

Indirizzo: LI04, EA03 – LICEO LINGUISTICO

Tema di: LINGUA E CULTURA STRANIERA 1: INGLESE

PART 1 – COMPREHENSION AND INTERPRETATION

Question A

Read the following text.

The wind was blowing in my face, so I pushed my bicycle up the hill. I left it inside the Brennans' gate and walked over the road to see my own home. There were French nuns there now. Only five or six of them, with a mistress of novices in charge of them. Young nuns came from the mother house in Limerick to spend their spiritual year in our large, secluded farmhouse.

- 5 The old gateway was abandoned, with nettles growing around it. The nuns had made a new gateway, with concrete piers on either side and concrete walls curving out from the piers. The avenue, which had been one of weeds and loose stones and cart tracks, was now tarmacked and steamrolled, and easy to walk on. Some of the trees around the house were cut, and the white, weather-beaten hall door was painted a soft kindly green. The curtains of course were different, and Hickey's beehive was
10 gone.

'Our Mother is expecting you,' said the little nun who answered the door.

She went off noiselessly down the carpeted hall. The room that was once our breakfast room seemed utterly strange. I felt that I had never been there before. There was a writing desk in the corner where the whatnot had been, and they had added a mahogany mantelpiece.

- 15 'You are welcome,' the Mother said. She was French, and she didn't look half as severe as the nuns in the convent. She rang a bell to summon the little nun and asked her to bring some refreshments. I got a glass of milk and a slice of homemade cake that was decorated with blanched almonds. It was difficult

chewing the food while she watched me, and I hoped that I didn't make a noise while I ate.

'And what are you planning to be?' she asked.

- 20 Grocer's apprentice, I thought of saying, but instead I said, 'My father hasn't decided yet.' It sounded pretty impertinent, because Molly had told me that Mother Superior helped my father get over his drinking bouts.

She brought down flasks of beef tea when he was in bed, and gave him little books to read prayers from.

- 25 She took a tiny blue medal out of her pocket and handed it to me. That night I pinned it to my vest and always wore it there after that. Mr. Gentleman laughed when he came to see it, months later.

- 'You might care to see the kitchen?' she asked, and I followed her out to the kitchen. There were white presses built in along the walls, and the wood range had been replaced by an anthracite cooker. In the kitchen garden outside, there were six or seven young nuns walking singly, with heads lowered as if they were meditating. I was waiting to hear Bull's-Eye chase the hens off the flag, but of course there
30 were no hens to chase. The visit upset me more than I had expected, and things that I thought I had forgotten kept floating to the surface of my mind. The skill with which Hickey set the mousetraps and put

them under the stairs. The smell of apple jelly in the autumn, and the flypaper hanging from the ceiling with black flies all over it. Flitches of bacon hung up to smoke. The cookery book on the window ledge stained with egg yolk.

- 35 These small things crowded in on me, so I felt very sad going down the drive.

On the way down I thought I ought to go into the gate lodge and see my father. I lifted the latch, but the door was locked. And I was just going out the gate, feeling very relieved, when I heard him call, 'Who's there?'

He opened the door and was lifting his braces up onto his shoulders. He was in his bare feet.

40 'Oh, I was lying down for an hour. I had a bad aul headache.'

'Go on back to bed,' I said. I was praying that he would.

'Not at all. Come on in.' He shut the door behind me. The kitchen was small and smoky, and the little white lace half-curtain on the window was the colour of cigarette ash. There were three enamel mugs on the table with tea leaves in each of them.

45 'Have a cup o' tea,' he said.

'All right.' I filled the kettle from the bucket on the floor, and spilled some water of course. I'm always clumsy when people are watching me do something. He sat down and put on his socks. His toenails needed to be cut.

'Where were you?' he asked.

50 'Up home.' It would always be home.

(778 words)

From Edna O'Brian, *The Country Girls* (Ch 13), 1960

Say whether each of the following statements is **True (T)** or **False (F)**. Put a cross in the correct box in the table below and quote **the first four words of the sentence** where the piece of information is found.

