**Maria Sharapova**

Q1. How long was the separation for her mother when Maria went to the US?

(a) 3 years  
(b) 2 years  
(c) 2.5 years  
(d) 3 years

Answer: (b) 2 years

Q2. Maria put up all the humiliations and insults during her training period to

(a) To pursue her education  
(b) To pursue her music  
(c) To pursue her dream for tennis  
(d) To be the richest tennis player in the world

Answer: (c) To pursue her dream for tennis

Q3. Sharapova has expressed to play the *\_* for Russia if allowed

(a) Wimbledon  
(b) Olympics  
(c) National League  
(d) Australia’s Open

Answer: (b) Olympics

Q4. What are Sharapova’s hobbies?

(a) Fashion, Dancing  
(b) Singing  
(c) Reciting  
(d) (Both (a) and (b))

Answer: (d) (Both (a) and (b))

Q5. Maria proudly speaks that her blood is totally

(a) American  
(b) Russian  
(c) Polish  
(d) British

Answer: (b) Russian

Q6. What’s Sharapova’s mantra for success?

(a) Being competitive  
(b) Working hard  
(c) Respecting her job  
(d) All of the above

Answer: (d) All of the above

Q7. Maria Sharapova expresses her desire to play for :

(a) America  
(b) India  
(c) England  
(d) Russia

Answer: (d) Russia

Q8. Depressing treatment in the U.S made Maria :

(a) weak  
(b) nervous  
(c) timid  
(d) tough

Answer: (d) tough

Q9. Which title did Maria win in 2004?

(a) Wimbledon  
(b) Australian open  
(c) American open  
(d) all of the above

Answer: (a) Wimbledon

Q10. Who went to the United States with Maria?

(a) her mother  
(b) her father  
(c) her grandmother  
(d) her teacher

Answer: (b) her father

Q11. Where was Maria sent to learn tennis?

(a) the United States  
(b) England  
(c) India  
(d) Germany

Answer: (a) the United States

Q12. When did Maria Sharapova get the world number one position in women’s tennis?

(a) 22 August 2004  
(b) 22 August 2005  
(c) 22 August 2006  
(d) 22 August 2007

Answer: (b) 22 August 2005

Q13. At what age did Santosh scale Mt Everest for the first time?

(a) eighteen  
(b) nineteen  
(c) twenty  
(d) twenty one

Answer: (c) twenty

Q14. What is considered the roof of the world?

(a) sky  
(b) stars  
(c) top of Mt Everest  
(d) all of the above

Answer: (c) top of Mt. Everest

Q15. When did Santosh scale Mt Everest for the first time?

(a) in 1992  
(b) in 1993  
(c) in 1994  
(d) in 1995

Answer: (a) in 1992

Q16. Santosh left home to get herself enrolled in :

(a) Rewari  
(b) Delhi  
(c) Gurgaon  
(d) Faridabad

Answer: (b) Delhi

Q17. From where did Santosh do her graduation?

(a) Rewari  
(b) Delhi  
(c) Jaipur  
(d) Mumbai

Answer: (c) Jaipur

Q18. What did Santosh write to her father after finishing her college?

(a) a letter  
(b) a telegram  
(c) a message  
(d) an apology letter

Answer: (d) an apology letter

Q19. What led Maria to the path of success and why couldn’t her mother accompany her? her trip to U.S for playing tennis.Her mother couldn’t accompany because of visa

(a) restrictions  
(b) her habits  
(c) her play  
(d) her mother

Answer: (a) restrictions

Q20. At what age did the girls get married in Santosh’s village?

(a) at the age of 14  
(b) at the age of 15  
(c) at the age of 17  
(d) at the age of 16

Answer: (d) at the age of 16

Q21. Whom did Santosh save with artificial respiration?

(a) Rohan Singh  
(b) Sohan Singh  
(c) Mohan Singh  
(d) All

Answer: (c) Mohan Singh

Q22. When was little Maria packed off to U.S and for what purpose and with whom?

(a) at the age of 9  
(b) at the age of 14  
(c) at the age of 15  
(d) at the age of 10 for training in tennis with her father

Answer: (d) at the age of 10 for training in tennis with her father

Q23. What did Santosh watch from her hostel Kasturba room?

(a) scenic beauty  
(b) crowd  
(c) villagers climbing up the Aravali hill and vanishing  
(d) none

Answer: (c) villagers climbing up the Aravali hill and vanishing

Q24. Why did senior climbers praise Santosh?

