

LANGUE VIVANTE IEpreuve du 1^{er} groupeA N G L A I S

A G U N C U L T U R E

On April 6, 1998, the nation's two leading news magazines featured cover photographs of a young boy with a gun. The photograph on the cover of the *Time* magazine was of a toddler named Andrew Golden, dressed in camouflage and clutching a high powered rifle. Newsweek featured a slightly older Andrew Golden still in camouflage, now clutching a pistol.

5 The two magazines chronicled the brief lives of Golden and Mitchell Johnson, boys growing up in a culture in which parents thought it a good idea to pose their three-year olds with deadly weapons and said, "Santa gave Drew Golden a shotgun when he was six" [...]

On March 24, 1998, these two boys aged eleven and thirteen set off the fire alarm at their school in Jonesboro, Arkansas, and then shot at the other children as **they** filed out of the building. Between them the boys had three rifles and seven pistols. In less than four minutes, they fired twenty-two shots, killing four children and their young teacher who was shielding one of her students. Golden and Johnson wounded ten other people, mostly children.

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The questions asked repeatedly after the Jonesboro tragedy – as after the shootings at Columbine High School in Littleton, Colorado, on April 20, 1999, and after every similar mass shooting – seem depressingly familiar. How did **we** get there ? How did the United States reach a point where children shoot and kill ? How did we acquire a culture in which Santa Claus gives a six-year-old boy a shotgun for Christmas ? For Christmas !

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An astoundingly high level of personal violence separates the United States from every other industrial nation. To find comparable levels of interpersonal violence, **one** must examine nations in the midst of civil wars or social chaos. In the United States of America in the 1990s, two million violent crimes and twenty-four thousand murders occurred on average every year. The weapon of choice in 70 percent of these murders was a gun, and thousands more are killed by firearms every year in accidents and suicides. In a typical week, more Americans are killed with guns than in all of Western Europe in a year. [...] It is now thought normal and appropriate for urban elementary schools to install metal detectors to check for firearms. And when a Denver pawnshop advertised a sale of pistols as a "back-to-school" special, four hundred people showed up to buy guns.

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The manifestations of America's gun culture are well known : the sincere love and affection with which American society views its weapons are demonstrated daily on television and movie screens. Every form of the media reinforces the notion that the solution to **your** problem can be held in your hands and provides immediate gratification. Just as there are flight simulators that recreate the experience of flying a plane, so do video games make available to any child in America a killing simulator that will train him or her to shoot without a moment's hesitation. An entire generation, as Dave Crossman has astutely argued, is being conditioned to kill. And since the United States does not register guns, no one knows how many there are or who actually buys them. The FBI estimates that there are 250 million firearms in private hands, with five million new guns purchased every year.

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Michael BELLESILES, *Arming America : The origins of a National Gun Culture (2000)*

Notes :

Toddler, bambin **pawnshop**, magasin de prêteur à gages **Dave Crossman**, well-known researcher and author
Santa Claus, Père Noël

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I. COMPREHENSION (8 marks)

A. VOCABULARY IN CONTEXT : Find in the text words synonymous to (0.5 mark x 4)

- 1. Holding tightly (p.1) =
- 2. Protecting (p.2) =
- 3. happened (p.4) =
- 4. In a clever way (p.5) =

B. REFERENCING : What do the following words refer to ? (0,5 mark x 4)

- 5. They (p.2) (they filed out of the building) =
- 6. We (p.3) (how did we get there...) =
- 7. One (p.4 (one must examine...) =
- 8. Your (p.5 the solution to your problem ...) =

C. COMPREHENSION CHECK : Pick out from the text passages showing that : (1 mark x 2)

- 9. Americans are led to think that they can solve their problems by themselves
.....
.....
- 10. Parents have a big responsibility in their children becoming killers
.....
.....

D. TRUE/FALSE : Circle True or False and justify with a specific quotation from the text (1 mark x 3)

- 11. Statistics show that there are as many people killed with firearms in the US as there are in the rest of European countries. T / F
.....
.....
- 12. People think that precautionary measures should be taken to control the possession of firearms in American schools. T / F
.....
.....
- 13. The US authorities know the exact number of people owning firearms. T / F
.....
.....

II. LINGUISTIC AND COMMUNICATIVE COMPETENCE

E. Put the verbs in brackets in the correct tense and / or form in the mini-dialogue below (0.5 mark x 3)

Tex : Excuse me ! where can I find this kind of firearm ?

Joe : Well ! This firearm can(to find) anywhere, but don't you think

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it's high time we Americans.....(to stop) being so dependent on guns ?

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Tex : Why do you think so ?

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Joe : Well, a friend of mine from Switzerland would like to visit America, but his father would rather he.....(to change) his mind because of the gun violence.

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F. Complete With the correct quantifiers (little/a little ; few/a few) (0.5 mark x 3)

In America, many parents know that their Kids have guns but they are.....concerned

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about it. Firearms are part of the American culture and very.....families

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don't possess any. However,more control could contribute to the reduction of

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tragedies.

G. Turn each statement into a dialogue.

Statement one : "How has the US come to this? "

Dialogue one :

(02 marks)

A = I wonder (20).....

B = (21).....

Statement two : "This problem may last forever !"

Dialogue two :

(02 marks)

A = Unless (22).....

B = (23).....

H. ASKING QUESTIONS : Ask questions corresponding with the underlined words to complete the interview (0.5 mark x 2)

24. ?

These two kids were born to kill.

25. ?

Gordon shot the youngest teacher in the school.

III. ESSAY Choose ONE topic and write about 150-200 words (06 marks)

1. What solutions do you propose to the problem of children manipulating arms ?
2. From the US, you write a letter to your parents about the crimes and murders on the streets.