

ENGLISH LANGUAGE EXAM SAMPLE FOR MUSIC MAJORS

Date: 27/09/2024

Full name: _____

Signature: _____

PART 1:

1. Reading comprehension

For reasons little understood by science, children as young as four or five years old sometimes demonstrate astonishing musical talent beyond the ability of many adults. Mozart is the prototypical child prodigy, but other famous composers also began as prodigies, including Chopin, Liszt, and Mendelssohn. Many contemporary world-class musicians began as child wonders, including pianist and conductor Daniel Barenboim and cellist Yo-Yo Ma.

But life is not always easy for these wonderkids. Gangly, pimply adolescents tend to lack the charm of precocious children, and audience standards are higher for performers who abruptly cease to be unique. In reaction, some former prodigies decide to abandon performing in favour of a more normal existence. Pianist Marnen Laibow-Koser, for example, gave up a promising career to attend college, take up Web design, and learn Klingon. Others go through a period of self-doubt and then make a comeback with even greater success, such as violinist Julian Rachlin, who stopped performing in 1994 when he turned twenty but returned to the stage in 1997 and now tours widely.

Not all prodigies are so lucky. Violinist Josef Hassid had a nervous breakdown at age eighteen, was diagnosed with schizophrenia at twenty, and died of a botched lobotomy at twenty-six. Pianist Terence Judd debuted with the London Philharmonic at twelve but committed suicide at twenty-two. Other stories are more sordid than tragic: Pianist Ervin Nyiregyházi was schlepped around Europe to perform at only six years old, soloed at Buckingham Palace at eight, and was a celebrity in both Europe and the United States in his teens. However, within a few years, the “new Liszt” had earned a reputation as an arrogant, temperamental prima donna with debilitating stage fright. He acquired ten wives along with an addiction to alcohol, but often lacked a piano, which was hard to haul to his flophouse.

Word to the wise: If your preschooler shows miraculous musical talent, think twice before pushing him or her to be a prodigy.

1. What is the main idea of the text?
 - a. Child prodigies often struggle later in life.
 - b. Many famous composers and musicians were once child prodigies.
 - c. Pushing a child to become a prodigy can have negative consequences.
 - d. Being a child prodigy guarantees a successful career in music.

2. According to the text, child prodigies...
 - a. tend to give up a promising career.
 - b. are children who show a great ability at a young age.
 - c. usually become ill and die at a young age.
 - d. are not unique.
3. Some very talented artists...
 - a. doubt that they can ever have an ordinary life.
 - b. stop being unique.
 - c. lack musical talent in childhood.
 - d. choose to have an ordinary life and career.
4. According to the text, stage fright can cause...
 - a. weakness
 - b. nervousness
 - c. anxiety
 - d. temperament
5. What factor makes it difficult for adolescent prodigies to maintain their uniqueness?
 - a. Lack of practice and dedication.
 - b. Changes in physical appearance.
 - c. Higher audience standards.
 - d. Loss of passion for music.
6. According to the author, some former prodigies...
 - a. had a life that can be described as morally wrong and shocking.
 - b. were pushed by their parents to become child prodigies.
 - c. died of various diseases.
 - d. never get married.
7. What cautionary advice is given by the author regarding preschoolers, who show exceptional musical talent?
 - a. Encourage them to become prodigies at all costs.
 - b. Provide them with intense training from a young age.
 - c. Be cautious when nurturing young musical talent.
 - d. Support their musical education without any reservations.

Vocabulary task

8. The verb *to schlep* means:
 - a. to hit with the flat part of the hand or other flat object
 - b. to move with effort and difficulty
 - c. to perform in front of an audience
 - d. to have a tragic fate

9. *Stage fright* is a term used to describe:
- fear of forgetting the lines
 - fear or nervousness felt when appearing in court
 - fear of the dark
 - fear or nervousness felt when appearing before an audience
10. The adjective *sordid* means:
- decent
 - moral
 - immoral
 - honourable
11. The opposite of the verb *to cease* is:
- to stop
 - to halt
 - to expire
 - to start
12. If a child is *precocious*, they are showing:
- signs of depression
 - early mental development
 - a good example
 - signs of prematurity
13. The antonym of the phrasal verb *to take up* is:
- to take down
 - to engage in
 - to let down
 - to give up
14. The adjective *prototypical* means:
- stereotypical
 - atypical
 - unconventional
 - non-typical
15. *Nervous breakdown* refers to a period of:
- growing anger and urge to break things
 - growing nervousness
 - mental illness, that results in anxiety, difficulty living and working as usual
 - mechanical failure

