



FRAMHALDSSKÓLINN Í VESTMANNAEYJUM

Enska 203

09:00-10:30

Próftími 90 mínútur

Nafn : _____
Kennitala: _____

Kennari:

Hjálpargögn: Engin

Til athugunar: Prófið er 13 síður og skiptist í

Reading Comprehension 50%

Grammar and vocabulary 50%

Fever pitch 20% (of the final grade)

Vægi prófpátta:

| | |
|---------------------------|--------|
| Smásögur/Crime never pays | (20%) |
| Kaflapróf | (10%) |
| Kjörbók/Fever pitch | (20%) |
| Lokapróf: | (50%) |
| ALLS: | (100%) |
| Einkunn: | |

Reading comprehension and translation total 50%

The hardest language

People often ask which is the most difficult language to learn, and it is not easy to answer because there are many factors to take into consideration. Firstly, in a first language the differences are unimportant as people learn their mother tongue naturally, so the question of how hard a language is to learn is only relevant when learning a second language.

A native speaker of Spanish, for example, will find Portuguese much easier to learn than a native speaker of Chinese, for example, because Portuguese is very similar to Spanish, while Chinese is very different, so first language can affect learning a second language. The greater the differences between the second language and our first, the harder it will be for most people to learn. Many people answer that Chinese is the hardest language to learn, possibly influenced by the thought of learning the Chinese writing system, and the pronunciation of Chinese does appear to be very difficult for many foreign learners. However, for Japanese speakers, who already use Chinese characters in their own language, learning writing will be less difficult than for speakers of languages using the Roman alphabet.

Some people seem to learn languages readily, while others find it very difficult. Teachers and the circumstances in which the language is learned also play an important role, as well as each learner's motivation for learning. If people learn a language because they need to use it professionally, they often learn it faster than people studying a language that has no direct use in their day to day life.

Apparently, British diplomats and other embassy staff have found that the second hardest language is Japanese, which will probably come as no surprise to many, but the language that they have found to be the most problematic is Hungarian, which has 35 cases (forms of a nouns according to whether it is subject, object, genitive, etc). This does not mean that Hungarian is the hardest language to learn for everyone, but it causes British diplomatic personnel, who are generally used to learning languages, the most difficulty. However, Tabassaran, a Caucasian language has 48 cases, so it might cause more difficulty if British diplomats had to learn it.

Different cultures and individuals from those cultures will find different languages more difficult. In the case of Hungarian for British learners, it is not a question of the writing system, which uses a similar alphabet, but the grammatical complexity, though native speakers of related languages may find it easier, while struggling with languages that the British find relatively easy.

No language is easy to learn well, though languages which are related to our first language are easier. Learning a completely different writing system is a huge challenge, but that does not necessarily make a language more difficult than another. In the end, it is impossible to say that there is one language that is the most difficult language in the world.

Choose true or false in the following questions 20%

1. The question of how hard a language is to learn is relevant to both first and second language acquisition.

True

False

2. Portuguese is definitely easier than Chinese.

True

False

3. A Japanese speaker may well find the Chinese writing system easier than a speaker of a European language.

True

False

4. The Hungarian alphabet causes problems for British speakers.

True

False

5. Hungarian is the hardest language in the world.

True

False

6. Hungarian has as many cases as Tabassaran.

True

False

7. Many British diplomats learn Tabassaran.

True

False

8. The writer thinks that learning new writing systems is easy.

True

False

9. All languages are easy to learn well

True

False

10. It is quite easy to choose the most difficult language in the world

True

False

Vocabulary 15% translate these words into Icelandic.

1. _____ - A fin

2. _____ - Parsley

3. _____ - bilingual

4. _____ - Emigrate

5. _____ - bitter

6. _____ - territory

7. _____ - manipulative

8. _____ - witty

9. _____ - Vital

10. _____ - premium

11. _____ - clash

12. _____ - plea

13. _____ - Savoury

14. _____ - to mumble

15. _____ - Adjective

Reading Comprehension (15%) Read the newspaper article.

Who's a clever boy then?

Is it wise for children aged six and seven to be taking GCSE exams, asks Zoe Brennan

Like many youngsters across the country, Piers Sharma will be waiting for the postman with trepidation next month, when exam results come out. Being seven years old, he is not the average GCSE student, however.

'It was a bit hard, and a bit easy,' he says of the exam in computer skills. 'The hard bit was the video conferencing, the applications bit was easy.'

Does he expect to pass? Sharma sounds momentarily stressed. 'I did really well in the practical, I got an A*,' he says. 'In the exam, I might have got a C+ or a B+.'

Most students do their GCSEs at the age of fifteen or sixteen, but Sharma is one of a growing number of pupils sitting exams extraordinarily early. This year, he is one of an entire class of nine children — four seven-year-olds and five six-year-olds — who in May took a GCSE in information and communication technology (ICT) at the private Ryde College in Hertfordshire.

The course takes a year to complete. Mike Ryde, principal of the college, confirmed that three of the children were five years old when they embarked on their GCSE studies, having 'graduated' from the college's baby and toddler computer course, where learning starts at eighteen months. At the age of three or four the infants attend 'primer' lessons. Then Ryde judges when they are ready to sit the exam.

'The most we've ever had before has been one or two children of this age doing a GCSE,' says Ryde. 'The very fact that we've got nine students this year shows that a lot of six and seven-year-olds would be capable of doing this. It is no coincidence that they all started in classes so early.'

