

第85回（令和8年7月）文章入力スピード認定試験（英語）問題

Beauty is in the eye of the beholder. This proverb was first recorded 72
in its current form in the century before the last century. However, the 146
concept of people viewing different beauty from a personal point of view 219
has been around in most cultures of the world since ancient times. Yet, 292
you may wonder what exactly beauty is and whether it is really personal or 367
not. The meaning in the world famous glossary is the qualities in a person 443
or a thing that give pleasure to the senses or the mind. This meaning, 515
however, fails to mention whether there is a universal standard for beauty, 591
or whether each person views beauty based on a totally different set of 663
criteria. Some of the arts seem to suggest the latter if we consider the 737
fact that everybody has their own favorite piece of music or painting that 812
they consider to be beautiful. Nature, on the other hand, at all times 884
comes up with scenes which are globally regarded as beautiful. 949

There is little doubt that physical beauty, or the inherent beauty, is 1,021
emotional. The ideal beautiful woman differs between cultures, and in many 1,097
cases it is based on fashion or trend. Some cultures cherish obesity, 1,168
while others believe that body damage is the epitome of beauty. The women 1,243
of one tribe, for example, gradually enlarge their lower lips to make space 1,319
for decorative discs made from clay or wood. It is a custom back to at 1,391
least over ten thousand years ago, and those stretched lips are beautiful 1,465
for them. Body art in the form of piercings and tattoos is also accepted 1,539
more and more as a sign of beauty in many countries of the world today, 1,611
although many people in those countries continue to disagree with this 1,682
assessment. 1,696

Certain ancient philosophers believed that beauty was based on 1,760
symmetry and regularity, and they were therefore convinced that mathematics 1,836
was at the core of true beauty. This concept was triggered by them 1,904
noticing that objects proportioned in accordance with the golden ratio 1,975
appeared to be much more attractive than objects that were more random in 2,049

shape. Symmetry and regularity seem to play a part in physical beauty,	2,121
too. At the end of the nineteenth century, one anthropologist discovered	2,195
that averaging out human faces by overlaying them to form a composite image	2,271
achieved a level of regularity that was more attractive than each of the	2,344
individual components.	2,369
Despite this, there are many forms of art that are considered	2,432
beautiful yet are far removed from symmetry and regularity. Some examples	2,507
of this include many other forms of modern art. One of the most profound	2,581
concepts of beauty lies not in symmetry, conformity and regularity, but in	2,656
imperfection, impermanence and incompleteness, wabi and sabi.	2,718
Wabi and sabi are religious concepts introduced to our country, where	2,789
it evolved into a distinctly aesthetic concept of our country. The word	2,862
wabi originally referred to the loneliness of nature and sabi to something	2,937
that is minimalistic or withered. The meaning gradually changed over time,	3,013
and by the fourteenth century wabi meant rustic simplicity and sabi beauty	3,088
or serenity. Nowadays this concept is usually described as natural	3,156
simplicity or flawed beauty.	3,187
Wabi and sabi is based on the three marks of existence, known as	3,253
sanboin, which are impermanence, suffering and emptiness. It was thought	3,327
that understanding the beauty contained within emptiness and imperfection	3,401
was the first step to achieving a state of enlightenment. Wabi and sabi	3,474
places the emphasis on simplicity, economy, modesty, asymmetry and	3,541
asperity. The main message is that nothing is finished, nothing is perfect	3,617
and nothing lasts forever. A withered autumn leaf, for example, could be	3,691
considered to be wabi and sabi, because it expresses the beauty of nature	3,765
while at the same time emphasizing its flaws and impermanence. The	3,833
artistic form, wabi and sabi, is best expressed in pottery. Simple	3,901
asymmetric bowls glazed in unsophisticated base colors and exuding a rustic	3,977
style of imperfection stimulate the mind into considering the beauty of the	4,053

three marks of existence laid down in sanboin. 4,102

Whether the true essence of beauty lies in mathematics, as believed by 4,174
the ancient people, or in the aesthetic emptiness of wabi and sabi, as 4,245
believed by us, remains open to conjecture. However, the only one thing is 4,321
certain. Beauty will always remain in the eye of the beholder. 4,387

For physical beauty, let us look to bathing. In our country, people 4,457
generally enjoy their baths, whether at home or visiting one of the 4,525
numerous hot springs or public bath houses. Bathing, for most of us, is an 4,601
integral part of their daily routine. It is customary to clean yourself by 4,677
pouring water on your body before stepping into a bath. In fact, our 4,747
bathroom, both private and public, is designed around this practice, and 4,820
space is provided next to the bathtub where people can rinse themselves 4,892
off. Bathtubs are even reheatable so that the water can maintain at a 4,963
comfortable temperature for several hours. Moreover, it is not uncommon 5,036
for family members to enjoy the same bathwater one after another. It may 5,110
surprise some people to find out that for many foreigners, bathing is not 5,184
very common. 5,199

In some countries, the majority of people prefer to take a shower, 5,267
mainly because it requires less time and uses less water. Bathing is often 5,343
considered a leisure activity, the time for soaking in a bubble bath while 5,418
enjoying some peace and quiet. Communal bathing or public baths are mostly 5,494
unheard of. Going to public baths at a hot spring in our country would be 5,569
considered exotic. In some other countries, many homes do not even have 5,642
bathtubs, choosing shower stalls or cubicles instead. Because of the hot 5,716
climate, many people take cold showers to cool themselves off. 5,781

In our country, we still find that public baths, especially those in 5,851
traditional inns, retain a sense of the exotic. At home, though we can 5,923
appreciate the appeal of relaxing in a warm tub, our hectic schedule and 5,996
the rising cost of utilities still make a shower much more sensible. 6,064