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HIZKUNTZA-ESKOLA OFIZIALAK / ESCUELAS OFICIALES DE IDIOMAS

ESPEZIALITATEA / ESPECIALIDAD: INGELESA / INGLÉS

PRACTICAL TEST

1. This part will be 60% of the total of the Practical Test. Choose one from the following texts (A or B) and answer the questions.

A

**England your England
George Orwell
1941
II (excerpt)**

5 National characteristics are not easy to pin down, and when pinned down they often turn out to be trivialities or seem to have no connexion with one another. Spaniards are cruel to animals, Italians can do nothing without making a deafening noise, the Chinese are addicted to gambling. Obviously such things don't matter in themselves. Nevertheless, nothing is causeless, and even the fact that Englishmen have bad teeth can tell something about the realities of English life.

10 Here are a couple of generalizations about England that would be accepted by almost all observers. One is that the English are not gifted artistically. They are not as musical as the Germans or Italians, painting and sculpture have never flourished in England as they have in France. Another is that, as Europeans go, the English are not intellectual. They have a horror of abstract thought, they feel no need for any philosophy or systematic 'world-view'. Nor is this because they are 'practical', as they are so fond of claiming for themselves. One has only to look at their methods of town planning and water supply, their obstinate clinging to everything that is out of date and a nuisance, a spelling system that defies analysis, and a system of weights and measures that is intelligible only to the compilers of arithmetic books, to see how little they care about mere efficiency. But they have a certain power of acting without taking thought. Their world-famed hypocrisy – their double-faced attitude towards the Empire, for instance – is bound up with this. Also, in moments of supreme crisis the whole nation can suddenly draw together and act upon a species of instinct, really a code of conduct which is understood by almost everyone, though never formulated. The phrase that Hitler coined for the Germans, 'a sleep-walking people', would have been better applied to the English. Not that there is anything to be proud of in being called a sleep-walker.

25 But here it is worth noting a minor English trait which is extremely well marked though not often commented on, and that is a love of flowers. This is one of the first things that one notices when one reaches England from abroad, especially if one is coming from southern Europe. Does it not contradict the English indifference to the arts? Not really, because it is found in people who have no aesthetic feelings whatever. What it does link up with, however, is another English characteristic which is so much a part of us that we barely notice it, and that is the addiction to hobbies and spare-time occupations, the *privateness* of English life. We are a nation of flower-lovers, but also a nation of stamp-collectors, pigeon-fanciers, amateur carpenters, coupon-snippers, darts-players, crossword-puzzle fans. All the culture that is most truly native centres round things which even when they are communal are not official – the pub, the football match, the back garden, the fireside and the 'nice cup of tea'. The liberty of the individual is still believed in, almost as in the nineteenth century. But this has nothing to do with economic liberty, the right to exploit others for profit. It is the liberty to have a home of your own, to do what you like in your spare time, to choose your own amusements instead of having them chosen for you from above. The most hateful of all names in an English ear is **Nosey Parker**. It is obvious, of course, that even this purely private liberty is a lost cause. Like all other modern people, the English are in process of being numbered, labelled, conscripted, 'co-ordinated'. But the pull of their impulses is in the other direction, and the kind of regimentation that can be imposed on them will be modified in

consequence. No party rallies, no Youth Movements, no coloured shirts, no Jew-baiting or 'spontaneous' demonstrations. No Gestapo either, in all probability.

40 But in all societies the common people must live to some extent *against* the existing order. The genuinely popular culture of England is something that goes on beneath the surface, unofficially and more or less frowned on by the authorities. One thing one notices if one looks directly at the common people, especially in the big towns, is that they are not puritanical. They are inveterate gamblers, drink as much beer as their wages will permit, are devoted to bawdy jokes, and use probably the foulest
45 language in the world. They have to satisfy these tastes in the face of astonishing, hypocritical laws (licensing laws, lottery acts, etc. etc.) which are designed to interfere with everybody but in practice allow everything to happen. Also, the common people are without definite religious belief, and have been so for centuries. The Anglican Church never had a real hold on them, it was simply a preserve of the landed gentry, and the Nonconformist sects only influenced minorities. And yet they have retained a deep **tinge** of Christian feeling, while almost forgetting the name of Christ. The power-worship which is
50 the new religion of Europe, and which has infected the English intelligentsia, has never touched the common people. They have never caught up with power politics. The 'realism' which is preached in Japanese and Italian newspapers would horrify them. One can learn a good deal about the spirit of England from the comic coloured postcards that you see in the windows of cheap stationers' shops.
55 These things are a sort of diary upon which the English people have unconsciously recorded themselves. Their old-fashioned outlook, their graded snobberies, their mixture of bawdiness and hypocrisy, their extreme gentleness, their deeply moral attitude to life, are all mirrored there.

