Priceless or worthless?

A New Genius?

The artist had some difficulty pointing out the features of his 3-metre-wide painting, which had just been sold for $19,000 to an adoring crowd at the opening night in Beverly Hills – perhaps because he is only 1 m 40 cms tall.

1 Now read through the whole article and answer the questions which follow.

The art world’s latest child prodigy, ten-year-old Beso Kazaishvili from the Republic of Georgia, looked resplendent in traditional costume: a belted cream wool tunic with sewn-in gunpowder tubes and a sinister curved dagger. He was ‘very happy’ about the sale but emphasised: ‘Money is not everything.’

Beso has burst upon the art scene two years after the Romanian-born Alexandra Netchita was hailed as a genius at the age of ten. She has now made $10 million from her paintings. Her family has moved from a cramped bungalow by a Los Angeles freeway to a $1 million mansion. Alexandra began in California and made a successful European tour. Beso began with some success in London, where his family stayed with the Georgian ambassador, and he is now touring the United States. His work is mostly in oils of human figures and faces, executed in a lively vivid bright, sometimes almost garish, colours. Many tell stories with symbolic themes of good and evil, death and time, and all are executed remarkably quickly. Ink drawings, which sold for £200 in London, are fetching up to $3,000 in Beverly Hills, where they are very highly thought of.

Beso and Alexandra are managed by the Californian art publisher Ben Valenty. Beso has signed a contract in the ‘mid-six figures’. Mr Valenty always takes half but pays all expenses. It is good money for both sides – Beso’s sales hit $30,000 in an hour in the USA. Cynics like myself may question a second genius arriving so soon, but Mr Valenty argues that there are probably half a dozen or more in the world. He adds: ‘No sooner had I discovered Alexandra than parents from all over the world began sending me their kids’ work. Yet none measured up to Beso, and I went to see him. Lightning can strike twice. Beso’s work is deeper.’ After Alexandra the door is open. People believe a child’s art is worthy of serious consideration, so Beso won’t meet the earlier scepticism. I believe he’s a genius, and I’m prepared for the verdict of time.’

Mr Valenty and his colleague Rick Lombardo, a television producer preparing a documentary on child prodigies, cheerfully admit that sales of the children’s works are market driven. ‘If Beso makes $19,000 in half an hour, it’s because people want his work. Dozens of other youngsters haven’t made that mark. Well, that’s the market. Who knows what will happen next?’

Beso’s parents, Badr, an engineer, and Irma, a schoolteacher, believe their son’s work was influenced by Georgia’s civil war of 1993–1995. They were often without water and electricity, and food was scarce. Short of money to buy paper, Beso made a drawing on the blank side of a card from his mother’s stockings packet. ‘That one is priceless, and not for sale,’ said Mr Valenty, who acknowledges that Beso’s ‘story’ helps sales. ‘He’s not like other kids,’ Mr Lombardo says. ‘He’s structured. Sure, he’ll watch television, play baseball, do his homework, but then start painting. He’s never distracted from that. We’re only just beginning to find out about these kids. Nobody studied it before. Who knows what Picasso was like at 11? We don’t know.’

1 Beso and Alexandra both
   A come from the same country in Europe.
   B are American citizens now.
   C paint similar kinds of pictures.
   D have an unusual gift.

2 What do we find out about Beso’s painting?
   A He enjoys doing portraits.
   B He spends time getting the details right.
   C He prefers using subtle colours.
   D He uses ideas from famous fairytales.

3 What does Mr Valenty say about child artists?
   A He knows at least six possible geniuses at the moment.
   B He wants to meet as many as possible.
   C He believes that their work will be easier to sell in the future.
   D Their work improves as they get older.

4 What do you think ‘measured up to’ means in line 28?
   A had the same height
   B was the same standard
   C was the same age
   D had the same experience

5 What does Mr Valenty say about the money that Beso earns?
   A Beso could earn a lot more when he is older.
   B It’s hard to put a price on Beso’s works.
   C Beso only earns what people are prepared to pay.
   D It’s crazy for people to pay so much for a child’s work.

6 What do we find out about Beso from the article?
   A His only interest is painting.
   B He’s a good student.
   C He is surprised that he is making so much money.
   D He loves being in the USA.
**Adverbs and word order**

| never | seldom | rarely | hardly | no sooner |

These adverbs can be put in the normal adverbial position. However, if they are put at the beginning of a sentence, the word order must be changed — this is called ‘inversion’. This is because the subject and verb are ‘inverted’, that is, the word order is changed so that it looks like a question. It is done to give greater emphasis.

No sooner had I discovered Alexandra than parents all over the world began sending me their kids’ work.

I had no sooner discovered Alexandra, than parents all over the world began sending me their kids’ work.

