

### SÈRIE 3

#### A WORD-LEARNING DOG

#### PART ONE: READING COMPREHENSION

*Choose the best answer according to the text. [0,5 points for each correct answer]*

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1. The first experiment with Rico proves that ...

- A. young children use fast-mapping to learn new words.
- B. matching new words to new objects is a social ability.
- C. communicative abilities are a quality pet owners show.
- D. **fast-mapping may be used by animals.**

2. Evolution from understanding to talking ...

- A. is related to the matching of new words to new objects.
- B. **may be the result of alterations in the neural system.**
- C. is due only to factors closely linked to comprehension.
- D. results from voluntary control and precise articulation of sounds.

3. One of the theories seems to indicate that in the process of language evolution...

- A. monkeys do not gesture because they have good hand control.
- B. **gestures must exist before language.**
- C. language is a pre-requisite to all kinds of gesturing.
- D. there are other factors but perhaps not in terms of social relationships.

4. The second experiment with Rico ...

- A. **was carried out to prove independence of language from visible clues.**
- B. included placing seven unknown objects in another room.
- C. showed that Rico picked up only randomly chosen objects.
- D. showed that Rico's performance was lower than 60%.

5. To check whether the association between new word and new object still existed, Rico...

- A. was given eight new toys, including the learned one.
- B. performed well -over 60% in the given test.
- C. was submitted to a new experiment.**
- D. performed well but not as well as the average young child.

6. Rico's exceptional performance may be the result of his ...

- A. addiction to habit-creating drugs.
- B. similarity to apes in comprehension skills.
- C. advanced age and long cohabitation with humans.
- D. strong desire and impulse to learn.**

7. Which of these sentences is true according to the text?

- A. We may find that only animals smarter than Rico can be language trained.
- B. Apes and other animals also talk.
- C. The future may reveal that other smart animals can be trained to talk.**
- D. Eventually we may find that all animals are smart and can be language trained.

8. In this article, experiments with animal language skills ...

- A. are based on object recognition and retrieval following verbal orders.**
  - B. show that pets' communicative abilities easily go beyond the 200-word limit.
  - C. show random performance depending on gesturing abilities.
  - D. show that only familiar toys are recognized.
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**PIECES OF AN ANCIENT CULTURE**

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**Listening Comprehension (Tapescript)**

In the following conversation you are going to hear some new words. Read and listen to them. Make sure you know what they mean

*resort*: poble turístic / pueblo turístico

*unearth*: desenterrar / desenterrar

*wear off*: gastar / gastar

*gather*: collir / recoger

*turmoil*: confusió, agitació / confusión, agitación

*undermine*: afeblir / socavar, debilitar

Ready?

Now read the questions on the following page. Read them carefully before listening to the conversation.

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Keith and his friend Melissa are students at the University of Maryland. After their summer vacation, they meet at a popular campus cafe and Melissa tells Keith about her trip to Mexico. She spent three months in the Yucatan peninsula participating in an archaeological project conducted by Dr. Hall, their American History professor. During her stay there, Melissa had a chance to travel around the area visiting some of the most important Maya ruins and learning about the scientific achievements of the Maya civilization and their enigmatic writing system. Of course, she also had some time to enjoy the wonderful beaches and seaside resorts of the Caribbean coast before she had to fly back to the United States.

[now listen to the conversation]

Keith: Hi Melissa, how are you? When did you get back from Mexico?

Melissa: I got back last week, just in time for the beginning of classes. How was your summer?

Keith: It was good, thank you, I went hiking with my brother. But I'm sure your summer was much more exciting than mine. You have to tell me all about it.

Melissa: Actually, yes, it was the most exciting summer of my life. When I decided to apply for the assistant position in Dr. Hall's team I could not imagine all the things I was going to experience and learn about. Even though I was a little concerned before leaving, I think I have learned more in three months about Maya history and archaeology than I would have in three years of classes.

Keith: So tell me, did you travel to Mexico by yourself or did the whole team travel together?

Melissa: I went there by myself. I flew into Merida, the Yucatan capital, from Mexico City, and from there I had to take a bus to the town that was closest to the archaeological site. Once I got there, I had to contact one of Dr. Hall's Mexican assistants and he took me to the site. It took us over two days, first in an old truck, and then, once the road ended, on foot across really dense forest, until we got to the base camp.

Keith: What kind of work did you do at the site?

Melissa: I was in charge of cleaning and classifying pieces of ceramic that the members of the team unearthed in the different chambers inside the pyramid.

Keith: That doesn't sound like a difficult job.

Melissa: In general it wasn't, but some of the pieces were really small and most of the color had worn off. Others, however, could easily be identified as being parts of different types of containers. Some even had clearly identifiable chunks of writing on them.

Keith: Really? Did you classify those in a separate box?

