



Exercises in preparation for INVALSI tests

READING COMPREHENSION

LEVEL B2 (342 words)

The English tasks you are going to do are aimed at verifying your reading comprehension skills. The directions before each question will introduce the task to you and will explain how to answer. So pay attention and read them carefully. The first question is always an example.

- Title: **The silk road and the spice road**
- Task **14** questions: **1-7** Multiple choice/**8-14** True or False



THE SILK ROAD AND THE SPICE ROAD

You've probably heard of the Silk Road, the ancient trade route that once ran between China and the West during the days of the Roman Empire. It's how oriental silk first came to Europe.

Human beings have always moved from place to place and traded with their neighbours, exchanging goods, skills and ideas. Maritime routes were an important part of this network, linking East and West by sea, and were used for the trade of spices in particular, thus becoming known as the Spice Roads.

The Spice Roads stretch from the west coast of Japan, through the islands of Indonesia, around India to the lands of the Middle East – and from there, across the Mediterranean to Europe. It is a distance of over 15,000 kilometers and, even today, is not an easy journey.

The Spice Routes is considered one of the most important routes of the ancient world. Throughout the regions of this ancient trade road there are several routes that are thousands of miles long, crossing many countries, along which desert caravans with hundreds of camels transported precious cargoes of the ancient world such as myrrh and various spices.

From our very earliest history, people have travelled the Spice Roads. At first, they probably ventured only short distances from their home ports but over the centuries their ships sailed further and further across seas and oceans.

They braved treacherous seas and sometimes hostile reception on arrival in an unknown land.



These journeys were not undertaken purely in the spirit of adventure – the driving force behind them was trade.

In the case of the Spice Roads the links were formed by traders buying and selling goods from port to port.

Other goods were exchanged too - cargoes of ivory and porcelain.

But precious goods were not the only points of exchange between the traders.

Perhaps more important was the exchange of knowledge: knowledge of new peoples and their religions, languages, artistic and scientific skills.

The ports along the Maritime Silk Roads acted as melting pots for ideas and information.

A READ the text then choose the correct answer (a, b, c or d) for questions 1-7. Put a cross (X) on the correct letter. Only one answer is correct. The first one (0) is an example

0. The Silk Road

- a. stretches only across Asia and America
- b. was only for trade between Europe and China
- c. stretches across several countries
- d. was only for export from Europe

1. Centuries ago when trade among countries began, travelling

- a. was safe
- b. was very dangerous
- c. was only by ship
- d. was only among very close countries

2. Trader were pushed by

- a. spirit of adventure
- b. political reasons
- c. religious reasons
- d. desire for finding new markets

3. Goods imported were

- a. basic needs
- b. spices in particular
- c. ideas and culture
- d. slaves

4. Today Western countries import from China

- a. only silk
 b. only raw material
 c. manpower
 d. commercial products

5. In the past, spice traders moved especially

- a. from port to port
 b. overland
 c. by train
 d. by plane

6. 15,000 kilometers is the distance from

- a. Europe to China
 b. Middle East to Europe
 c. Europe to Japan
 d. Middle East to Japan

7. Centuries ago

- a. countries were only inhabited by stable populations
 b. people didn't like travelling
 c. people were continuously fighting their neighbours
 d. people travelled to different countries

B Decide if the assumptions from 8 to 14 are **TRUE** or **FALSE**. Put a cross (X) on the proper space.

The first one (0) is an example.

	T	F
0. Even today travelling is not always safe	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8. The Romans were the first to export silk	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
9. In the past trading was only for goods	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
10. Spice Route is considered one of the most important routes of the ancient world	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
11. Skill and ideas were seldom exchanged	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
12. Spice roads include hundreds of miles crossing a couple of countries	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
13. Spice Road was already covered by people centuries ago	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
14. "Melting pot" means "distance from"	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**LISTENING COMPREHENSION****LEVEL B2 (399 words)**

The English tasks you are going to do are aimed at verifying your listening comprehension skills.

At the beginning of each task a speaker will read the text concerning the questions you are asked to answer.

We remind you that:

- you won't be able to go back in listening to the passage;
- the passage cannot be paused;
- if you decide not to answer a question, you will have to wait for the set time for that task to pass anyway; only at that moment the next task will be displayed.

The directions before each question will introduce the task to you and will explain how to answer. So pay attention and read them carefully.

The first question is always an example.

