



Arts, Music and Entertainment

Short-answer questions: Edinburgh Festival Fringe | Cambridge IGCSE ESL 0510/0511

1. Lead-in discussion

Talk with a partner before you read.

1. What kinds of performances do people usually see at a festival?
2. Would you rather perform in a small venue or a large theatre?
3. Why might a city want to host an arts festival?
4. How can performers attract an audience?

Exercise 1 at a glance

Read one factual text. Answers are in the text. Copy exact words and check the question carefully before choosing your answer.

2. Read for overall understanding

Read the text. Why is the Edinburgh Festival Fringe unusual?

Edinburgh Festival Fringe

Every August, Edinburgh becomes one of the busiest arts cities in the world. The Edinburgh Festival Fringe fills theatres, halls, pubs, churches, schools and temporary venues with performances. Audiences can choose from comedy, theatre, dance, music, circus, spoken word and many experimental shows that do not fit neatly into one category.

The Fringe began in 1947, the same year as the Edinburgh International Festival. Eight theatre groups arrived in the city even though they had not been invited to perform in the official programme. Instead of leaving, they performed on the edge of the main festival. This is why the word fringe became linked with performances outside the official centre.

Over time, the Fringe grew into a huge open-access festival. Open-access means that performers do not have to be selected by a central artistic committee before they can take part. If they can find a venue and organise the practical details, they can bring a show to Edinburgh. This gives new performers a chance, but it also creates strong competition for audiences.

For visitors, the festival can feel exciting and confusing at the same time. A person may see a famous comedian in the afternoon and then watch a student theatre group in a tiny room later that evening. Some shows are carefully reviewed by newspapers, while others rely on posters, street performances and word of mouth.

The variety is part of the attraction. Some performances last only a short time and use very simple staging, while others are full productions with lighting, music and costumes. A visitor can plan every hour carefully, but many people also take a chance on a show they know almost nothing about. This sense of discovery is one reason audiences return.

Venues also shape the experience. A school classroom may become a theatre for three weeks, and a basement room may host five different shows in one day. Performers often have very little time to set up before the next group arrives. This can be stressful, but it also gives the festival its fast-moving atmosphere.

The Fringe is important for the city's economy. Hotels, restaurants, cafes and transport services become very busy. However, the festival also creates pressure. Accommodation can become expensive, streets are crowded, and local residents may feel that their normal routines are interrupted for several weeks.

For artists, the Fringe can be risky. Taking a show to Edinburgh costs money, and not every performance makes a profit. Even so, many performers value the festival because it offers visibility, reviews and the possibility of meeting producers or touring companies. The Fringe remains unusual because it combines a professional arts market with the energy of anyone willing to try.

3. Strategy focus

Scan for the exact detail

Underline the key words in the question. Then scan the text for the same idea and copy only the words needed for the answer.

4. Exam-style short-answer questions

Answer the questions using words from the text.

1. What does open-access mean for performers? [1]

2. Where did the first uninvited groups perform in relation to the main festival? [1]

3. What do performers need to find before bringing a show to Edinburgh? [1]

4. How do some shows attract attention besides newspaper reviews? Give one example. [1]

5. What may local residents feel is interrupted? [1]

6. According to the text, what are three possible benefits of the Fringe for performers? [3]

5. Vocabulary notebook

Underline five useful words or phrases. Check their meaning, then record them in your vocabulary notebook.

6. Follow-up tasks

1. Discussion: Would you perform at an open-access festival?

2. Summary: Summarise the Fringe in about 50 words.

3. Creative task: Design a poster for a one-person show.

4. Research: Find one arts festival in another city.

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4. Exam-style short-answer questions

1. performers do not have to be selected by a central artistic committee
2. on the edge of the main festival
3. a venue
4. Any one from: posters; street performances; word of mouth.
5. their normal routines
6. Any three from: gives new performers a chance; offers visibility; reviews; possibility of meeting producers or touring companies; professional arts market.

Notes for checking

1. Answers should be short and clearly based on the text.
2. Accept bracketed or optional wording if the meaning is clear.
3. For the final question, learners need three separate details.