

## Reading

- 1 You are going to read an extract from an article about a popular TV cartoon series. Seven paragraphs have been removed from the extract. Choose from the paragraphs A–H the one which fits each gap (1–7). There is one extra paragraph which you do not need to use.

# The Simpsons

*Nick Griffiths meets the faces behind America's best-loved family of cartoon characters*

Mike Scully, writer/producer of *The Simpsons*, is in Aspen Colorado with the show's creator, Matt Groening, to attend the four-day US Comedy Arts Festival. Among the attractions is *The Simpsons Live*, a read-through of two separate episodes on-stage by members of the cast.

1

The shorts ran from 1987 and were subsequently developed into a full series that made its debut on American primetime two years later. From the off, the show was a huge hit, topping Fox's ratings. Although it is hard to figure out why it exploded so quickly, Scully has his own theory.

2

The Aspen venue for the *Simpsons* events is the Wheeler Opera House. The seven-strong cast take the stage, including Dan Castellaneta (Homer Simpson and others), Nancy Cartwright (Bart and others) and Yeardeley Smith (Lisa).

3

Stripped of the visual distraction of animation, you also realise how relentlessly clever and funny the scripts are. After the show, Scully acknowledges, 'It's times like that when you realise just what an impact the show has had on people. *The Simpsons* were dysfunctional yet you could also see that they loved and stuck by each other. People have always liked that because they don't see enough of it in real life.'

4

Quite simply, *The Simpsons* redefined television animation, spawning shows that were extreme by comparison – which naturally helped its own acceptance into the mainstream. For every action, of course, there's an equal and opposite reaction. 'Every time there's a fad that kids really like, there's gonna be a grown-up going, "Something's wrong here"', says Groening. 'It happened with video games, heavy metal, rap, and Pokemon.'



5

Indeed, it was deemed so influential that even President George Bush Senior waded in, criticising its portrayal of the American family during his 1992 election campaign. His wife, Barbara, called the show the 'dumbest thing' she had ever seen.

6

Groening refers to his secret motto, 'To entertain and to subvert'. 'It's not so much trying to change the minds of people who are already set in their ways, it's to point out to children that a lot of the rules that they're told are by authorities who do not have their best interests at heart. That's a good lesson. Think for yourself.'

7

But perhaps what pleases Groening and Scully most is the well-known fact that families watch *The Simpsons* together. In an age of meals-on-the-move, three-television households, computer games and the Internet, it is an achievement of which they can be justifiably proud.

**A** Unwittingly, *The Simpsons* struck a chord, which endures today: however much they mess up and frustrate each other, they are a viable family unit. Yet the American networks misread this popularity as a public craving for more primetime animation. 'They rushed all these shows on air and the public rejected most of them,' Scully explains.

**B** 'At the core is a family, and everyone can identify with that,' he says. 'This is probably why it plays well overseas, too.' At the last count, the series has been shown in a staggering 94 countries worldwide.

**C** In a small way, *The Simpsons* probably contributed to the demise of the administration. 'It didn't fly with a lot of Americans,' recalls Scully. 'People who enjoyed the show didn't want to be told that they were watching something bad or stupid, or something wrong for their kids.'

**D** Serious issues crop up regularly on the show, cloaked in humour and vivid animation: corrupt media and politicians, ineffective policing, the environment. Groening again, 'In conceiving the show, I made sure Homer worked in a nuclear power plant, because then we can keep returning to that and making a point about the environment.'

**E** So a mere animation series has quietly subverted the world's youth, helped to bring down a president, been stamped all over what we wear and changed the face of contemporary animation. Now academics are using it in universities: 'Having the donut and eating it: self-reflexivity in *The Simpsons*' is part of the Introduction to Cultural Studies module at Edinburgh's Napier University.

**F** Groening is a chunky, bearded man with tiny specs, a floppy fringe, Simpsons baseball jacket and baggy jeans. Oregon-raised and LA-based since college, he initially conceived the Simpsons family as a brief animated segment within the new Fox TV network's *Tracey Ullman Show*.

**G** And such was the case initially with *The Simpsons*. Homer was seen as a disgraceful role model; Bart's insolence to his elders would encourage the same. Bart Simpson t-shirts (notably 'Underachiever and proud of it') became so popular that some schools banned them for their subversive messages.

**H** It doesn't matter that both episodes have been aired previously on television. In the second, Lisa falls in love with the school bully (Bart to Lisa: 'I'll probably never say this to you again, but you can do better'). Watching a short, smiling woman come up with his voice is surreal and deeply impressive.

## Grammar

2 Complete these extracts with an appropriate participle form of the verbs in brackets.

While the No 1 Kodak box camera (1) ..... (produce) in 1889 was a crucial landmark in the development of photography, two of the most significant cameras in terms of modern photography were the Leica 1, (2) ..... (introduce) in 1925, and the Kine Exacta of 1937, (3) ..... (consider) to be the forerunner of sophisticated SLR (single lens reflex) cameras. However, until the digital revolution swept all before it, it was the 1950s Hasselblad which became the most widely used professional 'work horse' camera, (4) ..... (offer) as it did a wide range of specialist accessories. (5) ..... (use) to capture the famous Apollo moon-landing pictures, the Hasselblad is also assured of a place in the history of photography.

One of the most dominant figures in photography, Henri Cartier Bresson's approach is that of the purist, (6) ..... (use) the most basic equipment and never (7) ..... (resort) to the contrivance of unusual viewpoints or exaggerated perspectives. (8) ..... (study) painting, he took up photography seriously in 1931, (9) ..... (go on) to exert a tremendous influence on the medium. He

insisted that his pictures were not cropped and was at pains to preserve his anonymity. A phrase (10) ..... (coin) by him to describe his own approach – 'the decisive moment' – has become the watchword for many thousands of photographers (11) ..... (bend) on (12) ..... (secure) a winning image.

