

EXAMEN DE FIN D'ÉTUDES SECONDAIRES GÉNÉRALES
Sessions 2023 – QUESTIONNAIRE ÉCRIT

Date :	15.09.23	Durée :	13:30 - 16:30	Numéro candidat :	
Discipline :	Anglais	Section(s) :	GED / GSH / GSI		

PART I: READING (20 marks)

Copy only the numbers / letters / words asked for onto your answer sheets. Do not copy questions!

TEXT 1: The radical power of hanging out

Some of my fondest memories of friends should, by rights, be entirely forgettable. There was that time we took our books to the park and dozed. The time we sat by the sea drinking coffee, watching the waves. The time we assembled my flatpack furniture, ordered a pizza and watched TV.

Fifteen years ago, these open-ended hangs were effortless and my social life flowed with only the lightest steer. Fast-forward to now, and often the best I can manage is a quick drink after work. No one, myself included, is ever free to just hang out.

The author and academic Sheila Liming wants us to find the time – or, more precisely, to reclaim it. Her new book, *Hanging Out: The Radical Power of Killing Time* is partly a tribute to the pleasures of idling with others and partly a manifesto to “take back our social lives from the deadening whirl of contemporary life”. There is a desire, she says, “for more casual interactions that don’t have a lot of ‘objectives’ associated with them, where there is nothing in particular you’re trying to get out of it”.

Liming proposes a return to hanging out, defining it as: “any time that you find yourself killing time in the presence of others ... It can be something really informal, like sitting on your friend’s sofa and having a cup of tea.”

Rather than a particular activity, it is an approach to socialising. For her, the gold standard was modelled by a colleague who invited Liming and her partner over for lunch. When they called to say that they were 20 minutes away, their host responded with enthusiasm, saying he would get started with the food. Then he asked: who was calling, sorry? Liming’s friend was willing to make lunch for anyone with his phone number.

This was several years ago, she adds. “A lot has changed.” These days it may feel like we don’t have time for lunch at all, let alone to prepare it for friends who drop by. What free time people do have is mostly spent watching television – perhaps because we find ourselves too exhausted to do anything else.

The pandemic hasn’t helped. “It’s like those muscles that I had previously strengthened through social interactions were flabby,” Liming says. Indeed, many people report that their circles have shrunk since Covid-19 – a YouGov survey last year found that 40% of Britons aged 16 and over had lost contact with some of their friends.

Yet amid this reported epidemic of loneliness, there is increased understanding that relationships are essential to our mental and physical wellbeing. It is also about letting go of expectation. Hanging out doesn’t always have to mean “a perfect party scenario or gathering; it can be just OK”.

When schedules do not allow for sprawling socializing or even face-to-face, then “hanging out on the internet is just what we have to do”, says Liming. Certainly, in my experience, some digital interactions can be more rewarding than others – a few of my group chats on WhatsApp are nearly as free-flowing a source of entertainment and support as being together in person. This fits Liming’s thesis that hanging out is mostly a mindset, emphasising presence over merely being present.

That can extend to interacting with those whom we often see but don’t count as friends: the staff at our favourite cafe or the familiar faces at the gym. A recent large-scale study found that having a diverse “social portfolio” was predictive of happiness and higher wellbeing.

There are certainly risks to striking up conversations with strangers. But: “What’s the worst thing that’s going to happen?”

(604 words; adapted from *theguardian.com*; Elle Hunt; 19th January 2023)

Decide if the following statements are true (T) or false (F) according to the article. If the information is not given in the text, the statement is considered false. (7 marks, - 1.5)

1. Some memories we share with friends should be rightfully forgotten.
2. Normal everyday activities, without a real purpose, can be considered “hanging out”.
3. Liming’s friend, who invited her and her partner over for lunch, was sorry she had not reminded him earlier of their meeting.
4. Most people nowadays have limited free time, and feel too tired to spend it any other way than watching TV.
5. Many people are not physically fit after the pandemic, as their muscles have decreased.
6. Liming thinks that meetings in real life are more valuable than online socializing.
7. Having a larger circle of social interactions, not only close friends, is beneficial to our mental well-being.

TEXT 2: Ignore the purists – listening to a book instead of reading it isn't cheating

Insomniacs do it in the middle of the night. Dog owners do it while trudging round the park. Some people do it in the gym. But lately I've taken to doing it alone in the car, on long journeys through the dark when I need distraction from everything circling round my head.

__1__ The growth of audiobooks, podcasts and even voice notes – those quick self-recorded clips that are taking over from typed messages on WhatsApp – reflects a steady generational shift away from eyes to ears as the way we take in the world, and perhaps also in how we understand it.

__2__ This is perhaps because bedtime stories used to be strictly for children and oral storytelling is associated with more primitive cultures in the days before the printing press. But is that fair? If the effort involved in sitting down and decoding written words with your actual eyes were to gradually fade away in years to come – what exactly would we have lost?