(a) for being helpful to teammates  
(b) physical fitness and mental strength  
(c) climbing skills  
(d) all

Answer: (d) all

Q25. After finishing college why did Santosh write a letter of apology to her father?

(a) because she ran away  
(b) because she left her house  
(c) because she enrolled herself for an institution of mountaineering without his permission  
(d) none

Answer: (c) because she enrolled herself for an institution of mountaineering without his permission

Q26. How was Santosh attracted to mountain climbing?

(a) her neighbours prompted her  
(b) seeing her friends  
(c) her classmates prompted her  
(d) watching some people going up the Aravali hills from her hostel room

Answer: (d) watching some people going up the Aravali hills from her hostel room

Q27. Why was the holy man who gave blessings to Santosh’s mother surprised?

(a) because grandmother was seeking blessing for a daughter against the common trend of son  
(b) because he saw her first time  
(c) because he had never seen such a woman  
(d) none

Answer: (a) because grandmother was seeking blessing for a daughter against the common trend of son

Q28. What kind of girl was Santosh ?

(a) a hard working girl with a strong mind  
(b) a brat  
(c) arrogant  
(d) none

Answer: (a) a hard working girl with a strong mind

**Answers Short Answer Type**

Question 1.  
Briefly describe Maria Sharapova.  
Answer:  
Maria Sharapova, the famous woman tennis player, won the women’s singles at Wimbledon in 2004 and attained the world number one position in women’s tennis in 2005. Though Russian by birth, she got tennis training in United States of America. She loves singing, dancing, reading novels and is very hardworking and dedicated.

Question 2.  
How is Maria’s personality a mix of contrasts?  
Answer:  
The maturity, balanced mind and inner strength of Maria does not appear to be in accordance with her glamorous dress or her charming manner and ready smile. There seems to be some mismatch between her sophisticated outer appearance and her balanced inner-self.

Question 3.  
Maria possesses some contradictory characteristics. What are they?  
Answer:  
Maria appears to be highly fashionable as far as her appearance is considered, but she possesses a charming nature that proves her to be friendly and simple. She appears to be sophisticated and yet warm and approachable. Her love for junk foods like pancakes with chocolate spread and orange drinks appears at odds with her fondness for evening gowns.

Question 4.  
Explain: “all this happened in almost no time”.  
Answer:  
The phrase “all this happened in almost no time” means that Maria’s rose to the top in the world of tennis was very quickly and within a very short span of four years as a professional player she became the world number one in her chosen sport.

Question 5.  
What does Maria declare to be her ‘mantra for success’?  
Answer:  
Maria works really hard to fulfill her dreams. She does not shy away from making any sacrifice. She does not allow herself to be emotional and sentimental. She is very competitive and works hard to be the best in whatever she does. She is driven by her hunger to succeed and the dream of becoming the world number one in women’s tennis. This is her mantra for success.

Question 6.  
How was Maria different from other children?  
Answer:  
Maria was calmer and more composed, more confident and tolerant than the other children of her age. She also had inner strength that enabled her to make sacrifices – staying away from her mother, getting bullied by senior players in the hostel – that few children could think of making. Unlike most children, she did not buckle under hardships and adverse circumstances, but toiled hard to achieve success.

Question 7.  
Why was Maria brought to Florida in the USA by her father? Why didn’t her mother go with her? How did Maria respond to this separation?  
Answer:  
Maria was brought to Florida, USA, by her father, Yuri, to get trained as a professional tennis player and reach great heights of success and stardom in this sport. Her mother, Yelena, did not go with her because of visa restrictions. This two-year separation was very painful for the young girl. But Maria endured this sacrifice to pursue her dreams.

Question 8.  
How does Maria describe her journey from Siberia to United States?  
Answer:  
Maria was just nine years old when she had to leave her home, mother and her country to go to the United States. She had to make many sacrifices in a foreign land where she did not even speak the language. She was bullied by senior players and had to face a lot of humiliation and insults. But she did not give in. Her competitive nature and hard work helped her become the world number one in women’s tennis.

Question 9.  
What important lesson did Maria learn during the first two years of her stay in the USA, away from her mother?  
Answer:  
During her first two years in USA, when she was living away from her mother Maria learnt that excellence comes at a price. Since she wished to reach the top in the field of tennis, she would have to make sacrifices and struggle hard. She endured the heart-wrenching separation from her mother for two years to attain her goal. Moreover, she also learnt how to put up patiently with adverse circumstances.

