



Read the text and answer the following questions.

When I started secondary school, I was mediocre in most subjects but immediately took to languages. I have a very strong memory of my French teacher, whose nickname was Prune. He would write conjugations on the blackboard at extraordinary speed and it was noticeable that I enjoyed copying them down and learning them while most of my classmates didn't.

As soon as it was possible to take up a second language, I opted for German and immediately realised that I would be destined to do something with this language in my adult life. There was something so orderly, respectable and logical about the language and I loved it even when I had to move to a different teacher, a tiny gentleman called Willie Waters who shared Prune's lightning blackboard skills but had a short temper. I just found it easy and very satisfying to make progress, even through the A-levels which entailed painstaking word-by-word analysis of extremely tedious works by Goethe and Schiller.

In my mid-teens, Father took me to France with the intention of encouraging my linguistic tendencies. We stayed in a small hotel in a town called Mantes-La-Jolie outside Paris, where I was supposed to make friends with the proprietor's son. I actually didn't get on particularly well with him but was completely entranced by the other-worldliness of this country with its different architecture, customs and cuisine. Later on, I was sent on a summer course in Tours in the Loire valley, where I got my first minor taste of an adult experience, meeting people from a range of different countries. I stayed with a sweet family who were incredibly kind and generous to me in every way. This was where I learnt to be consistently outward-looking throughout my entire adult life. Although I happen by chance to have been born British, I have never had nationalistic feelings at all. Having been privileged to travel so much, I just adore the various cultures.



1 Which word is closest in meaning to 'mediocre'? (line 1)

- A playful B average C media D fantastic E terrible

2 What was 'Prune' particularly skilled at?

- A He was good at engaging primary pupils.
 B He explained concepts well.
 C He was quick at writing on the board.
 D He was friendly.
 E He could use technology well.

3 Which of these statements is true about Willie Waters?

- A He was a satisfactory teacher with no hair.
 B He was tedious and average height.
 C He wrote slowly on the board and was miserable.
 D He was small and quick to anger.
 E He hated high temperatures when teaching.

4 Which word is closest in meaning to the word 'tedious'? (line 16)

- A insightful B boring C clean D unethical E tense

5 Why did the author's father take him to France?

- A To taste the cuisine.
 B To make new friends.
 C To support his language skills.
 D Because he had been badly behaved.
 E To meet the proprietor.



6 What type of accommodation did the author stay in outside Paris?

- A With a family B A small hotel C A Bed and Breakfast
D A campsite E On a university campus

7 Who did the author meet on his summer course?

- A Only English people B Only French people
C People from many different nations D People from The Loire Valley
E Mexican people

8 Which languages is it most likely that the author can speak?

- A English B English and French C German and French
D English, German and French E English and German

9 Which of these words best describes how the author feels about being born British?

- A helpless B nationalistic C embarrassed D proud E indifferent

10 Where would you most likely read this passage?

- A An autobiography B A personal diary C A travel website
D A text book E A film review

Please mark the boxes with a thin, horizontal line like this:



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1. B) Average

Mediocre means average - in the middle. The author was of average ability in most subjects at school.

2. C) He was quick at writing on the board.

The text says 'He would write conjugations on the blackboard at extraordinary speed.'

3. D) Small and quick to anger

The text calls him 'a tiny gentleman' who 'had a short temper'.

4. B) Boring

Tedious is a synonym for boring.

5. C) To support his language skills

The text states 'Father took me to France with the intention of encouraging my linguistic tendencies.'

6. B) A small hotel

The text states 'We stayed in a small hotel in a town called Mantes-La-Jolie outside Paris.'

7. C) People from many different nations.

The text states he was 'meeting people from a range of different countries'.

8. D) English, German and French

The author is British and writes in English, we know he learnt German at school and he visited France with the intention of learning the language.

9. E) Indifferent

The author states 'Although I happen by chance to have been born British, I have never had nationalistic feelings at all.' Indifferent means that he does not have strong feelings about being British, rather he enjoys all cultures.

10. A) An autobiography

The text is written in first person and recounts stories from the author's life.