

## Expression écrite

Prescot, near Liverpool, is thought to be the site of the only Elizabethan-era indoor playhouse outside London. The theatre opening there on July 15th, a timber-framed replica of a 17<sup>th</sup> century playhouse, is meant to have greater impact. The idea is for the Shakespeare North Playhouse to become one corner of a theatrical triangle along with Stratford-on-Avon, where the Royal Shakespeare Company has its base, and Shakespeare's Globe theatre in London. The venue is central to plans to revive Prescot, which is in one of the most deprived areas of Britain. It is expected to bring in 140,000 visitors and add £5.4m (\$6.4m) to the local economy each year. Shakespeare-themed businesses are cropping up; a pub called 'The Bard' now graces the high street.

Under Boris Johnson, the government has been keen on using cultural attractions to advance its 'levelling up' agenda, to reduce inequalities between the south-east and the rest of the country. But when it comes to winning funding for projects, cultural institutions can be at a disadvantage. As well as creating jobs and luring tourists, these venues claim many intangible benefits. Melanie Lewis, the boss of the new theatre in Prescot, lists social activities to reduce loneliness among the elderly, educational programmes for local children and, most unquantifiable of all, enhanced pride in the city. Pricing such benefits is tricky, especially if admission is free (as it is at most national museums). One technique is to ask people how much they would be willing to pay for something. The answers can be used to assess what people get out of a cultural asset and to test out hypothetical scenarios that might inform funding decisions.

In 2021 the government launched a multi-year research project into how to value the benefits of culture and heritage. But the real constraint on new projects is limited budgets. Most arts funding in England comes from local government; the bulk of the money to pay for the theatre in Prescot was from local authorities. A wobbly economy, and a new prime minister who is less wedded than Mr Johnson to the idea of levelling up, may mean fewer curtains going up. The course of cultural regeneration never did run smooth.

Adapted from The Economist, 14th July 2022

### Questions

1. According to the article, what benefits is Prescot's theatre expected to bring to the local community and what major question does it raise? Answer the question in your own words. (80 words, ± 10%)

2. In your opinion, to what extent can culture (in its widest meaning) lead to a reduction in social inequalities? Illustrate your answer with relevant examples. (180 words, ± 10%)

## Thème

Irina avait trouvé un prétexte pour se débarrasser de sa fille et se noyer dans le vin et le whisky bon marché. « Tu ne vas pas te sentir seule ? En août on travaille à plein temps. — Oh non. J'ai apporté des livres. Et je vous aiderai au restaurant. — Pas question. Ici tu es en vacances. »

Il était agréable d'être traitée en enfant gâtée.

Le club de vacances que géraient Jacques et Paulette se trouvait sur une petite péninsule au bout d'une longue route. Paulette se gara devant le bâtiment principal. Clarisse descendit de voiture. C'était son sixième été ici. Elle se sentait chez elle. Jacques se précipita hors du bureau et la serra contre lui.

« Et voilà la plus belle ! Tu n'as pas changé du tout ! » Paulette rit.

« Je viens de lui dire le contraire ! »

D'après Catherine Cusset, *La Définition du bonheur*, 2021

## Proposition de corrigé

**1. According to the article, what benefits is Prescott's theatre expected to bring to the local community and what major question does it raise? Answer the question in your own words. (80 words, ± 10%)**

How much is culture worth ? Its benefits are indeed immaterial, basically unnecessary to a human being's survival but only pertaining to the sphere of well-being and knowledge. It's up to local governments to assess the added value of culture in their community. The aftereffects expected, which are bound to boost this whole low-income region, however unpredictable, are varied, ranging from educational to social. Prescott will become a touristic destination, with a new sense of belonging, intensifying the locals' pride in their own Elizabethan heritage. **(85 words)**

**2. In your opinion, to what extent can culture (in its widest meaning) lead to a reduction in social inequalities? Illustrate your answer with relevant examples. (180 words, ± 10%)**

In its widest meaning, one may consider culture as synonymous with education. Being educated, or cultured, might allow you to get out of your family background, thus fending off social determinism, and reducing social inequalities. A more uniform cultural landscape might help a nation get along better. The more cultured you are, the more curious about other people's customs and skills you become. Culture makes tolerant and understanding. However, culture, because it is not a staple, is often overlooked and ends up being the repository of difference between those who have the financial capacity and time to indulge and those who don't. To attract a wider public, cultural infrastructures offer renewed modes of exhibition. Most museums now allow photographs – and selfies – to be taken. Some venues try to tackle contemporaneous concerns such as diversity, inclusion, empowerment, in order to reduce social disparities. The Museum of Black History in Washington DC, for example, traces back the history of the USA, from the specific perspective of the black community. Its tour ends with portraits of successful figures. It is open to all, and free of charge. **(184 words)**

### Thème

Irina had found an excuse to get rid of her daughter and drown her sorrows in cheap wine and whiskey. "Aren't you going to feel lonely? We work full-time in August." "Oh, no. I brought some books. And I'll help out at the restaurant." "No way. You're on vacation here."

It was nice to be treated like a spoiled child.

The vacation club run by Jacques and Paulette was located on a small peninsula at the end of a long road. Paulette pulled up in front of the main building. Clarisse got out of the car. This was her sixth summer here. She felt right at home. Jacques rushed out of the office and hugged her tightly.

"And here's the most beautiful one! You haven't changed a bit!" Paulette laughed.

"I just told her the opposite!"