



South African College Junior School

ENGLISH HOME LANGUAGE COMPREHENSION and LANGUAGE

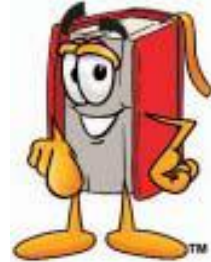
GRADE 7

24 November 2010

SECTION A: PERSUASIVE WRITING. Read through the following newspaper article and then answer the questions in full sentences:

FACEBOOK – FACILE FLUMMERY

Social networking on the Internet may be all the rage, but Frances Wilson found it to be an empty, soulless exercise designed to plump up the ego of its vacuous users.



This week I have been bitten by a zombie, given a fish for my aquarium and contacted by several people I had hoped never to hear from again. Welcome to the hell that is Facebook, the sixth most visited website in the world and the second most “in thing” among students in America, losing out only to the iPod.

So where did it all start and how does it work? The website was started three-and-a-half years ago by geeky Harvard students for the use of nerdy Harvard students. It was recently valued at \$10 billion. Since then, Facebook’s popularity has spread like a forest fire, and its inhabitants now spend an average of 19 minutes a day updating their pages.

In order to join Facebook, you need to build up your friend list. This is done by rummaging through the friend lists of your own Facebook friends or their Facebook friends or anyone that you find on Facebook until you come across someone who might know who you are. You then steal them. This is how to do successful networking.

If only real friends were as easy to make and manage as Facebook friends. On Facebook, friendship is not something earned through loyalty, trust, long term endurance or a shared bad experience. It is the result of clicking a key!

Facebook has introduced me to the world of round-the-clock surveillance, fake intimacy and diary entries which everyone can see. But I am gripped by how vacuous the whole thing is. I am fascinated by the superficiality of the friendships, the unapologetic focus on accumulation, the sentimentality of it all and by the ghastly silliness of its tone.

Facebook addiction happens instantly; within moments of joining you feel your life was incomplete without it. However, you need only experience the Facebook effect for a day or two to realize that the real life you scorned was fine as it was. E-mail and telephones did the trick and your modest handful of flesh-and-blood mates might have had their faults, but they also had their merits.

Until Facebook, had anyone ever thought of counting the number of friends they had, or wondering how many more friends each of those friends had, or who had the most friends?

Nobody in this virtual age wants private space, or to do anything without first telling a chorus of people that they are doing it and then sharing the experience. The Facebook phenomenon is part of our preoccupation with a celebrity culture. Networking sites make celebrities of us all. Facebook might present itself as a harmless tool for social networking, but it is really a fight-to-the-death popularity contest. My reaction to Facebook can be summed up as one of bitter disappointment.

(printed in the Sunday Times Lifestyle magazine, 4th November 2007)

VOCABULARY

- a. vacuous: empty, without meaning
- b. to flummox: to baffle, confuse or fool someone
- c. superficial: not deep or thorough
- d. facile: easy, without effort



SECTION A: Comprehension Activity – Answer the following questions in **full sentences** and in **YOUR OWN WORDS** as far as possible. Pay attention to good **punctuation** and **spelling** techniques:

1. Who or what exactly is "FACEBOOK"? (2)
2. Where was it designed? (1)
3. How much is it currently worth? (1)
4. What is more popular than Facebook among American students? (1)
5. How would you go about joining Facebook? (2)
6. "*It is the result of clicking a key!*" How would you describe the attitude of the writer towards Facebook at this point? Explain your answer. (3)
7. What does Frances Wilson find particularly 'gripping' about using the website? (2)
8. "*...within moments of joining you feel your life was incomplete without it.*" How does she contradict herself after making this statement? (2)
9. What point of view about Facebook is she expressing here? (2)
10. How does Frances explain the popularity of the 'Facebook phenomenon'? (2)
11. Explain the phrase '*virtual age*'. (1)

