Comics: Trash or Treasure?

In Japan, they call them *manga*; in Latin America, *historietas*; in Italy, *fumetti*. Some people call them “graphic novels.” But no matter what you call them, comics are a favourite source of reading pleasure for millions in many parts of the world.

In case you’re wondering how popular comics are, the best-selling comic title in the U.S. sells about 4.5 million copies a year. Mexico’s comic titles sell over 7 million copies a week. But Japan is by far the leading publisher of comics in the world. *Manga* make up nearly forty percent of all the books and magazines published in Japan each year.

Ever since comics first appeared, there have been people who have criticized them. In the 1940s and 50s, many people believed that comics caused bad behaviour among young people. Even today, many question whether young people should read them at all.

On the other hand, some modern educators see comics as a way to get teenagers to choose reading instead of television and video games. And because of the art, a number of educators have argued that comics are a great way to get children to think creatively. Some recent research has suggested that the combination of visuals and text in comics may be one reason young people handle computers and software so easily.

In many places comics have been a convenient way to communicate social or political information. For example, in the 1990s, comics were used by the Brazilian health ministry to communicate information about AIDS. In Japan, the Education Ministry calls comics “a part of Japan's national culture, recognized and highly regarded abroad.” Comics are increasingly being used for educational purposes, and many publishers there see them as a useful way of teaching history and other subjects.

No matter how you view them, comics remain a guilty pleasure for millions worldwide.

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<td>1.</td>
<td><strong>Answer the following questions according to the text. (Total: 6 points)</strong></td>
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<td>a. What does <em>manga</em> mean in Japanese?</td>
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<td>2. How do some modern educators see comics?</td>
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<td>3. How were comics viewed in the 1940s and 50s?</td>
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2. **Find in the text the synonyms for the words given below.** (Total: 4 points)
   a) to ask yourself____________________
   b) a teacher____________________

3. **Find in the text the antonyms for the words given below.** (Total: 4 points)
   a) to buy ________________
   b) difficultly ________________

4. **Based on the text, write if the sentences are True or False. Justify your choice.**
   (Total: 6 points)
   a) The Brazilian health ministry has never used comics to communicate social information. ________
      because
   
   b) Comics are used in teaching history. ________
      because

5. **Give another title to the text.** (Total: 2 points)

6. **Explain the message of the text in 35-40 words.** (Total: 8 points)
SECTION II. THE ASSESSMENT OF LINGUISTIC COMPETENCE (20 points)

Fill in the gaps with the correct form in brackets or with the correct form of the verb.

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<td>1.</td>
<td>When I was in high school I <em>(to work)</em> __________________________ part time as <em>(the/a/-)</em> __________________________ waiter at Darby’s restaurant. It wasn’t a very easy job but I liked making customers <em>(to feel)</em> __________________________ comfortable and pleased. After finishing school I started working at Steak Hut. By the time the tourist season began, I <em>(to offer)</em> __________________________ a promotion to headwaiter. I coordinated waiters and was responsible <em>(in/at/for)</em> __________________________ creating memorable experiences for our guests. Five years <em>(to pass)</em> __________________________ since that time and I still enjoy working for this restaurant. Recently, I have been appointed night manager. <em>(I already have developed/I have already developed/I have developed already)</em> __________________________ management skills and today I <em>(to supervise)</em> __________________________ the waiters and kitchen staff. Moreover, I have learned to order supplies, plan menus and <em>(other/another/others)</em> __________________________ things. These days, I wish I <em>(had/had had/have)</em> __________________________ more free time, as I want to get a degree in Tourism Managements.</td>
<td>A 0 0 2 2 4 4 6 6 8 8 10 10 12 12 14 14 16 16 18 18 20 20</td>
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SECTION III. THE ASSESSMENT OF CULTURAL AND PRAGMATIC COMPETENCES
(20 points)

Write a 75-80-word coherent text responding to the situation below.

Imagine you have the possibility to visit the capital of an English-speaking country. Name the capital and describe what you would like to visit there.

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A  | 0    | A 0 |
A  | 1    | A 1 |
A  | 0    | A 0 |
A  | 1    | A 1 |
A  | 1    | A 1 |
A  | 0    | A 0 |
A  | 0    | A 0 |
A  | 0    | A 0 |
Write a coherent 180-200-word text expressing your attitude on the given topic.

Why should government finance museums that some people consider just buildings that store old things? Bring two examples; use the following plan:

- introduction;
- body;
- conclusion.

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