

**МИНИСТЕРСТВО НА ОБРАЗОВАНИЕТО И НАУКАТА**

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**ДЪРЖАВЕН ЗРЕЛОСТЕН ИЗПИТ ПО**

**АНГЛИЙСКИ ЕЗИК – 23 май 2023 г.**

**ПРОФИЛИРАНА ПОДГОТОВКА**

**НИВО В2**

**ВАРИАНТ 2**

**ЧАСТ 1 (Време за работа: 60 минути)**

Write your answers on the separate answer sheet.

***LISTENING COMPREHENSION***

***Task One***

*You will hear a text twice. Before you listen to it for the first time, you have 30 seconds to read the tasks to the text. While listening for the first time you are NOT allowed to mark your chosen answers. After you listen to it for the first time, you have 1 minute to mark your chosen answers on your answer sheet. While listening to the text for a second time, you can mark your chosen answers. After you listen to the text for the second time, you have 1 more minute to check or correct your answers.*

**1. The Kukeri tradition appears to date back to Thracian times.**

A) True                      B) False

**2. The Kukeri tradition is a blend of pagan and Christian culture.**

A) True                      B) False

**3. The Kukeri rituals in Razlog are performed by men only.**

A) True                      B) False

**4. The local Kukeri wear unique sheepskin costumes and masks.**

A) True                      B) False

**5. The Kukery festival in Razlog has been held without any alterations over the years.**

A) True                      B) False



**12. In his essay *A Vindication of Natural Diet*, Shelley claims that ...**

- A) eating meat endangers man's health.
- B) people should not be afraid of old age.
- C) fattening animals will save poor children from starvation.
- D) people should stop eating the produce of farm fields.

**13. While studying at Oxford, Shelley ...**

- A) kept regular meal times.
- B) had peculiar eating habits.
- C) lived only on several pounds of bread per day.
- D) would often forget to eat bread at all.

**14. When Shelley and Harriet entertained guests at their place they would often serve ...**

- A) no vegetarian food.
- B) no fresh bread.
- C) no cooked dish.
- D) only drinks.

**15. George Bernard Shaw suggested renaming vegetarianism "Shelleyism" because Shelley ...**

- A) was very strict in his vegetarian ways.
- B) had a holistic approach to vegetarianism.
- C) had attracted quite a number of followers.
- D) was his dear friend and he wanted him to be remembered.

#### ***Task 4***

*You will hear a text twice. Before you listen to it for the first time, you have 4 minutes and 30 seconds to read the tasks to the text. While listening for the first time you are NOT allowed to mark your chosen answers. After you listen to it for the first time, you have 4 minutes to mark your chosen answers on your answer sheet. While listening to the text for a second time, you can mark your chosen answers. After you listen to the text for the second time, you have 1 more minute to check or correct your answers.*

**16. Lucy Worsley decided to write a book about Agatha Christie because ...**

- A) she was absolutely fascinated by her personal life.
- B) she wanted to provide some insights into the British working class.
- C) there were no other biography books about her.
- D) she wanted to look at her life from a historian's perspective.

**17. Agatha Christie came from ...**

- A) a very humble family.
- B) a typically English family.
- C) a noble Victorian family.
- D) a wealthy middle-class family.

**18. In her childhood, Agatha Christie ...**

- A) often invited her friends to play in her garden.
- B) used to write stories about her imaginary friends.
- C) used her imagination to invent her playmates.
- D) lived in a little house in the south of England.

**19. What is NOT true about Agatha Christie's parents?**

- A) They were ardent supporters of the 'New Woman' concept.
- B) They made their elder daughter, Madge, leave school and marry.
- C) They expected Agatha Christie to find a suitable wealthy husband.
- D) They wanted Agatha Christie to follow in the footsteps of her sister.

**20. According to her biographer Lucy Worsley, Agatha Christie's disappearance in 1926 ...**

- A) was inaccurately interpreted in newspapers and books.
- B) was the greatest mystery in the entire novelist's life.
- C) was planned by the writer herself to attract publicity.
- D) was organised by her husband who wanted a divorce.

