

10 Final Test – Answer Key

A READING COMPREHENSION

1. **Give a short overview** of the conduct of this research.

Robert McCrae, of the US National Institute on Ageing, led this research which is the "most comprehensive international study of its kind". We get to know that 49 groups all over the world took part in this study which was conducted by a team of 84 psychologists and was published on October the 7th in 2005 in the journal "Science".

First, Dr McCrae estimated the average levels of particular traits in each of 49 cultures, using standard personality surveys that assess people on the following key variables: "neuroticism, extroversion, openness to experience, agreeableness and conscientiousness".

Second, another 3,989 people had to answer questions on typical members of their own nationalities.

2. **Summarise** the conclusions which can be drawn from this newspaper article **by giving evidence** from the text and **by taking** the "kernel-of-truth hypothesis" into account.

The "kernel-of-truth hypothesis" suggests that there is a small amount of truth in every stereotypical statement. This may be true for example for gender stereotypes but this text reveals that at least national character stereotypes are "not founded on even a kernel of truth", which means that there's not a bit of truth in these prejudices. Starting with the belief that Englishmen are reserved and staid, conventional and closed-minded, the article summarizes some of the findings of McCrae's research. The English, however, are "relatively open" and extroverted.

However, there were at least some positive correlations when people were "asked to describe typical members of their own nationalities". The Australians, for instance, seem to be outgoing to others and to themselves.

3. "Dr McCrae now plans to lead a similar investigation of attitudes towards the elderly." **Give an example** of a third possible area of investigating stereotypes and **explain** why you think that it suggests itself.

Women don't know how to drive cars. Women are made for cleaning and taking care of their children. Men hate to go shopping. Men drink beer and watch soccer on TV in their free time. Having listed those stereotypes, it gets clear that a third possible area of investigation could be gender stereotypes. It suggests itself because these prejudices are a part of our every day lives, they are the basis of a high percentage of jokes and they definitely have a grain of truth in them.

B COMPOSITION

CHOOSE ONE OF THE FOLLOWING TOPICS. WRITE 120 TO 150 WORDS.

1. "If we were to wake up some morning and find that everyone was the same race, creed and color, we would find some other cause for prejudice by noon" (George Aiken). Discuss.

individual answers

2. Prejudices will live forever. Discuss.

individual answers

ideas titles:

- ☐ Prejudices will live forever. Clever?
- ☐ Prejudices will live forever. Never!
- ☐ All Scots Are Stingy and All Italians Unreliable

idea introduction:

national stereotypes – Italians unreliable and passionate, English not polite, German hard-working, Scots stingy

idea conclusion:

It is not true that prejudices will live forever, but we can say that they are difficult to eradicate.

3. "Many foreigners [...] seriously believe that the English have little or no humour" (J.B. Priestley). — Do you agree with these foreigners?

individual answers

C MEDIATION

Die Ergebnisse des Teams mit 84 Psychologen, die heute in der Zeitschrift *Science* veröffentlicht wurden, belegen aber klar, dass Nationalklischees nicht auf Beobachtungen tatsächlicher Individuen beruhen, sondern kulturelle Phänomene sind. Sie können eine gewisse Rolle beim Erhalt der nationalen Identität spielen, aber sie sind ungeeignet, um den möglichen Charakter irgendeines Individuums vorherzusagen – so die Wissenschaftler.

Dr. McCrae sagte, dass „die Körnchen-Wahrheit-Hypothese“ offensichtlich nicht auf den nationalen Charakter zutrifft. Nationale Klischees können zwar ein paar Informationen über eine Kultur bieten, aber sie beschreiben keine Menschen. Tatsächlich können ungünstige Klischees eventuell sogar gefährlich sein, da sie als Grundlage von Vorurteilen, Diskriminierung, Verfolgung und sogar Völkermord dienen.

(Daniela Pröls)