

1.3 How talent thrives

READING

1 Read the first paragraph of the text. What kind of text is it?

- a an academic essay ☐
- b a text book extract ☐
- c a book review ☐

2 Read the whole text. Which is the best summary?

- a An account of how certain working practices tend to be associated with certain fields of creativity. ☐
- b A description and analysis of how different people prefer different working practices. ☐
- c An explanation of how changes in working practice can negatively affect the creative process. ☐

3 Read the text again and answer the questions.

- 1 Which of the paragraphs (1–4) has each purpose (a–d)?
 - a Summarizes what the book gives the reader. ☐
 - b Describes the broad concept of the book. ☐
 - c Gives examples of working practices. ☐
 - d Explains the origins of the book. ☐
- 2 What is Mason Currey's main source of information?
 - a The individuals themselves and their associates. ☐
 - b The work of other writers and academics. ☐
 - c A combination of the above. ☐
- 3 Which of the people mentioned in the text:
 - a had a strict quota of work to be done each day? ☐
 - b worked in short bursts? ☐
 - c had a novel way of refocussing the mind? ☐

Working habits of creative minds

When aspiring to complete a particular project or task, we may look to the example set by former greats for inspiration about how best to organize our time and optimize creativity and productivity. This is exactly what author Mason Currey did and, after discovering that great minds don't think so alike after all, he set about writing a book on the subject. *Daily Rituals: How artists work* describes the habits and routines of some of history's most creative minds, breaking their days down into where and when they ate, slept, attended work, exercised and dedicated time to their crafts.

Based on each individual's letters, diaries and interviews, and drawing on some secondary sources, the book summarizes and analyzes the daily rituals of over 160 world famous novelists, poets, musicians, playwrights, painters, philosophers, scientists and mathematicians. The poet W. H. Auden, for example, who once said that 'routine is a sign of ambition', set himself an exacting timetable, in which eating, drinking, writing, shopping, and even doing crossword puzzles, were all timed to the minute. The writer Thomas Wolfe only wrote standing up in his kitchen, using the top of the refrigerator as a desk. Novelist Anthony Trollope forced himself to write 3,000 words (250 words every fifteen minutes for three hours) every morning before going off to his job at the postal service, which he kept for 33 years during the writing of more than two dozen books. In contrast, novelist and poet Gertrude Stein could never sustain writing for more than half an hour at a time. The choreographer George Balanchine did his ironing while working, while Igor Stravinsky had to be absolutely sure he was out of earshot in order to compose. Additionally, when suffering from creative block, he stood on his head to 'clear the brain'. Charles Darwin started the day by doing exercise.

Charles Dickens did several hours' exercise in the afternoon. And while the writer Mary Flannery O'Connor worked only in the morning, Franz Kafka generally only wrote at night, often until dawn, and then slept for most of the afternoon.

Bizarrely, Currey's own book was a product of procrastination while trying to write a story for an architecture magazine. As he did everything but write the article – reading *The New York Times* online, tidying his desk, making endless cups of coffee – he decided to search the Internet for information about how other writers managed to focus. Finding the results highly entertaining, he started to collect them. These soon became a blog, and later evolved into the book.

By writing about the mundane details of artists' daily schedules, Currey initially hoped to shine new light on their personalities and careers. But what the reader gains insight into is how grand creative visions are often the product of efforts made in small daily increments and how working habits themselves strongly influence the end product. *Daily Rituals* is a fascinating book about the raw mechanics of genius and eccentricities of the personalities behind it.



- 4 What initial event led to the publication of the book?
- Currey was looking for ideas to help him concentrate on his work more.
 - Currey wanted to find out how to efficiently combine work and leisure.
 - Currey felt being entertained would help him and others work better.
- 5 What was Currey's original aim for the book?
- To write a novel based on the entertaining personalities he had researched.
 - To relate an individual's working practice to their character and personality.
 - To show how creativity and working practices are dependent on each other.

