

IMPROVING OUR SKILLS: READING

Sophomores – Advanced Groups

In this worksheet you will find **TWO** exercises from the reading section of the **FCE exam**.

READING 1

PART 6

You are going to read a **newspaper article** in which a former ballet dancer talks about the **physical demands of the job**.

Good preparation leads to success in ballet dancing



A former classical ballet dancer explains what ballet training actually involves.

What we ballet dancers do is instinctive, but instinct learnt through a decade of training. A dancer's life is hard to understand, and easy to misinterpret. Many a poet and novelist has tried to do so, but even they have chosen to interpret all the hard work and physical discipline as obsessive. And so the idea persists that dancers spend every waking hour in pain, bodies at breaking point, their smiles a pretence.

As a former dancer in the Royal Ballet Company here in Britain, I would beg to question this.

37 With expert teaching and daily practice, its various demands are easily within the capacity of the healthy human body. Contrary to popular belief, there is no need to break bones or tear muscles to achieve ballet positions. It is simply a question of sufficient conditioning of the muscular system.

Over the course of my dancing life I worked my way through at least 10,000 ballet classes. I took my first at a school of dance at the age of seven and my last 36 years later at the Royal Opera House in London. In the years between, ballet class was the first thing I did every day. It starts at an early age, this daily ritual, because it has to.

38 But for a ballet dancer in particular, this lengthy period has to come before the effects of adolescence set in, while maximum flexibility can still be achieved.

Those first classes I took were remarkably similar to the last. In fact, taking into account the occasional new idea, ballet classes have changed little since 1820, when the details of ballet technique were first written down, and are easily recognised in any country. Starting with the left hand on the barre, the routine unrolls over some 75 minutes. **39** Even the leading dancers have to do it.

These classes serve two distinct purposes: they are the way we warm our bodies and the mechanism by which we improve basic technique. In class after class, we prove the old saying that 'practice makes perfect'. **40**

And it is also this daily repetition which enables us to strengthen the muscles required in jumping, spinning or lifting our legs to angles impossible to the average person.

The human body is designed to adapt to the demands we make of it, provided we make them carefully and over time. **41** In the same way, all those years of classes add up to a fit-for-purpose dancing machine. This level of physical fluency doesn't hurt; it feels good.

42 But they should not be misled: there is a difference between hard work and hardship. Dancers have an everyday familiarity with the first. Hardship it isn't.

1st Exercise: What does it mean?

Explain, in your own words, the meaning of the words below.

1. Misinterpret:
2. Breaking Point:
3. Beg:
4. Unrolls over:
5. Add up:
6. Misled:

2nd Exercise: Fill in the gaps.

Six sentences have been **removed** from the article. Choose from the sentences **A – G** the one which fits each gap **(37- 42)**. There is **one extra** sentences which you **do not need you use**.

- A** Through endless tries at the usual exercises and frequent failures, ballet dancers develop the neural pathways in the brain necessary to control accurate, fast and smooth movement.
- B** The ballet shoe offers some support, but the real strength is in the muscles, built up through training.
- C** As technology takes away activity from the lives of many, perhaps the ballet dancer's physicality is ever more difficult for most people to imagine.
- D** Ballet technique is certainly extreme but it is not, in itself, dangerous.
- E** The principle is identical in the gym – pushing yourself to the limit, but not beyond, will eventually bring the desired result.
- F** No one avoids this: it is ballet's great democratiser, the well established members of the company working alongside the newest recruits.
- G** It takes at least a decade of high-quality, regular practice to become an expert in any physical discipline.

Answers

37	38	39	40	41	42
----	----	----	----	----	----

3rd Exercise: Justifying answers.

Now, you must justify **why** you chose **those answers** for each gap.

N°	Answer	Support your answer.
37		
38		
39		
40		
41		
42		

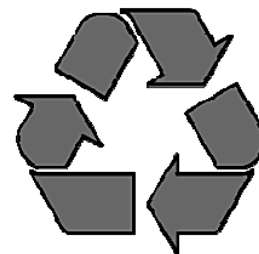
READING 2

PART 6

You are going to read a **newspaper article** about a man **who designed the recycling symbol**.

How the recycling symbol was created

Gary Anderson designed a symbol which we see everywhere nowadays.



I studied engineering at the University of Southern California at a time when there was a lot of emphasis in the United States on training young people to be engineers. That said, I eventually switched to architecture. I just couldn't get a grasp on electronics and architecture seemed more concrete to me.

It was around that time that I saw a poster advertising a design competition being run by the Container Corporation of America. The idea was to create a symbol to represent recycled paper. One of my college requirements had been a graphic design course so I thought I'd give it a go. It didn't take me long to come up with my design: only a day or two. **37** But I already had arrows and angles in my mind because on my course I'd done a presentation on recycling waste water. I'd come up with a graphic that described this process very simply.

The problem with the design I'd done earlier was that it seemed flat, two-dimensional. So when I sat down to enter the competition, I thought back to a field trip in elementary school to a newspaper office where we'd been shown how paper was fed over rollers as it was printed.

38 The three arrows in it look like strips of folded-over paper. I drew them in pencil, and then traced over everything in black ink. These days, with computer graphics packages, it's rare that designs are quite so plain.

I think I found out I'd won the competition in a letter. Was I excited? Well, yes of course – but not that excited. **39** So it just seemed like, of course I would win! There was a monetary prize, though for the life of me I can't remember how much it was... about \$2,000?

When I finished my studies, I decided to go into urban planning and I moved to Los Angeles. It seems funny, but I really played down the fact that I'd won this competition. I was afraid it would make me look as though I was interested in graphics, rather than urban planning. **40** I remember seeing it once on a leaflet which had been produced on recycled paper, but then it disappeared.

A while after graduating, I flew to Amsterdam for a holiday. I'll never forget: when I walked off the plane, I saw my symbol. It was on a big recycling bin. And it was bigger than a beach ball! **41** I was really taken aback. That was quite a long time ago though. Since then, I've got more qualifications and worked for quite a few different firms, some more environmentally aware than others.

I feel much prouder of the recycling symbol now than I used to, probably because it's so widely seen. Maybe this design has been more important to me than I'd thought. **42** There's more to me than the recycling symbol.

1st Exercise: What does it mean?

Explain, in your own words, the meaning of the words below.

1. Grasp:

2. Run by:

3. Come up:

4. Leaflet:

5. Taken aback:

6. Aware:

2nd Exercise: Fill in the gaps.

Six sentences have been **removed** from the article. Choose from the sentences **A – G** the one which fits each gap **(37- 42)**. There is **one extra** sentences which you **do not need you use**.

- | | |
|---|--|
| A Still, I'd hate to think that my life's work is defined by it. | E I realise that seems ridiculous for something that's been so successful. |
| B I used what I'd seen to create the image. | F Also, nothing much happened to the symbol for a while. |
| C I'm no expert on recycling but I can certainly see its value. | G I guess at that point in my life I had an exaggerated sense of my own importance. |
| D I hadn't thought about it for years and there it was right in my face. | |

Answers

37	38	39	40	41	42
----	----	----	----	----	----

3rd Exercise: Justifying answers.

Now, you must justify **why** you chose **those answers** for each gap.

N°	Answer	Support your answer.
37		
38		
39		
40		
41		
42		

Student's name: _____

Teacher's name: _____

Teacher's grading

Reading 1	Reading 2