



Università degli Studi di Verona
Centro Linguistico di Ateneo

Prova scritta: Inglese B2 Tandem – 12 febbraio 2015

Maximum time for the exam: **1 hour and 30 minutes**.

Part 1 Reading comprehension

Read the text and answer the five comprehension questions.

- Answer the questions **in your own words** in complete sentences.
- Do not begin sentences with 'Because'.
- **Do not copy** whole phrases or sentences from the text.
- Write a **maximum of 25 words for each answer** (long answers will be penalised).
- Do not use a dictionary.

Questions

1. How were the exhibits at Auschwitz originally presented to visitors in the 1950s?
2. How do other memorial museums differ from Auschwitz in presenting similar facts.
3. What is the proposed "update" going to change about how Auschwitz is presented to the public?
4. Very few survivors of Auschwitz are still alive. How has this influenced the proposed changes in the exhibition?
5. What does the museum director mean when he says: "It's not enough to cry?"

aftermath: a consequence, an after-effect

mocking: insulting, sarcastic

come to grips: to face

legacy: history, inheritance

righteous: honourable

Part 2 Composition

Write a 150-180 word composition on the following topic:

Some people think that museums should be enjoyable places to entertain people, while others believe that the purpose of museums is to educate. Discuss both views and give your own opinion.

For nearly 60 years, Auschwitz has told its own story, shaped in the **aftermath** of the Second World War. It presents itself unadorned and mostly unexplained, in displays of hair, shoes and other remains of the dead. Past the notorious, **mocking** gateway, into the brick rows of the former barracks of the Polish army camp that the Nazis converted into prisons and death chambers, visitors try to **come to grips** with the terrible events via this exhibition.

Now those in charge of keeping the **legacy** of this camp insist that Auschwitz needs an update. Its story needs to be retold, in a different way for a different age.

A proposed new exhibition at the Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum, occupying some of the same barracks or blocks, will retain the piled hair, shoes and other remains, which by now have become icons, as inextricable from Auschwitz as the crematoria and railway tracks. But the display will start with an explanatory section on how the camp worked, as a German Nazi bureaucratic institution, a topic now largely absent from the present exhibition, which was designed by survivors during the 1950s.

Back then they wished to eradicate the memory of their tormentors, as the Nazis had tried to eradicate them, so they said as little as possible in their exhibition about the Germans who had conceived and run the camp. They focused on mass victimhood but didn't highlight individual stories or testimonials of the sort that have become commonplace at memorial museums, as ways to translate incomprehensible numbers of dead into real people, giving visitors personal stories and characters they can relate to. Those piles, including prostheses and suitcases, also stressed the enormous scale of killing at a time when the world still didn't comprehend, and much of it refused to admit to, what really happened here.

The new exhibition would go on to describe the process of extermination, leading visitors step by step through what victims experienced, and end with a section on camp life, meaning the "daily dehumanization and attempts to keep one's humanity," said Piotr Cywinski, the 39-year-old Polish director of the Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum.

"If we succeed, we will show for the first time the whole range of choices that people faced at Auschwitz," he explained. "Our role is to show the human acts and decisions that took place in extreme situations here — the diversity of thinking and reasoning behind those decisions and their consequences. So, we may raise the question, should a mother give a child to the grandmother and go to selection alone, or take the child with her? This was a real choice, without a good solution, but at Auschwitz you had to make the choice." The gradual passing of survivors has also meant that Auschwitz faces a historical turning point.

"Teenagers now have grandparents born after the war," Mr. Cywinski noted. "This is a very big deal. Your grandparents are your era but your great-grandparents are history.

"The exhibition at Auschwitz no longer fulfills its role, as it used to," he continued. "More or less eight to 10 million people go to such exhibitions around the world today, they cry, they ask why people didn't react more at the time, why there were so few **righteous**, then they go home, see genocide on television and don't move a finger. They don't ask why they are not righteous themselves.

"To me the whole educational system regarding the Holocaust, which really got under way during the 1990s, served its purpose in terms of supplying facts and information. But there is another level of education, a level of awareness about the meaning of those facts. It's not enough to cry. Empathy is noble, but it's not enough."

This is the theme to which officials here return often. Auschwitz, they say, must find ways to engage young people, so they leave feeling what the director called "responsibility to the present."