First you will have 1 minute to study the task below, then you will hear the recording twice.

While listening, choose the correct answer (a, b, c or d) for questions 1-7.

Only one answer is correct.

The first one (0) has been done for you.

After the second listening, you will have 1 minute to check your answers.

Title: **The puritans' rule**

Task: **7** Multiple choice questions

THE PURITANS' RULE

A conversation between two teenagers during the Puritans' rule in the 17th century in England when theatres were closed, books forbidden and people could only read the Holy Bible. Even Christmas during the puritans' rule was a day of fasting, no food allowed, no carols could be sang and no decorations were to be displayed.

1st boy: What are you doing over there?

2nd boy: Hmm... nothing!

1st: Why do you say nothing? You are reading something!

2nd: Yes... something.

1st: What is it? Show me!

2nd: Well, it's nothing interesting, you know.

1st: But... These papers..... they aren't the Holy Bible. You know that we are only allowed to read the Holy Bible and you are reading something else!

2nd: I know! But the Holy Bible is so boring! Look, I found these papers in the cellar. They were under a basket. There was nobody around and so I took them.

1st: What is it? Let me see! What a strange name Shispre, Shapeare... yes, now I can see, Shakespeare! What is it about?

2nd: Well it is a love story between a boy and a girl, Romeo and Juliet they lived in a far country, Italy.

1st: A love story? We cannot read love stories. If you are get caught you'll be severely punished... but... what is the story about?

2nd: A boy and a girl meet at a party and fall in love, but they cannot marry because their families are enemies. At the end they both die. It's a very sad story, I cried while I was reading it. It's a tragedy written for the theatre. Have you ever heard about theatres?

1st: Yes... just something.

2nd: Theatres are places where some people – they call them actors – pretend to be somebody else. There is an audience watching and having fun.

1st: Just like the sermons we listen to when we are in the church?

2nd: Not exactly, sermons are not fun and no love stories are told by priests.

1st: Like the boy and the girl in Italy? Hmm...! Too sad. Come on let's go and play football.

2nd: Don't be silly. You know that we cannot play, we can only pray!

1st: O.k. and so we can keep reading the story, can't we?

2nd boy: Why not!

A LISTEN then choose the correct answer (a,b,c, or d) for questions 1-7. Put a cross on the correct letter. Only one is correct. The first one (0) is an example.

0. During puritans' government Christmas

- a. was celebrated with special food and songs.
- b. was a day like any other day.
- c. people were allowed to read the Holy Bible.
- d. People used to decorate their houses.

1. What is the 1st boy doing?

- a. he's listening to music.
- b. he's reading.
- c. he's playing football.
- d. he's eating.

2. What does the 1st boy say about the Holy Bible?

- a. it's interesting.
- b. it's frightening.
- c. it's boring.
- d. it's strange.

3. The 1st boy found the papers

- a. in the kitchen.
- b. in the garden.
- c. in the bedroom.
- d. in the cellar.

4. What is the 1st boy reading?

- a. a novel.
- b. a tragedy.
- c. fairy tales.
- d. The Holy Bible.

5. Why the boy and the girl of the story cannot marry?

- a. because they are too poor.
- b. because they live too far from each other.
- c. because they are close relatives.
- d. because their families are enemies.

6. What does the 1st boy say about theatre performances

- a. are like sermons.
- b. people watch and have fun.
- c. sometimes are boring.
- d. are too expensive.

7. At the end the boys

- a. go out to play football.
- b. pray.
- c. keep reading the story.
- d. decide to go to church.

**READING COMPREHENSION****LEVEL B1 (440 words)**

The English tasks you are going to do are aimed at verifying your reading comprehension skills. The directions before each question will introduce the task to you and will explain how to answer. So pay attention and read them carefully. The first question is always an example.

Title: **Bruce Springsteen**

Task **23** questions: **1-6** Multiple choice / **7-16** Match sentences/ **17-23** Short answers

**BRUCE SPRINGSTEEN**

Bruce Springsteen, also known as “The Boss”, was born in September 23th, 1949 in New Jersey. His father was of Dutch and Irish origins and worked as a bus driver, but he was mostly unemployed. His mother, Adele Ann, was a legal secretary and was of Italian origins. Bruce’s grandfather was born in Vico Equense, a town near Naples. He emigrated and when he arrived in the US, he couldn’t read or write. Eventually he became a lawyer. Springsteen has two younger sisters, Virginia and Pamela. Pamela had a brief film career, but left acting to pursue the career of photographer.

