



Ministero dell' Istruzione, dell' Università e della Ricerca
PL01 – ESAME DI STATO DI ISTRUZIONE SECONDARIA SUPERIORE

Indirizzo: LI04 - LICEO LINGUISTICO

Tema di: LINGUA STRANIERA - INGLESE

ATTENZIONE

IL CANDIDATO È TENUTO A SVOLGERE LA PROVA
PER UNO DEI TESTI DI SEGUITO PROPOSTI:

- A - ATTUALITÀ
- B - STORICO - SOCIALE
- C - LETTERATURA
- D - ARTISTICO

COPIA CONFORME AGLI ATTI MIUR



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A - ATTUALITÀ

Europe needs many more babies to avert a population disaster

When Spanish business consultant Alejandro Macarrón started crunching the numbers behind Spain's changing demographics, he couldn't believe what he was seeing. "I was astonished," said Macarrón. "We have provinces in Spain where for every baby born, more than two people die. And the ratio is moving closer to one to three."

5 Spain has one of the lowest fertility rates in the EU, with an average of 1.27 children born for every woman of childbearing age, compared to the EU average of 1.55. Its crippling economic crisis has seen a net exodus of people from the country, as hundreds of thousands of Spaniards and migrants leave in the hope of finding jobs abroad. The result is that, since 2012, Spain's population has been shrinking.

10 Record numbers of economic migrants and asylum-seekers are seeking to enter the European Union this summer and are risking their lives in the attempt. The paradox is that as police and security forces battle to keep them at bay, a demographic crisis is unfolding across the continent. Europe desperately needs more young people to run its health services, populate its rural areas and look after its elderly because, increasingly, its societies are no longer self-sustaining.

15 In Portugal, the population has been shrinking since 2010. For many analysts, the question now is how low can it go, with projections by the National Statistics Institute suggesting Portugal's population could drop from 10.5 million to 6.3 million by 2060. According to Prime Minister Pedro Passos Coelho: "We've got really serious problems."

20 In Italy the retired population is soaring, with the proportion of over-65s set to rise from 2.7% last year to 18.8% in 2050. Germany has the lowest birthrate in the world: 8.2 per 1,000 population between 2008 and 2013, according to a recent study by the Hamburg-based world economy institute, the HWWI.

The UK's population reached 64.6 million by mid-2014, a growth of 491,000 over the previous year, according to the Office for National Statistics. On average, Britain's population grew at a faster rate over the last decade than it has done over the last 50 years.

25 Macarrón is astonished at the reluctance of Spanish authorities to address what he calls a direct threat to economic growth as well as pensions, healthcare and social services. He and a few friends took it upon themselves to begin tackling the issue, starting the non-profit group Demographic Renaissance in 2013, with the aim of raising awareness of the crisis.

30 "Most people think we're only talking about something that will be a problem in 50 years, but we're already seeing part of the problem," he said. "If current numbers hold, every new generation of Spaniards will be 40% smaller than the previous one."



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A - ATTUALITÀ

A political knock-on effect is the overwhelming political power of the grey vote. Macarrón points to the crippling austerity measure put in place during the economic crisis: “During the same time frame, expenditures on pensions rose by more than 40%. We’re moving closer to being a gerontocratic society – it’s a government of the old.”

35 The region of Galicia is one of the few in Spain that has addressed the issue. The population of this north-western region has been shrinking, leaving it home to nearly half [of] Spain’s abandoned villages. More than 1,500 settlements – once home to schools, businesses and filled with children – now sit abandoned, overgrown with weeds and bushes.

40 In 2012, the regional government launched a multi-pronged initiative to address the falling fertility rate, with plans to roll out measures such as home and transport subsidies for families and radio advertisements urging women to have more children. But it is still estimated that Galicia’s population could shrink by 1 million residents in the next 40 years, a loss of just under one third of the region’s population.

45 For southern Europe, migration within the EU has become a grave problem. Hundreds of thousands of Portuguese have left, hoping to find better opportunities abroad. Coelho has said the next 10 to 15 years would be decisive in reversing the trend. If no action is taken, he said last year, “these issues will only be solved by a miracle.” [...]