The youngest ever to have taken a GCSE at Ryde was Arran Fernandez, who was five when he took Maths in 2001. Ryde's own daughter Francesca, seven, will take the ICT GCSE next year and his son Frederick, six, is on the primer course. 'The wonderful thing is that studying at a level designed for a fifteen-year-old has a knock-on effect,' he says. 'Francesca is topping the class at school.'

'We also have children doing English and Maths really early, but the younger children seem to gravitate towards ICT,' he says. 'They love working with computers.'

Many educationists and parents would be horrified, arguing that six is too young to burden a child with exams. Ryde, however, believes that early GCSEs should be introduced widely, claiming that such a system would reduce the stress on youngsters later on.

'At present, you see children taking upwards of ten GCSEs at once at the age of sixteen,' he says. 'That's a tremendous pressure. Why not give them the opportunity to take one or two a year? It seems to me that most children are ready to do a GCSE by the age of eleven. We should not dumb down the system to the lowest common denominator — education is all about opportunity.'

Match the sentence halves after the reading

1. Piers Sharma
2. Mike Ryde
3. Arran Fernandez
4. Francesca
5. Frederick

- [] Took Maths GCSE at the age of five
- [] Is a college principal
- [] Is taking a GCSE next year
- [] Is six years old
- [] Is waiting for his exam results

Match the following words and phrases from the text with the meaning

1. Trepidation
2. Momentarily
3. Extraordinarily
4. Embarked
5. Coincidence
6. Knock - on effect
7. Gravitate
8. Horrified
9. Dumb down
10. Lowest common denominator

-] When two things are the same for no reason
-] Surprisingly
-] Lower the standard
-] Causes other things to happen
-] Slight nervousness or fear
-] Shocked, frightened
-] Least difficult thing that everyone understands
-] For a very short period of time
-] Are attracted towards
-] begin

Grammar and vocabulary 50%

Articles 10% Complete the gaps in this article with a/an, the or Ø if no article is required

I don't like _____ coat. _____ colour is horrible.

He doesn't like to see _____ dentist.

She asked for _____ cup of coffee, but she got tea instead.

_____ laboratory is a place where scientific experiments are done.

I don't believe he's _____ policeman, he looks too young!

She is _____ intelligent woman.

I went to _____ bank today and they said I didn't have any kredit.

Who left _____ door open?

_____ hotel is more expensive than a youth hostel.

The passive. Rewrite each sentence so that it does not contain the words *someone or people* (5%)

a. Someone built ships with sails more than 5,000 years ago.

b. Someone constructed a hot air-balloon in 1783

c. People developed the steam ship in the 19th century

d. Someone opened the first successful passenger railway in 1830

e. People started the first passenger airlines after the First World War.

Reporting speech. Rewrite each sentence as a reported speech. Jill is telling us some things and you have to change them into a reported speech. (5%).

a. My parents are very well

b. Everybody likes comedy films, she said.

c. John has given up his job.

d. I´m a nurse, she said.

e. I am going a way for a few days, she said.

Relative clauses. Complete the sentence using *why*, *when* or *where*. (5%).

a. Most of us at some time have wanted to know _____leaves change colour.

b. It is difficult to predict exactly _____this will happen.

c. It also depends on _____exactly the tree is growing.

d. The leaves start to change colour _____the tree stops making chlorophyll.

e. The trees stop making chlorophyll _____there is not enough light for the process of the photosynthesis to work.

Complete the sentences with; mustn't / don't/ doesn't have to. (5%).

- a. You _____ stand on the desk. You'll break it.
- b. We _____ take an umbrella. I'm sure it isn't going to rain.
- c. You _____ put a stamp on this letter. It says FREEPOST on it.
- d. We _____ forget to take the presents with us when we go.
- e. In our country children _____ go to school on Saturday.

Hard or hardly. Fill in the gaps with one of the words in the box, remember to change the tense and use hard or hardly with it 5%.

| |
|-----------------------------------|
| Know - say - change - have - work |
|-----------------------------------|

I am very busy at the moment. I _____ any time to go to the gym.

Are you ok? You have _____ a word during dinner.

Doesn't Tom look amazing? He's _____ at all since we were at school.

I don't understand why that woman from the office was so friendly. I _____ her.

Studying every weekend for my exams was _____.

Conditional sentences. Complete the sentence using the verb in the brackets (5%).

- a. If Columbus (not read) _____ about Marco Polo's trip to China, he (not try) _____ to sail there by crossing the Atlantic.
- b. If Columbus (sail) _____ east in 1492, he (reach) _____ China or Japan.
- c. If the Aztecs (not think) _____ that Cortes and his men were gods, the Spaniards wouldn't have conquered Mexico so easily.

True or false statements, choose either T or F (10%)

1. _____ You should always use a definite article with the word President.
2. _____ Fever pitch is about Manchester United
3. _____ Who, when and where are not relative clauses.
4. _____ The name of the main book in the class is Master class
5. _____ You can an appeal an apple.
6. _____ Hypnotists can help people to get over their fears.
7. _____ The reflexive pronoun of I is myself.
8. _____ Sherlock Holmes was a fiction.
9. _____ Making documentaries can change big companies
10. _____ Uncountable nouns are for example: bread, fruit and meat.

