

TOEFL Practice 2

Integrated Writing (read/listen/write)

1. Read (3min)

Toward the end of his life, the Chevalier de Seingalt (1725–1798) wrote a long memoir recounting his life and adventures. The Chevalier was a somewhat controversial figure, but since he met many famous people, including kings and writers, his memoir has become a valuable historical source about European society in the eighteenth century. However, some critics have raised doubts about the accuracy of the memoir. They claim that the Chevalier distorted or invented many events in the memoir to make his life seem more exciting and glamorous than it really was.

For example, in his memoir the Chevalier claims that while living in Switzerland, he was very wealthy, and it is known that he spent a great deal of money there on parties and gambling. However, evidence has recently surfaced that the Chevalier borrowed considerable sums of money from a Swiss merchant. Critics thus argue that if the Chevalier had really been very rich, he would not have needed to borrow money.

Critics are also skeptical about the accuracy of the conversations that the Chevalier records in the memoir between himself and the famous writer Voltaire. No one doubts that the Chevalier and Voltaire met and conversed. However, critics complain that the memoir cannot possibly capture these conversations accurately, because it was written many years after the conversations occurred. Critics point out that it is impossible to remember exact phrases from extended conversations held many years earlier.

Critics have also questioned the memoir's account of the Chevalier's escape from a notorious prison in Venice, Italy. He claims to have escaped the Venetian prison by using a piece of metal to make a hole in the ceiling and climbing through the roof. Critics claim that while such a daring escape makes for enjoyable reading, it is more likely that the Chevalier's jailers were bribed to free him. They point out that the Chevalier had a number of politically well-connected friends in Venice who could have offered a bribe.

2. Listen

https://www.ets.org/c/17722/audio/vol_3/track11rlwlistn.mp3

3. Write (20min)

TIFFANY'S SAMPLE NOTES

| R = memoir wrong | L = right |
|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> C → \$ → Switz. C borrowed \$ ≠ rich | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> property wait to be sold = rich |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> convos b/w V <u>not</u> T written > years <u>after</u> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> convos w/ V written <u>rightly</u> 👁️ → C consult notes |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Venice p. escape bribe | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> other \$ prisoners X bribe Ⓐ esc. → <u>✓</u> repaired |

TIFFANY'S SAMPLE RESPONSE BASED ON NOTES

The lecturer mentioned three points to prove the accuracy of Chevalier's memoir against the article's descriptions that doubted the accuracy.

First, the article doubted Chevalier's wealth when he was in Switzerland because he borrowed money from a Swiss merchant. However, the lecturer clarified Chevalier borrowed the money because he was waiting for his valued assets like properties to be sold to exchange for money during emergencies. Therefore, he was not poor.

Second, the article questioned the conversations between him and Voltaire on his memoir because those conversations were written into the memoir many years after the conversations happened which could not have been remembered so accurately. To the contrary, the lecturer proved that Chevalier recorded the conversations at night when the meeting happened, and witnesses confirmed that he consulted his notes regularly when writing the memoir.

Third, the article doubted the account of Chevalier escaping the prison by digging a hole in the ceiling; instead, the article believes that he bribed himself out of prison. However, the lecturer argues that there were more powerful people in the prison that could not bribe themselves out of jail. Also, the prison's document showed that it had replaced the ceiling after Chevalier escaped. If the escaping account was not true, why did the prison need to change the ceiling of the room?

Summarizing the above three reasons, Chevalier's memoir had high accuracy because first, Chevalier borrowed the money because he was waiting for his property to exchange to money. Second, Chevalier recorded the conversions at night after the meeting happened and witnesses confirmed that he used those notes in his memoire. Third, the office document proves the accuracy of escaping the prison through a hole in the ceiling.