12. MCQ. Choose the correct answer from each of the following:

- a. Frances Wilson has written this article to persuade readers that:
- Facebook is a fantastic website.
 - Facebook allows ordinary people to become famous.
 - Facebook makes a mockery of the notion of friendship.
 - Facebook is an over-rated popularity contest. (1)
- b. How would you describe her overall feelings towards Facebook?
- sentimental and impressed
 - unconvinced and unimpressed
 - cautious and undecided
 - superficial and uncritical (1)

13. The writer uses a number of **FIGURES OF SPEECH** to make her persuasive piece more dynamic. Identify the figures of speech contained in the following words and phrases:

- a. FACEBOOK
- b. Welcome to the hell that is Facebook.
- c. Facebook's popularity has spread like a forest fire.
- d. Facebook – Facile Flummery
- e. Clicking (5)

14. Find a word in the article which is a synonym for:

- hooked on to
- despised (2)

15. Find a word in the article which is an antonym for:

- deadly
- difficult (2)

SUB-TOTAL: 30



SECTION B: LANGUAGE STUDY

70 marks

QUESTION1: **PARTS OF SPEECH.** The article contains a number of words which have been underlined. Match them up to the following labels:



- a. collective noun
- b. abstract noun
- c. action verb
- d. past participle
- e. auxiliary verb
- f. adjective
- g. adverb of manner
- h. adverb of time

[8 x ½ = 4]

QUESTION 2: **CONVERSION OF TENSES:**

- 1. Identify the tense of each of these sentences and label them.
- 2. Rewrite the sentence in the tense indicated.

- a. Facebook presents itself as a harmless tool. **[PAST PERFECT]**
- b. They were counting the number of Facebook friends. **[FUTURE SIMPLE]**
- c. Facebook has affected the lives of millions of people. **[PRESENT CONTINUOUS]**
- d. Your life on Facebook will begin. **[PRESENT PERFECT]**

[4 X 2 = 8]

QUESTION 3: **CONCORD.** Choose the correct form of the verb in brackets:

- a. Neither Frances nor Peter (support/supports) Facebook.
- b. All of them (is/are) looking forward to logging on to Facebook.
- c. The network of users (was/were) logged onto Facebook.
- d. Five hours on Facebook (was/were) long enough for me.
- e. Each of them (has/have) access to the Internet.

[5]

QUESTION 4: Rewrite the following sentences into **INDIRECT SPEECH:**

- a. Frances asked, "Is Facebook really a useful tool?"
- b. "I last logged onto Facebook three days ago, " said Frances.
- c. "Oh no! This guy has just thrown these virtual sheep at me!" said Frances.

[3 x 2 = 6]

QUESTION 5: FIGURES OF SPEECH, THE PUN

Explain the ambiguity created in each of the following humorous headlines:



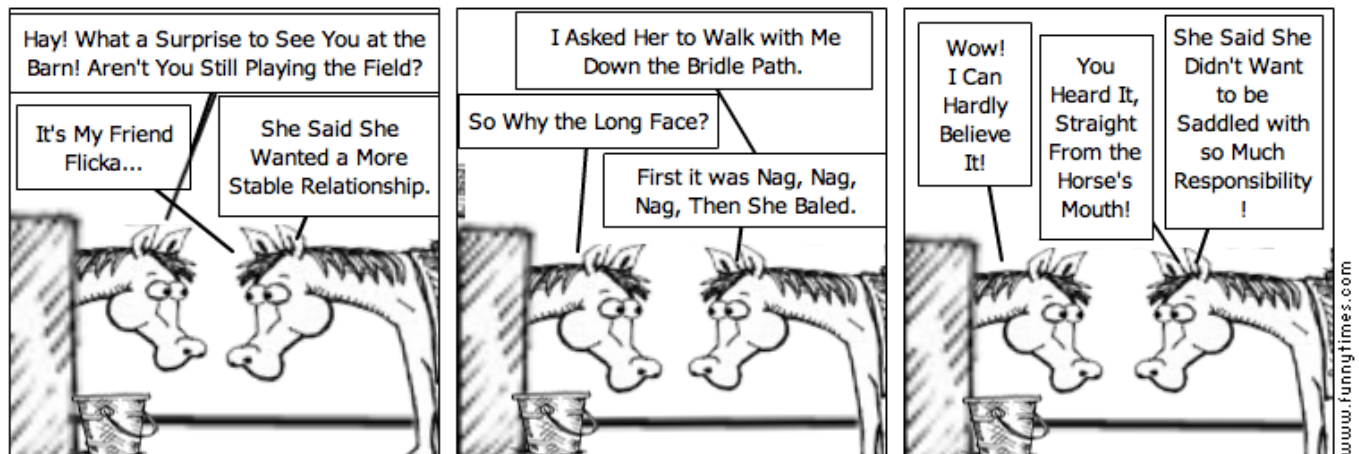
- a. New study of obesity looks for larger test group.
- b. Red Tape holds up New Bridges.
- c. Nutritionists argue that a boiled egg is hard to beat
- d. Workers lose job at a blanket factory when it folded.