[702 words]

Abridged from:
The Guardian, 23 August 2015
 Available online:
<http://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/aug/23/baby-crisis-europe-brink-depopulation-disaster>
 Accessed on 1 February 2016.

COMPREHENSION AND INTERPRETATION

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

1. Why was Alejandro Macarrón surprised when working on the numbers of Spanish demographics?
2. What are two facts of Spain’s current demographic situation?
3. What paradox does the article highlight?
4. What do European societies need in order to become more self-sustaining?
5. What have Macarrón and some of his friends started? Why?
6. What prospect does every new generation of Spaniards face, if things do not change?



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A - ATTUALITÀ

7. What is the “grey vote” and why is it so powerful?
8. What do many villages in Galicia now look like?
9. How has the region of Galicia tried to tackle the demographic issue?
10. According to Portuguese Prime Minister Coelho, how long do southern European countries have to react to the critical demographic situation if it is to be changed?

PRODUCTION

Choose **one** of the following questions.

Number your answer clearly to show which question you have attempted.

Either

1. A 2015 Eurostat report titled *Being young in Europe today – demographic trends* tells us that the “median age of the EU-28 population was 41.9 years in 2013” and it “rose at a relatively rapid and consistent pace from 35.2 years in 1990.”
How do you think this fact, along with the issues illustrated in the article above, can affect you as a young European? Write an essay of approximately 300 words.

Or

2. Do you find it easy or difficult to relate to people who are much older than you, and why is that? Write a composition of about 300 words on your thoughts and experiences. Try to show self-awareness in your reflections.

Durata massima della prova: 6 ore.

È consentito soltanto l'uso dei dizionari monolingue e bilingue.

Non è consentito lasciare l'Istituto prima che siano trascorse 3 ore dalla dettatura del tema.



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B – STORICO - SOCIALE

The problem of systematically rejecting the past arises only when innovation is recognized both as inescapable and as socially desirable: when it represents “progress”. This raises two distinct questions, how innovation as such is recognized and legitimized, and how the situation arising from it is to be specified (that is how a model of society is to be formulated when the past can no longer provide it). The former is more easily answered.

We know very little about the process which has turned the words “new” and “revolutionary” (as used in the language of advertising) into synonyms for “better” and “more desirable”, and research is badly needed here. However, it would seem that novelty or even constant innovation is more readily accepted as far as it concerns the human control over non-human nature, for example science and technology, since so much of it is obviously advantageous even to the most tradition-bound. Has there ever been a serious example of Luddism directed against bicycles or transistor radios? On the other hand, while certain socio-political innovations may appear attractive to some groups of human beings, at least prospectively, the social and human implications of innovation (including technical innovation) tend to meet with greater resistance, for equally obvious reasons. Rapid and constant change in material technology may be hailed by the very people who are profoundly upset by the experience of rapid change in human (for example sexual and family) relations, and who might actually find it hard to conceive of constant change in such relations. Where even palpably “useful” material innovation is rejected, it is generally, perhaps always, because of the fear of the social innovation, that is disruption, it entails.

Innovation which is so obviously useful and socially neutral that it is accepted almost automatically, at all events by people to whom technological change is familiar, raises virtually no problem of legitimation. One would guess (but has the subject actually been investigated?) that even so traditionalist an activity as popular institutional religion has found little difficulty in accepting it. We know of violent resistance to any change in the ancient holy texts, but there appears to have been no equivalent resistance to, say, the cheapening of holy images and icons by means of modern technological processes, such as prints and oleographs. On the other hand certain innovations require legitimation, and in periods when the past ceases to provide any precedent for them, this raises very grave difficulties. A single dose of innovation, however great, is not so troublesome. It can be presented as the victory of some permanent positive principle over its opposite, or as a process of “correction” or “rectification”, reason prevailing over unreason, knowledge over ignorance, “nature” over the “unnatural”, good over evil. But the basic experience of the past two centuries has been constant and continued change, which cannot be so dealt with except sometimes, at the cost of considerable casuistry, as the constantly necessary application of permanent principles to circumstances ever changing in ways which remain rather mysterious, or by exaggerating the strength of the surviving forces of evil.

