DEPARTMENT FOR CURRICULUM,
LIFELONG LEARNING AND EMPLOYABILITY
Directorate for Learning and Assessment Programmes
Educational Assessment Unit

Track 1

Annual Examinations for Secondary Schools 2022

YEAR 11 ENGLISH
COMPREHENSION TEXT

A. When Jason Tardy was 15, he and younger brother Matthew performed at a local talent show in their hometown in Maine. Their act consisted of lip syncing to Weird Al Yankovic songs. Professional juggler Mike Miclon was in the audience and saw their potential as jugglers. He became their mentor and taught **them** how to juggle. Within months, Jason and Matthew were performing at birthday parties. By the time he graduated high school, Jason was working full-time as a performing artist. "It's the only job I have ever had."

B. Jason and his brother have formed the talent agency *Atypical Entertainment*. In the last 20 years, Jason has been finding new ways to entertain his audiences while keeping **his** act fresh and fun for him, too. He juggles fire, daggers – sometimes while balancing on a yoga ball. He plays music on electronic bodysuits and a custom-made 15-foot drum set he and his brother designed. "I love what I do! I love being creative and making people laugh. I appreciate that my job is to make other people happy. That is really important to me. Seeing other performer friends and what they are doing really inspires me to push myself and not to just keep doing the same thing."

C. When Jason first started to juggle, he would practise up to eight hours a day. Nowadays he does not practise that much. However, when he's incorporating something new into his act he'll practise the skill a few hours a day for a couple of weeks before his show. But when Jason is home, **he's focused on the art of parenthood**. "I do about 150 to 175 shows a year but most of those are quick. For example, every Tuesday this summer I had a show at a local resort and I would leave at 5:30 p.m. and be home by around 10:00 p.m. So I could hang out all day with my family. Probably about two times a year I am gone for five or more days in a row. And most of the other times it's a night or two here or there. And other times I can be home with no shows for a week or more during my slower months."

D. One or two tours a month are with his brother. Most recently, Jason booked a 10-day tour after he and his wife agreed the financial opportunity was too good to turn down. Tardy loves being a dad and family man, but he needs to be a smart businessman too.

E. He has performed on Disney cruises, at fairs, resorts, and even the White House on three different occasions. But his favourite place to play is at home. "I really think I see my kids way more than other working parents do. I have to take work when it comes but I really do have a lot of flexibility."

F. When Jason was spotted by Mike Miclon at the talent show, he wasn't just discovered, he was encouraged. Someone believed in him and that helped Jason believe in himself. Tardy relied on that while dealing with bullies in middle school and high school. "I had a lot of people say I should give up. That what I was doing was dumb and that there was no way I would ever do this for a job. I had some kids take my juggling stuff and throw it at me. I had bullies call me awful names and make fun of me. I knew that **they** just did not understand what I was trying to do."

G. Jason's confidence pushed him forward, helped him to ignore the nonbelievers, and has put him in a position to pass on what he has learned to others. Jason and his brother, Matthew, tackle the subject of bullying in their AudioBody performances done at schools for kids in grades K-12. The show mixes physical comedy with technology and music and **it** helps students gain an appreciation for those things while encouraging kids to become creative problem solvers. The Tardy brothers tailor their show for each age group but always focus on how being kind is a direct path to a successful future."

H. Jason is living his best life because of his unwillingness to quit. The obstacles that he overcame are just a part of his story; the ability to do what he loves and support his family while doing it is the story of a lifetime.

(adapted from www.parent.com)