**Task Five**

*You will hear a text twice. Before you listen to it for the first time, you have 4 minutes and 30 seconds to read the tasks to the text. While listening for the first time you are NOT allowed to mark your chosen answers. After you listen to it for the first time, you have 4 minutes to mark your chosen answers on your answer sheet. While listening to the text for a second time, you can mark your chosen answers. After you listen to the text for the second time, you have 1 more minute to check or correct your answers.*

**21. The Curse of the Ninth supposedly poses a threat to ...**

- A) some symphonies.
- B) composers' popularity.
- C) composers' lives.
- D) the symphony genre.

**22. The Curse of the Ninth ...**

- A) doomed all Romantic symphony composers.
- B) was a conspiracy devised by Romantic musicians.
- C) was started by Gustav Mahler.
- D) was founded on some real events.

**23. Gustav Mahler skipped nine when numbering his symphonies in order to ...**

- A) prove the *Curse of the Ninth* correct.
- B) trick Fate and avoid the *Curse of the Ninth*.
- C) debunk the *Curse of the Ninth* myth.
- D) show Beethoven and Bruckner were not victims of the 'curse'.

**24. Schubert and Dvořák ...**

- A) never wrote as many as nine symphonies.
- B) skipped *nine* when numbering their symphonies.
- C) didn't know Mahler's *Symphony No. 9*.
- D) had no *Symphony No. 9* in Mahler's time.

**25. According to the text, among all mentioned composers ...**

- A) Haydn was the most prolific one in the symphony genre.
- B) Gustav Mahler was the most religious one.
- C) Shostakovich was the most classical one.
- D) Mozart was the most virtuoso one.

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**ДЪРЖАВЕН ЗРЕЛОСТЕН ИЗПИТ ПО**

**АНГЛИЙСКИ ЕЗИК – 23 май 2023 г.**

**ПРОФИЛИРАНА ПОДГОТОВКА**

**НИВО В2**

**ВАРИАНТ 2**

**ЧАСТ 2 (Време за работа: 180 минути)**

Write your answers **on the separate answer sheet.**

***READING COMPREHENSION***

***Task One***

***Read the text below. Then read the questions that follow it and choose the best answer to each question, marking your answers on your answer sheet.***

One afternoon a telegram came from Sebastian.

My father was out and returned to find me in a state of feverish anxiety.

“Father, I’ve got to leave. A great friend of mine has had a terrible accident. I must go to him at once. There’s a train in half an hour.”

I showed him the telegram, which read simply: GRAVELY INJURED. COME AT ONCE. SEBASTIAN.

“Well,” said my father. “I’m sorry you are upset. Reading this message I should not say that the accident was as serious as you seem to think – otherwise it would hardly be signed by the victim himself. Well, I shall miss you, my dear boy, but do not hurry back on my account.”

On that August Sunday the train was nearly empty. I put my suitcase in a third-class carriage. The cornfields sped past and the throb of the wheels re-echoed in my ears, “You’ve come too late. You’ve come too late. He’s dead. He’s dead.”

In twilight the train reached my destination.

I recognized Sebastian’s sister, Julia, sitting at the wheel of an open car.

“Mr. Ryder, jump in.” Her voice was Sebastian’s and so was her way of speaking.

“How is Sebastian?”

“Oh, he’s fine. Sebastian and I are alone, so I thought I’d wait for you.”

“What’s happened to him?”

“He’s cracked an ankle bone so small that it hasn’t a name. But they X-rayed it yesterday and told him to keep it up for a month. It’s a great bore to him ... He tried to make me stay with him. Well, I

expect you know how maddeningly pathetic he can be. So I said: ‘Surely there must be *someone* you can get hold of,’ and he said everybody was away or busy. At last he agreed to try you. It’s very noble of you to come all this way at a moment’s notice.”

