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DEPARTAMENTO DE EDUCACIÓN

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Erakunde autonomiadun Organismo Autónomo de
EUSKO JAURLARITZA
GOBIERNO VASCO

Remember you must write your answers on the separate answer sheet

Read this article and answer the questions below.

Boredom is the Best Lesson of all

Leaving your children to their own devices during the school holidays will spur them to inventiveness, says Victoria Hislop. Leave them to it: 'Ennui can be very productive'

The first day of the school summer holidays is a defining moment in the year. Unlike the first day of spring, a vague date that nobody can quite agree on (and which is generally indistinguishable from winter), the beginning of the long vacation is a precise point in the children's calendar. The next six or seven weeks stretch out beyond the reach of the imagination and, as far as they're concerned, the end of the holiday is light years off - so distant that by the time they return to school they'll probably have grown at least a couple of shoe sizes.

Now that I am a parent, I still share that "Day one of the holidays" sense of anticipation and enjoy the respite from the rigid daily routine of drop-offs, pick-ups and homework deadlines just as much as the children. But the pure rapture of it all can be as short-lived as a Mars ice cream in a heat wave. Within hours (probably by lunchtime on the first day of the holiday), you'll perceive the first signs of doldrums (not usually very subtle, since they're accompanied by that plaintive wail, "Muuum, I'm bored"). Suddenly, the prospect of the forthcoming weeks takes on a whole new complexion - if you were setting off on the London marathon having jogged once around the park, you'd be better prepared.

So how should we react? If our response is anything like our own parents', we'll tell them to run along and occupy ourselves. For us, this meant many hours of kicking our heels, an activity that was an acceptable part of childhood and, in retrospect, a very agreeable one. Unquestionably, we could be left more to our own devices 20 or 30 years ago. It's not simply nostalgic nonsense to say that it was perfectly safe for us as 10-year-olds to go off in a gang for the day on our bikes with a Spam sandwich and a bottle of Tizer. This is what we did, most days.

Whatever other changes have or haven't taken place, there are many more cars today than there were in the 1970s and they now drive at speeds that make cycling for children a perilous sport. Few of us would send a child under 10 off to the playground with the casual words: "Have fun and make sure you're back before dark." It's as archaic as Little Red Riding Hood going off into the woods all on her own to visit grandma. Presumably, her mother had thought up the errand just to keep her occupied.

There are, then, some good reasons for why we feel duty-bound to provide our children with entertainment and why there is a sense of parental responsibility to appease their boredom. But many of us also harbour some kind of fear that our offspring will suffer irreparable damage if they aren't engaged in organised activity.

For the ambitious parent (or the working parent or the parents who just feel that the child will benefit from being out of their hair), the long vacation can be one non-stop, helter-skelter series of courses and residential weeks at summer camps, the whole period conducted with the same rhythm as the school term.

Here is another learning opportunity, we're tempted to think. Time to hone the backhand, polish up the French and learn abseiling, archery and animation. Why squander an opportunity to make sure they're well ahead of the game? If we aren't vigilant, the long holiday can turn into a two-month opportunity for parents to drive their children around the country and themselves into the ground. This is a guaranteed way to warrant that there won't be any time to fit boredom on to the agenda.

Even if we haven't created a schedule of events for the children and have decided on the stay-at-home-and-see-what-happens kind of holiday, what is it about boredom that we dread for our children? Will it turn their brains into blancmange? Will their muscles atrophy? Perhaps we need to calm down and resist the fright which seizes us whenever the "B" word rears its ugly head. The American writer Nancy Blakey, the author of a series of activity books for children, says, "Boredom can deliver us to our best selves," and if you allow boredom to take its natural course, you can often see what she means. Boredom is the space where planned activity stops and something unbidden begins - and where the children start to draw on their own resources. It's an area they will never discover if, the minute they are unoccupied, a video is put on or they reach for their Gameboy or technological gadget.

Boredom will drive children to make up their own games, with their own rules and logic, and, if there aren't enough players, they will introduce some imaginary ones. Siblings might even begin to display uncharacteristic interest in each other, needing reinforcements for a game or extras for a play. When we were children and there seemed to be nothing to do, we would loaf about until we thought of something and, if we hadn't a friend around that day, we would make up an imaginary one. I had one who hung around for years.