Paradoxically, the past remains the most useful analytical tool for coping with constant change, but in a novel form. It turns into the discovery of history as a process of directional change, of development or evolution. Change thus becomes its own legitimation, but it is thereby anchored to a transformed “sense



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B – STORICO - SOCIALE

of the past”. Bagehot’s *Physics and Politics* (1872) is a good nineteenth-century example of this; current concepts of “modernization” illustrate more simple-minded versions of the same approach. In brief, what legitimates the present and explains it is not now the past as a set of reference points (for example Magna Carta), or even as duration (for example the age of parliamentary institutions) but the past as a process of becoming the present. Faced with the overriding reality of change, even conservative thought becomes historicist. Perhaps, because hindsight is the most persuasive form of the historian’s wisdom, it suits them better than most.

But what of these who also require foresight to specify a future which is unlike anything in the past? [...]

Some sort of historicism, that is the more or less sophisticated and complex extrapolation of past tendencies into the future, has been the most convenient and popular method of prediction. At all events the shape of the future is discerned by searching the process of past development for clues, so that paradoxically, the more we expect innovation, the more history becomes essential to discover what it will be like.

[754 words]

Eric Hobsbawm, *On History*, Orion Books, 2010 (first ed. Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1997).

<https://books.google.it/books?id=WVuIyMVegT8C&printsec=copyright&hl=it#v=onepage&q&f=false>

COMPREHENSION AND INTERPRETATION

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

1. When is the past systematically rejected?
2. What research is necessary according to the author?
3. When is innovation easily accepted?
4. Why does social and human change meet with greater resistance?
5. What idea does the example of prints and oleographs support?
6. Why does a single dose of innovation cause no problem?
7. What is the paradox about the past?
8. How is history interpreted?
9. How is the present legitimized and explained?
10. What does the author mean by historicism?



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B – STORICO - SOCIALE

PRODUCTION

Choose **one** of the following questions.

Number your answer clearly to show which question you have attempted.

Either

1. “To be a member of any human community is to situate oneself with regards to one’s (its) past, if only by rejecting it. The past is therefore a permanent dimension of the human consciousness, an inevitable component of the institutions, values and other patterns of human society. The problem for historians is to analyse the nature of this “sense of the past” in society and to trace its changes and transformations.” (Eric Hobsbawm, *On History*)

Discuss the quotation by linking and supporting your ideas with your readings or by recalling your studies in history. Write a 300-word essay.

Or

2. Focus on the concepts of “innovation”, “novelty” and “progress” and express your views by linking and supporting them with examples which refer to your readings and your personal experience. Write a 300-word composition.

Durata massima della prova: 6 ore.

È consentito soltanto l’uso dei dizionari monolingue e bilingue.

Non è consentito lasciare l’Istituto prima che siano trascorse 3 ore dalla dettatura del tema.



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C – LETTERATURA

When it came to concealing his troubles, Tommy Wilhelm was not less capable than the next fellow. So at least he thought, and there was a certain amount of evidence to back him up. He had once been an actor – no, not quite, an extra – and he knew what acting should be. Also, he was smoking a cigar, and when a man is smoking a cigar, wearing a hat, he has an advantage; it is harder to find out how he feels. He came from the twenty-third floor down to the lobby on the mezzanine to collect his mail before breakfast, and he believed – he hoped – that he looked passably well: doing all right. It was a matter of sheer hope, because there was not much that he could add to his present effort. On the fourteenth floor he looked for his father to enter the elevator; they often met at this hour, on the way to breakfast. If he worried about his appearance it was mainly for his old father's sake. But there was no stop on the fourteenth, and the elevator sank and sank. Then the smooth door opened and the great dark-red uneven carpet that covered the lobby billowed toward Wilhelm's feet. In the foreground the lobby was dark, sleepy. French drapes like sails kept out the sun, but three high, narrow windows were open, and in the blue air Wilhelm saw a pigeon about to light on the great chain that supported the marquee of the movie house directly underneath the lobby. For one moment he heard the wings beating strongly.