Reading is still very far from dead. Lockdown rekindled the love of curling up with a good novel. __3__ When the world seems to be falling apart it's comforting to let someone else tell you a story, even if it is a faintly apocalyptic one, given the dominance of news and politics at the top of the Apple podcast charts.

The idea prevails that listening is flighty or unserious. __4__ Going to the theatre isn't considered intellectually inferior to reading the play at home either.

There's an intimacy too to listening. To hear a book read by its author is sometimes to understand, by the inflections of their voice, a meaning you wouldn't otherwise have picked up. __5__ They are also harder to misunderstand than text messages, as people can hear when you're being ironic, lessening the risk of accidentally causing offence.

__6__ You can recommend a podcast to a friend but you can't leave it on the train seat for the next person when you get off, as I've done all my life with finished newspapers.

All of which makes me think reading will never yield to listening completely. But if it turns out I'm wrong – well, you didn't hear it from me.

(368 words; adapted from *theguardian.com*; Gaby Hinsliff; 29th December 2022)

Read the article carefully, and then complete the text with the missing sentences. There is one sentence more than you need. (6 marks, - 1.5)

- A. What troubles me most about listening, I suppose, is that it's harder to share.
- B. Reading instinctively feels superior.
- C. Voice notes suit the anxious young in much the same way because they're less intrusive than a phone call.
- D. The view that listening is cheating continues even though nobody thinks it's lazy for a student to sit through lectures.
- E. Of course, I mean listening; and more specifically, listening to things you might once have read instead.
- F. But the audiobook market also notched up and podcasting is growing faster than any other media.
- G. Reading, be it digitally or on paper, seems to have lost its appeal after the pandemic.

TEXT 3: I'm done saying sorry for being deaf – I want to change how society treats people like me

“Sorry, I’m deaf,” I say. I gesture to the apparatus in my ear – the universal sign for my hearing aids not working quite as well as they should, hoping the mildly annoyed waiter in front of me repeats his question with a little less frustration. I’m in a burrito bar trying to order dinner, but this kind of exchange can occur in any customer service scenario. Stressed staff want to get the orders in, and customers behind me are hungry. Hearing people perhaps don’t notice how frenzied daily communication is in our fast-moving society. But it has a significant impact on deaf people like me.

Too often I find myself apologising for the communication breakdown. I say sorry in the hope that my good manners will eliminate the exasperation of the hearing person in front of me. It usually does, and we’re soon fumbling for another way to communicate, but isn’t it troubling that the oh-so British institution of politeness extends to deaf people apologising for the very inaccessibility that discriminates against them?

I didn’t always think this way. When I was first coming to terms with having to wear hearing aids as a teenager, challenging systemic discrimination would have felt insurmountable. Self-conscious, I avoided questions. A quick “sorry” to move things on was so much easier. It never got any less awkward to utter, only compounding the shame I already felt around my deafness. But connecting with other young deaf people through the *National Deaf Children’s Society* helped my identity to blossom – and my confidence with it.

It opened my eyes to the myriad ways in which deaf people are shut out of the conversation. It helped me see that my limited *British Sign Language (BSL)* skills were still an achievement – I was at least doing something to break down the communication barrier, which is more than can be said for most hearing people. My new deaf friends encouraged me to stop apologising for being inclusive, and even more, made me realise I had to stop saying sorry for being myself.

Part of learning how to stop apologising came through a greater understanding of the social model. That it isn’t my own condition(s) as a deaf and disabled person that disables me, but rather the world we live in. In the burrito bar, for example, the masked staff members and loud music made my deafness disabling.

I hope that in the long term I’ll be able to shed the embarrassment I carry as a result of apologizing. But ultimately, more work has to be done by hearing and non-disabled people to remove these barriers so I don’t *have* to feel bad about asking for something to be repeated.

(450 words; adapted from *theguardian.com*, Liam O'Dell, 25th November 2022)

Read the text and identify the expressions that match the following definitions. Give one word only unless indicated otherwise. (7 marks, - 1.5)

1. (two-word noun) an electronic device that makes sounds louder, usually worn in or behind the ear of a person who cannot hear well
2. (adjective) uncontrolled and chaotic
3. (adjective) causing feelings of worry or anxiety
4. (expression) to accept something unpleasant by learning to deal with it
5. (phrasal verb) not to include a person in an activity; to exclude
6. (noun) a feeling of shame or awkwardness
7. (adverb) finally, in the end

PART II: SHORT STORIES (20 marks)

Answer the TWO questions on the short stories with close reference to the texts studied in class.

1. The Third and Final Continent - Jhumpa Lahiri (10 marks)

Describe the narrator's life when he first comes to live in America. In what way is it different to his life in England?

2. The Doll's House - Katherine Mansfield (10 marks)

What does the doll's house signify for the children of both families? Explain.

PART III: ESSAY (20 marks)

Write a well-structured essay of 250-300 words on one of the following topics. Clearly indicate which topic you have chosen. Please indicate the number of words used.

1. It is impossible to keep a healthy work-life balance in modern society. Discuss.

OR

2. School stifles creativity and individuality. Discuss.