- 1) The protagonist rode her bicycle all the way up the hill.
- 2) The family's farmhouse was now a convent.
- 3) The French nuns had built a new gateway with concrete piers and walls.
- 4) The protagonist refused the refreshments offered by the Mother.
- 5) The Mother Superior had taken good care of the protagonist's father when he needed it.
- 6) The protagonist's father was preparing lunch when he answered the door.

Statement	T	F	First four words of the sentence
1			
2			
3			
4			
5			
6			

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

- 7) Explain the changes that the narrator notices in the house and its surroundings. How do these compare to her memories?

- 8)** What aspects of the narrator's personality can the reader infer from the text? Support your statements with references to the text.
- 9)** Describe how the narrator's feelings change throughout the text. How does the text present the theme of home?

Question B

Read the following text.

Why is AI controversial?

While acknowledging AI's potential, some experts are worried about the implications of its rapid growth.

The International Monetary Fund (IMF) has warned AI could affect nearly 40% of jobs, and worsen financial inequality.

- 5 Prof Geoffrey Hinton, a computer scientist regarded as one of the 'godfathers' of AI development, has expressed concern that powerful AI systems could even make humans extinct – a fear dismissed by his fellow 'AI godfather', Yann LeCun.

Critics also highlight the tech's potential to reproduce biased information, or discriminate against some social groups.

- 10 This is because much of the data used to train AI comes from public material, including social media posts or comments, which can reflect biases such as sexism or racism.

And while AI programmes are growing more adept, they are still prone to errors. Generative AI systems are known for their ability to 'hallucinate' and assert falsehoods as fact.

Apple halted a new AI feature in January after it incorrectly summarised news app notifications.

- 15 The BBC complained about the feature after Apple's AI falsely told readers that Luigi Mangione – the man accused of killing UnitedHealthcare CEO Brian Thompson – had shot himself.

Google has also faced criticism over inaccurate answers produced by its AI search overviews.

This has added to concerns about the use of AI in schools and workplaces, where it is increasingly used to help summarise texts, write emails or essays and solve bugs in code.

- 20 There are worries about students using AI technology to 'cheat' on assignments, or employees 'smuggling' it into work.

Writers, musicians and artists have also pushed back against the technology, accusing AI developers of using their work to train systems without consent or compensation.

- 25 Thousands of creators – including Abba singer-songwriter Björn Ulvaeus, writers Ian Rankin and Joanne Harris and actress Julianne Moore – signed a statement in October 2024 calling AI a 'major, unjust threat' to their livelihoods.

(314 words)

<https://www.bbc.com/news/technology-65855333> (18 February 2025)

Choose the answer which fits best according to the text. Circle one letter.

- 1) The International Monetary Fund is concerned that AI
- A. will provide too many new jobs.
 - B. might bring about better opportunities.
 - C. might create problems to do with financial equality and employment.
 - D. might underline financial warnings if used in the wrong way.
- 2) Critics believe that AI may produce biased information because
- A. so much of its data is based on social media sources.
 - B. the data it uses cannot be verified in public material.

- C. it will always contain material based on sexism and racism.
- D. all of its posts and comments originate from the same sources.

3) A clear example of false information was

- A. when AI systems used their ability to 'hallucinate'.
- B. when Apple asserted that Luigi Mangione had shot the CEO of UnitedHealthcare.
- C. that students might use AI to 'cheat' in their assignments.
- D. that an accused man had shot himself.

4) According to writers, musicians and artists

- A. AI could offer them new possibilities.
- B. the development of AI might soon be seen as a risk rather than a benefit.
- C. AI could affect their earnings in a negative way.
- D. there is the need for a new form of creativity.

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

- 5)** What are the worrying implications of AI's rapid growth, according to some experts?
- 6)** Why is there concern about the use of AI in schools and workplaces?

PART 2 – WRITTEN PRODUCTION

Task A

“Home is not just a place where you happen to be born. It’s the place where you become yourself.”

Siddharth Pico Iyer, *The Art of Stillness* (2014)

Why is the concept of ‘home’ so important? Write a 300-word essay in which you describe what place is ‘home’ for you. Support your ideas by referring to your readings and personal experience.

Task B

“AI does not keep us from dreaming; it just makes those dreams come true faster.”

Kevin Kelly, journalist and technology writer

You have been asked to write an article for your school magazine on the following topic:

The possible benefits and risks of AI.

Write your article in about 300 words.