“How did he do it?”

“Playing croquet. He lost his temper and tripped in the playground. *Not* an honourable scar.”

We turned the corner of the drive; the doors of the house were open. Julia led me up the steps and into the hall. At that moment he appeared between the pillars at the further end in a wheel-chair. He was in pyjamas with one foot heavily bandaged.

“I thought you were dying,” I said, with vexation, rather than relief, for having been deceived of my expectations of a grand tragedy.

“I thought I was, too. The pain was agonizing.”

**26. The narrator was horrified because he received a telegram saying that a friend of his was dying.**

A) True                      B) False

**27. Mr. Ryder’s father shared completely his son’s anxiety.**

A) True                      B) False

**28. On the train, the narrator was overwhelmed by a sense of guilt for being late.**

A) True                      B) False

**29. Julia hardly showed much compassion for her brother’s misery.**

A) True                      B) False

**30. According to his sister, after the injury Sebastian felt awfully bored and full of self-pity.**

A) True                      B) False

### ***Task Two***

***Read the text below. Then read the questions that follow it and choose the best answer to each question, marking your answers on your answer sheet.***

“Couldn’t resist the old call of the river, eh?” said a familiar voice. Just ahead, the guide split off from the tour group and stepped toward me, wearing oversize, knee-high galoshes and blue cleaning gloves.

“I guess not.” Truth be told, I still didn’t even know what we were doing in the riverbed, but that was part of the appeal of it. I couldn’t help but grin at him. “Do I need some of those?”

I nodded at his boots.

He shook his head. “Your sneakers will be fine, but take a pair of these.” From a backpack, he withdrew a pair of used, mud-stained rubber gloves, not unlike his own. “Wouldn’t want to cut yourself. Come on, we’re down here.” He started off, then turned back to me. “Oh, I’m Alfred, by the way. But they all call me ‘Bachelor Alf’. Funny, too, seeing as how I’ve been married going on forty years. Nah, the old nickname’s on account of the fact that I’ve found so many of them bent-up rings.”

Seeing the confused look on my face as I tugged on my gloves, he went on. “Hundreds of years ago, men would bend metal rings to display their strength before asking a lady for her hand. But if the lady didn’t want to marry the man, you see, she threw the ring off the bridge and told him off. I’ve found hundreds of the rings. Seems plenty of gentlemen walked away from this river as bachelors, if you gather what I’m saying. Strange tradition anyhow.”

I looked down at my hands. My own ring was now hidden beneath a filthy rubber glove. Tradition hadn’t done much good for me, either. A few weeks ago, before my life came to a shuddering halt, I bought James a vintage box for his new business cards. The box was made of tin, the traditional gift on a tenth anniversary, meant to signify durability in a marriage. I’d had it engraved with James’s initials, and it arrived in the mail the evening before our planned trip to London – right on time.

But not much else had gone right since then.

**31. From the start of their conversation it can be inferred that the narrator and the guide ...**

- A) had already met.
- B) knew each other very well.
- C) were just being introduced to each other.
- D) were good colleagues.

**32. In the riverbed they intended ...**

- A) to try their luck at fishing.
- B) to collect more bent-up rings.
- C) to clean some of the mud there.
- D) No information in the excerpt.

**33. According to the guide, the narrator’s outfit was ...**

- A) not all safe enough.
- B) just perfect for the occasion.
- C) too mud-stained for their work.
- D) too exquisite for the occasion.



**34. The guide's nickname was *Bachelor Alf* ...**

- A) because he was a confirmed bachelor.
- B) since he was forty years old and was not married yet.
- C) as he had a rich collection of bent-up rings.
- D) for he could not bend the ring on his wedding day.

**35. Hundreds of years ago the decisive factor for the success of a man's proposal in marriage was ...**

- A) the lady's opinion.
- B) the correct choice of bride.
- C) the man's physical strength.
- D) All of the above.