4 Complete definitions (a–f) with words or phrases from the text.

- _____ = separating into parts (paragraph 1)
- _____ = using something that is available to you (paragraph 2)
- _____ = needing a lot of effort and care (paragraph 2)
- _____ = the act of delaying something that you should do (paragraph 3)
- _____ = not interesting or exciting (paragraph 4)
- _____ = a small section or part of something (paragraph 4)

VOCABULARY Creativity collocations

5 Complete the sentences with a word from each box.

broke	build	came	came	devoted
express	follow	had	take	

angle	convention	experience	freely	hobby
idea	inspiration	path	work	

- The creative arts, be it painting, music, dance or writing, allow you to **express** yourself **freely** with few constraints.
- Chester Greenwood always claimed that the idea for the earmuff, which he invented in 1873 at the age of 15, came to him after he _____ a flash of _____ while ice skating.
- People had been using the wheel on its side to make pottery for hundreds of years before someone _____ up with the _____ of putting it upright and using it for transport.
- Talking about his debut album *In The Lonely Hour*, singer Sam Smith said he wanted to write an album about love that _____ from a different _____.
- Studies suggest that if you really want to stay sharp in old age you need to _____ up a new _____ to boost your memory.
- After the death of her husband Pierre in a road accident in 1906, Marie Curie _____ herself to her _____ on radioactivity.

- 7 Romanticist landscape artists such as Constable _____ with _____ to change the way we see the world.
- 8 Most creative geniuses first _____ on the _____ of others before they _____ their own _____ and start to create a niche of their own.

WORD FOCUS create

6 Complete the words with the correct endings.

- It is thought that the Ancient Greeks are responsible for the **creat**_____ of the first true alphabet.
- Brazilian footballer Pelé is widely regarded as one of the most **creat**_____ players of all time.
- Tim Berners-Lee is best known as the **creat**_____ of the World Wide Web.
- Creat**_____ is increasingly recognized as an essential higher-order skill for learning.
- Studies indicate that teachers who teach **creat**_____ and enthusiastically tend to be more popular with their students.
- The temple, one of the oldest in Asia, is a truly impressive **creat**_____.
- A recent online trend is to make short films **recreat**_____ famous movie scenes.
- Creat**_____ is the belief that the universe and life originated from acts of divine creation. Those who believe in this are known as **creat**_____.

7 Complete the sentences. Use the words in the box.

demonstrate	force	foster	highly
impression	stifling	streak	thinking

- For a student to get high marks, he or she needs to clearly _____ creativity and originality in academic thinking and writing, whatever the discipline.
- Creative _____ requires a very different set of skills to critical thinking.
- Most of us have a creative _____ hiding somewhere inside us, be it for music, art, dancing, writing poetry or just having a vivid imagination.
- Steven Spielberg was for many years the biggest creative _____ in the world of cinema.
- Because of her flamboyant style, the singer tended to create an _____ wherever she went.
- Research suggests that _____ creative children often require more individualized attention at school.
- Many would say that having too much objective assessment and testing in schools is _____ creativity or even inhibiting it completely.
- The course aims to encourage and _____ creativity in a number of ways, from course design to lesson planning.

1.4 It's not really my thing

DESCRIBING LIKES AND DISLIKES

- 1** **1 06** Listen to two people talking about likes and dislikes. Tick (✓) what they like and cross (X) what they don't like.



Conversation 1:

- 1 films in general ☐
- 2 psychological thrillers ☐
- 3 more lightweight films ☐

Conversation 2:

- 4 rugby ☐
- 5 football ☐
- 6 live sport ☐

Conversation 3:

- 7 Van Gogh ☐
- 8 contemporary art ☐
- 9 Turner ☐

- 2** **1 06** Complete the sentences. Then listen and check your answers.

- 1 Well, yeah, I'm not that _____ films to be honest. It's _____ really my _____.
- 2 I _____ like a good psychological thriller, though ... But I'm _____ so _____ on the more lightweight stuff.
- 3 What sports are you _____?
- 4 I'm _____ huge rugby _____. My favourite sport by a mile. I'm _____ really _____ football. It's OK, but I can _____ it or _____ it.
- 5 I'm _____ big _____ of Van Gogh.
- 6 I _____ really get _____ about much contemporary art, to be honest. It just doesn't _____ to me at all.

DESCRIBING TALENTS AND ABILITIES

- 3** **1 07** Listen to four people talking about what they are good at and not good at. Tick (✓) what they are good at and cross (X) what they are not good at.

- | | | | |
|---------------------|--------------------------|----------------------|--------------------------|
| 1 playing the piano | <input type="checkbox"/> | singing | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 2 teaching | <input type="checkbox"/> | administrative tasks | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 3 making tea | <input type="checkbox"/> | cooking | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 4 shopping | <input type="checkbox"/> | saving money | <input type="checkbox"/> |

- 4** **1 07** Put the words into the correct order to make sentences. Then listen again and check your answers.


