

Indirizzo: LICEO LINGUISTICO

Disciplina: LINGUA E CULTURA STRANIERA 1 (INGLESE)

PART 1 – COMPREHENSION AND INTERPRETATION

QUESTION A

Read the following text.

At the end of last term, the school soccer team reached the final of some competition and everyone in the year had to take the last three classes off to go and watch them. Marianne had never seen them play before. She had no interest in sport and
5 suffered anxiety related to physical education. In the bus on the way to the match she just listened to her headphones, no one spoke to her. Out the window: black cattle, green meadows, white houses with brown roof tiles. The football team were all
10 together at the top of the bus, drinking water and slapping each other on the shoulders to raise morale. Marianne had the sense that her real life was happening somewhere very far away, happening without her, and she didn't know if she would ever find out where it was and become part of it. She had that feeling in school often,
15 but it wasn't accompanied by any specific images of what the real life might look or feel like. All she knew was that when it started, she wouldn't need to imagine it anymore.

20 It stayed dry for the match. They had been brought there for the purpose of standing at the sidelines and cheering. Marianne was near the goalposts, with Karen and some of the other girls. Everyone other than Marianne seemed to know the school chants off by heart somehow, with lyrics she had never heard before. By half-time it was still nil-all, and Miss Keaney handed around boxes of juice and energy bars. For the second half, the ends changed around, and the school forwards were playing near where Marianne was standing. Connell Waldron was the centre forward. She could see him standing there in his football kit, the shiny white shorts, the school jersey with number nine on the back. He had very good posture, more so than any of the other players. His figure was like a long elegant line drawn with a brush. When the ball moved towards their end of the pitch he tended to run around and maybe throw one of his hands in the air, and then he went back to standing still. It was

25 pleasurable to watch him, and she didn't think he knew or cared where she was
standing. After school some day she could tell him she had been watching him, and
he'd laugh at her and call her weird.

30 At seventy minutes Aidan Kennedy brought the ball up the left side of the pitch and
crossed it over to Connell, who took a shot from the corner of the penalty area, over
the heads of the defenders, and it spun into the back of the net. Everyone screamed,
even Marianne, and Karen threw her arm around Marianne's waist and squeezed it.
35 They were cheering together; they had seen something magical which dissolved the
ordinary social relations between them. Miss Keaney was whistling and stamping her
feet. On the pitch Connell and Aidan embraced like reunited brothers. Connell was so
40 beautiful. [...]

Marianne's classmates all seem to like school so much and find it normal. To dress in
the same uniform every day, to comply at all times with arbitrary rules, to be
scrutinised and monitored for misbehaviour: this is normal to them. They have no
45 sense of the school as an oppressive environment.

Marianne had a row with the History teacher, Mr Kerrigan, last year because he
caught her looking out a window during class, and no one in the class took her side.
It seemed so obviously insane to her then that she should have to dress up in a
costume every morning and be herded around a huge building all day, and that she
wasn't even allowed to move her eyes where she wanted: even her eye movements
fell under the jurisdiction of school rules. You're not learning if you're staring out the
window daydreaming, Mr Kerrigan said. Marianne, who had lost her temper by then,
snapped back: Don't delude yourself, I have nothing to learn from you.

(675 words)

From Sally Rooney, *Normal People* (2018)

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. Marianne feels deliberately excluded by her classmates on the bus.
2. Marianne has a precise idea of what her 'real life' will be like.
3. Connell plays an active role throughout the whole match.

4. The goal temporarily changes the social dynamic between Marianne and her classmates.
5. Marianne openly challenges her teacher's authority.

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

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

6. What does Marianne mean when she thinks that her 'real life' is happening somewhere far away?
7. How is Connell presented in the text, and what does this presentation reveal about Marianne?
8. Why does Marianne perceive school as an oppressive environment?

QUESTION B

Read the following text.

How children's play with everyday objects can encourage skills needed for STEM success

5 Researchers have found that certain toys or play materials (like plastic bricks, wooden blocks or sand) can support STEM learning and cognitive development. For instance, playing with blocks can increase mathematical knowledge and engineering behaviours.