Below are sixteen sentences, fifteen of which show mistakes in word order made by students of English. Work with a partner to identify the errors and then rewrite the sentences correctly. You may need to add a word. One sentence is correct.

1. I like very much Van Gogh.
2. I yesterday visited a gallery in London.
3. She would have never suggested buying it.
4. He still is hoping to have an exhibition.
5. I asked him to not stand in front of the painting.
6. Always there is a queue for the Summer Exhibition.
7. I go often to Los Angeles.
8. The price is enough high, so don’t bid any more.
9. I never have I seen a painting like that.
10. Can you tell me what is the price, please?
11. I don’t know what is it called.
12. It was a such heavy frame that no one could carry it.
13. The artist gave to my father the small portrait.
14. How it is magnificent!
15. He me described the photo.
16. She drew quickly the sketch.

3. Read the following information about adverbs.

Adverbs are usually formed by adding -ly to an adjective. However, some words ending in -ly are adjectives and have no adverb.

- **friendly**, **lonely**, **lovely**, **ugly**, **silly**

If you want to use these words as adverbs you need to add ‘in a … way’.  

- **He held out his hand in a friendly way.**
- **Some adverbs keep the same form as the adjective.**
  - She walks fast.
  - She is a fast walker.
  - He works hard.
  - He is a hard worker.
- **Some adverbs have two forms, with a difference in meaning.**
  - She works hard. (a great deal)
  - She hardly does any work. (almost no work)
  - I came home late yesterday. (not on time)
  - Have you seen Peter lately? (recently)

**Adverb or adjective?** Complete these sentences by using a word or phrase based on the word in capitals. Some sentences do not need to be changed.

1. He seemed to be a very SILLY person.
2. He drives quite GOOD for someone with so little experience.
3. The gallery owner shook my hand FRIENDLY.
4. I think Picasso painted GOOD pictures than Braque.
5. Don’t paint so FAST, you’ll make a mess of it.
6. Women painters were often GOOD than men, it’s just they are less GOOD known.
7. She draws CAREFUL than anyone else in the class.
8. If you painted a little INTERESTING, people might buy more of your paintings.
9. A painter’s life can be very LONELY.
10. Luckily my art teacher’s drawing was BAD than mine.
11. I’ve eaten HARD any dinner.
12. Your hem isn’t very STRAIGHT.
Priceless or worthless?

Vocabulary Confusible words

Vocabulary spot
Some words in English are easily confused, either because they look or sound similar, or because they exist in another language with a different meaning. Take special care when learning these words.

4 The article about Beso talked about a work of art being 'priceless.' This means that you can’t buy it because it is so valuable; it has no price.
In the following sentences there are two words or phrases which are often confused by students. Decide which one is correct, then write another sentence to show how the other word or phrase is used.

a My sister spent so long talking on the phone every day that at the end / in the end my parents bought her a mobile phone.

b My next door neighbour’s help has been invaluable / priceless while my mother was in hospital.

c You don’t see many people smoking nowadays / actually.

d Prices of impressionist paintings have raised / risen a great deal in the last few years.

e Lie / lay down on the bed and have a rest.

f Tell / say me the story about how you met Monet.

g My mother is an excellent cook / cooker.

h The bank in town was stolen / robbed this morning.

i I damaged / injured the piano when I tried to move it.

j The watch I got for my birthday was very priceless / valuable.

k My friend was very sympathetic / friendly when I broke my arm.

l Jean is so sensible / sensitive that she cries whenever she watches a sad film.

5 Read the text below. Use the word given in capitals at the end of each line to form a word that fits in the space in the same line.
There is an example at the beginning (0).
Remember you need to spell the word correctly.

Pablo Picasso was born in Spain. As a child he was very (0) talented.

At the age of 19, he went to Paris and experimented with (1) ..............
styles, from sad paintings in blue, to more (2) .............. ones of circuses
in reds and pinks. Picasso very quickly became (3) ............... He was
constantly looking for new (4) ..............

He became interested in (5) .............. masks, which were being shown in
Europe for the first time. He particularly liked the simple but (6) ..............
way they distorted the human face. He began to use (7) ..............
shapes to build up an image – this was the (8) .............. of cubism. Even
though his cubist pictures are (9) .............. we still understand what
they are supposed to be (10) .............. .

TALENT
DIFFER
CHEER
SUCCEED
INSPIRE
AFRICA
EXPRESSION
ANGLE
BEGIN
REALISM
SYMBOL
Priceless or worthless?