Boredom can be hugely productive and great discoveries have grown out of it. One famously bored child was Thomas Edison, inventor of the light bulb (and more than 1,000 other patented inventions). He was conducting experiments before he was 10 and, if his parents had kept him constantly diverted with visits to theme parks and one-day mime workshops, we could all still be in darkness. They simply let him get on with it and he became one of the greatest inventors ever.

As everyone's French teacher told them, "to be bored" ("s'ennuyer") is a reflexive verb - if you were bored, you had only yourself to recriminate. This was a great way of turning the tables on a class of 11-year-olds who abhorred the tedium of learning irregular verbs and I have believed it ever since. Boredom is a fact of life and the sooner children apprehend that there isn't a magic pill to dispel it, the better. The holiday can't be an endless round of visits to the zoo, and learning to cope with that fact early on can set you up for life.

As the novelist A N Wilson put it: "Boredom is what most human lives consist of. Few jobs are interesting all of the time; and, when retirement age has been reached, the long days of emptiness cannot possibly be entirely devoid of tedium. Learning how to cope with these periods of vacancy can actually reduce or eliminate their boringness."

Clearly, you can't absolve yourself of all responsibility for keeping the children occupied - it would be unrealistic to imagine that children will entertain themselves for weeks on end without either damaging the carpets or each other. But you should allow plenty of room for boredom. It could be as much of an education as . . . their education.

Adapted from an article by Victoria Hislop©The Telegraph

1. Choose the answer which you think fits best <u>according to the text.</u> (14 marks)

1. What does the writer say about children's reaction to the beginning of the long summer holidays?

A. They know that they will start on a fixed date.

B. They cannot envisage when they will conclude.

C. They know they will grow a lot during this time.

D. They cannot foresee the changes in the seasons.

2. How do the reactions of parents like the writer change after the first impression?

A. They have the same sense of eagerness as the children.

B. They are delighted that they no longer have to take them to school.

C. They realise that they have organised very little for amusing them.

D. They realise that they are in poor physical condition for entertaining them.

3. What does the writer suggest that her own mother said to her if she complained of being bored?

A. `Find something to do.´

B. `Get out from under my feet.´

C. `Why don't you join a gang?

D. `Go for a ride.´

4. Why does she think that parents nowadays are averse to adopt the same attitudes?

A. They are afraid of children being unescorted.

B. They are afraid of them being out after dark.

C. They know that the roads are no longer safe.

D. They know that playgrounds are no longer unsafe.

5. Why are some parents keen on children taking part in a series of organized activities throughout the summer?

A. They are daunted that the children will be injured if left to themselves.

B. They want them out of the house in order to enjoy their own interests.

C. They think it is crucial for them to continue their studies on holiday.

D. They are afraid that in some way they will fall behind their classmates.

6. What, in the writer's opinion, is the main advantage of children being bored?

A. They are compelled to develop their own imagination.

B. They realise that they need their brothers and sisters.

C. They make friends more easily.

D. They devote more time to useful experiments.

7. In what way is it suggested that boredom is a necessary preparation for adult life?

A. If you are bored, it is your own blunder.

B. Life itself is drab.

C. There are bound to be periods of dormancy in any existence.

D. When you get old, you will not have much to do.

2. Find words or expressions in the text with a similar meaning. (12 marks)

bliss ..... spontaneous.....

attenuate ..... sit idly .....

waste ..... scatter .....

3. Fill in the gaps with ONE word only. (10 marks)

Boredom: a life skill.

It is widely alleged that cool parents are those (1) _____entertain and are always eager to play with their children not only sometimes, but always. The (2) _____they play, the cooler they are. Boredom is forbidden among 21st century children. Their life is packed (3) _____ all types of activities. While at school, these vary from academic activities to those connected to sport, (4) _____during the holidays children often go to summer camps or travel abroad to reinforce a foreign language. It is undeniable that there is a wide (5) _____of amusing activities. However, does this mean that our children have to do or try them (6) _____? Should a child be active all the time, every day, the whole week? I reckon that I must be getting old, but when I was young we (7) _____ practise sport, we went to private tuition, but we were not as hectic as our children are at present. We trained for fun, but we did not have all these modern competitions and championships and above all, our weekends were absolutely free from any type of competition or event. At weekends, we relaxed, spent time with our family, visited friends or relatives and obviously got bored. At times, really bored and of course we complained about it. At times, our parents thought we were a real pain in the neck but at least we ran away from the weekly hustle and (8) _____. There is (9) _____denying that being bored is tough and difficult, but as I see it now that I am a mother, teaching our children to be bored and stay calm is a relevant and necessary life skill. And who knows, maybe we will find out that our children are able to do amazing and incredible things while they are bored to (10) _____ .

