

**Read carefully this interview with writer E.B. White.**

INTERVIEWER: Can you say something about your childhood in Mount Vernon?

E.B. WHITE: As a child, I was frightened but not unhappy. My parents were loving and kind. We were a large family (six children). Nobody ever came to dinner. My father was formal, conservative, successful, hardworking, and worried. My mother was loving and hardworking. We lived in a large house in a suburb. I lacked for nothing except confidence. I suffered from the routine terrors of childhood: fear of the dark, fear of the future, fear of the return to school after summer.... I was, as a child, allergic to pollens and dusts, and still am.

INTERVIEWER: At what age did you know you were going to follow a literary profession? Was there a particular incident, or moment?

WHITE: I never knew for sure that I would follow a literary profession. I was twenty-seven or twenty-eight before anything happened that gave me any assurance that I could be a writer. I had done a great deal of writing, but I lacked confidence in my abilities.

INTERVIEWER: When did you first move to New York?

WHITE: After I got out of college, in 1921, I went to work in New York but did not live in New York. I lived at home, with my father and mother in Mount Vernon. I held three jobs in about seven months. I disliked them all. In the spring of 1922 I headed west to seek my fortune. I landed in Seattle six months later and worked there as a reporter on the *Times* for a year, was fired, shipped to Alaska, and then returned to New York.

INTERVIEWER: Nature has been very important to you. This seems a contradiction considering the urbanity of New York.

WHITE: There is no contradiction. New York is part of the natural world. I love the city, I love the country. The city is part of the country. But it is not just a question of birds and animals. The urban scene is a spectacle that fascinates me. People are animals, and the city is full of people in strange plumage, defending their territorial rights, digging for their supper.

INTERVIEWER: Do you have a special interest in the other arts than writing?

WHITE: I have no special interest in any of the other arts. I know nothing of music or of painting or of sculpture or of the dance. I would rather watch the circus or a ball game than ballet.

INTERVIEWER: Is style something that can be taught?

WHITE: I don't think it can be taught. Style results more from what a person is than from what he knows.

1. What are the main life experiences that E.B. White describes in this interview?  
(minimum 30 words)

E.B.White talks about his experiences as a child. He describes his parents, the house where he used to live and his daily life back then. E.B.White then talks about becoming a writer after moving to New York. Finally, he talks about his relationship with nature and with art.

2. True or false?

	True	False
E.B. White never wanted to become a writer.	X	
E. B. White did not like New York.		X
E.B. White was passionate about music and painting.		X
E.B. White was a very confident young man.		X

3. Replace the word in italics with a synonym.

As a child, I was *frightened* but not unhappy.

*Scared, terrified*

I had done a great deal of writing, but I lacked confidence in my *abilities*.

*Capacities, skills, competences*

4. **E.B. White tells the story of his young years in this interview. He also describes his personality and his likes and dislikes. Describe your main passions and hobbies. (minimum 50 words)**

One of my favorite hobby is reading novels. I like to read novels because I can discover different characters and their life stories. And usually it is like entering in a whole new universe. Reading also helps me open my mind, find out more about different countries and also more about history.

Another passion I have is gardening. I like spending time in my garden, planting and taking care of my vegetables, and then making delicious dishes with fresh and tasty tomatoes or salads!

## Part 2. Written comprehension

### 5. Read this article and choose the best word to fill the spaces.

My name's Hannah and I'm twenty years old. I've got a daughter called Nicole.

She's \_\_\_\_\_ three now. (*nearly* / *quite* / *yet*)

I live in a small flat \_\_\_\_\_ the city centre. It isn't a nice place to live. (*in* / *at* / *on*)

It's very noisy and dirty and there is \_\_\_\_\_ for Nicole to play. (*somewhere* / *anywhere* / *nowhere*)

I want to move out of the city and live in the countryside. But it's very expensive to live there. I will need to earn \_\_\_\_\_ money to buy a house. (*enough* / *any* / *this*)

There aren't \_\_\_\_\_ flats for sale in the small villages near here. (*much* / *lot* / *many*)

I will need to buy a car \_\_\_\_\_ (*too* / *also* / *maybe*).