Topic review

6 Answer these questions, giving your own opinions.

a What should someone do to lose weight?
b When should you tell someone it’s time for them to leave a party?
c Even if someone has committed a crime, is prison the best form of punishment?
d Would you rather spend your money on entertainment or clothes?
e Is there a luxury you regret not having?
f Do you ever wish you were famous?
g What do you hope to do after you have passed FCE?
h What would you do if you were stranded in a storm?
i How often do you go to art exhibitions?
j Are modern painters and sculptors exceptionally talented professionals or totally worthless con-artists?

Vocabulary

7 Read the statements or questions and choose the best option, A, B or C.

1 You have been out in the wind and your hair looks a mess. Should you
A untie it?  B unwind it?  C untangle it?
2 If you give away your friend’s secret even though you agreed not to, have you
A broken a promise?  B kept your word?
C spent a fortune?
3 Which performer would you not see at a classical recital?
A a violinist  B a cellist  C a bass guitarist
4 You are driving in torrential rain and a tree falls across the road 200 metres in front of you. Are you in danger of being
A cut down?  B cut off?  C cut out?

5 While a photograph is being taken of you, should you keep
A quiet?  B calm?  C still?
6 If you have a steady income but enjoy paying everyone’s expenses, are you likely to be
A tight?  B broke?  C loaded?
7 What should you do about a large debt?
A pay it off  B break it off  C call it off
8 It’s about time you found a glass of water.
Are you
A fainting?  B hiccuping?  C sneezing?

8 The twenty words below have all appeared in prior units. Decide what they are with the help of the information given. Use one from each set to complete the sentences a-e in the next page.

- two verbs to do with illness or injury:
  1 _ P _ A _
  2 C ___ H
- three words to do with volcanoes:
  3 ___ U ___
  4 ___ H
  5 L ___
- four musical instruments:
  6 O ___
  7 I ___ O
  8 U I ___
  9 ___ L ___
- five serious crimes:
  10 ___ A ___
  11 F ___
  12 ___ G G ___
  13 ___ S ___
  14 ___ I J ___
- six adjectives to describe works of art:
  15 W ___ E ___
  16 ___ X ___ I V ___
  17 ___ R ___ S
  18 ___ L ___ L ___
  19 G ___ I S H
  20 S Y ___ O ___ C
Vocabulary Collocations

10 Look at this example from the article.

She has now **made $10 million** from her paintings.
The collocation is 'to make money'.
Can you match each verb in A with a word or phrase in B? Some are used more than once.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>A</th>
<th>B</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>break</td>
<td>a conversation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sit</td>
<td>a promise</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>get</td>
<td>20 kilometres to the litre</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>spend</td>
<td>a look</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>taste</td>
<td>an expression</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>keep</td>
<td>still</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>have</td>
<td>a fortune</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>do</td>
<td>awake</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>wear</td>
<td>funny</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>a secret</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>a week</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>a holiday</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>better</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Grammar**

9 Read the text below and think of the word which best fits each space. Use one word in each space. There is an example at the beginning (0).

**How to make a small fortune**

Have you ever wished you had some savings to fall back on? Perhaps you already have something put aside for a rainy day, but if here are some unusual ways to make a pile cash. If you are prepared to wait for your money, David Leach, a specialist in collecting, suggests keeping empty Spice Girls crisp packets:

'Most people throw them away, so there are millions of them now, one day they be extremely valuable.' Very old toys remain in a condition that is good for them to be sold, that a pre-1950, well-looked-after teddy bear can be worth to £2,000. Musical instruments can raise large sum, sometimes unexpectedly. Hazel Morgan hadn’t played her violin for more forty years, so she decided to sell. To her surprise, the violin itself was valued £1,500 and the bow, despite In bad condition, was expected to fetch even more. Fine wines can also be highly profitable, and even your investment doesn’t prove as big an earner as you hoped, you can still enjoy drinking the wine!
Grammar

12 Read the text below and think of the word which best fits each space. Use only one word in each space. There is an example at the beginning (0).

Your guides to the best possible taste

Have you ever wondered (0) ________ people generally go for in a painting?

In 1993, two artists set (1) ____________ to discover what America’s favourite painting looked (2) ____________ . They hired telephone researchers to call 1,001 Americans (3) ____________ all backgrounds and ask them a list of questions. What (4) ____________ of paintings do you like? Which colours do you prefer? There were 102 questions (5) ____________ all.

Once equipped with (6) ____________ information, the artists, Vitaly Komar and Alexander Melamid, set to (7) ____________ to create two paintings – America’s Most Wanted, and America’s Most Unwanted. Eighty-eight per (8) ____________ of people questioned wanted (9) ____________ landscape. Favourite colours were blue and green.

America’s Most Unwanted, (10) ____________ contrast, aimed to displease. It was ‘different looking’, featured gold, orange, peach and teal, (11) ____________ was very modern. But this was (12) ____________ the start of the artists’ scientific guide to taste. Komar and Melamid then went (13) ____________ to do similar surveys for (14) ____________ nine countries. Disturbingly, many of the respondents in these countries wanted landscapes similar (15) ____________ the one Americans had chosen.