4. Read the following article. Four paragraphs have been removed from the extract. Choose from the paragraphs A-F the one which fits each gap. There are two extra paragraphs you do not need to choose. Mark your answers on the separate answer sheet. (12 marks)

Encourage them to read, full stop

A report that claims returning to old favourites such as Jeff Kinney stalls 'progress' misunderstands what reading is about.

Andrew McCallum Fri 23 Feb 2018

I get as frustrated as the next parent when my children appear unable to move on to reading pastures new. Dav Pilkey's Captain Underpants books are hugely entertaining but surely there's no reason to read the complete collection, volumes 1-12, for the seventh time?

1.

The report comes from Renaissance Learning, which runs the Accelerated Reader programme in schools. This directs pupils to choose books based on their assessed reading age. It has a vested interest in constructing reading as a linear process to be tracked and measured.

2.

The first reason for this is that the benefits of independent reading seem to stem more from the act itself than from the specifics of the material. Report after report shows a direct correlation between reading regularly for pleasure and academic attainment. There are emotional and social benefits too, including increased self-confidence, greater understanding of different cultures and better insight into human nature.

Second, revisiting familiar ground can aid literacy development. Up until about 13 most young readers need to return to authors they are familiar with. If they already know a writer's common tropes, then they are better able to absorb the language and events in front of them. Few bonds are stronger than the one between young reader and favourite writer. Children shouldn't just view reading as a learning opportunity but rather as an intimate relationship with a wise and trusted adult. Returning to a much-loved writer is like hanging out with a favourite relative. You know what you're going to get, but it's great fun anyway.

Finally, we should recognise that children, like adults, read different kinds of books, sometimes side by side. The Renaissance Learning report focuses on favourites. It seems to assume a direct correlation between reading choices and ability. It would be interesting to know if the data includes challenging material pupils meet in the classroom, as well as selections from the Accelerated Reader programme.

The report is not without merit. Learning is about advancing to the next stage. Discarding favourite writers, though, is not the solution. If secondary children stay interested, their personal reading will move on in due course. We should encourage them to venture into new territory, and schools should look for effective ways to do this.

3.

Great children's and YA literature provides a stepping stone to adult books. Much of Sonya Hartnett's work, for example, offers a well-judged introduction to tricky aspects of narrative; Alex Wheatle's Crongton sequence is perfect for secondary pupils not yet ready for the full-on shock of crime-noir; Max, by Sarah Cohen-Scali, uses the same narrative device as Ian McEwan's Nutshell; and Richard Kurti's Monkey Wars, for my money, uses anthropomorphism just as powerfully as George Orwell's Animal Farm.

4.

A. English teachers in particular need a strong knowledge of children's and young adult fiction. Many are real enthusiasts, brilliant at sharing their expertise. But some teachers active on social media boast about their antipathy for contemporary writing aimed at teens, making unsubstantiated claims about the benefits of the classics above all else. I think this is an abnegation of duty.

B. We are familiar with the hue and cry of our students' reading failures and lack of interest in reading. But we have never paused to find whether these children are being taught how to read. Research has shown that reading instruction plays vital role in whether students would have interest in reading and eventually become efficient readers.

C. Is reading development really this simple though? I would argue that it's much more complicated, particularly in the early teenage years. Of course we want children to tackle more challenging material as they grow older. But there are good reasons not to worry if your 13-year-old is yet again reading Walliams's Billionaire Boy, so long as they still enjoy reading, do it regularly, and have teachers who can gradually nudge them towards new material.

D. Young readers won't get to books such as these if we dictate what they should read and when. They'll switch off instead. Publicity for the Renaissance Learning report actually calls for David Walliams to write more challenging material for his older fans. Why not ask Dan Brown to pen a Man Booker winner along the way? Walliams's books are what they are. If children want to read them into their teens, so be it. Just as long as they keep reading and have the chance to graduate to new material on their own terms.

E. A new report seems to agree with me. It claims secondary pupils are falling behind in their reading because they are not moving on from writers they first met in primary school. It cites data showing the 10 most popular books in secondary were all written by Jeff Kinney and David Walliams. In corresponding data for primary pupils the books were all written by Kinney, Walliams and Roald Dahl.