The gentleness of the English civilization is perhaps its most marked characteristic. You notice it the instant you set foot on English soil. It is a land where the bus conductors are good-tempered and the
60 policemen carry no revolvers. In no country inhabited by white men is it easier to shove people off the pavement. And with this goes something that is always written off by European observers as 'decadence' or hypocrisy, the English hatred of war and militarism. It is rooted deep in history, and it is strong in the lower-middle class as well as the working class. Successive wars have shaken it but not destroyed it. Well within living memory it was common for 'the redcoats' **to be booted at** in the streets
65 and for the landlords of respectable public houses to refuse to allow soldiers on the premises. In peace time, even when there are two million unemployed, it is difficult to fill the ranks of the tiny standing army, which is officered by the country gentry and a specialized stratum of the middle class, and manned by farm labourers and slum proletarians. The mass of the people are without military knowledge or tradition, and their attitude towards war is invariably defensive. No politician could rise to
70 power by promising them conquests or military 'glory', no Hymn of Hate has ever made any appeal to them. In the last war the songs which the soldiers made up and sang of their own accord were not vengeful but humorous and **mock-defeatist** (1). The only enemy they ever named was the sergeant-major.

75 (1) For example:
 'I don't want to join the bloody Army,
 I don't want to go unto the war;
 I want no more to roam,
 I'd rather stay at home,
80 Living on the earnings of a whore.
But it was not in that spirit that they fought.

1. Text analysis. Provide a brief analysis of the text which includes the following ideas: (3/10)
 - a) Theme and main ideas.
 - b) Identification of genre/text type/subtype. Justify your answer.
 - c) George Orwell's communicative intent and possible audience.

2. Write a short definition of the words or expressions highlighted in the text and give a synonym for each of them. (1/10)

a) **Nosey Parker**

b) **tinge**

c) **to be booed at**

d) **mock-defeatist**

3. Write the phonetic transcription of the words underlined in the text. Mark the word stress. (1/10)

a) <u>surface</u>
b) <u>bawdiness</u>
c) <u>hypocrisy</u>
d) <u>vengeful</u>
e) <u>sergeant</u>

4. How could you exploit this text in class?
- Set the level and justify your answer. (1/10)
 - Give ideas of the activities you would use to work on the four skills (reading, writing, listening and speaking), and specify the communicative competencies which would be developed through those activities. (4/10)

B

Hag-Seed
Margaret Atwood
2016

Chapter 8, Bring the rabble (excerpt)

The job came his way via one of the local online papers. A teacher in the Literacy Through Literature high school level program at the nearby Fletcher County Correctional Institute had suffered a sudden illness—a fatal illness, as it turned out. A vacancy needed to be filled at short notice. It would be a temporary position. Some experience was required, although—Felix assumed—not much. Those interested . . .

5 Felix was interested. Using Mr. Duke’s email account, he sent an initial note registering his willingness. Then he cobbled together a fraudulent resumé, forging decades-old letters of reference from several obscure schools in Saskatchewan, signed by principals who might be expected to have died or moved to Florida. He was ninety percent certain that these would never be checked: he’d be, after
10 all, just a stopgap. In his covering letter he said he’d been retired for some years but felt the need to give back to the community, since he had been given so much in life himself.

He was summoned by email for an interview almost immediately, by which he divined that there weren’t any other applicants. So much the better: they were probably desperate, and he’d get the job by default. By this time he really wanted it, he’d talked himself into it. It had, perhaps, some potential.

15 He cleaned himself up—he’d been letting himself get ratty – and bought a new dark-green plebian-looking shirt at the Mark’s Work Wearhouse in Wilmot. He even trimmed his beard. He’d grown it over the years; it was grey now, almost white, and he had long white eyebrows to match. He hoped he looked **sage**.

The interview took place not at Fletcher Correctional itself but at a McDonald’s nearby. The woman
20 interviewing him was forty-odd and making efforts: the streak of pink in her grey-blond hair, the shining earrings; the careful nails, a fashionable silver. Her name was Estelle, she offered. The first name was a positive signal, she wanted them to be friends. She didn’t work at Fletcher herself, she explained: she was a professor at Guelph University and supervised the Fletcher course from a distance. She also sat on various advisory committees, for the government. The Ministry of Justice. “My grandfather was a
25 Senator,” she said. “It’s given me a certain access. I know the ropes, you could say, and I have to share with you that the Literacy Through Literature program has been more or less . . . well, my special baby. I’ve lobbied quite hard for it!”

Felix said that was admirable. Estelle said we all did what we could.

30 The teacher who’d died had been such a fine person, she said; he’d be missed by so many, it was so sudden, a shock. He’d really tried, up at Fletcher; he’d accomplished . . . well, he’d done his very best, under conditions that were . . . no one could go into it expecting too much.

Felix nodded and um-**hummed** at the right places, and looked sympathetic, and made eye contact. In return, Estelle’s smiles multiplied. All was as going as it should.

35 The preliminaries over, Estelle launched into the interview proper. She took a breath. “I believe I recognize you, Mr. Duke,” she said. “Despite the beard, which I must say looks very distinguished. You’re Felix Phillips, yes? The famous director? I’ve been attending that Festival since I was a kid, my grandfather used to take us; I have a *big* collection of the programs!”