Question 10.  
Maria’s father accompanied her to USA but why could he also not see her during her stay there?  
Answer:  
Maria’s father, Yuri, had brought his nine-year-old daughter to the USA to get her trained in tennis. U Unfortunately, he too could not see her frequently as he had to work very hard to earn to pay for her training.

Question 11.  
How did some of the other pupils at the tennis academy trouble her? How did Maria cope with this?  
Answer:  
The other pupils at the tennis academy were much older than Maria and would return to the room around 11 pm when Maria was already asleep. They would wake her up and make her clean and tidy up the room. Maria coped with this trouble by not allowing it to depress her. Instead this strengthened her determination and mental toughness.

Question 12.  
Why did Maria not retaliate against the humiliation at the hands of the other pupils?  
Answer:  
Maria was working hard to attain the world number one position in women’s tennis. She had no time to retaliate against others and their humiliation. She also had no time for sentiments. So, instead of retaliating against the humiliation at the hands of the other pupils, she took it as a challenge and worked harder to achieve success.

Question 13.  
Despite being harassed by her seniors, why didn’t Maria think of quitting?  
Answer:  
Instead of letting the harassment by her seniors depress her and get her to quit, she became more quietly determined and mentally tough. She learnt how to take care of herself and never thought of quitting because she knew what she wanted. Her hunger for success and determination to achieve prompted her to put up with the humiliation and insults in order to steadfastly pursue her dream.

Question 14.  
Describe Maria’s struggle to reach at the top of the world in the field of the women tennis.  
Answer:  
Maria started working to achieve her goal at a very young age, making any sacrifices required. She had to face separation from her mother and stay in completely unfamiliar and hostile surroundings for years. She also faced humiliation but never let it affect negatively. She took it as a challenge and with her mental toughness and competitive nature, she succeeded in achieving her goal.

Question 15.  
What mental qualities of Maria are revealed by her decision not to quit and pack up on being harassed by her fellow-trainees?  
Answer:  
The torment and humiliation inflicted on Maria by her fellow trainees failed to demoralise her. This reveals that she had a firm determination and strong-will. She was much more mature than other girls of her age and knew the art of survival.

Question 16.  
What makes Maria very hungry and determined?  
Answer:  
Maria came from a middle class background, where she had known deprivation. She didn’t want to miss any opportunity to succeed. She bore unfavourable and painful situations with forbearance. She lived apart from her mother, suffered bullying by older players, but never took it to heart. She said that if you came from nothing and you had nothing, it made you very hungry and determined.

Question 17.  
What motivates Maria to keep moving ahead?  
Answer:  
Maria is motivated by her spirit of competitiveness to keep moving ahead. She works very hard once she has decided to achieve something. She considers it her job to excel despite severe hardships and demands.

Question 18.  
Despite staying in America for years, Maria is a Russian at the core of her heart. Justify.  
Answer:  
Maria moved to Florida, USA, from Siberia at the young age of nine. Since then she has spent most part of her life here. Yet, she has remained a Russian through and through. She is proud of her Russian blood and Russian citizenship. She adds that she would play for Russia in the Olympics if given an opportunity.

Question 19.  
Why does Maria call the US a big part of her life?  
Answer:  
Maria was trained for tennis in the US and attained the number one position in women’s tennis in the game as a result of the training. It was in the USA that she developed confidence, self-control, strength of will and endurance – qualities that are pre-requisites for a person to reach the top in any field. Since she gained all this in the US, she calls it a big part of her life.

Question 20.  
In addition to tennis, what else is Maria fond of?  
Answer:  
Maria’s first love is tennis. Apart from this sport, she is fond of fashion, singing and dancing like any other young girl of her age. She also likes to read Arthur Canon Doyle’s novels, is fond of sophisticated evening gowns and enjoys pancakes with chocolate-spread and fizzy orange drinks.

Question 21.  
What has lifted Maria Sharapova to the top of the world?  
Answer:  
Maria’s talent, her unwavering determination, her hunger for success, her willingness to work hard, her readiness to endure challenges, and her sacrifices have lifted her to the top of the world. In addition, monetary gains have motivated her to reach the top.