**36. What do traditional tenth wedding anniversary gifts and bent-up rings found in a riverbed hundreds of years later share in common?**

- A) Both are vintage articles.
- B) The type of material they are made of.
- C) The same symbolic meaning they have.
- D) The occasion upon which they are given.

### ***Task Three***

***Read the text below. Then read the questions that follow it and answer each question with a sentence of your own. Write your answers on your answer sheet. Sentences copied word for word from the text will get 0 points.***

Breakfast in Paris, lunch in Frankfurt and dinner in Vienna – all without the hassle and frustration of flying.

Imagine a network of modern, super-fast and comfortable trains hurtling between every major city in the European Union, providing a reliable, comfortable and sustainable alternative to air travel.

In an attempt to cut carbon emissions, the EU leaders launched a grand plan to double high-speed rail use by 2030 and triple current levels by 2050.

Unlike many parts of the world, Europe already has thousands of kilometres of dedicated high-speed railway. In France, Germany and Spain rail travel has been transformed over the last 40 years, but it still remains largely focused on domestic markets.

Building lines across international borders, even within the European Union, can create tension over who pays for what, how the contracts are allocated, conflicting national standards and regulations and a number of other obstacles.

For decades it's been too easy to kick difficult projects down the road until they become someone else's problem. Even where international high-speed lines have been built – often at enormous cost – stifling bureaucracy and high access charges are preventing some routes from fulfilling their potential. Others, such as Paris-London via the Channel Tunnel and Paris-Brussels-Amsterdam are more successful but could – and should – be luring many more passengers away from short-haul air travel.

Now European policymakers have committed to a new study highlighting the numerous benefits of an expanded high-speed rail network connecting national capitals and major cities. They will investigate how to pay for tens of thousands of kilometres of new lines and how a radical transformation of the continent's rail network can help the EU deliver on its 'Green Deal' objective of carbon neutrality by 2050. Some of that expansion will come on new routes that are planned or under construction but many more will be needed to facilitate the vision of European leaders.

Reaching an agreement on which routes to prioritize, which cities will benefit (and which will miss out) will cause huge arguments between competing interests. With the shape of the final network likely to have a massive influence on the future development of Europe over the next 100 years, cities will be desperate to stake their claim.

**37. What is the EU's plan for high-speed rail use by the mid-21 century?**

**38. What are the two reasons mentioned in the text for the European Union to want to replace airplanes with high-speed rail network?**

**39. What is the main disadvantage of the existing high-speed railway travel in European countries like Germany and Spain?**

**40. Why can building high-speed railways across borders cause disagreement between the EU countries?**

**41. What two things prevent the existing high-speed international lines from operating at full capacity?**

**42. What will be the two major benefits of the study conducted by European policymakers on expanding the high-speed rail network?**

**43. Why will it not be easy to reach an agreement in the EU on which rail routes to prioritize?**

## ***WRITING***

**You are required to do BOTH tasks.**

**Внимание: В случай на непристоен език, плагиатство или текст, идентичен с този на друг ученик, на съответния текст се присъждат 0 точки.**

**44. Read the task and write a formal letter (120 – 130 words) including the suggested prompts.**

**The earth's resources are limited, yet a lot of them are wasted on a daily basis.** Write a letter to your mayor outlining a plan to save water, electricity or food (focus on one natural resource). In your letter you should:

- explain why you chose to focus on this particular resource;
- suggest measures that should be taken to reduce its waste;
- speculate about the effect of the proposed measures.

Sign your letter with **John Smith / Jane Smith.**

**Писмен текст с обем под 65 думи или текст, изцяло несъответстващ на темата, се оценява с 0 (нула) точки.**

**45. Read the task and write an essay (200 – 220 words), expressing your opinion on the set topic.**

**What makes a good team leader?** State your opinion and support it with arguments and examples. You should consider the following:

- his/her personal qualities;
- his/her interpersonal skills;
- whether leaders are born or made.

