

# Entry Test 2024

## Lycée Argouges Grenoble

### International American Section (BFI)

#### **Part 1: Reading Comprehension (20 points)**

Answer the questions on a separate answer sheet.

#### **Part 2: Written Expression (20 points)**

Write your answer on a separate answer sheet.

Choose ONE subject. Write about 250 words.

*Parts 1 and 2 shall be done in one hour and thirty minutes.*

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#### **Part 3: Oral Comprehension (20 points)**

Write your answer on a separate answer sheet.

About 20 minutes.

## Written Comprehension

“Here’s your paper.” Vinnie’s seatmate holds out the London Times, clumsily refolded.

“Oh. Thank you.” To avoid further requests for it from other passengers, she places the newspaper in her lap beneath Vogue.

“Thank you. Not much in it.”

Since this is not phrased as a question, Vinnie is not obliged to respond, and does not. Not much of what? she wonders. Perhaps of American news, sports events, middlebrow comment, or even advertisements, in comparison to whatever paper he habitually reads. Or perhaps, being used to screaming headlines and exclamatory one-sentence paragraphs, he has been misled by the typographical and stylistic restraint of the Times into thinking that nothing of importance occurred in the world yesterday. And perhaps nothing has...

Setting aside Vogue, she unfolds the newspaper. Gradually, the leisurely Times style, with its air of measured consideration and its undertone of educated irony, begins to calm her, as the voice of an English nanny might quiet a hurt, overwrought child.

“You on your way to London?”

“What? Yes.” Caught as it were in the act, she admits her destination, and returns her glance to the story Nanny is telling her about Prince Charles.

“Glad to get out of that New York weather, I bet.”

Again Vinnie agrees, but in such a way as to make it clear that she does not choose to converse. She shifts her body and the tissuey sheets of the paper toward the window, though nothing can be seen there. The plane seems to stand still, shuddering with a monotonous regularity, while ragged gray billows of cloud churn past.

However long the flight, Vinnie always tries to avoid striking up acquaintance with anyone, especially on transatlantic journeys. According to her calculations, there is far more chance of having to listen to some bore for seven-and-a-half hours than of meeting someone interesting—and after all, whom even among her friends would she want to converse with for so long?

Besides, this man looks like someone Vinnie would hardly want to converse with for seven-and-a-half minutes. His dress and speech proclaim him to be, probably, a Southern Plains States businessman of no particular education or distinction; the sort of

person who goes on package tours to Europe. And indeed the carry-on bag that rests between his oversize Western-style leather boots is pasted with the same sun tours logo she had noticed earlier: fat comic-book letters enclosing a grinning Disney sun. Physically too he is of a type she has never cared for: big, ruddy, blunt-featured, with cropped coarse graying red hair. Some women would consider him attractive in a weather-beaten Western way; but Vinnie has always preferred in men an elegant slimness, fair fine hair and skin, small well-cut features—the sort of looks that are an idealized male version of her own.

Half an hour later, as she refolds the Times and gets out a novel, she glances again at her companion. He is wedged heavily in his seat, neither dozing nor reading, although the airline magazine lies limp on his broad knees. For a moment she speculates as to what sort of man would embark on a transatlantic flight without reading materials, categorizing him as philistine and as improvident. It was foolish of him to count on passing the time in conversation: even if he didn't happen to be seated beside someone like Vinnie, he might well have been placed next to foreigners or children. What will he do now, just sit there?

As the plane drones on, Vinnie's question is answered. At intervals her seatmate gets up and walks toward the rear, returning each time smelling unpleasantly of burnt tobacco. Vinnie, who detests cigarettes, wonders irritably why he didn't request a seat in the smoking section.<sup>1</sup> He rents headphones from the stewardess, fits the plastic pieces into his large red ears, and listens to the low-grade recorded noise – evidently without satisfaction, since he keeps switching channels. Finally he rises again and, standing in the aisle, converses with a member of his tour group in the seat ahead, and then for even longer with two others in the seats behind. Vinnie realizes that she is surrounded by Sun Tourists, the representatives of all she deplores and despises in her native land and is going to London to get away from.

Alison Lurie, *Foreign Affairs*, 1984.

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<sup>1</sup> In the 1980s, when this story was written, commercial airplanes had a smoking section and a non-smoking section on board.

# I - Written Comprehension - 20 points

## Note to candidates:

- Keep your answers short.
- Write in complete sentences.
- Answer the questions in the order given.
- Indicate the question number (ex: Q2c).

1. Where does the scene take place?

2. The characters:

2a. Who are the two characters?

2b. What is their nationality?

2c. Where are they going?

2d. How long is their trip?

3. Consider the dialogue between the characters:

3a. For each line, identify which character is speaking:

- I. "Here's your paper."
- II. "Oh. Thank you."
- III. "Thank you. Not much in it."
- IV. "You on your way to London?"
- V. "What? Yes."
- VI. "Glad to get out of that New York weather, I bet."

3b. What does the dialogue reveal about the relationship between the characters and about them? Justify your answer.

4. Compare and contrast the two characters' attitudes in the text.
5. Whose point of view does the story give?
  
6. What is your personal opinion about the character of Vinnie? Justify your answer with at least two examples from the text.
7. Why is each character traveling?
  
8. How do you interpret the following lines? What is the tone?

“Vinnie realizes that she is surrounded by Sun Tourists, the representatives of all she deprecates and despises in her native land and is going to London to get away from.”

## **II - Written Expression – 20 points**

**Choose ONE topic and write about 250 words. Write your answer in a new answer booklet.**

- A. Creative writing: Rewrite the story from Vinnie's seatmate's perspective.
- B. Personal reflection: Write about a time when you judged someone too quickly.
- C. Essay: Why are people judgmental of others?

### **III – Oral Comprehension – 20 points**

**About 20 minutes. Write your answer in a new answer booklet.**

You are going to watch a one minute and sixteen second video.

Report in French OR in English what you understood in a coherent way.

**Procedure:**

You will listen to the whole document three times. After the first and second viewing you will have one minute to take notes. Following the third viewing, you will have ten minutes to write your report.

**Format:**

You must present the document (type of document, how many people speak, in which setting, with what purpose...).

Then you must report what you understood using paragraphs (one set of ideas in the document corresponding to one paragraph of your report).

Finally, you can comment on the tone or attitude of the speakers.

**Title of the video:**

“Taylor Swift is Time Magazine’s Person of the Year for 2023” (Global News, December 7<sup>th</sup>, 2023)