- 1 Well, I play the piano, so I guess *quite / one / at / I'm / thing / that's / good* _____
- 2 *great / I'm / singing / not / at* _____
- 3 *I'm / a / teaching / think / I / quite / at / natural* _____
- 4 *a / not / when it comes to / most definitely / I'm / natural* all the admin side of it. _____
- 5 *my / can't / a cup of tea / I / to / make / life / save* _____
- 6 *a / I / for / talent / do / cooking / have* _____
- 7 *it / I'm / at / saving / hopeless / pretty* _____
- 8 *born / I'm / a / spendaholic* _____

- 5** Use the words to write full sentences.

- 1 I / not / fan / rock music _____
- 2 Football / OK / but / I / take / leave _____
- 3 I / can't / excited / modern art / just / not / appeal _____
- 4 Anna / natural / when / comes / learning languages _____
- 5 I / cook / save / life _____
- 6 He / born / leader _____

PRONUNCIATION

Emphasis and de-emphasis

- 6  1 08 Underline the words you think will be stressed. Then listen and check your answers.

- 1 I do like watching a good film.
- 2 I really want to learn the piano one day.
- 3 The lecture was quite good, but I thought it was a bit slow in places.
- 4 Modern art's really not my thing, I'm afraid.
- 5 I quite like modern art, actually. Especially earlier modern art.
- 6 Sam does tell a good story.
- 7 I did enjoy that film last night.
- 8 I know it's quite expensive, but I really do think it's worth it.

WRITING SKILL Nominalization

- 7 Complete the sentences so the meaning is similar. Use a noun and any other words necessary.

- 1 We intend to submit the proposal later this week.
Our _____ to submit the proposal later this week.
- 2 It has been decided that we will extend the trial period by a further two weeks.
The _____ to extend the trial period by a further two weeks.
- 3 It is vital that departments communicate clearly and openly with each other at all times.
_____ departments is vital at all times.
- 4 Satisfaction levels have increased significantly since the new system was implemented.
There _____ satisfaction levels since _____ the new system.
- 5 Not many people responded to the survey and a number of people complained about its length.
There _____ to the survey and _____ about its length.
- 6 We need to further consult about distributing the new product.
We need _____ about _____ the new product.

- 8 Rewrite the sentences using noun phrases in place of the phrases or clauses in bold. Make any other changes necessary.

- 1 **When it was published, it** caused a sensation.
Its publication caused a sensation.
- 2 **If you don't get sufficient sleep it** can affect your concentration.

- 3 **They have changed a number of things in the** proposal.

- 4 Technology is advancing alarmingly.

- 5 I think **what the marketing department is proposing** is too technical and **unnecessarily complicates things**.

- 6 Thanks for your email. I'm just about to go away on a work trip, but I'll have a think about **what you suggest** and get back to you **when I get back** in a couple of weeks.

- 9 Rewrite the short progress report using nouns in place of the words in bold. Make any other changes necessary.

Online marketing: A progress report

We **attempted** on two separate occasions to market the product online, but neither **succeeded** very well. In hindsight, the way we **developed** the two sites was not based on any kind of comprehensive e-commerce strategy. We didn't think enough about the way we **designed** them and the way they **functioned**. In addition, we didn't properly **implement** how to **process** credit card transactions and the way we **fulfilled** orders was inefficient. Looking forward, we have been **consulting** with a specialist e-commerce firm and we are currently **discussing** with the board about additional financial and human resources **being available**.

There were two separate attempts to market the product online, but neither was very successful. In hindsight, ...

Presentation 1 | TALKING ABOUT TALENT

YOUR IDEA

- 1 Read what each person says about discovering their talent and answer the questions a–f.

1 **Joel:** I have a very analytical mind. I was good at school, doing well in subjects like maths and science. That's not very cool, though, is it? Being good with numbers has served me well in my career – I'm an accountant – but I never thought it could lead to anything very exciting. Then I read something about how mathematical patterns and classical music might be related. I did a lot of reading around the subject and decided I wanted to learn a musical instrument to find out if there really was a link between maths and music. I took up violin classes at a local music school and just loved it. It hasn't always been easy and it takes me a long time to pick up different tunes. My teacher is great though, and she's always pushing me to do better. In fact she entered me for a talent show.

