



B2 Overall Reading Comprehension (Common European Framework):

Can read with a large degree of independence, adapting style and speed of reading to different texts and purposes, and using appropriate reference sources selectively. Has a broad active reading vocabulary, but may experience some difficulty with low-frequency idioms.

4. TASK IDENTIFIER

TITLE	The Last Review
NUMBER OF WORDS	617
READING BEHAVIOUR	Careful reading
GENERAL FOCUS	Reading for main ideas and supporting details
CEFR LEVEL	B2
TEST METHOD	Multiple Choice Questions
NUMBER OF ITEMS	9



The Last Review

Read the text about a music critic, then choose the correct answer (A, B, C, D) for questions 1-9.

Only one answer is correct.

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

Tom Bates had been music critic at The Herald for almost all of his working life. As an enthusiastic young journalist, he had stepped into the shoes of Bob Black when the respected old music critic dropped dead on his way home from a performance of Fidelio.

That was the only performance that was not reviewed in the whole history of the newspaper. Bob's column was one of The Herald's most popular features and the editor demanded that somebody take over from Bob right away. The problem was that old Bob had had a string of music qualifications to his name. There was nobody at The Herald to match.

"What about you, Bates?" asked the editor. "Know anything about music?" Seeing an opportunity not to be missed, Tom said that he played the piano.

"Splendid!" was the editor's reply. "The next concert's some piano thing. Make up an impressive-sounding pseudonym and get going."

To say he played the piano had actually been a slight exaggeration as Tom's musical career had come to an end at the age of ten over the tricky fingering in Für Elise. The pseudonym hadn't been a problem, though. Tom decided to call himself Major Third. He had no idea what it meant but it was a term he remembered his long-suffering piano teacher using. It had a sophisticated ring to it that would appeal to the elderly readers of the music column, he felt.

There was no denying that Tom had a way with words; his writing was eloquent. However, he had no knowledge of music whatsoever and his first reviews were met with a storm of disapproval. "The Major is a charlatan. Are you even aware that Wolfgang Amadeus and Mozart were one and the same person, sir?" was a typical response to his weekly review on the letters page.

Tom Bates, alias Major Third, was a fraud, but he persevered. He did his homework, checking encyclopedias for important facts before concerts, and in time he got to know names and faces on the classical music scene. As the years passed, the old generation of Bob's fans died out, Tom charmed the new wave of readers with his elegant prose, and by the time he was a senior at The Herald, there was hardly anybody left who remembered the day he had taken over from Bob Black. Major Third's opinion was respected and quoted at dinner parties and no one seemed to notice that he knew next to nothing about the subject he wrote so convincingly about.



It was around the time that the internet became popular that Tom stopped going to the concerts, some of them at least. He soon realized that with a little cyber surfing and a couple of CDs, he could write just as good a review without leaving his own fireside. On a cold winter's night he could have his review written and be sitting watching his favourite detective series on TV before the audience at the concert had even struggled to the bar for their drinks at the interval.

It was unfortunate that the night the young Albanian soprano Edona Luga was due to sing the lead in Handel's Semele, Tom decided to go to the performance. If he had stayed at home, he would have heard on the news that Edona had tripped getting off the plane and broken her ankle and that the opera company would be staging Monteverdi's L'Orfeo instead. It was doubly unfortunate that Tom arrived a little late for the performance and didn't get a programme. Major Third's review in The Herald next day was as eloquent and inspired as ever but, sadly, it was to be his last.



0 Tom Bates became music critic at The Herald

- A because he was an experienced journalist.
- B because Bob Black gave up the job.
- C when The Herald's music critic retired.
- D when something unexpected happened.

Q1 The most important thing for The Herald was that

- A they found somebody similar to Bob.
- B Bob was replaced immediately.
- C somebody wrote about Fidelio immediately.
- D Bob was replaced by somebody younger.

Q2 Tom got the job because

- A nobody else had the time or the interest.
- B the editor had known he played an instrument.
- C he was good at inventing names.
- D he claimed to have a relevant skill.

Q3 Tom chose the name Major Third because

- A it had been his piano teacher's name.
- B it sounded appropriate for a music critic.
- C the older generation were often snobs.
- D a musical name was best for a music critic.

Q4 When Tom started the job,

- A many readers were annoyed.
- B readers protested after a concert of Mozart.
- C nobody realized how well he could write.
- D it was clear he would succeed eventually.

Q5 Tom soon started

- A meeting performers.
- B doing research.
- C going to concerts after work.
- D to accept he was no good.

Q6 After a while, Tom managed to

- A become more popular than Bob Black.
- B learn everything about music.
- C write in exactly the same way as Bob Black.
- D make people think he was a music expert.



- Q7** Finally, Tom stayed at home to write his reviews because
- A recordings were better than live music.
 - B he hated queuing for drinks at the concerts.
 - C it was easier than doing his job properly.
 - D he preferred to watch Sherlock Holmes on TV.
- Q8** The opera company changed their plans
- A and the time of the performance.
 - B and showed an opera Tom wanted to see.
 - C because of an unforeseen problem.
 - D because the soloist had missed her flight.
- Q9** Tom's last review showed that he
- A did not know which opera he had seen.
 - B was not such a good writer after all.
 - C knew L'Orfeo better than Semele.
 - D was too good a critic for The Herald.