Melissa: No, whenever I found any of those, I had to bring them to the team's linguist, who told me about the writing system of the ancient Mayas. This system is made up of symbols known as glyphs, and it was not deciphered until the 20th century.

Keith: What else did you learn about the Maya civilization?

Melissa: I learned about the different buildings that usually made up their towns and cities, and how most of these buildings were situated around the central pyramid, which was used mostly for religious ceremonies. I also found out about their knowledge of astronomy and the very sophisticated calendar that they had developed. One of the most interesting things about the Maya civilization is that no one really knows why it declined so rapidly after many centuries of splendor.

Keith: Any ideas?

Melissa: Actually, some of the evidence that Dr. Hall has been collecting seems to indicate that internal war and turmoil among the different Maya groups may have led to the disintegration of their social organization.

Keith: I see, and do you get to know all of that from looking at pieces of ceramic?

Melissa: Well, from that and many other findings about their civilization, but I am happy thinking that I made a small contribution to our knowledge of how the Maya lived and what made them abandon their fabulous cities, their ceremonies and their lifestyle in general.

Keith: While you were in Mexico, how did you manage with the language?

Melissa: At first it was really difficult for me to understand Mexicans. The Spanish I had learned at school was really insufficient. But after a couple of weeks I got used to it and I was able to communicate with most people. For me, however, the most fascinating thing was to discover that most of the people in that area actually still speak Mayan.

Keith: Really? That's fascinating! Did you learn any?

Melissa: Ignacio, one of our assistants, tried to teach me a few words and phrases, but I found it very difficult. Still, it was great seeing that at least some part of this great past civilization still survives today.

Keith: And so, after you finished at the site, did you fly back directly to the US?

Melissa: No, I decided to take a few extra days and spend some time at the beach before coming back home.

Keith: That sounds like an excellent idea. You must have had a great time there.

Melissa: Well, after spending nearly three months in the middle of the forest surrounded by nothing but trees and ancient ruins, it was quite a shock again to arrive in Cancun, with all the noise, the lights, and the life of a big tourist resort. But once I was lying on the beach I managed to relax and enjoy my time there.

Keith: Well, you know what? Tomorrow is registration day and, guess what course I'm planning to register for this year? Dr. Hall's American history class!!

Melissa: Excellent!! Maybe next year you can go to the Yucatan and continue my work cleaning and classifying ceramics!!

Keith: Oh! That's a tempting possibility!

### **Pauta de correcció**

Choose the most appropriate answer according to the text. Only one answer is correct. Look at number 0 as an example.

[0,25 points each correct answer; wrong answers will be penalized (-0,08)]

0. Dr. Hall is a professor of...

- a) the Maya language.
- b) archaeology.

**c) American history.**

d) Mexican history.

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1. During her stay in Mexico, Melissa learned more about...

a) Maya history than in the last three years.

**b) Maya history in three months than if she had attended classes for three years.**

c) Maya archaeology than history.

d) the Maya archaeology and history classes she would take in the next three years.

2. In order to get to the archaeological site, Melissa had to travel by...

a) plane, bus, car and truck.

b) plane, bus, car and on foot.

c) bus, truck and taxi.

**d) plane, bus, truck and on foot.**

3. Maya glyphs were...

a) first discovered in the 20th century.

b) only known by linguists until the 20th century.

**c) deciphered in the 20th century.**

d) first used as a writing system in the 20th century.

4. The towns of the ancient Maya were...

**a) built around a central building used for religious ceremonies.**

b) organized according to their calendar.

c) designed taking into consideration their knowledge of astronomy.

d) made up of pyramids used mostly for religious purposes.

5. The end of the Maya civilization may have been precipitated by the...

- a) fact that they abandoned their fabulous cities, their ceremonies, and their lifestyle.
- b) disintegration of their social organization caused by war and turmoil.**
- c) many centuries of splendor.
- d) disintegration of the different Maya groups.

6. While she was in Mexico, Melissa...

- a) taught Castilian Spanish to Ignacio.
- b) taught Ignacio a few words and phrases in Mayan.
- c) discovered that the Maya language is still spoken in Mexico.**
- d) was able to communicate with most people from the very beginning.

7. In Cancun Melissa...

- a) lay on the beach and tried to forget her time in the forest.
- b) was shocked by all the lights and the noise of the big resort.**
- c) spent a few days surrounded by nothing but trees and ancient ruins.
- d) couldn't lie on the beach because of all the lights and the noise of the big resort.

8. According to Mellissa, next year, Keith could...

- a) register for a course in ceramics at the University of Maryland.
- b) spend the course cleaning ceramics in Dr. Hall's class.
- c) study the classification of ceramics in American history.
- d) spend the summer in Yucatan working at Dr. Hall's archaeological site.**