Most of the guests at the Hotel Gloriana were past the age of retirement. Along Broadway in the Seventies, Eighties, and Nineties, a great part of New York's vast population of old men and women lives. Unless the weather is too cold or wet they fill the benches about the tiny railed parks and along the subway gratings from Verdi Square to Columbia University, they crowd the shops and cafeterias, the dime stores, the tearooms, the bakeries, the beauty parlors, the reading rooms and club rooms. Among these old people at the Gloriana, Wilhelm felt out of place. He was comparatively young, in his middle forties, large and blond, with big shoulders; his back was heavy and strong, if already a little stooped or thickened. After breakfast the old guests sat down on the green leather armchairs and sofas in the lobby and began to gossip and look into the papers; they had nothing to do but wait out the day. But Wilhelm was used to an active life and liked to go out energetically in the morning. And for several months, because he had no position, he had kept up his morale by rising early; he was shaved and in the lobby by eight o'clock. He bought the paper and some cigars and drank a Coca-Cola or two before he went in to breakfast with his father. After breakfast – out, out, out to attend to business. The getting out had in itself become the chief business. But he had realized that he could not keep this up much longer, and today he was afraid. He was aware that his routine was about to break up and he sensed that a huge trouble long presaged but till now formless was due. Before evening, he'd know. Nevertheless he followed his daily course and crossed the lobby.

Rubin, the man at the newsstand, had poor eyes. They may not have been actually weak but they were poor in expression, with lacy lids that furled down at the corners. He dressed well. It didn't seem necessary – he was behind the counter most of the time – but he dressed very well. He had on a rich brown suit; the cuffs embarrassed the hairs on his small hands. He wore a Countess Mara painted necktie. As Wilhelm approached, Rubin did not see him; he was looking out dreamily at the Hotel



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C – LETTERATURA

40 Ansonia, which was visible from his corner, several blocks away. The Ansonia, the neighborhood's great landmark, was built by Stanford White. It looks like a baroque palace from Prague or Munich enlarged a hundred times, with towers, domes, huge swells and bubbles of metal gone green from exposure, iron fretwork and festoons. Black television antennae are densely planted on its round summits. Under the changes of weather it may look like marble or like sea water, black as slate in the fog, white as tufa in sunlight. This morning it looked like the image of itself reflected in deep water, white and cumulous above, with cavernous distortions underneath. Together, the two men gazed at it.

[776 words]

Saul Bellow, *Seize the Day*, [first ed. the Viking Press, New York, 1956] Kindle edition 2013.

COMPREHENSION AND INTERPRETATION

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

1. Who is Tommy Wilhelm?
2. Where does he live?
3. What seems to be making Tommy nervous when he comes down from his room?
4. What does he see when he gets out of the lift?
5. Who are the guests at the Hotel Gloriana?
6. Why does Wilhelm feel out of place there?
7. What do the hotel guests do after breakfast?
8. What has Wilhelm done in the last months?
9. What does Rubin look like?
10. Why do Rubin and Wilhelm gaze at the Hotel Ansonia?



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C – LETTERATURA

PRODUCTION

Choose **one** of the following questions.

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Either

1. Alienation or sense of separation is one of the dominating themes in Bellow's novel *Seize the Day*. Saul Bellow is primarily concerned with the well-worn modern dilemma of the individual: desperately isolated and profoundly alone in a society whose only God is money. Discuss the topic in a 300-word essay by referring to other literary and/or philosophical texts you have read and to your experience.

Or

2. That day Wilhelm "was aware that his routine was about to break up and he sensed that a huge trouble long presaged but till now formless was due." Have you ever started a day with the feeling that something bad was going to happen? How did the day progress? What did you do? Write a 300-word composition on your experience.

Durata massima della prova: 6 ore.

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D – ARTISTICO

Aesthetic behaviour is the pursuit of beauty. This is easy to say but difficult to explain, because beauty is such an elusive quality, especially when viewed biologically. It bears no obvious relationship to any of the basic survival patterns of the human animal, such as feeding, mating, sleeping or parental care. And yet it cannot be ignored, because any objective survey of the way people spend their time must include many hours of beauty-reaction. There is no other way to describe the response of men and women who can be found standing silently in front of paintings in an art gallery, or sitting quietly listening to music, or watching dancing, or viewing sculpture, or gazing at flowers, or wandering through landscapes, or savouring wines. In each of these cases the human sense-organs are passing impressions to the brain, the receipt of which appears to be the only goal involved. The advanced wine-taster even goes so far as to spit out the wine after tasting it, as if to underline that it is his need for beauty that is being quenched and not his thirst.

