to Northern Ireland, that the wheels came off the carriage, and Charles lost his cool. While signing the visitors' book at Hillsborough Castle, the king wrote down the wrong date, was quietly informed by Camilla that the pen was leaking, and **seethed**: “I can't bear this bloody thing! ... Every stinking time!” Charles's mother had survived the Battle of Britain; he couldn't survive a guest book.

C) You would assume that Elizabeth would be despised in Britain's former colonies —she was, after all, the great-great-granddaughter of Queen Victoria, the first empress of India. But Elizabeth was admired by millions of people in many of those former colonies, from the earliest years of her reign to the hour of her death. But she had to face other missions that were awaiting her country.

D) But the old lessons of empire were not lost on the newcomers, a few of whom brought to England the same thing that England had once brought them: **contemptuous** disregard of the religion, customs, habits, traditions, and shared beliefs of the native population. It fell to Elizabeth —older daughter of a man who never wanted or expected to be King, a woman with many interests of her own that she would much rather have pursued —to try to maintain the fantasy of a continuous England that could absorb within it wildly different cultures. Elizabeth never “celebrated” multiculturalism in the meaningless way of college presidents or HR functionaries. But she often acknowledged how Britain was changing, never once

disparaged it, and found within it a plausible case for continuity. What she did was locate —or possibly create —a unifying culture of Englishness: courage, calm, resolve.

E) Once the sun had set on the British empire, the Queen began her more complicated mission, which was forming a coherent narrative of “England” and “Englishness” in the face of the great disrupter: 25 years of massive immigration. In 1997, Prime Minister Tony Blair began relaxing immigration laws in hopes of creating an England **imbued** with the best traditions of a range of cultures, an England that was no longer fortified against the world but wide open to it, an oasis of people eating fusion cuisine and voting Labour.

The order of the paragraphs (A-E):

6 _____

7 _____

8 _____

9 _____

10 _____

Task 3. Reread the two assembled texts. Choose the meaning the words and phrases in bold have in one of the texts.

1 The underlined word “**commitment**” means the same as:

- A. collusion
- B. devotion
- C. containment
- D. undercurrent

2 The underlined word “**sedate**” means the same as:

- A. hilarious
- B. seemly
- C. precarious
- D. calm

3 The underlined word “**receding**” means the same as:

- A. declining
- B. reciprocating
- C. redeeming

D. displaying

4 The underlined word "turmoil" means the same as:

A. disentanglement

B. deterrence

C. unrest

D. timidity

5 The underlined word "contemptuous" means the same as:

A. soothing

B. supercilious

C. conspicuous

D. concurring

6 The underlined word "inextricably" means the same as:

A. indiscreetly

B. indistinctly

C. intrinsically

D. inappropriately

7 The underlined word "imbued" means the same as:

A. flattered

B. dispersed

C. disposed

D. filled

8 The underlined word "reluctance" means the same as:

A. retribution

B. disinclination

C. desolation

D. retaliation

9 The underlined word "seethed" means the same as:

- A. shifted
- B. agitated
- C. attained
- D. shuddered

10 The underlined word "pursuit" means the same as:

- A. chase
- B. contemplation
- C. propensity
- D. precipitation

Task 4. Here is a summary of the article "The Crown is losing its shine". However, it contains some vocabulary, grammar and factual errors. Decide which of the sentences contain an error if any. There can be more than 1 error in a sentence. Some sentences do not have errors at all. If there are no errors in the sentence choose "0".

1 *The Crown* drama series depicts its central figure, Queen Elizabeth II, only as a key person of the country's past.

- A. 0
- B. 1
- C. 2
- D. 3
- E. 4
- F. 5

2 Members of the royal family and their allies have always been ardent fans of the show.

- A. 0
- B. 1
- C. 2
- D. 3
- E. 4
- F. 5

3 Season 5 of the series, which had started streaming this week, depicts the tabloid turbulence of the 1990s, including the breakdown of Charles and Diana's marriage and various related scandals.

- A. 0
- B. 1
- C. 2
- D. 3
- E. 4
- F. 5

4 The director's approach to the personal lives of the royals is too sympathetic to ever be criticizing.

- A. 0
- B. 1
- C. 2
- D. 3
- E. 4
- F. 5

5 The season about the most salacious era in recent royal history shouldn't feel so hilarious.

- A. 0
- B. 1
- C. 2
- D. 3
- E. 4
- F. 5

6 The fifth episode passes over the embarrassing a leaked phone call between Charles and Camilla.

- A. 0
- B. 1
- C. 2
- D. 3
- E. 4

F. 5

7 These baffling moves soften any potential blows and prevent the show from pursue more provocative threads.

A. 0

B. 1

C. 2

D. 3

E. 4

F. 5

8 The royals are insulated from people.

A. 0

B. 1

C. 2

D. 3

E. 4

F. 5

9 This reluctance to provoke the audience yields the show's most inelegant and inconsistently paced season yet.

A. 0

B. 1

C. 2

D. 3

E. 4

F. 5

10 In one episode, he vehemently support every decision Elizabeth makes; in another, he's spiteful, rehashing his grievances.

A. 0

B. 1

C. 2

D. 3

E. 4

F. 5

11 *The Crown* develops the story line just as it begins to make a point about the restlessness that comes from spending decades as a consort.

A. 0

B. 1

C. 2

D. 3

E. 4

F. 5

12 The retirement of a ship is very interesting for TV-viewers.

A. 0

B. 1

C. 2

D. 3

E. 4

F. 5

13 Two years ago, the series praised the Queen.

A. 0

B. 1

C. 2

D. 3

E. 4

F. 5

14 The historical moments, reproduced in the fourth season, felt carefully chosen to show the monarchy's busy life.

A. 0

B. 1

- C. 2
- D. 3
- E. 4
- F. 5

15 If anything, *The Crown* has become like the Queen in her final decades: pristine-looking, dutiful to a fault, and searching for a kind of significance that's long been out of reach.

- A. 0
- B. 1
- C. 2
- D. 3
- E. 4
- F. 5

Task 5. Use the following separate words in the order given to write a coherent sentence, based on information in the article "The petulant king and his mother". You can change the form of the given words.

Use your sentences as parts of your outline for your commentary on the article "The petulant king and his mother".

1 children of empire / recovering / their empire is receding

2 fade / middle-aged man / old / life's work

3 take the throne / head off on many tours / spend his childhood / pine for

4 was admired / millions of people / former colonies / earliest years of her reign

5 fall to / expected to be King / with many interests / pursue / absorb different cultures

Task 6. Write your commentary on the article "The petulant king and his mother". Your commentary is to be between 180-200 words. You are not allowed to cite from the original text pieces longer than 4 words running. Your text should contain various points of view, including your own.

To fulfill the task successfully you are:

- to briefly convey the content of the article;
- to mention various/possible views of the issue;
- to divide your text into logically connected paragraphs.

Key

TASK 1

E

B

A

D

C

TASK 2

B

A

C

E

D

TASK 3

devotion

calm

declining

unrest

supercilious

intrinsically

filled

disinclination

agitated

chase

TASK 4

1

1

1

0

1

2

1
1
0
1
1
1
1
1
1
0