

Name: _____



Unlocking Talents: A Reading and Listening Adventure" (CEFR Level: B1-B2)

PART 1: READING & LISTENING COMPREHENSION

Read and listen about **Unlocking Talents**. Then, answer the questions.

Extraordinary Talents: The Stories of Alex Turner and Robert Walsh

Alex Turner

Alex Turner grew up in Madison, Wisconsin. According to his father, Greg, Alex showed an interest in art as a toddler. At the age of three, he began using modeling clay to create animals. His first sculptures were so detailed that they amazed everyone who saw them. Despite this early talent, Alex faced challenges in learning other basic skills such as dressing himself.

Alex has what experts call "savant syndrome." Savants often have developmental disabilities, such as autism, but excel in specific areas. For Alex, this area is sculpture. While he struggles with some everyday tasks, he creates highly detailed animal sculptures in less than an hour. His most famous piece, Galloping Stallions, is a life-size model of three horses and took him only a month to complete.

Since his first exhibition in 1992, Alex's work has been featured in galleries across the USA. Creating art has helped him communicate better and lead a more independent life. Today, he enjoys sculpting, working part-time at an art gallery, and playing basketball.



Robert Walsh

Robert Walsh was born in Edinburgh, Scotland, to parents with diverse backgrounds—his father was a Polish military officer, and his mother was a Scottish teacher. From a young age, Robert showed unique behavior. He loved repetitive actions, such as playing the same piano note for hours, and would spend long periods studying illustrations in books. Many schools refused to admit him because of his difficulties in communication and behavior.

At the age of seven, a teacher discovered Robert's gift for drawing. His first sketches, often of everyday objects like cars, animals, or scenes from memory, were striking in their accuracy and detail. Robert's parents supported his talent, providing him with endless sketchbooks. By the time he was 19, Robert's art was displayed in his first exhibition. His career flourished, and he gained international recognition. He enjoyed visiting the USA, where he was celebrated purely as an artist.



ACTIVITY A: MULTIPLE-CHOICE QUESTIONS

Choose the correct answer for each question.



1 Alex Turner began sculpting at an early age because:

- a. His mother encouraged him to use clay.
- b. He wanted to impress his friends.
- c. He had a natural ability to sculpt animals in detail.
- d. He took art lessons at school.

2. Savants like Alex typically:

- a. Excel in a particular skill despite developmental challenges.
- b. Learn everyday tasks more quickly than others.
- c. Can master multiple talents at the same time.
- d. Do not communicate well even in adulthood.

3. Robert Walsh's first teacher:

- a. Encouraged him to write stories.
- b. Was amazed by his artistic talent.
- c. Refused to teach him due to his behavior.
- d. Taught him to sketch landscapes.

4. Robert's drawings were:

- a. Inspired by photographs he found online.
- b. Always detailed and drawn from memory.
- c. Focused only on abstract ideas.
- d. Mostly about his favorite books.

5. Alex Turner's Galloping Stallions:

- a. Took over a year to complete.
- b. Was created with the help of another artist.
- c. Is a life-size sculpture of horses.
- d. Is not anatomically accurate.

6. Robert Walsh's favorite country to visit was:

- a. Poland.
- b. The United Kingdom.
- c. The United States.
- d. Germany.

7. Art helped Alex:

- a. Become completely independent.
- b. Communicate more effectively with others.
- c. Learn to play the piano.
- d. Stop sculpting small works.

8. Robert Walsh's parents:

- a. Discouraged him from pursuing art.
- b. Provided unlimited resources for his drawings.
- c. Forced him to study other subjects.
- d. Found it hard to accept his talent.

9. Both Alex and Robert:

- a. Created life-size works of art.
- b. Had their talents recognized as children.
- c. Overcame significant challenges to succeed.
- d. Were known for their musical abilities.

PART 2: WRITING TASK

Opinion Paragraph

Imagine you have the chance to attend an exhibition featuring either Alex Turner's sculptures or Robert Walsh's drawings. Use the internet to find images of their work. Write a paragraph explaining which exhibition you would choose to attend and why. Mention what you admire about the artist's style and why the other option appeals less to you.

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PART 1: READING COMPREHENSION

Answer Key:

1. c
2. a
3. b
4. b
5. c
6. c
7. b
8. b
9. c

PART 2: WRITING TASK

Sample Opinion Paragraph:

If I had the chance to attend an exhibition, I would choose Alex Turner's sculptures over Robert Walsh's drawings. Alex's life-size animal sculptures, like *Galloping Stallions*, capture incredible realism and detail that truly bring the subjects to life. I admire his ability to create anatomically perfect pieces, which evoke both beauty and movement, all while overcoming personal challenges through his art. While Robert Walsh's drawings are undeniably impressive in their precision and emotional depth, I find that sculptures offer a three-dimensional experience that feels more immersive and tactile. Alex's work not only showcases extraordinary talent but also tells an inspiring story of resilience and passion, making his exhibition my top choice.