

LISTENING – TAPESCRIPT

SOPHIE McALOONE – FINE-ART RESTORER

My name is Sophie McAloone, and I work for the Fine Art Restoration Company, based in Carlisle, Cumbria, UK. We don't just do paintings – we also restore frames, objects, and furniture – but I specifically work on easel painting restoration and conservation. We work for private clients, commercial galleries, private collectors, and insurance companies. My days are split into typical admin tasks and working on paintings. I'll usually be working on more than one painting at once. Some days, I'll be removing varnish from 16th-century panel paintings, and then other days, I'll be doing structural work on a contemporary canvas. We mainly work in the studio, but we're occasionally asked to work in stately homes, private homes, or churches.

Our mantra for contemporary restoration is that anything we do needs to be reversible. If we take a painting that has areas of paint loss, we'll use specialist resins, special substances insoluble in water, and lightfast pigments to match the colours and recreate the missing areas. These resins and pigments can be removed without causing damage to the original painting. Sometimes, paintings come with surprises that lead to more drastic changes. This was the case with a 16th-century religious painting of Mary Magdalene, which had sustained damage and been covered in non-original paint. Using microscopes and UV photography, we detected the original paint layer. With the client's permission, we removed this top layer to reveal the original dress and background.

People tend to think of art restorers and conservators as being artists. You do need artistic skills for this job, like manual dexterity, but science goes into it, too. Technical imaging helps us understand changes that have been made to paintings. The pH of cleaning solutions is another consideration, as we need to predict how they'll interact with the varnish and paint. We repair any tears under the microscope, weaving the threads and using a small amount of adhesive to bind them together again. I have a kit of dental tools to help me with this. When I'm retouching something, I generally wear a piece of magnifying headgear called an Optivisor.

In the work we do for the insurance sector, we see the severe damage that water does to art – anything from high humidity to full submersion. Typically, 20th-century paintings with modern paint film are affected by water because of the additives in the paint. The treatment of major damage caused by water and neglect can take more than 200 hours. It's labour-intensive work, but I love seeing artworks that I otherwise wouldn't see and ensuring that other people also get to enjoy them for years to come.

Source: Spotlight 02/2025, pages 22/23, adapted

ANSWER KEY

READING:

- | | |
|--------|---------|
| 1. T/3 | 6. F/5 |
| 2. T/5 | 7. T/3 |
| 3. F/4 | 8. F/6 |
| 4. T/6 | 9. F/2 |
| 5. T/2 | 10. F/4 |

10 points

VOCABULARY:

- | | |
|-----------------|---|
| 1. c | 6. predictive |
| 2. b | 7. maximise/maximize |
| 3. a | 8. overview |
| 4. viral | 9. guidance |
| 5. spirituality | 10. alignments (<i>accept</i> alignment) |

10 points

GRAMMAR:

- | | |
|--------------------------------|---|
| 1. both | 9. have |
| 2. within | 10. its |
| 3. At | 11. anything |
| 4. However | 12. out |
| 5. must/may/might/could/should | 13. matter how late |
| 6. enough | 14. have any objection to me/my watching |
| 7. with | 15. had been published (was published) did the president make |
| 8. that/which | |

15 points

LISTENING (half a point for each complete answer)

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1. frames (<i>accept</i> easels) | 6. scientific |
| 2. contemporary canvases / canvas | 7. threads, adhesive (<i>accept</i> adhesives) |
| 3. lightfast pigments | 8. magnifying |
| 4. religious | 9. insurance |
| 5. microscopes (<i>accept</i> microscope) | 10. humidity, submersion |

5 points

40 points

ROLE – PLAY

STUDENT:

Your classmate has suggested initiating a new school environmental project. They want to invite experts to discuss global environmental issues. You like the idea of the project, but your concept is different. You would like to do it in a more practical way – you would like to turn your school into an ecological institution in which students may come up with their own ideas on how to save electricity, recycle in a more efficient way, etc. Describe your ideas and persuade your classmate that your approach to this topic is more beneficial for your school.

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ROLE – PLAY

TEACHER:

You have decided to initiate a new school environmental project. Before you introduce the idea to the school headmaster, you would like to consult your idea with your classmate. The focus of the project will be on experts who will be invited to discuss global environmental issues. You are surprised that your classmate has come up with a different concept. They would like to do it in a more practical way – they would like to turn your school into an ecological institution in which students may come up with their own ideas on how to save electricity, recycle in a more efficient way, etc. Discuss your classmate's concept of with them and decide about a final version for the project.

PICTURE-STORY

Based on the image below, tell a story about a young businesswoman who was known as a ruthless and heartless manager. She thought this was the only way how to get to the top. After the arrival of a new colleague, whose attitude to life, coworkers, and her job was quite different, she started to change as well.



Source: <https://www.gettyimages.com/photos/business-woman-ambition>

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