**Писмен текст с обем под 110 думи или текст, изцяло несъответстващ на темата, се оценява с 0 (нула) точки.**

**МИНИСТЕРСТВО НА ОБРАЗОВАНИЕТО И НАУКАТА**

**ДЪРЖАВЕН ЗРЕЛОСТЕН ИЗПИТ ПО**

**АНГЛИЙСКИ ЕЗИК – 23 май 2023 г.**

**ПРОФИЛИРАНА ПОДГОТОВКА**

**НИВО В2**

**ВАРИАНТ 2**

**Ключ с верните отговори**

Въпрос №	Верен отговор	Брой точки
1.	A	1
2.	A	1
3.	B	1
4.	B	1
5.	B	1
6.	B	1
7.	B	1
8.	A	1
9.	B	1
10.	B	1
11.	D	1
12.	A	1
13.	B	1
14.	C	1
15.	C	1
16.	D	1
17.	D	1
18.	C	1

Въпрос №	Верен отговор	Брой точки
19.	A	1
20.	A	1
21.	C	1
22.	D	1
23.	B	1
24.	D	1
25.	A	1
26.	B	1
27.	B	1
28.	A	1
29.	A	1
30.	A	1
31.	A	1
32.	D	1
33.	A	1
34.	C	1
35.	A	1
36.	B	1

Въпросите от № 37 до № 43 са отворени. Задачите с кратък свободен отговор се оценяват с **0 точки, 1 точка** или **2 точки** в зависимост от верността и пълнотата на отговора. При проверка на задачите с кратък свободен отговор не се вземат предвид правописни и граматически грешки. В отговора се оценява съответствието между информацията в него с тази в текста.

**Отговорите на отворените въпроси са примерни.** Приема се за верен всеки отговор, формулиран по различен начин, но съответстващ на въпроса и на информацията.

**37. What is the EU's plan for high-speed rail use by the mid-21 century?**

The EU aims to triple the use of high-speed rail / increase the use of high-speed rail three times by 2050 / the mid-21 century. (2 т.)

**38. What are the two reasons mentioned in the text for the European Union to want to replace airplanes with high-speed rail network?**

To cut carbon emissions, because travelling by train is more sustainable /eco-friendly (1т.) To make better use of the existing thousands of kilometres of high-speed railway in the different EU countries (1т.)

**39. What is the main disadvantage of the existing high-speed railway travel in European countries like Germany and Spain?**

It is mainly centred /focused on local markets / it is mainly local / it rarely connects the different European countries. (2 т.)

**40. Why can building high-speed railways across borders cause disagreement between the EU countries?**

Because the countries could/can argue over funding, contract distribution, different national regulations and standards. (1 – 1,5 – 2 т.)

**41. What two things prevent existing high-speed international lines from operating at full capacity?**

The excessive bureaucracy / the red tape (1т.) and the high access fees / charges. (1т.)

**42. What will be the two major benefits of the study conducted by European policymakers on expanding the high-speed rail network?**

It can help [to] identify potential funding sources (1т.) and show how the railway expansion helps Europe to realise/ implement / carry out the *Green Deal* scheme / plan / policy / initiative (1т.)

**43. Why will it not be easy to reach an agreement in the EU on which rail routes to prioritize?**

Because the rail network is likely to have / will probably have a great influence on the future (socio-economic) development of European cities and they will compete to be included in it. / Because there would be arguments/ competition between the cities as to who should benefit / the decision would involve competing interests / provoke arguments. (2т.)