It is true to say that virtually every human creature expresses itself aesthetically in some way or other, so the need to experience the beauty-reaction has a global importance. It is also true to say that there are no absolutes involved. Nothing is considered to be beautiful by all peoples everywhere. Every revered object of beauty is considered ugly by someone, somewhere. This fact makes nonsense of a great deal of aesthetic theory, and many find it hard to accept. There is so often the feeling that this, or that, particular form of beauty really does have some intrinsic value, some universal validity that simply must be appreciated by everyone. But the hard truth is that beauty is in the brain of the beholder and nowhere else. [...]

Turning to the question of invented aesthetics, we move into the area usually designated as *Art*. Art can best be defined as man-made beauty, and it appears in two main forms: the Performing Arts and the Plastic Arts. The Performing Arts provide an aesthetic event; the Plastic Arts provide an aesthetic object. In both cases, the sense of beauty comes primarily from our subtle comparisons and classifications of set themes, as it did with natural objects. The difference, of course, is that with natural beauty the theme is merely isolated from the world around us. We do not invent it, we only isolate it. In the case of the arts, however, we create it ourselves.

This gives rise to a new problem: how to arrive at a theme, so that its variations can then be enjoyed. If, for example, we were going to enjoy the beauty of wild animals or wild flowers, there would be no creativity involved. They existed already, and evolution had done the creative work for us. But if we now decide to compose music or paint pictures we have to impose our own evolutionary forces on the works we invent.

For the painter staring at a blank canvas or the composer sitting in front of a silent piano, there is total responsibility. He starts from nothing, or, rather, from everything. His initial choice at the beginning of a work of art is theoretically completely open. *Any* shape can be drawn. *Any* note can be played. This is the special, additional challenge for the artist, as opposed to the individual reacting to natural beauty. How does he meet it?



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D – ARTISTICO

The answer is that he quickly imposes on himself a highly restricted form. In a word, he formalizes. Any form will do, just so long as it contains the potential for a complex set of variations. He may copy the form from nature – a tree, for instance – or he may steal a scale of notes from bird-song. Or he may paint a geometric pattern from some geological structure as his starting point. Once he has begun to experiment with forms he has wrested from nature, he can then rapidly shift his themes further and further away from the natural starting point until the themes he employs are relatively abstract. With music this process took place long, long ago. The visual arts are, by contrast, only recently beginning to explore the more abstract possibilities of painting and sculpture.

Either way, whether staying close to imitated natural objects, or creating entirely novel abstracted compositions, the artist's work is judged, finally, not on any absolute values, but on the basis of how ingeniously he manages to ring the changes on the themes he has employed. [...]

[765 words]

From: Desmond Morris, *Manwatching. A Field Guide to Human Behaviour*.
St. Albans, Triad Panther, 1977, pgs. 278 & 283.

COMPREHENSION AND INTERPRETATION

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

1. Why does Desmond Morris believe that it is difficult to explain the association between “aesthetic behaviour” and the “pursuit of beauty”?
2. What sort of perspective is he approaching his discussion of beauty and aesthetic behaviour from?
3. What are some of the types of “beauty-reaction” that he lists? Mention at least three.
4. Why does Morris say that “no absolutes” can be involved in considering aesthetic beauty?
5. In what way are aesthetics “invented” when it comes to Art?
6. What main forms can these “invented aesthetics” take, as explained in the passage?
7. According to the author, how is natural beauty different from artistic beauty?
8. What dilemma is the artist faced with?
9. Where in the text can you see that Morris refers to an imitative concept of art? Give at least two examples.
10. How does Morris explain abstraction in art?



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PRODUCTION

Choose **one** of the following questions.

Number your answer clearly to show which question you have attempted.

Either

1. Focus on any modern or contemporary artists you have studied or art shows you have been to. In an essay of approximately 300 words, discuss whether you agree or disagree with the statement made by Desmond Morris at the end of the passage, on the judgment of an artist's work.

Or

2. Write a composition of about 300 words on your own personal "aesthetic behaviour".

Durata massima della prova: 6 ore.

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