Raised a Roman Catholic, Springsteen attended the St. Rose of Lima Catholic school. He began to take up music at the age of seven after seeing Elvis Presley on The Ed Sullivan Show in 1956. When he was 14, his mother bought him his first guitar for \$18. The next year, in 1964, a major turning point for Springsteen occurred with the Beatles’ appearance on The Ed Sullivan Show. Thereafter he started playing for audiences, first at a park on New Jersey Route 34 and then at a local Elks Lodge.

Called for military service in the United States Army when he was 19, Springsteen failed the physical examination and did not serve in the Vietnam War. He had suffered brain injury in a motorcycle accident when he was 17, and this together with his “crazy” behaviour made him unacceptable for service.

Springsteen signed a contract with Columbia Records in 1972 and brought many of his New Jersey colleagues into the studio with him, thus forming the E Street Band.

After the huge success of the “Born in the U.S.A.” album, in 1987 he released “Tunnel of Love”, an album which included romantic songs. In 1994 he won an academy award for the song “Streets of Philadelphia” for the film Philadelphia (1993).

He married for the first time at the age of 35 to actress Julianne Phillips. Their marriage ended in 1989. He then married Patti Scialfa on June 8th, 1991. They have three children: Evan James, Jessica Rae and Sam Ryan. In 2008 Springsteen became a strong supporter of Democratic presidential candidate Barack Obama. When Obama won the election, Springsteen's "The Rising" was the first song played at the victory party. At the Kennedy Center in 2009, Obama said "I may be the President, but he is 'The Boss.'" Springsteen campaigned for President Obama's re-election in 2012.

He has sold more than 135 million records worldwide and more than 64 million records in the United States, making him one of the world's best-selling artists.

A READ the text then choose the correct answer (a, b, c or d) for questions 1-6. Put a cross (X) on the correct letter. Only one answer is correct. The first one (0) is an example

0. Bruce Springsteen is of
- a. America origins
 - b. Italian origins
 - c. African origins
 - d. Japanese origins
1. When his grandfather arrived in the States, he was
- a. an illiterate
 - b. a lawyer
 - c. a bus driver
 - d. a photographer
2. He began to be interested in music when
- a. his mother gave him a guitar
 - b. his sister became an actress
 - c. he saw an Elvis Presley concert
 - d. he went to St. Rose of Lima Catholic school
3. When he was 15, he
- a. began to play in a park
 - b. started playing in a Lodge
 - c. played at the Ed Sullivan Show
 - d. played with the Beatles



4. When he was 19, he

- a. joined the army
- b. took part in the Vietnam War
- c. had a motorcycle accident
- d. was rejected for conscription

5. The E Street Band

- a. was his first band
- b. was made up of his new colleagues
- c. only performed romantic songs
- d. was not successful

6. Bruce Springsteen

- a. had no political ideas
- b. was a republican
- c. was a democrat
- d. was a candidate for Democratic Party

B MATCH number (7-16) to letters (a-k) to obtain meaningful sentences. The first one (0) is an example.

- | | |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 0. Bruce Springsteen 7. His grandfather 8. His sister Pamela 9. 18\$ 10. He had an accident 11. The army 12. His first Band 13. Philadelphia 14. When he was 35 15. President Obama 16. He sold | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> a. he married for the first time <input type="checkbox"/> b. millions of records <input type="checkbox"/> c. was a famous film <input type="checkbox"/> d. had been a migrant <input type="checkbox"/> e. admired him <input type="checkbox"/> f. was the E Street Band <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> g. was also called The Boss <input type="checkbox"/> h. is a photographer <input type="checkbox"/> i. rejected him <input type="checkbox"/> j. was the price of his first guitar <input type="checkbox"/> k. when he was 17 |
|---|--|

C Work out short answers for the questions below. The first one (0) is an example.

- 0. Was Bruce Springsteen known as "The Boss"? Yes, he was
- 17. Was he born in New York?
- 18. Was his father of Dutch and Irish origin?
- 19. Did his grandfather migrate to the States?
- 20. Did he begin to take up music at the age of 20?
- 21. Were Elvis Presley and the Beatles important for him?
- 22. Could he do the military service?
- 23. Is Bruce Springsteen a Republican?