So much for alter egos. “Indeed,” said Felix, “but I’m going under Mr. Duke for this job. I thought it would be less intimidating.”

40 “I see.” A smile, more tentative. A weaponless, elderly theatre director, intimidating? To the hardened Fletcher inmates? Really?

"If anyone on the hiring end knew who I was, they'd say I was way overqualified. Too professional for this position." A bigger smile: Estelle found this more convincing. "So it can be our secret," Felix said, lowering his voice, leaning across the table. "You can be my confidante."

45 "Oh, what fun!" She liked it. "A confidante! It's like a Restoration play! *The City Heiress*, or . . ."

"By Aphra Behn," said Felix. "Except the confidantes are burglars." He was impressed: it was an obscure play, not one he'd ever done.

"Maybe I've always longed to be a burglar," she laughed.

50 "But seriously, this is quite an honour! I must have seen almost all of your plays, over at Makeshiweg, when you were there. I loved your *Lear*! It was so, it was so . . ."

"Visceral," said Felix, quoting one of the more enthusiastic reviews.

"Yes," said Estelle. "Visceral." She paused. "But this position. . . I mean, you are of course way overqualified. You realize it's only part-time – three months a year. You wouldn't expect a commensurate—"

55 "No, no," said Felix. "Standard pay. I've been retired for a while, I'm bound to be rusty."

"Retired? Oh, you're too young to retire," she said, a reflex compliment. "That would be a waste."

"Too kind," said Felix.

60 There was a pause. "You do understand that this is a prison," she said at length. "You'll be teaching, well, convicted criminals. The goal of the course is to improve their basic literacy skills so they can find a meaningful place in the community once they're back in the world. Wouldn't you be rather wasted on them?"

"It would be a challenge," said Felix. "I've always liked challenges."

65 "Let's be frank," said Estelle. "Some of these men have very **short fuses**. They act out. I wouldn't want you to . . ." She clearly had a vision of Felix lying on the floor with a homemade shiv sticking out of his neck and a puddle of blood spreading around him.

"Dear lady," said Felix, resorting to one of his posh-aristocrat stage accents, "in the early days of the theatre, actors were regarded as next door to criminals anyway. And I've known many actors—that's what they do, they act out! Stage rage. There are ways of handling that. And, studying with me, they'll be guaranteed to learn more self-control."

70 Estelle was still wavering, but she said, "Well, if you're willing to give it a try . . ."

"I'd need to do things in my own way," said Felix, pushing his luck. "I'd want considerable latitude." It was the beginning of the semester and the dead teacher had barely got started, so Felix himself would have room to create. "What do they usually read for this course?"

75 "Well, we've relied on *The Catcher in the Rye*," said Estelle. "Quite a lot. And some stories by Stephen King, they like those. *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time*. Many of them identify with that, and it's simple to read. Short sentences."

"I see," said Felix. *Catcher in the bloody Rye*, he thought. **Pabulum** for prep school juveniles. It was a medium- to maximum-security facility; these were grown men, they'd lived lives that had driven them far beyond those parameters. "I'll be taking a somewhat different tack."

80 "I hesitate to ask what tack," said Estelle, cocking her head archly. Now that she'd accepted him for the job, she was relaxed enough to flirt. Watch your trousers, Felix, he admonished himself. She doesn't have a wedding ring, so you're fair game. Don't start anything you can't finish.

"Shakespeare," said Felix. "That's the tack."

1. Text analysis. Provide a brief analysis of the text which includes the following ideas: (3/10)

- a) Structure of the text.
- b) How does Atwood use language in order to sketch out the two characters?
- c) *"I'd want considerable latitude."* What is Felix's strategy in order to convince Estelle of his having freedom to take a different track?

2. Write a short definition of the words or expressions highlighted in the text and give a synonym for each of them. (1/10)

a) **sage**

b) **hummed**

c) **short fuses**

d) **pablum**

3. Write the phonetic transcription of the words underlined in the text. Mark the word stress. (1/10)

a) <u>resumé</u>
b) <u>various</u>
c) <u>admirable</u>
d) <u>egos</u>
e) <u>Heiress</u>

4. How could you exploit this text in class?

- Set the level and justify your answer. (1/10)
- Give ideas of the activities you would use to work on the four skills (reading, writing, listening and speaking), and specify the communicative competencies which would be developed through those activities. (4/10)

- 2. This part will be 40% of the total of the Practical Test. Choose one from the following topics (A or B) for the writing exercise (220-250 words).**

A

Two students and a teacher at your school have been diagnosed with measles over the last week. The Principal has asked you to write an article (220-250 words) for the school magazine on the safety of vaccines as a strong campaign against vaccination has been launched in your city through social media. The aim of the article is to give students, teachers and other workers information about the illness and the need to be vaccinated to prevent the disease from spreading.

B

Your school has been sued by a student who was injured during a performance put on stage by the English Department last year. You are new at school but, as a member of the Department, you strongly believe that the project should go on. Write a **letter (220-250 words)** to the Head of the Department offering yourself to help with the staging as you are an expert on that field. Include ideas on how to improve security so as to avoid future accidents.