[4 x 2 = 8]

QUESTION 6: FIGURES OF SPEECH, THE PUN

Puns are used to create humour in language. The following cartoon is bristling with puns and is an excellent illustration of this. Choose any 4 puns (words and phrases) from the cartoon and explain their ambiguous meanings:

Just Horsing Around by EarthMuffin



[4 x 2 = 8]

QUESTION 7: **IDIOMATIC LANGUAGE.** The following conversation was overheard in the teachers' staffroom. Rewrite the conversation so that no idioms are used and the meaning is quite clear:



Many of the kids in my class seem to be hooked onto Facebook. They think that I'm making a mountain out of a molehill. I suppose I can't help it. Facebook makes my hair stand on end.

You're wasting your time trying to warn them about the dangers of Facebook. They don't realise that they're in it over their heads. What annoys me is that teachers have to step in when someone lands in hot water.



Great minds think alike. You've hit the nail on the head with this issue. Best if we simply wash our hands of this problem. I don't want to appear to be a square peg in a round hole. In any event, I think that Facebook is a real cross for society to bear.



[10]

QUESTION 8: **Proverbs: The wise things people say...**

All these proverbs are muddled. Match the proverbs in Column A with their correct endings in Column B. Complete Column C:

PROVERB	ENDING	MEANING
1. A small leak	gathers no moss.	
2. A drowning man	will sink a ship.	
3. We never miss the water	while the sun shines.	
4. A rolling stone	will clutch at a straw.	
5. Make hay	till the well runs dry	

[10]

QUESTION 9: **PROVERBS.** In this exercise there are a number of brief descriptions of various situations. Write down the proverb that best describes each situation:

- a. At the advice of a fortune teller, you buy a lottery ticket. You then take your friends out for an expensive night on the town in the belief that you will soon be rich.
- b. Tom was already late for school, so he thought he might as well take the rest of the day off.
- c. After trying to make a bookcase and failing dismally, Sebastian tells his father that he really needs a new jigsaw.
- d. Alistair unfortunately falls asleep during the last period of the day. The caretaker locks him in the classroom. More bad luck! Alistair finds a paper clip and uses it to pick the door lock.
- e. Dylan suspects that his best friend has stolen his most valuable Yugioh Card. For the sake of their friendship, he decides to do nothing about it.

[5]

QUESTION 10 **FUN WITH WORDS**

- a. "**Site**" is an example of a **homophone**. Explain why this is so.
- b. What do the following acronyms represent?
 - RADAR
 - COSATU
 - SCUBA
 - LAN
- c. Create an anagram for "**merits**".

[6]

SUB-TOTAL: 70



Once you've reached this point, **STOP!** Take your right hand, reach over your left shoulder... and give yourself a **BIG** pat on the back. You deserve it! (Go on, do it!)



Guess who's got to mark all of this?