**Критерии за оценяване на текст:**

**44. Първа задача - официално писмо**

**0-5 точки:** Съдържателно съответствие с темата, смислова свързаност и логическа последователност (вкл. и спазване на регистъра);

**0-3 точки:** Структура на текста (вкл. и спазване на зададения обем и формат);

**0-5 точки:** Правилна и адекватна употреба на лексиката, лексикално богатство;

**0-5 точки:** Граматическа правилност (морфологична и синтактична правилност);

**0-2 точки:** Правопис.

**45. Втора задача – аргументативно есе за изразяване на мнение по даден въпрос**

**0-8 точки:** Съдържателно съответствие с темата, смислова свързаност и логическа последователност (умение за представяне на факти, за формулиране на позиция);

**0-2 точки:** Структура на текста (вкл. и спазване на зададения обем и формат);

**0-9 точки:** Правилна и адекватна употреба на лексиката, лексикално богатство;

**0-9 точки:** Граматическа правилност (морфологична и синтактична правилност);

**0-2 точки:** Правопис.

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**ПРОФИЛИРАНА ПОДГОТОВКА**

**НИВО В2**

**ВАРИАНТ 2**

**Лист за учителя! Да се дава само при необходимост!!!**

***LISTENING COMPREHENSION***

***Task One***

***You will hear a text twice. Before you listen to it for the first time, you have 30 seconds to read the tasks to the text. While listening for the first time you are not allowed to mark your chosen answers. After you listen to it for the first time, you have 1 minute to mark your chosen answers on your answer sheet. While listening to the text for a second time, you can mark your chosen answers. After you listen to the text for the second time, you have 1 more minute to check or correct your answers.***

Each year on January 1, the central square of Razlog becomes a stage, a meeting place for the Kukeri, young boys and girls from all seven quarters of the town.

The roots of this tradition are hidden in the Thracian legends and myths of the Dionysus Mysteries. This is a symbiosis between a pagan culture intertwined with Christian values. The new beginning and the parting of the old and the new years can be fully experienced and felt by the participants in the carnival.

The Kukeri procession is led by the oldest member of the group who ploughs the ground and throws seeds, as a symbol of fertility and well-being for the region. As the tradition requires, every member of the Kukeri group must have a costume of his or her own. These costumes, either inherited or sewn by their owners, are made from goat skin, while the masks the local Kukeri wear are usually made from wood and covered in colourful yarn threads, fur, animal teeth, beads, and horns. This annual tradition, repeated over and over with some variations but still unique for the country, has placed Razlog among the renowned carnival towns of Europe. It serves as a start to the January International Kukeri Festival, held under the auspices of the Razlog Municipality and the Federation of European Carnival Cities.

## ***Task Two***

***You will hear a text twice. Before you listen to it for the first time, you have 30 seconds to read the tasks to the text. While listening for the first time you are not allowed to mark your chosen answers. After you listen to it for the first time, you have 1 minute to mark your chosen answers on your answer sheet. While listening to the text for a second time, you can mark your chosen answers. After you listen to the text for the second time, you have 1 more minute to check or correct your answers.***

With the latest discovery about the origins of Stonehenge's mysterious bluestones there's a new buzz around the archaeological treasures buried across the UK. Here we share some of the nation's top spots to explore the ancient past.

Sutton Hoo in Suffolk was first unearthed in 1939, with the shadow of the Second World War looming. Sutton Hoo is an early medieval royal burial site that's famously home to the ship burial of seventh-century Anglo-Saxon King Raedwald.

Long-neglected, Sutton Hoo reopened in the summer of 2019 after a year-long renovation, which included the creation of a new walking route out to the burial mounds, where you can follow in the footsteps of the Anglo-Saxons, who hauled the monumental timber ship to the top of a hill to bury their king, filled with gold treasures, such as the iconic Sutton Hoo helmet.

There's always something big in Stonehenge country. The latest discovery reveals that the origins of its mysterious bluestones lay in a quarry deep in the Welsh Preseli Hills, and that they first stood in a stone circle that predates Stonehenge, before being carried for a long distance overland to the then developing site. Here you can try your arm at dragging a massive stone monolith at the site's visitor centre.

Discoveries still abound at Hadrian's Wall, where there are plenty of places to step back into the past. Try to see some of the historical re-enactments around the ruins, archaeological talks, guided walks or history-focused hikes and bike routes between the North and Irish Seas. Plus, there are lots of hands-on dig opportunities for all ages.

