

LANGUAGE TEST

Name:-----

My English Level (please underline the level you consider corresponds to yours):

Basic Intermediate Upper Intermediate Advanced

Other languages spoken: -----

Part 1: replace the following prepositions in the text (some will be used more than once):

as / for / in / of / on / with

Standing over 6 feet and two inches tall and dressed (1) _____ his habitual black, Pierre Soulanges looks (2) _____ though he's just stepped out of one of his monumental all-black canvases, suspended like cavernous portals from the ceilings of Paris's Pompidou Centre. It is a banner year for Soulanges, who never fails to oversee the hanging of his paintings.

The Pompidou's show is the biggest it has ever mounted (3) _____ a living French artist. It looks back over more than 60 years of his painting, with emphasis (4) _____ more recent developments in his work, which have led him being dubbed the 'painter of black and light'.

One would venture to describe this style as 'abstract' but Soulanges disagrees. 'Abstract art is a general term which is incredibly vague,' he says. 'I wanted to call my first painting concrete not abstract. But people told me concrete art designates paintings made up (5) _____ geometric shapes. I replied, 'If that is how you define concrete art, then you better find another term for figurative art because geometric shapes are like figures.'

With these words a smile creeps on Soulanges' lips: he knows there are some battles that are not worth fighting. A confirmed individualist, Soulanges has never aligned himself with any art movement or school, shunning the distraction of urban mondanities, or anything that might lead him to neglect his art.

'I've got nothing against people who are part (6) _____ a group but I don't like being bossed around,' he says. 'Groups are interesting for sociologists or historians but artistically it's a mistake because by grouping artists together you only become focussed on what they share. What did artists like Manet or Sisley have in common? Impressionism; but what's much more interesting is what makes each unique.'

Meanwhile, Soulange's fascination (7) _____ the artistic possibilities of the colour black dates back even further than he can remember. 'A cousin (8) _____ mine, who is 100 years old, told Pierre Encrevé, the curator of the exhibition, that when I was a boy I dipped my paintbrush in the ink-well and began to paint swathes of black on a white sheet of paper. When my family asked me what I was doing, apparently I replied: Painting snow. Of course that made everyone laugh. But I was a shy child and not trying to show off.

(9) _____ a boy growing up in the southern French town of Rodez, Soulanges liked to paint the stark black branches of leafless trees. He used to visit centuries-old caves such (10) _____ those of Pech-Merle in the Lot or Font-de-Gaume in the Dordogne, where prehistoric hunting scenes worked in crushed charcoal had been made on the walls.

Part 2: circle the word closest in meaning to the underlined words:

1. Habitual – customary / accustomed / habit
2. Oversee – overview / monitor / supervise
3. Dubbed – knighted / named / labelled
4. Vague – imprecise / precise / wave
5. Creep – appear / crawl / slither
6. Shun – escape / avoid / embrace
7. Dip – hold / place / immerse
8. Swathe – blanket / quantity / treatment
9. Shy – introverted / timid / reluctant
10. Stark – rough / stubborn / cheerful