Memorandum: COMPREHENSION

1. Facebook is a website that offers people the opportunity to chat with a host of friends while online. (2)
2. It was designed at Harvard University. (1)
3. It is worth \$10 billion. (1)
4. iPod is more popular. (1)
5. You would first need to register online as someone's friend. Then you would need to build up your own list of contacts by using other people's friend lists. (2)
6. She is skeptical/cynical. She is pointing to the fact that Facebook friendships are not really sincere. Far more effort is required for real friendships to be made. Making friends can never be as easy as Facebook users suggest. (3)
7. She is amazed at the superficial nature of the friendships and the insincerity of Facebook users. (2)
8. She goes on to say that this fascination wears off quite quickly when you realize that building real friendships is far more important. (2)
9. Facebook can never replace real friends or tried and tested methods of communication. (2)
10. She argues that people are attracted to Facebook because they desire to be celebrities. (2)
11. This term refers to the fact that our world is dependent on computer technology. (1)
12. a – makes a mockery of the notion of friendship (1)
b - unconvinced and unimpressed (1)
13. a: personification
b: metaphor
c: simile
d: alliteration
e: onomatopoeia (5)
14. addicted/scorned (2)
15. harmless/facile (2)

TOTAL: 30

Memorandum: Language Study

Question 1

- a. chorus
- b. culture
- c. build
- d. introduced
- e. was
- f. soulless
- g. really
- h. three-and-half years ago [4]

Question 2

- a. Facebook presents itself as a harmless tool. **Simple Present**
Facebook had presented itself as a harmless tool. [PAST PERFECT]
- b. They were counting the number of Facebook friends. **Past Continuous**
They will count the number... [FUTURE SIMPLE]
- c. Facebook has affected the lives of millions of people. **Present Perfect**
Facebook is affecting the lives... [PRESENT CONTINUOUS]
- d. Your life on Facebook will begin. **Future Simple**
Your life on facebook has begun. [PRESENT PERFECT]

[4 X 2 = 8]

Question 3

- a. support
- b. are
- c. was
- d. was
- e. has (5)

Question 4

- a. Frances asked if Facebook was really a useful tool.
- b. Frances said that she had last logged onto Facebook three days previously.
- c. Frances exclaimed in disgust that that guy had just thrown those virtual sheep at her.

[3 x 2 = 6]

Question 5

- a. 'Larger' could refer to a bigger group or the size of the people in the group.
- b. The 'Red Tape' could refer to official regulations or to the stickiness of the tape.
- c. Hard-boiled eggs cannot be whipped; they are the best meal to eat.
- d. The factory closed for business; the blankets were literally folded.

[8]

Question 6

Students are expected to begin their explanation using the following lead: 'The word *stable* is a pun because is used ambiguously. It could refer to the place where horses are kept, or its real meaning is to describe the positive relationship that exists.'

[8]

Question 7

Many of the kids in my class are **addicted** to Facebook. They think that I am making a **big fuss** over nothing... Facebook makes me so **angry**. They don't realize that they **cannot control** the situation... when someone gets into **big trouble**. We share the **same view**. You've **spoken the truth**. Best f we simply **ignore** the problem. I don't want to appear not **to fit in**. Facebook is a **burden** to society.

[10]

Question 8

1. will sink a ship: Very often, small, trivial issues will get blown out of proportion. The situation will become worse than it should be.
2. will clutch at a straw: People who are in trouble will seek desperate solutions.
3. till the well runs dry: Be happy, satisfied with what you have – there may not be other opportunities/chances in the future.
4. gathers no moss: People who do not commit to others will not be able to build any bonds with anyone, nor feel that they belong anywhere.
5. while the sun shines: Grasp the opportunity while it is there.

[10]

Question 9

- a. A fool and his money are soon parted.
- b. In for a penny, in for a pound.
- c. A poor worker will always blame his tools.
- d. Necessity is the mother of invention.
- e. Let sleeping dogs lie.

[5]

Question 10

- a. It sounds like the word 'sight' – an abstract noun – ability to see. (1)
- b. RADIO DETECTING AND RANGING; Congress of South African Trade Unions; Self-Contained Underwater Breathing Apparatus; Local Area Network (4)
- c. Timers (1)