## ***Task Three***

***You will hear a text twice. Before you listen to it for the first time, you have 4 minutes and 30 seconds to read the tasks to the text. While listening for the first time you are not allowed to mark your chosen answers. After you listen to it for the first time, you have 4 minutes to mark your chosen answers on your answer sheet. While listening to the text for a second time, you can mark your chosen answers. After you listen to the text for the second time, you have 1 more minute to check or correct your answers.***

Percy Bysshe Shelley is famous for his Romantic poetry, stormy relationships, and tragic death in a boating accident at 29. He was also an influential promoter of vegetarianism.

In 1812, a year after being expelled from Oxford for advocating atheism, Shelley and his new wife Harriet Westbrook adopted a diet eliminating meat.



By then vegetarianism had been practised in many places around the world, and was popular among ethical and health reformers in seventeenth- and eighteenth-century Britain. In his 1813 essay *A Vindication of Natural Diet*, Shelley argued that “animal flesh and fermented liquors” are “slow but certain poison”, and those who avoid them would “have to dread no disease but old age”.

Like many modern vegetarians and vegans, Shelley linked a vegetable-based diet not only to health, but also to ecology and economic justice. He argued that if people ate the products of farm fields themselves rather than inefficiently using them to fatten animals, they could stop “devouring an acre at a meal” and put an end to “the famine of the hard-working peasant’s hungry babies”.

Even before becoming a vegetarian, Shelley maintained an odd diet. As a student at Oxford, he would eat pounds of bread at a time while walking around town and carry raisins in his pocket. When he and Harriet had guests, they sometimes served nothing but some fresh bread. Shelley also disliked remaining seated for even a short dinner and frequently forgot to eat at all.

On the other hand, Shelley was inconsistent in his vegetarianism. His friend Thomas Hogg once recalled ordering bacon at an inn to which Shelley responded with horror that gradually transformed into curiosity, and once the poet tried a small bit of the meat he quickly demanded more. Hogg attributed this and other lapses to Shelley’s impulsiveness.

At other times, Shelley broke from his vegetarianism for health reasons, or because it was inconvenient to maintain while traveling. Nevertheless, the poet’s advocacy of vegetarianism influenced many others, including playwright and critic George Bernard Shaw, who – because of that impact – proposed renaming vegetarianism “Shelleyism”.

#### ***Task Four***

***You will hear a text twice. Before you listen to it for the first time, you have 4 minutes and 30 seconds to read the tasks to the text. While listening for the first time you are not allowed to mark your chosen answers. After you listen to it for the first time, you have 4 minutes to mark your chosen answers on your answer sheet. While listening to the text for a second time, you can mark your chosen answers. After you listen to the text for the second time, you have 1 more minute to check or correct your answers.***

***Lucy Worsley – LW***

***Ryan Davies – RD***

**RD:** Hello! I’m Ryan Davies and today I’m speaking to Lucy Worsley about her new biography of the doyen of detective novels, Agatha Christie. Lucy, why have you decided to write about Agatha Christie for your new book?

**LW:** I have a bit of an obsession with detective fiction so I thought it would be fascinating to view Agatha Christie’s life through the eyes of a historian. Someone who’s such a cultural phenomenon is worth taking seriously and investigating. Her life and her work provide a

wonderful record of what middle-class British people thought about things throughout the 20th century.

**RD:** How did her background inform her life and writing?

**LW:** She was born into a family with money, and I think that's so important in understanding a lot of the things that happened to her later. Her father was American – so that gave her an international perspective on life right from the start. One of the things people get wrong about Agatha Christie is thinking she's typically English; in reality, she was from a family of globetrotters.

They lived on the south coast of Devon, and Agatha had a very comfortable life in a big Victorian villa. They had lots of money and a beautiful garden where, she tells us, she often used to play with her imaginary friends. So she was making up stories from an early age.