2 **Tammy:** When I was younger, I didn't take part in school sports activities. I was excluded from most activities for health and safety reasons – being in my wheelchair, I could watch and cheer on my classmates, but I couldn't get involved. I didn't think that you could be an athlete and be in a wheelchair. That all changed when I went to see a wheelchair marathon. I was so interested that I bugged my parents to find out how I could train to be like the marathon competitors. I ended up going to a try-out at a local sports club and raced for the first time in an upright chair. Luckily my time was good enough to join the team and since then I've trained and raced in a proper racing wheelchair. I'm looking forward to my next track meet – I've got a great chance of winning a medal.

3 **Claudia:** I think I was quite misunderstood as a child. My mum always told me that I seemed to have unlimited energy – I'd never sit still and always fidgeted. I think the teachers at school agreed, and there was some talk of taking me to see a doctor. Not all of them though, thankfully. One of my teachers, Mrs Giles, suggested something different to my parents. She was really passionate about dance and theatre and gave my mum and dad the idea of taking me along to dance classes. To be honest, I've never really looked back – now I run my own dance school and our students compete all over the world. I sometimes wonder what would have happened if Mrs Giles hadn't been there to give me the push I needed. I might never have discovered that I had a real knack for dancing.

- a Who wasn't fully involved in sporting activities at school? _____
- b Who experienced difficulty at school? _____
- c Who did well academically at school? _____
- d Who received encouragement from a teacher? (2 people) _____
- e Who is confident they will succeed because of their talent? _____
- f Who sometimes thinks about what their life would have been like without their talent? _____

- 2 Write notes about a talent you have or would like to have.

- 3 Answer the following questions about your talent or a talent you would like to have.

If you have a talent ...

- 1 How did you discover your talent? How do you think you could develop it?

- 2 Who helped you develop your talent? Who could help you?

- 3 What opportunities does having this talent give you?

If you would like to have a talent ...

- 1 How do you think you could develop this talent?

- 2 Who could help you develop this talent?

- 3 What opportunities would having this talent give you?

- 4 Practise describing your talent out loud. Remember to practise using humour in your presentation, but remember ...

- its purpose is to relax people.
- it should illustrate the point you are making and not distract from it.
- it should not offend any group or individual.
- it helps if the humour is based on an anecdote about you or your experience, which others can easily relate to.
- it's essential to test any jokes on friends or colleagues before your presentation.

ORGANIZING YOUR PRESENTATION

- 5 Match the five steps of a presentation (1–5) with the examples of useful language (a–e).

- | | |
|--|--------------------------|
| 1 Introduce yourself and your topic | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 2 Say what talent you're talking about | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 3 Say who or what helped you develop this talent | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 4 Say what opportunities this talent would give you | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 5 Finish | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| a I left my office job and I've opened my own art gallery to showcase my and my friends' work. | |
| b Hello everyone. Welcome to my presentation today. I'm going to talk about a talent I am lucky to have. | |
| c I'm very fortunate to have had the support of my partner while I attended evening classes. | |
| d I wasn't very artistic as a child, but I've been able to develop my skills as a painter. | |
| e That brings us to the end of my presentation. If you have any questions, please feel free to ask them. | |

YOUR PRESENTATION

6 Read the useful language on the left and make notes for your presentation.

<p>1 Introduce yourself and your topic</p> <p>Hello everyone. Welcome ... The purpose of the presentation is to ...</p>	
<p>2 Say what talent you're talking about</p> <p>I've been able to ... Something I'm good at is ... Something I'd like to do is ...</p>	
<p>3 Say who or what helped you develop this talent</p> <p>... has/have been so helpful to me. I couldn't have done this without ... I would need ... to help me ... They could help me by ...</p>	
<p>4 Say what opportunities this talent would give you</p> <p>Now I've ... I'd be able to ...</p>	
<p>5 Finish</p> <p>That brings us to the end of ... If you have any questions, please ...</p>	

7 Film yourself giving your presentation or practise in front of a mirror.
Give yourself marks out of ten for ...

- using humour in your presentation. ☐ /10
- acting naturally as you talk. ☐ /10
- following the five steps in Exercise 6. ☐ /10
- using correct grammar. ☐ /10