

# **Abiturprüfung 2004**

## **ENGLISCH**

als Leistungskursfach

– Textteil –

**Arbeitszeit: 270 Minuten**

Der Prüfling hat **e i n e** Textaufgabe seiner Wahl  
nach den Arbeitsanweisungen des beiliegenden Aufgabenteils zu bearbeiten.

**Textaufgabe I****The right to be beautiful**

Of course, it is ridiculous. What sane person would put metal rings round her neck to stretch it like a giraffe's, or lace her corset so tight that she fainted, or allow her feet to be bound to make them tiny? How backward, how primitive. Completely different, obviously, from the woman who pays huge sums to have her breasts surgically enlarged; or the man who takes drugs to give him an athlete's torso; or the rich, modern men and women who spend \$160 billion a year on beauty products whose impact on the appearance is sometimes, um, unproven. From stilettos to diets to cosmetic surgery, women (and, increasingly, men) go to great lengths and huge cost to make themselves better looking. And now, advances in technology allow people to change their appearance not just for an evening out but for ever.

Does it matter if human beings change their bodies in more fundamental ways than our grandparents ever dreamt of? The reasons for change go well beyond the pursuit of beauty, of course. Athletes reshape themselves to do better at sport, but it is beauty that dominates the remodelling business and that raises the toughest questions.

The search for beauty has always seemed frivolous to some. Puritans, who once squawked about the evils of lipstick and facepaint, now have fresh moral dilemmas to wrestle with. If the beauty business deceives people into spending money uselessly or harmfully, should it be stopped from doing so? Some fret that the preoccupation with appearance is leading to a shallower society, and to a host of social horrors from family breakdown to eating disorders. Others fear that beauty firms are trying to blur the line between

drugs and cosmetics, or complain that tampering with the incline of one's nose is the first step on a slippery slope to tampering with one's genes.

Only in the case of the young are there grounds for special intervention – although parental responsibility ought really to do the job. Until their bodies stop growing, teenagers should not be allowed to change them in permanent ways that may turn out to be harmful. By all means straighten their teeth and even their noses, but leave puppy fat alone. Let them pierce their ears or indeed their tongues, if they must, but ban the tattoos and hold that graduation present of breast enlargement.

But what of adults, who behave little more rationally than teenagers in this regard? Perhaps governments should get the makers of those creams made of dolphin serum and goose fat to list the ingredients on the pot, as if they were breakfast cereals. Big beauty companies, experts at deception, have the money and power to play on people's hopes and fears. As for the poor, sales of beauty products tend to take off when incomes rise. Lipstick may be an indicator of economic progress. And the freedom to believe nonsense about getting rid of wrinkles is one of the most basic human liberties.

The more difficult questions will arise when it becomes clear that some of the promises actually come true. Good-looking people have great advantages over the ugly. For example, they earn more: when Barry Harper of London Guildhall University looked at 11,000 British 33-year-olds, he found that the pay penalty for unattractiveness was around 15% for men and 11% for women. Overweight women earned 5% less than average, especially in clerical and secretarial jobs. Good looks in both sexes mattered especially in sales jobs, where the seller meets the buyer.

Not only do looks help in the job market. In both sexes, they help in the marriage market. Studies show that handsome folk are more confident. It is a cruel fact that good looks can make you a better parent: babies are attracted

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to prettier people. Good looks remove some of life's irritations: people rated as more attractive feel more entitled to better treatment and are less willing to be kept waiting; good-looking women with a flat tyre get rescued first. And a nice face helps to get people out of trouble: a recent study found that university students awarded criminals sentences which were 20% lighter if they were told that the villains were "handsome" or "pretty".

If a bit of lipstick can keep you out of jail, or waxing your moustache can land an extra 15% in earnings, then who would not pay for successful beauty treatments? If genetic engineering ever catches on, it will be hard to draw a firm line between correcting defects and enhancing characteristics. It would be irrational for parents who love their children not to want them to be more beautiful as well as healthier and more intelligent.

But if society believes that government should aim to give citizens equal opportunities, might beauty be a right that society can be legitimately asked to pay for? The poor once looked very different from the rich: they were worse fed, worse clothed, worse washed and had less access to medical and dental care. Those days are gone, at least in the developed world. But bat ears or a cleft lip can still make a teenager's life a misery. The World Health Organisation has broadened its definition of health to include psychological well-being. Stand by for the moment when public policy has cut out the most striking sources of inequality, and conventions of cosmetic surgeons announce that their craft can excise the remainder.

