

Question B – Radio Text | Sample answer

Reflections on the World of Childhood – 2017 Paper 1 Text 3 Q. B

Good morning everybody, we're here on the Sunday Breakfast Show from nine until noon. Today, we are going to be exploring the wonderful world of our childhood. Feel free to text in any comments to 53109.

Having grown up in the nineties, I might as well have grown up on Mars it was so different to what it is to grow up in 2018, as I'm sure many of you who are about my age will agree. Even the idea of iPods and iPhones, laptops and Xboxes was non-existent. My days were spent out on our road, racing the neighbours' kids up and down on our bikes. When that got boring, or we had fallen off one too many times, we settled for selling the toys out of our Happy Meals to passers-by for a couple of cents. Many of our listeners will be familiar with the good old-fashioned lemonade stand, which we set up religiously as soon as the sun came out in the hope of tempting some unfortunate strangers with our sticky lemon juice. The weather seemed to always be sunny, and the best days were those spent at the beach, knee deep in water and digging out wet sand to build sandcastles. The world was a simpler place back then, and I think I speak on behalf of us all when I say that I'm glad I grew up when I did, as the world of children today is far more complex. There were no stresses or struggles over exams, or who-said-what on social media. Our single biggest concern was whether or not we would get a gold star on our homework. The best 'toy' I had was my imagination, and it is fair to say it got plenty of use.

My memories of my childhood all blend into one single, happy, yellow memory. Why yellow, you ask. I'll tell you why – because to five-year-old me, every feeling, every emotion, had a colour. Yellow was happy, blue was sad, pink was excited, brown was bored. Did any of our listeners experience this? I can't have been the only weird child. I think I associated how I was feeling with colours up until I was about eight years old. Do you remember those friends you had that no one had ever seen, yet you talked to them daily? This wasn't due to them living in Australia and us communicating through Facebook. No, this was because they lived in our

heads. In my case, what was even more spectacular about these friends were what they were named after – inanimate objects. I have a distinct memory of my good pal Spoon around the age of four. Kids are weird.

Nature and the outside world provided me with endless tools to aid my imagination. Tell me, were we the only ones who used chestnuts and fallen leaves as money for our games in autumn? Who sucked nectar from the honeydews as food for our games in spring? How did nature inspire your childhood imagination? For us, the markings on the road where the tarmac had been dug up to lay down pipes marked out the ‘roads’ we used to cycle our bikes on in our own little make-believe town. Everything and anything sparked our imaginations: changes in the seasons, a new film that had just been released or something we were doing in school. We may have been a lot of things as children, but we certainly weren’t boring.

As I am retelling the tales of my childhood, the jingle-jangle sound of the ice cream truck is playing at the back of my mind. That for me, as I’m sure it is for many of you, is the unmistakable sound of childhood. I remember waiting patiently on the footpath, the two-euro coin pressed into the palm of my hand, as the ice cream man lifted the lever and the creamy goodness swirled on top of the wafer cone. When I think back to how I spent my weekends when I was young, I am struck by the image of a little girl putting on her ‘Sunday best’ for mass, and then going to her Grandparents’ house to have ‘dinner for lunch’. Do any of our listeners still do this? I, for one, am ashamed to say that I do not.

When I couldn’t sleep at night because I was afraid of the dark, my dad would sing ‘Dream a Little Dream of Me’ until I drifted off into unconsciousness. It’s these little things, the things we’re surprised we remember, but know we’ll never forget, that make childhood so special. Please feel free to text in with your own childhood memories, we’re only too glad to hear our listeners’ experiences.