13 The words in these sentences are jumbled. Put them in the correct order and add punctuation. Sometimes there is more than one correct answer.

a theatre I go often there isn’t to town one my don’t the very in because
b use I phone could your please
c lovely dress bought her a silk yesterday blue I
d keen never Alan on swimming has been
e members few were a of students quite the audience the of
f Italian very I much like food
g quietly watched pulled they down old cinema as crowd the the
h asked money him the if man he give him some could
i does not also bananas Alison only like she keen apples on is
j been horrified life never I so my in have
Vocabulary
Verb collocations

14 Complete these sentences by using the correct form of one of the verbs below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>taste</th>
<th>do</th>
<th>sit</th>
<th>spend</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>keep</td>
<td>have</td>
<td>break</td>
<td>get</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

a My new car ................... 25 kms to the litre.
b Some airline food .............. funny.
c People always seem to ............... a fortune when they go on holiday.
d I .................. a conversation at the bus stop when I realised the person I was talking about was right behind me.
e Why can't you children .............. still for more than five minutes?
f His speech was so boring it was all I could do to .................. awake.
g Is your brother ................. better at playing chess?
h My father said he would lend me his car at the weekend, but he .............. his promise.

Adverb – adjective collocations

15 In the article on page 1, the writer said that Beso's paintings are very highly thought of. This means people like them very much and believe that he is a real artist.

Which of the adverbs in A collocate with the adjectives in B?

A highly  deeply  perfectly  seriously

B ill  serious  acclaimed  happy  disappointed  reasonable  amusing  ashamed

c Although my hotel was rather expensive, I decided that the prices were .......................... , considering the excellent service I had received.
d I found it hard to believe, but my sister was .......................... when she told me she was going to join the navy.
e His latest play has been .......................... by the critics.
f I am .......................... of my behaviour last night and am writing to you to apologise.
g I don’t know why the baby started crying – he seemed .......................... when I put him to bed.
h My boss isn’t here at the moment. His wife had to call for an ambulance when he was taken .......................... in the night.

Definitions

17 Match these words with the definitions below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>garish</th>
<th>prodigy</th>
<th>scepticism</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>priceless</td>
<td>sympathetic</td>
<td>portrait</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>colleague</td>
<td>scarce</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

a Someone who is very gifted at a young age. ..........................
b A picture of a person. ..........................
c So expensive you cannot put a price on it. ..........................
d When there is very little of something. ..........................
e Too colourful. ..........................
f The state of not believing something. ..........................
g Used to describe someone who is very helpful or pleasant when you have problems. ..........................
h Someone who works with you. ..........................
Adverbs and word order
At the beginning, usually for emphasis
• Time adverbs – tomorrow, yesterday evening – can go at the beginning or the end of a sentence.
  Tomorrow I’m going swimming.
  We had a curry last night.
• Most negative adverbs can be placed at the beginning of a sentence but the word order changes as a result. This is called inversion.
  seldom, never, rarely, under no circumstances, no sooner, hardly.
  Never have I seen such a wonderful sunset!
  Notice the change in word order. The meaning is the same as ‘I have never seen such a wonderful sunset’, but the inversion gives the sentence more emphasis.
• Adverbs of frequency – sometimes, often, etc. – can start a sentence for emphasis, but they usually go between the subject and the verb. There is no inversion after them.
  Sometimes I go shopping after work.
• Adverbs of manner – suddenly, quietly, etc. – can start a sentence for emphasis.
  Quietly she stepped into the cellar.
• Adverbs of opinion – actually, surprisingly, etc. – are often placed at the beginning of a sentence for emphasis.
  Actually, I’m older than you think.

In the middle
• Adverbs of frequency – sometimes, often, always, usually, etc. – are placed:
  before the verb in simple sentences – We often play tennis.
  after the first auxiliary verb – I have always been fond of chocolate.
  after the verb ‘to be’ – I am never ill.
• Adverbs of degree – almost, very, quite – are placed before the word they modify:
  It was very dark outside.
• Adverbs of manner – suddenly, quietly, etc.
  They suddenly appeared from behind the wall.
• Adverbs of opinion – obviously, stupidly, etc.
  I obviously forgot to tell you where I would be.

End position
Adverbs of Manner (How), Place (Where) and Time (When) usually go in the end position. Never place one of these adverbs between a verb and its object. You cannot say They gave generously the present.
If there are two or three adverbs of manner, place and time they are placed in this order:
Manner – Place – Time
Valerie behaved badly at her aunt’s yesterday.