

## EPISODE 32

### LEVEL B2

#### READING COMPREHENSION



#### GENIUS

People are amazed when a 14-year-old boy **obtains** (=gets) a first class degree in physics, or a 9-year-old becomes a chess champion. They would straightaway be called **geniuses**. It's not always the case, however, that a genius **emerges** (= comes out) at an early age. Take Einstein for example. He is said to have been very slow at school. Shakespeare, too, was not the most clever student you can imagine. Another thing is that a lot of children are **talented**, but it's some parents' **over-ambition** that makes them **push** (=force) **their children into** music, maths or whatever else. Such kids, whether they like it or not, become even more talented than the others. True genius is often **inherited** (= taken from parents) in the genes, since unusual abilities tend to **run in the family** (= a lot of people in the family are good at or interested in the same thing).



Obviously, there are some advantages of being a genius. Things that ordinary people have to work at would come easily to you and it would be easier for you to choose a future career. And on top of that, people would respect and admire you.

On the other hand, it's certain that some hyper-talented children would enjoy being ordinary boys or girls rather than **prodigies**. Why? If you were a genius you could find it hard to build relationships with other people, and as a result feel a bit lonely. You might also have problems with learning very practical things. Last but not least, being aware of your abilities, you could feel **superior to** other people and not be able to respect them as they deserve. So, when you discover a talent in your child, think twice if you really want them to turn into a genius!

#### More contexts for the new words:

- **You don't have to be a genius to** see that it won't make sense. (= spoken: used for saying that something is obvious)
- I'm sure he will resign if you **push him** too far. (= make him impatient/annoyed by behaving in an unreasonable way)
- He was respected for his **superior knowledge of** the topic. (= better than someone else's in quality)



### EXERCISE 1

Complete the sentences with the missing words. The first letters are given to help you.

1. When I finish my studies, I will o..... a degree in physics.
2. Very successful at an early age, Mozart was definitely a child p.....
3. If you're vain, you think you're s..... to everyone else.
4. The talent for music runs in Mike's f.....
5. After his grandma died, John i..... her house. She'd left it to him in his will.
6. Parents often p..... their children into too many extracurricular activities at the same time.
7. They spent hours observing Loch Ness, and finally Nessie e.....!
8. He is quite intelligent, but I wouldn't really call him a g.....



### EXERCISE 2

Match the question halves, then answer the questions.

- |  |                                       |
|--|---------------------------------------|
| 1. Would you like your child to be     | a. a genius? Why/ why not?            |
| 2. What would you most like to inherit | b. in your family?                    |
| 3. What talent runs                    | c. from your parents or grandparents? |

## ENGLISH IN USE



In the previous lesson we had a look at a structure ('I wish/If only') which allows you to dream about a present situation and imagine things which are totally different from what is happening now. I hope you noticed a similar structure in today's text. Look at the following sentences:

*'If you were a genius, you could find it hard to build relationships with other people and you might have problems with learning practical things.'*

This sentence is similar to 'I wish' sentences because it's also imagining some situation, not true at present (because we are talking about someone who is not a genius now, but maybe wishes he was one).

This structure is called the 2<sup>nd</sup> conditional. You use it to talk about the present situation, but in terms of dreaming and speculating, that's why it is unreal. The most important thing to remember here is that IF has to be followed by a past tense (simple or continuous), like in 'I wish' structure. The second part of the 2<sup>nd</sup> conditional sentence can include '*would/could/might*', depending on the degree of probability or improbability.

Normally you can't say 'I were', but in the 2<sup>nd</sup> conditional it's not a mistake, it's allowed and quite often used, especially to give advice:

*If I were you, I'd take this job.*

*If I were him, I would feel the same.*

Look at other examples of 2<sup>nd</sup> conditional:

*What would you do if you saw a ghost?*

*He would be angry if he saw Hanna with her ex-boyfriend.*

## IDIOM CLOSE-UP



*A/ Hi son, how was the project at school?*

*B/ Not too well, it turned out I had made some terrible mistakes. But I still got an **A FOR EFFORT**.*

If you get an **A for effort**, you receive recognition that you've tried hard to do something, even though you may not be successful.

## PHRASAL VERBS CLOSE-UP



1. When you **GO OVER** something, you practice and repeat it in order to learn it.

*I'm not a genius – I just spend lots of time **going over** my course work.*

*Mike's going to help me **go over** my lines for the play.*

2. When you **DROP OUT**, you leave a school or university before your course has finished.

*Paradoxically, a lot of geniuses **drop out** of the formal education system.*

*Too many students **drop out** of college after only one year.*



### EXERCISE 3

Rearrange the sentences to form a logical story.

- As a result, he failed many tests, but his teachers sometimes gave him an A for effort.
- He spent hours going over the material he had done at school, but he forgot everything quickly.
- He spent the rest of his life happily working as a chef.
- Patrick wasn't a genius.
- Unfortunately, this wasn't enough, and he soon dropped out of school.

## NEWS



### ARE YOU A GENIUS?

You already know you're rather smart (otherwise you wouldn't be studying these lessons), but have you ever had the **nagging** doubt whether you are really and truly brilliant? Well, the moment of truth has arrived. By answering just five simple questions you can check if you're Einstein **reincarnated**. So get down to work!

1. Can you name all the chemical **elements** from Mendeleev's **periodic table**?  
YES – NO – MAYBE
2. Can you name (in Latin) at least five **species** that were **contemporary with** Tyrannosaurus rex?  
YES – NO – MAYBE
3. Do you remember the birth dates, death dates, and coronation dates, of at least five **consecutive** Polish monarchs?  
YES – NO – MAYBE
4. Can you name the capital cities of at least one hundred countries?  
YES – NO – MAYBE
5. Can you identify at least one hundred works of Beethoven when you hear them?  
YES – NO – MAYBE

*Now count your 'YES' answers.*

5 'YES' answers – congratulations, you're a real genius! You're bound to get the Nobel prize next year!

4 'YES' answers – well done, you're well on your way to being an academic celebrity!

3 'YES' answers – not bad, you might consider giving up your job so that you can spend more time developing your brain.

2 'YES' answers – sorry, you're not too brilliant, but your children still might be really bright.

1 'YES' answer – how come you're reading this?

### GLOSSARY

- **nagging** – constant
- **reincarnated** – brought back to life
- **elements** – pure chemical substances, e.g. oxygen, nitrogen, coal
- **periodic table** – Mendeleev's board of chemical elements
- **species** – biological groups
- **contemporary with** – living at the same time as
- **consecutive** – one after another

## KEY TO EXERCISES

### Ex.1

1. obtain
2. prodigy
3. superior
4. family
5. inherited
6. push
7. emerged
8. genius

### Ex. 2

1. a
2. c
3. b

### Ex.3

d, b, a, e, c.