From: *The Economist*, May 24, 2003

## Textaufgabe II

### From: Timothy Findley, *Dinner Along the Amazon*

Every morning at seven o'clock Harper Dewey turned over and woke up. And every morning he would lie in his tumbled bed (for he slept without repose even at the age of eight) until it was seven-thirty, thinking his way back into his dreams, which were always of his father. At seven-thirty he would get out of bed and cross to his window where he would stand for a moment watching his dreams fade in the sunlight until there was nothing in the garden save the lilac and the high board fence.

And the birds.

Robins and starlings and sparrows flowed over the smooth lawn in great droves, turning it into the likeness of a marketplace; and the raucous babble of their bargaining (of dealings in worms and beetles and flies) poured itself, like something distilled or dehydrated, from the jar of darkness into the morning air, which made it swell and burst. This enormous shout of birds at morning was always a delight to Harper Dewey.

Presently, over this sound, there would burst the first indication of an awakening household: Bertha Millroy's hymn.

Bertha Millroy was the maid – and a day, to Bertha, wasn't a day at all unless it began with a hymn and ended with a prayer.

She lived – Bertha – in the attic, in a small room directly above Harper's room and she sang her hymn from the window which opened over his head. When it was finished she would say the same thing every morning – "Amen" and "Good morning Harper." Then they would race each other to the landing

PLEASE TURN OVER

on the stairs. Harper never cheated, although he could easily have been dressed long before Bertha if he had chosen to be, because he was always  
25 awake so much earlier than her. But this every morning race had never been specifically agreed upon and if Harper had ever said to Bertha at the window "Let's race," or if Bertha had ever said to Harper below her "Beat you downstairs," the whole procedure would have been off. Neither of them could remember when this habit had started – it just had.

30 Well, one morning early in the summer, (in fact it was hardly more than late spring), Harper and Bertha met on the stairs' landing – Bertha won – and after they had scanned the note they found there, they looked at each other and then quickly looked away. They descended to the first floor in their usual fashion – Harper going down the front stairs to collect the paper from the front  
35 porch – and Bertha going down the back stairs to light the stove and to bring in the milk.

This morning, Harper didn't open the paper, although he usually read the comics sitting on the porch step. Instead he returned inside, letting the screen door clap behind him and leaving the big oak and glass door open so that the  
40 air could come through, into the still house. He went straight out to the kitchen and sat down at the table, slipping the still folded paper onto the breakfast tray which was laid out for his mother.

In the kitchen, Bertha Millroy behaved in the same morose fashion, as though touched by the same hand. And indeed their mutual despondency was  
45 based upon a kindred misgiving. And Mrs Renalda Harper Dewey was the instigator of that misgiving.

Mrs Renalda Harper Dewey, widow of Harper Peter Dewey the First (killed in the battle for Caen, August 1944, the year after Harper P. Dewey the Second's birth) was a lady who lay in bed till nine o'clock every morning  
50 because of the night before<sup>1</sup>. It used to be that she would lie abed until eight

and then it became an occasional night before – but now the lieabed was until nine and had ceased to be occasional.

This morning there had been a note on the flat top of the balustrade on the landing. On the note were written the words "Ten o'clock – thank you" in rather  
55 indistinct watery blue ink. "Ten o'clock, thank you" and that was all.

Bertha put on the kettle.

"I don't want any tea," said Harper Dewey.

"You don't drink morning tea because you want to, Master<sup>2</sup> Harper Dewey,"  
said Bertha Millroy in her flat voice, "you drink it to assist nature."

60 The kettle boiled.

Bertha warmed the teapot.

They were silent.

Bertha threw out the water into the sink and put tea leaves in the pot.

The robins moved across the lawn outside the kitchen window.

65 Harper watched them.

Bertha poured boiling water over the tea leaves, turned off the stove and put the lid on the teapot. One, two, three, and sat down.

"Ten o'clock indeed," she muttered – and then she poured tea into their cups.

70 One of the robins was listening to a worm under the dew. Harper watched. The robin's head was cocked to one side as it listened. Then it ran a few steps on tiptoe and caught the worm noise again – this time nearer to it. The robin waited. Harper waited – Bertha Millroy waited – and then the robin stabbed the ground with its beak – caught the worm and tossed it into the sunlight. Harper  
75 shivered.

"I don't want to assist nature," he said, and he pushed his teacup away.

From: Timothy Findley, "Lemonade" in *Dinner Along the Amazon* (1984).

PLEASE TURN OVER

**Annotations**

- 1 the night before cf. the expression "the morning after the night before",  
used to describe how someone feels the next morning  
after an occasion when they have drunk too much  
alcohol
- 2 Master title, now old-fashioned but in the 1950s still normal,  
for a boy too young to be called "Mister"

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– Aufgabenteil –

**Arbeitszeit: 270 Minuten**

Der Prüfling hat e i n e Textaufgabe seiner Wahl zu bearbeiten.