That's why I study at college. I'm studying Business. While I am at college, my mum looks \_\_\_\_\_ Nicole. (*at* / *after* / *for*)

My mum really likes spending time with her. In the evening, I work as a cleaner. I clean people's houses. Nicole comes with me. She plays \_\_\_\_\_ with her toys while I work. (*quiet* / *quieter* / *quietly*)

### 6. Choose the correct tense for the verbs in the following text.

When George **created** (*to create*) his own business, everyone **thought** (*to think*) he **was crazy** (*to be*) crazy. They **thought** (*to think*) that he **had made / made / would made** (*make*) a lot of sacrifices. His friends **told** (*to tell*) him not to give up his great lifestyle. His business **was** (*to be*) small, but in twenty years it **would become** (*to become*) a large and successful company.

## Read the following article:

### **A journey into genius**

by Dan Savery Paz, Lonely Planet Writer

Want to enter the world of a genius? Visiting the homes and workplaces of Marie Curie, Shakespeare and Einstein may not make you more intelligent, but it will certainly inspire you. Take a trip with us to some of these great places.

#### **Curie's birthplace, Warsaw, Poland**

Marie Curie, one of the greatest fighters against cancer, was a proud daughter of Warsaw. She was the first woman to win a Nobel Prize (1903). She discovered two elements— polonium (named after Poland) and radium. She is famous for her research on radioactivity.

#### **Einstein's apartment, Bern, Switzerland**

Albert Einstein lived in Bern from 1902 to 1909. These were the happiest and most productive years of his life. 1905 was the year when he wrote four articles that changed modern physics, including the special theory of relativity. These important papers were created in a modest apartment on Kramgasse, which is now the Einstein House, home to his typewriter, telephone and some very well-worn passports.

#### **Shakespeare's Globe, London, UK**

What could be more English than standing with a beer in hand, watching a Shakespeare play by the River Thames? Only tea with the Queen. 2016 marks 400 years since the death of William Shakespeare. The Globe Theatre in London will be celebrating with a host of special performances and exhibitions.

(adapted from <https://www.lonelyplanet.com/travel-tips-and-articles/a-journey-into-genius> , retrieved on 31 May 2016)

## Part 1. Comprehension (6 points)

### 1. What is this article about? (minimum 30 words)

This article presents the homes and workplaces of Marie Curie, Shakespeare and Einstein. It introduces these three famous people, by describing their lives, their achievements and also the places where they lived.

### 2. Why is it important to visit the homes of Marie Curie, Shakespeare and Einstein? (minimum 30 words)

According to the author of this article, it is important to visit the homes of Marie Curie, Shakespeare and Einstein in order to get inspiration. These houses and workplaces are also good destinations for a trip.

### 3. True or false?

	True	False
Visiting the home of a genius will make you more intelligent.		x
Marie Curie discovered two new chemical elements.	x	
Einstein discovered the theory of relativity in late 1920s.		x
Einstein had several passports.	x	

## Part 2. Comprehension (4 points)

What does Josh say to his friend Marta?

Complete the conversation between two friends, matching the numbers 1 to 6 with the letters A to H.

Marta: Hello, Josh. It's good to see you. How was your holiday?

Josh: 1 .....

Marta: Where did you go this year?

Josh: 2 .....

Marta: What was the weather like?

Josh: 3 .....

Marta: Great! Did you take any photos?

Josh: 4 .....

Marta: Did you stay in a hotel?

Josh: 5 .....

Marta: It sounds like you had a great time. Will you go again?

Josh: 6 .....

Marta: It would be more interesting to do that.

### Possible answers:

A It was quite warm. I went swimming in the sea.

B No we didn't. My uncle has some friends there and we stayed with them.

C I thought they were really great.

D Probably not. I'm planning to go somewhere else next year.

E It was great, thanks.

F I took some really good ones.

G We didn't have enough money.

H I went with my uncle to Iceland.

### Your answers:

1 E

2 H

3 A

4 F

5 B

6 D

**Part 2. Written expression (10 points)**

**Describe a personal experience of visiting a museum, a city, or a place in nature. (minimum 100 words)**

**I love nature! It offers some of the best experiences when you have a free day from work. Nothing compares to walking in the forest for two or three hours on a sunny day! Let me tell you more about this.**

**I enjoy walking a lot. I usually like to put on my walking shoes on a sunny day and then walk around the forests which are just next to the village where I live. Walking in the forest is relaxing, first of all. It is also educational, because you can learn more about the flowers, trees and animals that live just next to us. It is also a way to get over problems and stop thinking about stress and daily life issues.**

**Try it, you won't regret it!**