10 However, some STEM-marketed toys are designed to function in specific ways. Instructions prescribe how to assemble the pieces step by step. While these toys can be enjoyable and engaging, they often limit how much children need to figure out for themselves. When a toy already demonstrates its purpose, there is less opportunity for problem-solving, experimentation or sustained exploration.

15 On the other hand, children constantly scan their environment to see what they can use in their play and how. Some objects they find in their environment may not have been designed as toys but can be repurposed during play.

20 Items like cardboard, buttons, fabric scraps, tubes, containers or pieces of wood do not dictate to children what to do with them – as some toys do. Instead, children must decide how to use them, what they might represent and how they can be combined. This versatility is important because it requires children to actively think, plan, test ideas, evaluate the results and revise their actions.

25 Our research team examined how children use everyday objects in their play when they are given time and space to explore independently. We focused on children's free play with materials drawn from their immediate environment that could be used in multiple ways, such as string, rocks, fabric, spools and cork coasters.

30 We observed 60 pre-school-aged children engaged in solitary play in two sessions: one with everyday objects and another with toys designed for a single, specific use – toy percussion instruments, which we called limited-purpose toys. This approach allowed us to directly compare how the same child engaged with different types of play materials. The differences were striking. Children played significantly longer with everyday objects. They also engaged in more STEM-related behaviours – frequently constructing structures, explaining how things were built or worked,

exploring mathematical ideas and communicating their goals frequently – than when they played with limited-purpose toys.

Children in the study were more likely to engage in STEM thinking during play with everyday materials if their parents valued play and regularly engaged in playful activities.

(371 words)

Adapted from *The Conversation*, 2026, <https://theconversation.com/how-childrens-play-with-everyday-objects-can-encourage-skills-needed-for-stem-success-274274>

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

1. According to the text, some STEM-marketed toys may limit learning because they

- a. are often too complex for children to enjoy without constant adult supervision.
- b. provide specific guidance that reduces the need for independent discovery.
- c. tend to discourage children from interacting with their peers during playtime.
- d. are mostly made for outdoor play and cannot be used in different ways indoors.

2. The main difference between everyday objects and some purpose-built toys is that everyday objects

- a. are designed to introduce children to complex scientific concepts.
- b. instruct children on the most efficient way to complete a task.
- c. force children to use their imagination to assign meaning to the materials.
- d. cannot be used to explore mathematical ideas.

- 3.** In the research described, the children were observed
- in group play across several different schools.
 - only at home, while their parents were present.
 - while playing alone in two separate sessions with different materials.
 - during a single long session that lasted for several hours.
- 4.** The researchers found that, compared with limited-purpose toys, everyday objects led children to
- play longer and show more STEM-like activity.
 - play for a shorter time but communicate their goals more often.
 - play longer but show fewer STEM-related behaviours.
 - behave in the same way, regardless of the materials.
- 5.** The text reports that, when using everyday materials, children more frequently
- followed fixed instructions step by step.
 - showed a clear preference for items that had only one predictable function.
 - avoided talking about what they were doing.
 - created structures and described their purpose and how they functioned.

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

- 6.** How does the versatility of everyday objects force children to become more active participants in their own play?
- 7.** What role do parents and the home environment play in encouraging a child's 'STEM thinking'?

PART 2 – WRITTEN PRODUCTION

Complete both Task A and Task B.

TASK A

Rita Mae Brown, an American writer and activist, once wrote:

'The reward for conformity is that everyone likes you except yourself.'

In today's society, young people often feel immense pressure to fit in and follow the crowd, whether at school or on social media. Discuss this quote, reflecting on the conflict between the desire to belong to a group and the need to preserve one's own individuality. Support your arguments with examples from your reading and personal experience.

(about 300 words)

TASK B

You have seen a post on an international student blog discussing how modern technology and expensive gadgets might be killing creativity. The blog editors have invited readers to contribute articles on the topic: 'Is less more? The power of simplicity in a complex world.'

Write an article for the blog.

(about 300 words)