**WORKSHEET: The right to be beautiful**maximum number of  
points attainable**I. Questions on the text**

Read all the questions first, then answer them in the given order.  
Use your own words as far as is appropriate.

1. People have always taken measures to change their outward appearance. Outline the development of these changes. 10
2. Summarize the arguments against cosmetic changes and the search for beauty. 20
3. What reasons make the pursuit of physical enhancement comprehensible or justifiable? Give evidence from the text. 20
4. In the whole spectrum of attempts to change one's appearance, with whom should the responsibility lie? 10
5. Compare the ideas of the final paragraph with what is implied in the title. 20
6. How does the writer use tone and language to convey his attitude? Analyse four examples. 20

**II. Composition****50**

Choose **o n e** of the following topics. Write about 250 to 300 words.

1. "Every generation laughs at the old fashions, but follows religiously the new" (Henry David Thoreau, 1817-1862). Comment on this statement.
2. "The surest way to corrupt a youth is to instruct him to hold in higher esteem those who think alike than those who think differently" (Friedrich Nietzsche, 1844-1900). Comment on this statement.
3. Your school magazine is doing an English-language dossier on tattoos. You contribute by writing an article.
4. A reporter talks to an athlete who has tested positive for illegal substances. Write up the interview published in a sports magazine.

**III. Translation****50**

Translate the following text into German:

The brain is just as much a muscle as any other part of the body; and the more you exercise it, the more vigorous and robust it gets. But the corollary of this is that people who don't keep on challenging themselves will quickly find that their brain has atrophied. They will come to the surprising conclusion that, in the past year, not one single original thought has sailed through their heads.

Brits are taking much more care over their appearance than they've ever done before; it shows a certain amount of pride, as well as an even larger slice of vanity. But do these people seriously expect to be going to the gym when they're in their 60s? A shallow number aspire to just this. They want to mix with thirtysomethings, and be mistaken for thirtysomethings. But in their quest for eternal youth, they have turned themselves into standing jokes.

Compare the stars who are obsessed with their looks to people of the same age who are keen to stay mentally agile and alert. Are they figures of fun or do we admire these people, and remark upon how amazing it is that their minds are still as quick as steel traps?

From: *The Scotsman*, June 11, 2003



**WORKSHEET: Timothy Findley, *Dinner Along the Amazon***maximum number of  
points attainable**I. Questions on the text**

Read all the questions first, then answer them in the given order.  
Use your own words as far as is appropriate.

- |  |    |
|--|----|
| 1. Describe the social background and the present situation of the Dewey family.   | 10 |
| 2. Analyse the relationship between Harper and Bertha.   | 20 |
| 3. Characterize Bertha and Harper.   | 20 |
| 4. Examine the significance of the note and its effect on Harper and Bertha. What is hereby revealed about the role of the mother in the family? | 20 |
| 5. How does the author create suspense? Consider the narrative perspective in your answer.   | 10 |
| 6. Compare the two passages about birds in this excerpt (ll. 8-14 and 64-76) and explain their function in the text.                             | 20 |

**II. Composition****50**

Choose one of the following topics. Write about 250 to 300 words.

- Has society become too tolerant of drinking?
- "Today you need a licence for almost everything but not for having children" was the topic of a magazine article. Write a letter to the editor outlining the qualifications you think necessary for a 'parenting licence'.
- "Happiness is having a large, loving, caring, close-knit family in another city" (George Burns, 1896-1996). Comment on this statement.
- "The worst solitude is to be destitute of sincere friendship" (Sir Francis Bacon, 1561-1626). Comment on this statement.

**III. Translation****50**

Translate the following text into German:

"I don't know how to begin ...," says the narrator in the opening sentence of the story that begins Timothy Findley's career as a writer of fiction.

The openings of Findley's narratives are often linked with a loss of innocence, and in his early work this loss is often imaged through the figure of a troubled adolescent whose fall from childhood is at the core of the narrative. The early narratives circle around sexuality, mental illness, and violence, portraying them through the eyes of children. The adults in these stories engage in a conspiracy of silence about the frightening things that are happening in their families – parents who refuse to be parents, people who drink themselves into oblivion, shoot themselves, drive their cars off cliffs. From the adult point of view, these are unspeakable acts that must never enter the discourse of society. Perhaps the adults are attempting to protect the children, to keep them innocent. But the prolonged innocence is double edged. It builds up unbearable tension, generating an insatiable desire to break the silence. The stories of these families must be told – and the desire to tell them is embodied in Findley's children. Yet they don't know how to begin.

From: Anne Geddes Baily / Karen Grandy (eds.), *Paying Attention: Critical Essays on Timothy Findley* (1998).