Question 22.  
Why do her fans not grudge Maria her riches?  
Answer:  
Maria’s fans are aware of the immense hard work that has gone into making her attain the number one position in women’s tennis. The unparalleled sacrifices she made were investments that she is reaping the dividends of. Her earnest efforts and hard work have resulted in financial rewards that are well earned and well deserved. Therefore, nobody feels jealous of or grudges Maria her riches.

Question 23.  
Why does Maria call tennis a business and a sport?  
Answer:  
Tennis is a competitive sport like any other and requires the player display stamina, nerve, determination, planning and strategizing. It is also a business because it is played professionally for money. Tennis tournaments involve millions of pounds being spent on sponsorship and prize money. Tennis generates a lot of business for media, drinks, clothes and sports companies too.

Question 24.  
What makes How are Maria’s achievements significant?  
Answer:  
Maria exemplifies the success achieved through hard work and dedication. Her patience, determination, iron will and persistence and her hunger for success make her an ideal role model for the girls all over the world. Her winning Wimbledon and then becoming world’s number one woman tennis player also makes her achievement significant.

Question 25.  
“Maria’s parents played an important role in her success? How? What other things motivated her?  
Answer:  
When Maria was only nine years old her training started. She moved to USA with her father, Yuri, leaving her mother, Yelena, behind in Russia as she had visa problems. In USA, her father had to work very hard to keep Maria’s tennis training going. Her mother stayed alone in Siberia without her husband and daughter to give her daughter the chance to succeed.

**Long Answer Type**

Question 1.  
What do you know about Maria Sharapova’s parents?  
Answer:  
Maria’s parents, Yuri and Yelena Sharapova, Maria Sharapova’s father and mother contributed to her success by identifing their daughter’s potential at a very young age and going all out to get her the best tennis training that could be had in the USA. They knew well that it was going to be expensive and difficult, still they extended their full support to their talented daughter.

Yuri worked very hard to pay for Maria’s training and Yelena tolerated the heart-wrenching separation from her dearly loved child for two years. As parents, they displayed unflinching faith in their child’s abilities which gave Maria the boost to keep going ahead and to overcome the challenges that came her way.

Question 2.  
What problems did Maria face as a child while she trained at the tennis academy in Florida? What sustained her?  
Answer:  
As a young child Maria had to make many sacrifices and endure loneliness in her struggle to reach the top. She came to the U.S. at the young age of nine years without her mother, who could not accompany Maria and her father due to some visa restrictions. During the first two years of their heart-wrenching separation she missed her mother terribly.

Though her father had accompanied her to the USA, he too could not frequently visit her as he had to spend a lot of time to earn money to pay for Maria’s tennis training. Apart from it, the other trainees at the tennis academy in Florida bullied, tormented and humiliated her. They were inconsiderate to Maria who was much younger and woke her up late at night and made her tidy up and clean the room.

Yet, Maria never let these problems get the better of her. Her eyes firmly fixed on achieving her goal of becoming the number one player in women’s tennis, Maria endured the hardships without thinking of quitting. In fact, the problems she faced strengthened her will-power and made her even more determined to succeed.

Question 3.  
One has to sacrifice something to achieve something good in life. Do you agree? Justify with reference to Maria Sharapova.  
Answer:  
Yes, I agree without sacrifice one can never achieve good things in life. Maria Sharapova is an example of the truth of this statement. Maria Sharapova had to sacrifice her childhood pleasures in order to become a tennis star. She left her home at a tender age to achieve her goal in life.

At the age of nine, she came to USA with her father. Her mother could not accompany her as she had some visa restrictions. Her father, who had accompanied her to USA, had to work very hard to pay for her tennis training. She was not able to meet him often. At the hostel, she was bullied by the older players, who woke her up late at night to clean and tidy up the room. If she had not sacrificed her childhood, she would not have become a star.

Question 4.  
The lives of Santosh Yadav and Maria Sharapova have much in common to prove that determined and consistent hard work paves the way to success. Identify the points of comparison and contrast in the lives of these two great players.  
Answer:  
Santosh Yadav, the legendary mountaineer from India, and Maria Sharapova, Russia’s tennis sensation who trained in the USA, are living examples that single-minded determination and dedication and consistent hard work are the way to success. Both young women had to struggle against odds to reach the top. Santosh belonged to a small village in the Rewari district of Haryana while Maria came from the frozen plains of Siberia where she did not have adequate training facilities.