F. Reading is one of the language skills and a pivot for meaningful development. The child in the school needs reading to learn. Effective communication is also enhanced through extensive reading where the child is exposed to good writers of varied styles; reading such works help to improve their communication skills.

Write the two extra-paragraphs you do not need:

(Remember to write your answers on the separate answer sheet)

5.

6.

5. Read the following article and choose the correct answer which you can find on the separate answer sheet. (10 marks)

Progress in reading stalls at secondary school. It should be a priority

Teenagers are falling below the expected reading level for their age – but good literacy is a key building block for all learning. Keith Topping Wed 21 Feb 2018

In his first major interview since being appointed education secretary, Damian Hinds set out his vision for the future schools. Raising school standards, teacher (1) _____ and school budgets are rightly top of his to-do list. But a new report has uncovered another challenge (2) _____ in our classrooms.

We have a persistent problem encouraging secondary school pupils to read challenging and age-appropriate books. The tenth annual What Kids Are Reading Report, which analysed the reading habits of almost one million school pupils from 4,364 schools that use the Accelerated Reader assessment programme, found that this is true across Britain and Ireland.

The report revealed that progress made by pupils in primary school (3) _____ when they transfer to secondary school and, from then on, the gap between students' reading ability and their age grows wider each year. Worryingly, by the later years of secondary school many students are reading books that are no harder than those in primary school.

Sociological and biological factors will no doubt play a (4) _____, and many young book lovers will find their attention wandering elsewhere once they (5) _____ puberty. But there is also a more obvious factor with a more straightforward solution: reading time. The majority of primary schools place an emphasis on developing pupils' literacy skills, but this is rarely continued into secondary school. Reading, like any skill, needs to be practised or it will (6) _____. With this in mind, all secondary school students would benefit from having 15 to 30 minutes of dedicated reading time built into the school day.

Of course, teachers are already under immense pressure to ensure the curriculum meets a range of (7) _____ demands. But good literacy is the single most important educational building block from which all other learning follows. We need to recognise that literacy is not just important for the English teacher but matters for geography, science and maths.

Once we realise this, it perhaps seems less of a challenge to fit more dedicated reading time into a week. Advances in technology and increasingly sophisticated and responsive "edtech" programmes may also help.

However, finding the time to read is only part of the solution. The report also found that secondary school students read fewer books than those in primary school. This would be expected if the books were more difficult, but this is not the case. By pushing themselves to read more challenging books, pupils develop the brain and improve their literacy. Schools should therefore be steering children (8) _____ reading a greater number of suitable books for their age.

Of course, balancing challenge with enjoyment can be difficult and it is important to be realistic about what teenagers will read. Indeed, The National Literacy Trust's Read On Get On report identified the lack of reading enjoyment as a fundamental (9) _____ to advancing literacy skills nationwide. But finding books of interest does not need to mean dumbing (10) _____. This year, Pakistani activist Malala Yousafzai's book I Am Malala proved a surprising success among 11- and 12-year-olds. While it has an important message, the text is also suitably challenging and age appropriate.

The new education secretary has a number of competing tasks in his in-tray, but few can be as important as the scale of the literacy challenge faced in our secondary schools. A small amount of time for reading suitably challenging books would make a real difference, but we need the will to make it happen.

6. Choose the word with the <u>different vowel sound</u> and write the answer on the answer sheet (1 mark)

a) sec<u>o</u>ndary b) resp<u>o</u>nsive c) w<u>a</u>ndering d) pr<u>o</u>blem

7. Choose the word with the <u>different consonant sound</u> and write the answer on the answer sheet (1 mark)

a) messa<u>g</u>e b) atten<u>t</u>ion c) ma<u>j</u>or d) ran<u>g</u>e

8.

'Books are the quietest and most constant of friends; they are the most accessible and wisest of counselors, and the most patient of teachers'.

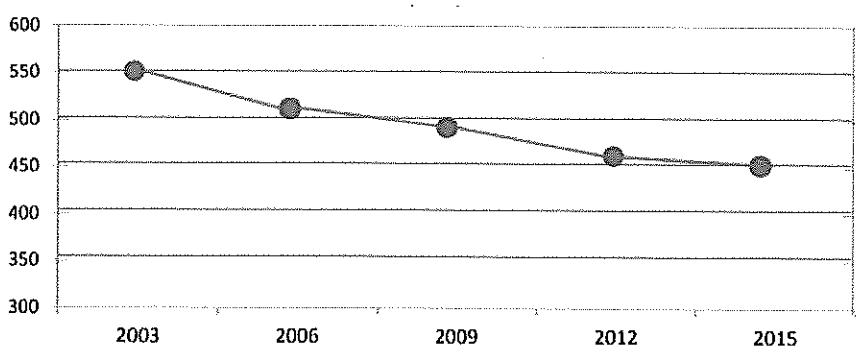
-Charles W. Elio-

We live in a society which is subjected to rapid changes in almost every walk of life. The ability to read is one of life's most important achievements and it is a vital skill in being able to function in today's society. A student's success in literacy development enhances learning in all subject areas, helps create a love of learning, and paves the way for future economic success and a rewarding life.