## Vocabulary

- 3 In each of the following sentences two of the words in italics collocate with the noun. Put a tick (✓) if the word collocates and a cross (X) if it does not.
- a Clive has rather unusual *beady* / *blushing* / *bulging* eyes.
  - b Maria has delightful *sparkling* / *twinkling* / *gleaming* eyes.
  - c The man gave Clare a *fixing* / *menacing* / *piercing* look.
  - d It was hard to tell what Jo was thinking because of the *bare* / *glazed* / *blank* expression on her face.
  - e Adam was admitted to hospital suffering from *double* / *blurred* / *bloodshot* vision.
- 4 The words in capitals in these sentences are all anagrams of verbs meaning *see*. Use your dictionary to help you solve them. The first and last letters of each word are given.
- EXAMPLE: Try to *picture* RUIPECT yourself lying on a beach in the hot sun.
- a I p.....d CREEVDIEP a note of unhappiness in her voice.
  - b It's often quite hard to g.....p SRPAG what the professor is saying.
  - c I can f.....e ESROSEFE a time when everyone will use electric cars.
  - d The new bridge is a sight to b.....d LOHDEB.
  - e People who are colour-blind can't d.....h USTDHISINGI between red and green easily.
  - f I was so surprised when he turned up – I'd v.....d DALEUVSISI someone much older.
  - g I thought I g.....d MDSIPGLE a shadowy figure at the window of the old house.
  - h When do you e.....e VENGESAI finishing the project?
  - i He couldn't c.....e OCCENIVE of a time when he would not be able to paint.

## Use of English

- 5 Complete the second sentence so that it has a similar meaning to the first sentence, using the word given. Do not change the word given. You must use between three and eight words, including the word given.
- 1 It is absolutely essential to get this parcel off today or we will lose the contract.  
**despatched**  
This parcel .....  
fail or we will lose the contract.
  - 2 Central Gallery is nowhere near as good since there was a change of ownership.  
**downhill**  
Central Gallery has really .....  
hands last autumn.
  - 3 When I was young, cycling 80 kms a day was easy, but I couldn't do it now.  
**difficulty**  
In my .....  
cycling 80 kms a day, but I couldn't do it now.
  - 4 Sarah's mother complained constantly but Sarah didn't pay attention any more.  
**notice**  
Sarah no ..... complaining.

5 Geoff is unlikely to be invited to the wedding as he appalled everyone with the way he behaved.  
**doubtful**

In view of his .....  
 be invited to the wedding.

6 They were playing so well, there was no way they would lose the final match.

**bound**

Such was the standard of ..... the final match.

6 Read the text below and decide which answer (A, B, C or D) best fits each gap. There is an example at the beginning (0).

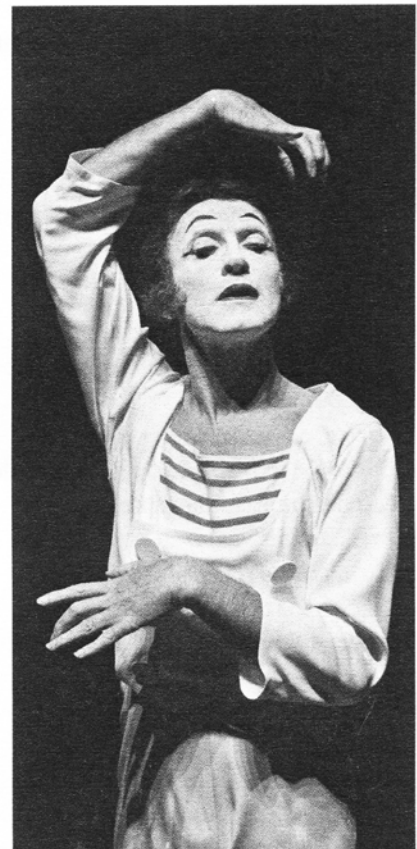
### Marcel Marceau, the mime artist

Wearing white trousers and a striped vest, and with a (0) ..... mask of a face, the celebrated mime artist Marcel Marceau produced a whole (1) ..... of unforgettable characters – waiters, sculptors, matadors and ballet dancers. One critic said of him ‘He (2) ..... in less than two minutes what most novelists cannot do in volumes.’

As a child in the 1920s Marcel enjoyed the silent movies of the time, learning from the (3) ..... of Buster Keaton and Charlie Chaplin how to express your feelings (4) ..... mime.

Marcel toured the whole world doing his mime show based on the antics of ‘Bip’, the character he created. The names Marcel Marceau and mime became (5) ..... linked in the public mind and the Japanese in particular (6) ..... under his spell. Marcel also appeared in several films, including Mel Brooks’s original *Silent Movie*, in which Marceau spoke the only line – (7) ..... the only audible word – ‘Non!’

The list of Marcel’s prizes and honorary doctorates is enormous, and the city of Paris has a permanent mime school (8) ..... after him.



0 A typical

B truthful

C precise

D veritable

1 A host

B gathering

C multitude

D swarm

2 A fulfilled

B attained

C accomplished

D executed

3 A equals

B likes

C counterparts

D parallels

4 A through

B across

C under

D by

5 A inextricably

B irretrievably

C infallibly

D irrevocably

6 A ran

B fell

C stood

D lay

7 A likewise

B indeed

C similarly

D furthermore

8 A entitled

B called

C termed

D named