3. Grammar Task:

16. If there (...) good weather next weekend, we (...) a barbecue.
- is / will have
 - will be / have
 - will be / will have
 - is / have
17. Students regularly (...) snacks from vending machines during the breaks.
- buys
 - buy
 - is buying
 - are buying
18. I stepped out of the building, and my car was nowhere. I found out that it (...) by the authorities.
- has removed
 - had been removed
 - has been removed
 - was removing
19. We (...) a labour union, but they (...) to do much for us.
- were having / didn't seem
 - had / didn't seem
 - had / wasn't seeming
 - were having / didn't seemed
20. I (...) in touch with him a few weeks ago.
- had
 - took
 - got
 - made
21. I (...) up my mind. You can't change my opinion.
- 've already made up
 - 've already make up
 - has already made up
 - already made up
22. 'Sorry, Lena, I (...) the glass if I (...) so nervous now about our guest.'
'Stop worrying about him! Go wash your hands, and I'll pick up the shards.'
- wouldn't have dropped / weren't
 - wouldn't drop / hadn't been
 - won't drop / wasn't
 - didn't drop / hadn't been

23. 'How long (...) him?' / 'Since high school. We're old friends. So can I speak to him?'
- did you know
 - do you know
 - have you known
 - has you known
24. 'Well, he's bought an engagement ring to her. What more proof do you want? I'm telling you, they (...) married.'
- 're going to get
 - 'll going to get
 - will get
 - get
25. By the time they found him, he (...) in the woods for 16 hours.
- was
 - had been
 - has been
 - were
26. Not so fast! I just need to stop (...) my breath for a second.
- catching
 - to catching
 - catch
 - to catch
27. If I (...) savings in the bank, we (...) able to prepare for our wedding. But I do, and I'm glad for that.
- don't have / won't be
 - didn't have / wouldn't be
 - hadn't had / wouldn't been
 - wouldn't have / couldn't be
28. *Pick the question that fits the answer:*
'Simone's team. They are the best.'
- Which team did the competition win?
 - Which competition did the team win?
 - Which did the team win the competition?
 - Which team won the competition?
29. You'd better (...) as she says. Don't rock the boat!
- to do
 - doing
 - to doing
 - do

30. I had my phone turned off. I (...) when you called. It went pretty well, I think.

- a. was interviewed
- b. was being interviewed
- c. have been interviewed
- d. am being interviewed

PART 2: Speaking

The candidate randomly picks a card from the table. Each card has a topic and a set of questions:

Self-Taught Musicians

Child Prodigies

Music and Films

Video Game Music

Music Therapy

Women Composers

Earworm Songs

Opera Libretti

The Impact of Music on the Human Brain

Pro Advice on How to Succeed

Example of a set of questions:

Child Prodigies:

1. Is musical talent hereditary, innate, or acquired?
2. What difficulties do talented children or prodigies have?
3. In what way is a talented child's life different from that of an average child?
4. How would you handle your own child prodigy if you had one?
5. If music were valued as much as learning a language, do you think more people would have the ability to play an instrument?

Assessment:

- **Part 1:**

30 multiple choice questions (Reading comprehension / Vocabulary / Grammar) → 30 points

- 0-14 overall correct answers: FAIL
- 15-30 overall correct answers: PASS

- **Part 2: (Only available if Part 1 results in PASS)**

5 questions (Speaking)

→ 30 points

10 points for Content (Relevance and Quality of Answers)

10 points for Language (Grammar and Vocabulary)

10 points for Communication Skills (Fluency, Pronunciation, Style, Interaction)

Source material to prepare for the exam:

Pop Antonia, Izsák Hajnalka, Szabó Roland-Attila. *Partium Language Exams – English Language – 10 topics for students with specialisation in Music*. Partium kiadó, 2023