

МАТУРА ПО АНГЛИЙСКИ ЕЗИК – ПРОБЕН ВАРИАНТ 2016

PART 2: READING COMPREHENSION

Instructions: Read the text and answer the questions that follow.

St. George

Accounts of the life of St. George, the patron saint of England, hold that he was a Cappadocian Christian who joined the Roman army, under whose auspices he may have visited Britain. In the early fourth century, George of Cappadocia is said to have been imprisoned and subjected to horrible tortures before finally being martyred at the order of the emperor Diocletian for declaring himself a Christian. There are a number of variations on this tale but precious little evidence to show that such a man ever actually lived. The popular legend maintained that the people of the Libyan city of Silene were threatened by a dragon that lived in a nearby pond. To placate the beast they fed it first their sheep and then local children. Finally, the last child, the young princess of Libya, was offered to the ferocious creature, to the great sorrow of her father. As the dragon was about to consume her, George of Cappadocia chanced to ride by on his horse. He saw the princess's distress and "drew out his sword and garnished him with the sign of the cross, and rode hardily against the dragon which came toward him, and smote him with his spear and hurt him sore and threw him to the ground." He directed the princess to tie her girdle around the dragon's neck, after which the dragon followed her back into the city. Once there, the future Saint George decapitated the dragon, saving the princess and the people of the city.

Despite his tenuous connection with England, Saint George became a celebrated figure in Britain during the Middle Ages. His legend may have become known to England as early as the end of the sixth century, brought by missionaries from Rome. The Venerable Bede included Saint George in the list of martyrs that he wrote in the eighth century, and the earliest known church dedicated to the saint was mentioned in the will of Alfred the Great at the beginning of the tenth century. The crusades seem to have solidified Saint George's role as the special protector of soldiers, and chivalric orders in Aragon, Genoa, the Holy Roman Empire, and Hungary adopted him as their patron.

16. There is exhaustive evidence that St. George visited England as a Roman soldier.

- A) True B) False C) No information in the text.

17. St. George was persecuted for treason against emperor Diocletian.

- A) True B) False C) No information in the text.

18. The legend maintains that St. George decapitated the dragon in Cappadocia.

- A) True B) False C) No information in the text.

19. Not before the early 6 century was the legend of St. George brought to England.

- A) True B) False C) No information in the text.

20. The crusaders chose St. George as their protector for his bravery and valiance.

- A) True B) False C) No information in the text.

The Vikings

The stereotypical picture of Vikings is that of savages running berserk who looted and plundered the European coasts, pillaged towns, burned churches, raped women, killed innocents and just generally created havoc and mayhem before eventually celebrating their feats by gorging and drinking day and night. This colourful view of the Vikings seems to be at odds with the one held by historians.

One popular explanation offered for the Viking phenomenon is that overpopulation created a need for more land and thus the Vikings were largely motivated by a desire to colonise. Others see the Viking ship which undoubtedly facilitated 'viking' as the cause of the Nordic expansion. While Marxist and cultural theorists see the Viking phenomenon as the result of the grand materialist laws of history or as isolated events understandable in their own context, a new entrepreneurial approach seems to provide fresh insights into the business model of these barbarian warriors.

The study investigates the number of raids and the amount of wealth extorted by the Vikings and concludes that, first, roving banditry has reached a point where profits approached zero because of over-plundering and competition. Second, Viking rulers with a relative advantage in the use of coercion had an economic incentive to move to stationary banditry where they would increase profits by settling down and taxing local people rather than by roving and looting. Third, by settling the Vikings were able to build organizations that could offer solutions to public good problems. They did so by accumulating revenue from a number of sources, ranging from simple plunder to extortion of tribute and taxes, as well as by selling their services. Consequently, they produced protection and law enforcement, engaged in public works, supported the growth of trade, while simultaneously reaping rents for themselves. Increased production increased their tax collections.

21. According to the text the popular imagination sees the Viking as

- A) merciless warriors.
- B) ancient capitalists.
- C) ruthless mercenaries and drunkards.
- D) ancient seafarers.

22. The entrepreneurial approach to the Viking phenomenon:

- A) coincides with that of historians.
- B) is similar to that of Marxists.
- C) accepts that the Viking ship caused the expansion.
- D) contradicts the historical perspective.

23. According to the authors of the study Viking profits from roving banditry decreased because:

- A) there was too much resistance.
- B) the Vikings couldn't pool their plundered resources.
- C) of rivalry and the finite plunder targets.
- D) there was no coordination in the raids.

24. Stationary Nordic banditry allowed for:

- A) easier looting and taxation.
- B) higher and continuous profits.
- C) hiring the Vikings as mercenaries.
- D) the centralization of power.

25. Increased profits from sedentary settlements:

- A) facilitated the development of science and technology.
- B) resulted in the establishment of public organizations.
- C) boosted trade and navigation.
- D) encouraged the centralization of power.

The Planets

Thousands of years ago, ancient civilizations turned to the heavens, marveling at their wonders. The ancient people honoured various gods and often linked their gods with the 'wandering stars' - the planets in the sky.

Mercury derives its name from the winged messenger of the gods, the god of thievery, commerce, and travel. Probably the planet got its name from the rate at which it spins. Venus was the Roman counterpart of Aphrodite, the goddess of love and beauty, so it is an appropriate name for the brightest planet. The only objects in our Solar System brighter than Venus are the Sun and the Moon. The ancient people thought that Venus was two different celestial objects – the Morning Star and the Evening Star. The Babylonians called the planet Ishtar after their goddess of womanhood and love. Earth is the only planet which is not named after a Roman god, but is associated with the goddess Terra Mater - Gaea to the Greeks. In mythology, she was the first goddess on Earth and the mother of Uranus. Mars is named after the Roman god of war. The planet got its name from the fact that it has the color of blood. Jupiter was the Roman king of the gods. Having in mind that Jupiter is the largest planet in our Solar System, it makes sense that the planet was named after the most important god. Saturn was named after the Roman god of agriculture and harvest during his reign, known as the Golden Age, plenty and peace triumphed. The golden color associated with wheat and harvest gave the planet its name, but it also had to do with its position in the sky. Saturn stole the position of king of the gods from his father Uranus and afterwards the throne was stolen by Jupiter. Uranus was not discovered until the 1800's, but the astronomers in that time followed the tradition of naming planets after Roman gods. In mythology, Uranus was the father of Saturn and was at one time the supreme king of the gods. While Neptune almost ended up being named after one of the astronomers credited with discovering it – Verrier – that was greatly disputed, so it was named after the god of the sea. The name was probably inspired by its blue color. Pluto no longer fits the definition of a planet, but it used to be. In classical mythology Pluto was the god of the underworld (Hades, not *cosa nostra*). The first two letters of Pluto are also the initials of the man who predicted its existence - Percival Lowell.

26. Mercury spins at a higher rate than Jupiter does.

- A) True B) False C) No information in the text.

27. Venus is NOT the brightest planet in the Solar system.

- A) True B) False C) No information in the text.

28. Uranus was discovered in 1800.

- A) True B) False C) No information in the text.

29. The phrase 'that was greatly disputed' refers to the naming of Neptune after a man rather than a Roman god.

- A) True B) False C) No information in the text.

30. Pluto is now considered to be a star.

- A) True B) False C) No information in the text.

Answers: 16. B 17. C 18. B 19. B 20. C 21. A 22. D 23. C 24. B 25. B 26. C 27. B 28 B 29. B 30. C

The Passionate Shepherd wishes you 'Good luck'!