Although both girls were supported by their respective parents, Santosh, at times, had to struggle to make her conservative family agree to her decisions, while Maria’s parents were willing to make any sacrifice to help Maria succeed. However, both the young girls had to sacrifice the loving and protective environment of their homes in order to train for their passion.

Both the women had unwavering determination, physical and mental strength, and undivided focus on their goals. They both rose to the number one position in their respective areas within a short span of four years. While Sharapova moved from the frozen Siberia to the plains of Florida, Yadav moved from the plains of Rewari to the frozen Mount Everest. But both of them are devout patriots and their love for their country remains constant.

**Answers Reference to Context**

Read the extracts given below and answer the questions that follow.

Question 1.  
There is something disarming about Maria Sharapova, something at odds with her ready smile and glamorous attire. And that something in her lifted her on Monday, 22 August 2005 to the world number one position in women’s tennis. All this happened in almost no time.

(a) What contrast does Maria present?  
Answer:  
Maria Sharapova has a charming manner and is quick to smile. This spontaneous behaviour is at odds with her glamorous attire.

(b) What position did Maria achieve in 2005?  
Answer:  
She became world number one in women’s tennis.

(c) How long had it taken her to reach this position?  
Answer:  
It had taken her merely four years to reach this position.

(d) Where had Maria come from? How old was she then?  
Answer:  
Maria had come to USA from Siberia at the age of nine.

Question 2.  
However, the rapid ascent in a fiercely competitive world began nine years before with a level of sacrifice few children would be prepared to endure.

(a) What does the phrase “rapid ascent” refer to?  
Answer:  
The phrase “rapid ascent” refers to the short period of time in which Maria Sharapova achieved so much success.

(b) What had happened nine years ago?  
Answer:  
Nine years ago Maria had come to USA from Siberia to receive training in tennis.

(c) What sacrifice did Maria have to make?  
Answer:  
Maria came to USA with her father while her mother had to stay back in Russia.

(d) What lesson did this teach the young Maria?  
Answer:  
Maria learnt that that tennis excellence would only come at a price, and she would need to pay that price.

Question 3.  
Little Maria had not yet celebrated her tenth birthday when she was packed off to train in the United States. That trip to Florida with her father Yuri launched her on the path to success and stardom. But it also required a heart-wrenching two-year separation from her mother Yelena.

(a) How old was Maria when she came to the United States?  
Answer:  
Maria Sharapova came to the United States when she was just nine years old.

(b) From where did she make the journey to Florida and why?  
Answer:  
She came to Florida from the frozen plains in Russia with the purpose of taking training in tennis.

(c) What was the ‘heart-wrenching’ thing about the journey?  
Answer:  
The ‘heart-wrenching’ thing was that she had to part from her mother for two years.

(d) Why could her mother not accompany her?  
Answer:  
Her mother could not accompany her because of visa restrictions.

Question 4.  
“I used to be so lonely, ” Maria Sharapova recalls. “I missed my mother terribly. My father was working as much as he could to keep my tennis-training going. So, he couldn’t see me either. ”

(a) What does the word ‘recalls’ in the passage imply?  
Answer:  
The word ‘recalls’ implies that Maria is sharing her memories with someone.

(b) Why was Maria lonely at the time?  
Answer:  
Maria was staying at the tennis academy at the time. She was only nine years old and did not speak English so could not communicate with the others. That is why she felt very lonely.

(c) Why did Maria’s father have to work so hard?  
Answer:  
‘ Maria’s father worked hard to earn enough money for paying the fees at the tennis training academy at Florida. ‘

(d) Where was Maria’s mother at the time? How long did it take for her to arrive in USA?  
Answer:  
Maria’s mother was still in Russia at the time due to visa restrictions. She joined her husband and Maria after two years.

Question 5.  
Instead of letting that depress me, I became more quietly determined and mentally tough.

(a) Where was the speaker at the time?  
Answer:  
The speaker, Maria Sharapova, was at the tennis academy at Florida.

(b) What was ‘that’ which could not depress her?  
Answer:  
The senior trainees in the tennis training academy at Florida bullied and tormented Maria. They would wake her up late at night and order her to tidy up the room and clean it.

(c) What was the impact of ‘that’ on her?  
Answer:  
‘That’ – or – the bullying of her seniors made her more determined and mentally strong.

(d) What does the extract reveal about the speaker’s character?  
Answer:  
The extract reveals that the speaker had the ability to face difficult situations boldly and not yield to adverse circumstances.