"Reading literacy" includes a wide range of cognitive competencies, from basic decoding, to knowledge of words, grammar and larger linguistic and textual structures and features, to knowledge about the world. Apart from favouring our students' success in school, as they will allow them to access the breadth of the curriculum and improve their communication and language skill, reading can be a fun and imaginative time for children, which opens doors to all kinds of new worlds for them.

However, results from a closely studied comparative international assessment made headlines late last year for exposing the Basque Country's continued middling performance in reading comprehension among developed nations. Basque Education authorities, concerned about this fact, have tackled the issue and provided schools with certain tools to work on this matter.

Imagine you work in a Secondary school in which students' reading results have decreased in recent years, shown as follows:



Which steps would you take in your class? What kind of resources and strategies would you use to promote reading inside and outside the classroom? How can students with lack of reading strategies be helped to improve their reading skills and catch up with their peers? What, in your opinion, should be the steps taken by the whole school and education community regarding this issue? (40 marks)

JARRAIBIDEAK

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Mila esker aldez aurretik.

Ingleseko Hautaketa Batzordea.

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ERANTZUNEN TXANTILOIA

PLANTILLA DE RESPUESTAS

ANSWER SHEET

Erakunde autonomiadun
Organismo Autónomo del
EUSKO JAURLARITZA
GOBIERNO VASCO

Boredom is the Best Lesson of all

1. Choose the answer which you think fits best <u>according to the text.</u> (14 marks)

1. _____ 2. _____ 3. _____ 4. _____ 5. _____ 6. _____ 7. _____

2. Find words in the text with a similar meaning. (12 marks)

bliss	.....	spontaneous	.....
attenuate	.....	sit idly	.....
waste	.....	scatter	.....

3. Fill in the gaps with ONE word only. (10 marks)

1._____ 4._____ 7._____ 10._____

2._____ 5._____ 8._____

3._____ 6._____ 9._____

Encourage them to read, full stop

4. Read the following article. Choose from the paragraphs A-F the one which fits each gap. There are two extra paragraphs you do not need to choose. (12 marks)

1._____ 2. _____ 3. _____ 4. _____

Write the two extra-paragraphs you do not need:

5. _____ 6. _____

Progress in reading stalls at secondary school. It should be a priority

5. Read the text and fill in the gaps with the correct answer. WRITE ONLY THE CORRECT LETTER IN THE BOX BELOW! (10 marks)

1.- a) potential	b) communication	c) retention	d) liberation
2.- a) brewing	b) cooking	c) expecting	d) giving
3.- a) halts	b) continues	c) prolongs	d) progresses
4.- a) game	b) part	c) rule	d) trick
5.- a) hit	b) catch up with	c) achieve	d) miss
6.- a) slide	b) fall	c) mention	d) slip
7.- a) public	b) peak	c) competing	d) compelling
8.- a) to	b) against	c) toward	d) towards
9.- a) clue	b) key	c) hurdle	d) way
10.- a) down	b) up	c) - - -	d) forward

1. _____	2. _____	3. _____	4. _____
5. _____	6. _____	7. _____	8. _____
9. _____	10. _____		

6. Choose the word with the different vowel sound and write the letter to the correct answer (1 mark): _____

a) secondary b) responsive c) wandering d) problem

7. Choose the word with the different consonant sound and write the letter to the correct answer (1 mark): _____

a) message b) attention c) major d) range

8.

'Books are the quietest and most constant of friends; they are the most accessible and wisest of counselors, and the most patient of teachers'.

-Charles W. Elio-

Which steps would you take in your class? What kind of resources and strategies would you use to promote reading inside and outside the classroom? How can students with lack of reading strategies be helped to improve their reading skills and catch up with their peers? What, in your opinion, should be the steps taken by the whole school and education community regarding this issue? (40 marks)