



Holiday Assignments

ADVANCE LEVEL

Subject: English Literature Grade 12 /13 Arts

Medium: English

Language - Summary Writing

Task 01

Summarize the following passage in not more than 120 words:

Communication is part of our everyday life. We greet one another, smile or frown, depending on our moods. Animals too, communicate, much to our surprise. Just like us, interaction among animals can be both verbal or non-verbal.

Singing is one way in which animals can interact with one another. Male blackbirds often use their melodious songs to catch the attention of the females. These songs are usually rich in notes variation, encoding various kinds of messages. Songs are also used to warn and keep off other blackbirds from their territory, usually a place where they dwell and reproduce.

Large mammals in the oceans sing too, according to adventurous sailors. Enormous whales groan and grunt while smaller dolphins and porpoises produce pings, whistles and clicks. These sounds are surprisingly received by other mates as far as several hundred kilometers away.

Besides singing, body language also forms a large part of animals' communication tactics. Dominant hyenas exhibit their power by raising the fur hackles on their necks and shoulders, while the submissive ones normally "surrender" to the powerful parties by crouching their heads low and curling their lips a little, revealing their teeth in friendly smiles.

Colours, which are most conspicuously found on animals are also important means of interaction among animals. Male birds of paradise, which have the most gaudy colored feathers often hang themselves upside down from branches, among fluffing plumes, displaying proudly their feathers, attracting the opposite sex.

The alternating black and white striped coats of zebras have their roles to play too. Each zebra is born with a unique set of stripes which enables its mates to recognize them. When grazing safely, their stripes are all lined up neatly so that none of them loses track of their friends. However, when danger such as a hungry lion approaches, the zebras would dart out in various directions, making it difficult for the lion to choose his target.

Insects such as the wasps, armed with poisonous bites or stings, normally have brightly painted bodies to remind other predators of their power. Hoverflies and other harmless insects also make use of this fact and colored their bodies brightly in attempts to fool their predators into thinking that they are as dangerous and harmful as the wasps too.

Task 02

Summarize the following passage in not more than 120 words:

With the invention of televisions, many forms of entertainments have been replaced. Lively programs like television serials and world news, have removed from us the need to read books or papers, to listen to radios or even to watch movies. In fact, during the 1970s, when televisions were first introduced, cinema theatres suffered great losses as many people chose to stay in the comforts of their homes to watch their favorite programs.

Indeed, the television brings the world into our house. Hence, by staying at home and pressing some buttons world happenings are immediately presented before us. Children nowadays develop faster in language, owing to the early exposure to television programs. At such tender age, it would be difficult for them to read books or papers. Thus, television programs are a good source of learning for them. Furthermore, pronunciations by the newscasters, actors or actresses are usually standardized, hence young children watching these programs will learn the 'right' pronunciations too. Owning a television is also extremely beneficial to working parents who are usually too busy or tired to take their kids out for entertainments. Surrounded by the comforts of their home, the family can have a chance to get together and watch their favourite television programs.

Of course, we should not be too carried away by the advantages of the television and overlook its negative points. Watching television programs takes away our need to read. Why bother to read the papers when we can hear them from the television news reports? Why read books when exciting movies are screened? The lack of reading is unhealthy especially to younger children as they will grow up only with the ability to speak but not write. I have a neighbour whose six-year-old child can say complete sentences like "I like cats," but when told to write out the sentence, is unable to do so. Not only are the writing skills of children affected, their thinking capacities are also handicapped. Television programs remove the need to think. The stories, ideas and facts are woven in the way television planners wanted. Exposure to such opinions and the lack of thinking opportunities will hinder the children's analyzing ability.

Despite the disadvantages of watching television programs, personally, I think that choosing the 'middle path', which is to do selective television viewing and not over indulging in the habit should be the best solution to reconcile both the merits and demerits of owning a television.