Question 6.  
The straight looks and the answers she gives when asked about her ambition make it amply clear that she considers the sacrifices were worth it. “I am very, very competitive. I work hard at what I do. It’s my job. ” This is her mantra for success.

(a) How does Maria show she is not a sentimental person?  
Answer:  
Maria shows she is not sentimental by not talking too much on her struggle and sacrifice.

(b) What does the writer mean by “straight looks”?  
Answer:  
The writer means that as she talks about herself, Maria looks boldly and steadily, and does not show much emotion or sentimentality.

(c) What helped Maria win the women’s singles crown at Wimbledon in 2004?  
Answer:  
Her ambition and desire to succeed, her toughness and her competitive spirit helped Maria win the women’s singles crown at Wimbledon in 2004.

(d) Why does the writer say there is no room for sentiment in her life?  
Answer:  
Sentiment would make her softer and less competitive.

Question 7.  
“I’m Russian. It’s true that the U.S. is a big part of my life. But I have Russian citizenship. My blood is totally Russian. I will play the Olympics for Russia if they want me. ”

(a) What light does this statement throw on Maria’s character?  
Answer:  
Maria Sharapova takes immense pride in her nationality.

(b) What does she say about the US?  
Answer:  
Maria acknowledges the contribution of the USA where she took training in tennis and became the world number one tennis player.

(c) Why does the speaker say, ‘My blood is totally Russian’?  
Answer:  
Maria claims this because she was born to Russian parents in Russia. She did spend a large part of her life in the USA, but she proudly declares her Russian identity.

(d) Given a chance, what will Maria like to do for Russia?  
Answer:  
Being a Russian, and proud of her nationality, Maria would like to represent Russia in the Olympics and make them proud, if given an opportunity.

Question 8.  
Few would grudge her the riches she is now reaping.

(a) How is she ‘reaping’ the ‘riches’?  
Answer:  
Maria has been declared the number one in women’s tennis. She earns a good deal of money from her game.

(b) Why would few grudge her the riches?  
Answer:  
Everybody is aware of the fact that Maria has reached the top by making a lot of sacrifices and by working extremely hard. Hence, the riches that she is earning from her game are well deserved and everybody readily agrees on this.

(c) Why has the word ‘reaping’ been used for riches?  
Answer:  
The word ‘reaping’ has been used metaphorically. Just as reaping the harvest is the reward for the hard work of the farmer, similarly earning money is the reward for Maria Sharapova’s labour and sacrifice.

(d) What according to her is the biggest motivation for her to do well?  
Answer:  
The biggest motivation for Maria to do well is to become the World number one in tennis.

Question 9.  
Tennis is a business and a sport, but the most important thing is to become number one in the world.

(a) Why does Maria call tennis “a business”?  
Answer:  
For Maria, playing tennis as a professional game requires following rules and regulations and hard work just as running a business does. Also, as in business, tennis too brings profits in terms of name, fame and money.

(b) According to Maria, why is tennis also a ‘sport’ in addition to being a business?  
Answer:  
Maria calls tennis a sport, in addition to being a business, as it gives excitement and thrill just like other sporting events do. Every match is filled with expectations and anxiety both among the players and the spectators.

(c) What light does the extract throw on Maria’s personality?  
Answer:  
The extract shows that Maria is very practical and pragmatic in her views. She does not deny that winning at tennis is monetarily rewarding.

(d) Why did Maria wish to become number one in the world?  
Answer:  
Maria’s childhood dream was to become the number one tennis player in the world. She worked very hard and made a lot of sacrifices to train herself for this feat.

Question 10.  
Like any number of teenaged sensations, Maria Sharapova lists fashion, singing and dancing as her hobbies. She loves reading the novels of Arthur Conan Doyle. Her fondness for sophisticated evening gowns appears at odds with her love of pancakes with chocolate spread and fizzy orange drinks.

(a) What are Maria’s hobbies?  
Answer:  
Maria’s hobbies include fashion, singing and dancing.

(b) What does Maria like to read?  
Answer:  
Maria likes to read the novels of Arthur Conan Doyle.

(c) What contrast does Maria present in her tastes?  
Answer:  
While Maria lists fashion as her hobby and likes to wear sophisticated evening gowns, she is also fond of junk food like pancakes with chocolate spread and fizzy orange drinks.

(d) What light does this throw on Maria’s character?  
Answer:  
She combines the sophistication of a fashionista with the simplicity of a teenager.