**RD:** What was expected of a woman of her social class at that time?

**LW:** Get married. She described the philosophy of the people she knew in her childhood as waiting for "the man" who was going to come along and change your life. She had an older sister, Madge, who was sent to a boarding school and given some of the values of what was called the "New Woman". This was a middle-class view of femininity: you should be educated, and break barriers, and go out into the world.

Clearly, though, her parents didn't completely agree with that concept. They brought Madge home and put her on the marriage market. She got married – very successfully – to the heir of a Manchester business fortune, and ended up with a huge house. The idea was that Agatha herself would follow the same route.

**RD:** Let's talk about 1926 and Agatha's 11-day disappearance, an episode that captured the nation's imagination. What was the background to her vanishing?

**LW:** This mysterious disappearance of Agatha Christie, which led to a national search for her, seems to be the central injustice of Agatha Christie's life. A lot of people would tell you that it happened because she wanted to frame her cheating husband for her murder. That's what the newspapers said at the time, and it's a narrative that's been picked up in so many other biography books about her.

When I started my research for this book, I was open to that suggestion. But it's not at all consistent with what I found in her personal archive and in the evidence from the time. What I believe happened was as different from that as night from day.

By 1926, Agatha was a successful novelist, and she was under a lot of pressure to keep producing books. But her mother died that year, and she went into an episode of what today would probably be described as depression. She reported forgetfulness, tearfulness, insomnia and an inability to cope with normal life. And on the top of that her husband announced that he was leaving her.

Then Agatha gave herself a new name and travelled to the town of Harrogate, which had a reputation for medical excellence. There she stayed at a health spa, where she tried to recover her lost health.

### ***Task Five***

***You will hear a text twice. Before you listen to it for the first time, you have 4 minutes and 30 seconds to read the tasks to the text. While listening for the first time you are not allowed to mark your chosen answers. After you listen to it for the first time, you have 4 minutes to mark your chosen answers on your answer sheet. While listening to the text for a second time, you can mark your chosen answers. After you listen to the text for the second time, you have 1 more minute to check or correct your answers.***

There's a superstition that afflicted some of the great composers of the 19th and 20th centuries – the *Curse of the Ninth*. It started during the late Romantic period – some people believed that composers were doomed to die during or after writing their ninth symphony.

On the surface, the theory seems like it might be based on fact: Beethoven, Schubert, Dvořák all died after completing their Ninths, Anton Bruckner died with his Ninth unfinished.

Gustav Mahler, who wrote some of the most glorious symphonies of the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, got obsessed with the superstition surrounding ninth symphonies. Seeing how fate had struck down Beethoven and Bruckner before him, he came up with a cunning plan to beat the curse. After completing his eighth symphony, Mahler wrote a piece of music that was, in essence, a symphony – but he refused to call it one. He then set to work on his tenth – but then he developed pneumonia while writing it and died in 1911, aged 51, apparently proving the curse correct.

Still, there are some problems with the *Curse of the Ninth* theory. At the time he was writing, the only victims of the 'curse' that Mahler would have been aware of were Beethoven and Bruckner. He wouldn't have known about Schubert's nine symphonies – because what is now called his Symphony No. 9 (the 'Great') was known as his Seventh in Mahler's time. Plus, Dvořák's Ninth 'New World' Symphony wasn't even considered a 'ninth' in Mahler's time. It was published as his Symphony No. 5.

Even Bruckner doesn't fully qualify; he died before completing his Ninth Symphony – which brings his total symphonies to just eight.

Besides, lots of composers have written more than nine symphonies. The main problem with the *Curse of the Ninth* is that it only makes sense if you concentrate on a small number of 19th and 20th-century composers, omitting composers like Shostakovich, who wrote 15 symphonies, not to mention the most famous classical composers like Mozart, who wrote 41 symphonies, and Haydn with his amazing 104 (there was no stopping that man).

So the *Curse of the Ninth* may sound like a fascinating story, but like all good conspiracy theories, it has been debunked and dismissed.