

SECONDA PROVA SCRITTA – SIMULAZIONE
Indirizzo: LICEO LINGUISTICO
Tema di: LINGUA E CULTURA STRANIERA 1: INGLESE
classe 5B Liceo Linguistico - IIS G. Romani

PART 1 – COMPREHENSION AND INTERPRETATION

Read the texts A and B and answer the questions below.

Text A

MIRROR by Sylvia Plath(1961)

I am silver and exact. I have no preconceptions.
Whatever I see I swallow immediately
Just as it is, unmisted by love or dislike.
I am not cruel, only truthful
The eye of a little god, four-cornered.
Most of the time I meditate on the opposite wall.
It is pink, with speckles. I have looked at it so long
I think it is a part of my heart. But it flickers.
Faces and darkness separate us over and over.

Now I am a lake. A woman bends over me.
Searching my reaches for what she really is.
Then she turns to those liars, the candles and the moon.
I see her back, and reflect it faithfully.
She rewards me with tears and an agitation of hands.
I am important to her. She comes and goes.
Each morning it is her face that replaces the darkness.
In me she has drowned a young girl, and in me an old woman
Rises towards her day after day, like a terrible fish.

[172 words]
Sylvia Plath (1932-1963)

*Read the first stanza and say whether each of the following statements is **True (T)**, **False (F)** or **Not Stated (NS)**.*

1. At the beginning of the poem the mirror introduces itself as neutral and objective.

T F NS

2. It is a round mirror.

T F NS

3. The mirror is hanging on a wall.

T F NS

4. The mirror usually reflects the wall opposite it.

T F NS

5. The light in the room is always on.

T F NS

Consider the whole poem and answer the questions below. Use complete sentences and your own words.

6. What word in the first stanza shows that the mirror is not an absolutely detached entity but feels emotions?

7. In the second stanza the mirror imagines itself as a lake and continues to claim it is truthful. What elements mentioned in this stanza, on the contrary, do not tell the truth?

8. What, in the woman's behaviour, reflects her anxiety? What line suggests that the woman might not only be preoccupied with her physical appearance but also wants to explore some deeper part of herself when looking into the mirror?

Text B

You're Not as Smart as You Think: Perils and Benefits of Overconfidence

- It is widely known—or at least widely believed—that people are overconfident in their own abilities. Psychological research has consistently found, in fact, that people have too high a self-assessment when it comes to traits that they see as important or socially desirable. We tend to think we are funnier, better leaders, better at driving and even more attractive than we really are. But what do people think about one of the most desirable and important traits a person can have: intelligence?
- The claim that ‘most people think they are smarter than average’ is a cliché of popular psychology, but the scientific evidence for it is surprisingly thin. Most research in this area has been conducted using small samples of individuals or only with high school or college students. The most recent study that polled a representative sample of American adults on the topic was published way back in 1965.
- Do people today think they are smarter than average? [...] We asked a combined representative sample of 2,821 Americans whether they agreed or disagreed with the simple statement ‘I am more intelligent than the average person.’ [...] We found that 65% agreed that they are more intelligent than average. [...] Not only was our sample of Americans overconfident in their intelligence, they also had little doubt about where they stand in relation to others. [...] Perhaps unsurprisingly, more men exhibited overconfidence (71% said they were smarter than average) than women (only 59% agreed).
- These are not unrealistic self-assessments. People who complete more formal schooling tend to be more intelligent than those who don’t. After all, those who are less intelligent are less likely to get advanced degrees, and receiving more education actually increases people’s intelligence.
- Who did our participants think about when they compared themselves to ‘the average person’? The word ‘average’ has several mathematical definitions. It can refer to the mean (here, the result of adding up everyone’s ‘intelligence’ and dividing by the total number of people), the median (the ‘intelligence’ value right at the middle, where exactly half of people score higher and half score lower) or the mode (the most common value). IQ tests are designed so that the mean, median and mode are essentially the same, so there’s no way that two-thirds of people can be above average.
- But expressing confidence also can bestow benefits, even if that confidence is sometimes undeserved. Confident people are seen as being more competent and higher in social status than humble people. A belief that one is truly capable of managing a huge corporation, saving lives in an emergency room or leading troops in battle could be a vital element of decisive, charismatic leadership.
- The most reliable way to convince other people you are brilliant probably starts with sincerely believing it yourself. Our study shows that many people think they are smarter than they really are, but they may not be stupid to think so.
- [486 words]

Patrick Heck and Christopher Chabris, from *The Wall Street Journal* 2018
<https://www.wsj.com/articles/youre-not-as-smart-as-you-think-perils-and-benefits-of-overconfidence-1532100629>

Read the text and say whether each of the following statements is **True (T)**, **False (F)** or **Not Stated (NS)**. Put a cross in the correct box.

1. There is substantial historical proof that the majority of people think they are cleverer than average.

T ☐ **F** ☐ **NS** ☐

2. The researchers thought it was predictable that men were more confident in their intellectual than women.

T ☐ **F** ☐ **NS** ☐

3. Young people still in education are statistically more intelligent than average.

T ☐ **F** ☐ **NS** ☐

4. The 'mean' value of intelligence is dependent on the people being surveyed.

T ☐ **F** ☐ **NS** ☐

5. The researchers maintain that people are unintelligent if they believe they are cleverer than they actually are.

T ☐ **F** ☐ **NS** ☐

Answer the questions below. Use complete sentences and your own words.

6. What are the advantages of being overconfident?

7. Why is it impossible for 65% of people to be 'above average'?

8. Why do you think men tend to be more overconfident than women?

PART 2 – WRITTEN PRODUCTION

Task A

Sylvia Plath's poem is particularly relevant in the light of the contemporary preoccupation with body image. American author Golda Poretsky has written:

'Don't change your body to get respect from society. Instead let's change society to respect our bodies.'

*Discuss the quotation in a **300**-word essay. Support your ideas by referring to your reading and/or to your personal experience.*

Task B

Are you an overconfident person? What are the advantages and disadvantages? How does this affect your life and experiences in general and at school?

*Write a **200**-word text about this topic.*