In 1993, Zlata Filipovic published a diary about her childhood in war-torn Bosnia. Years later, she was asked to write the foreword, or introduction, to The Freedom Writers Diary*, a collection of writings by California students who chronicle poverty, homelessness, violence, and other problems they face in a large city. Read the foreword and answer the questions that follow.*

from *The Freedom Writers Diary*
Foreword

by Zlata Filipovic

1 When I was asked to write the foreword to *The Freedom Writers Diary*, I must say I was extremely honored and proud, but at the same time amazed by how many wonderful things can happen in such a short time.

2 I met the students of Wilson High School in March 1996, when thanks to their dedication, effort and will, they invited my parents, Mirna (my best friend from Bosnia, who was living with me at the time) and myself to come to the city of Long Beach, California. When I met them, I was touched by their warmth and kindness. They were teenagers just like me, and like all young people all over the world, they have an amazing potential to grow into truly great people, leaders, ones who will inspire others.

3 These students and their teacher, Erin Gruwell, chose to read *Anne Frank: The Diary of a Young Girl*, my own book, *Zlata's Diary: A Child's Life in Sarajevo* (and many other books), and were inspired to start writing their own diaries. They had organized themselves and chose to do something different, something memorable, something powerful and humane. They chose to rid themselves of doing things the easy way, the way they've always been done, and chose to write, to create, to fight stereotypes and live up to the name of true Freedom Writers. I am immensely proud and happy to have had a chance to meet them and to play some role in their "growth" as human beings.

4 I started writing my own diary before the war in Bosnia because I wanted to have a place to record my childhood and create something that I could look back on and laugh, cry and reminisce.[1] I wanted to see myself grow through my writing. Some of my older girlfriends had their own diaries, and having read the diaries of Anne Frank and Adrian Mole, I was absolutely certain that writing a diary was the right thing to do. I never imagined that my diary would be published, and certainly didn't expect it to become a war diary. I also never dreamed that my childhood would be cut short. These things seemed too impossible to think about, because it's human nature to always believe that "bad" things happen to other people, not us. But when misfortune comes our way, we find ourselves surprised, confused, scared, angry and sad.

5 When the Bosnian war started with all its horrors and disrupted my happy and carefree childhood, my diary became more than a place to record daily events. It became a friend, the paper that it was made of was ready and willing to accept anything and everything I had to say; it could handle my fear, my questions, my sadness. I discovered the beauty of writing—when one can pour oneself onto a great white emptiness and fill it with emotions and thoughts and leave them there forever. And I kept on writing during almost two years of war; it became a type of therapy for dealing with everything that was going on.

6 I see a parallel between the Freedom Writers and myself because we've all been subjected to things in our surroundings that could have made us feel like victims. Life brings good things and bad things, it makes people sad and happy in their own homes, within their families, in school and on the street. Sometimes we suffer because of many things over which we have no control: the color of our skin, poverty, our religion, our family situation, war. It would be easy to become a victim of our circumstances and continue feeling sad, scared or angry; or instead, we could choose to deal with injustice humanely and break the chains of negative thoughts and energies, and not let ourselves sink into it. Writing about the things that happen to us allows us to look objectively at what's going on around us and turn a negative experience into something positive and useful. This process requires a lot of work, effort and greatness, but it is possible, and the Freedom Writers have proved it—they've chosen a difficult, but powerful, path.

7 After I left Bosnia, the war continued, and as we've recently seen, a similar thing happened in Kosovo. People have asked me what I think about this, and all I can say is that it makes me terribly sad. Now, almost all of the young former Yugoslavians know what a bomb sounds like, what a cellar is and what the absence of water, electricity or home feels like. And again, these children and young people had nothing to do with the situation they found themselves in. I just hope that the anger, hate and sadness they have experienced will not remain inside them, and that they will be able to rise above their experiences. Because if they grow up holding on to such terrible feelings, it could lead to another war sometime in the future when the fate of the country is in their hands. This is why I believe that everything the Freedom Writers have overcome and accomplished is very important and must be respected. If they had chosen to stay encapsulated[2] in the anger and hate that surrounded them in their neighbourhoods, the seeds of hatred and fear would have grown with them and history would repeat itself with their children in the future. The Freedom Writers chose to break this cycle and make their positive experiences a lesson for generations to come.

8 And, of course, I will always very highly respect and admire the Freedom Writers' mentor, their friend and teacher, Erin Gruwell, who is also my friend. She never wants to be congratulated or held responsible for the great things that came out of Room 203 at Wilson High School, but she must be. She was (and still is) much more than a teacher to the Freedom Writers. She was a parent to those who did not have, or could not communicate with, their own; she was an older friend who was fun to be around; but she was also very loyal, someone who cared and fought for each one of her "kids." She shared her education, tenacity[3] and love with them and made a huge difference in her students' lives. They could have remained the "underachievers" they'd been labeled before they arrived in her classroom. But in just several years, she made a tremendous difference and created a safe place for them to grow and blossom into amazing people. She made authors and, I dare say, historical figures out of them. Many teachers consider their after-school time to be precious, but Erin gave herself over to her work. She was dedicated to helping her students learn, opening their eyes to injustice and guiding them to the weapons (in this case a pen, knowledge, a measure of faith, and an unyielding determination) with which to fight intolerance. Finally, she taught them how to assume their rightful place in the world. I know her students will remember her the rest of their lives, as well they should. I wish that teachers everywhere were like her—because the world would be a much better place. I always say that the young people are the future of the world,

and if we start with them first, if we educate and develop a sense of tolerance among them, our future, the future of this world, will be in good hands for generations to come.

9 How many good things can come out of a bad situation? I'm a perfect example. I was a small happy Sarajevan girl whose country was struck by war. Suddenly I was put in the position of having some say and possible influence in the world. I did not want that responsibility, and I wish that my diary had never been published; if not for the war, there would have been no reason to share it with the world. But nonetheless, some good has come out of it.

10 Anne Frank's diary inspired the world, and good has come out of her tragedy. Her strength kept her going for as long as it could, and subsequently has been recognized by millions of people, young and old. The greatness of those who are no longer with us fortunately remains to lead and inspire those left behind.

Q.1.

Based on the foreword, the author's character can **best** be described as

A. sad and resentful.
B. cheerful and excited.
C. doubting and uncertain.
D. thoughtful and optimistic.

Q.2.

Based on paragraph 2, what is a great advantage that young people have?

A. They have few responsibilities.
B. Their future is full of possibilities.
C. They are naturally talented writers.
D. Their parents are still teaching them.

Q.3.

What does paragraph 3 suggest about the Freedom Writers?

A. They felt their writing should win awards.
B. They created a work that was controversial.
C. They had many people to help with their efforts.
D. They consciously decided to take positive action.

Q.4.

What is the **main** function of paragraph 4?

A. It describes the people who influenced the Freedom Writers.
B. It explains how Filipovic and the Freedom Writers are changing.
C. It contrasts Filipovic's beliefs with those of the Freedom Writers.
D. It serves as a transition to a description of Filipovic's experiences.

Q.5.

According to the foreword, what is the **main** reason Filipovic started her own diary?

A. She was intending to write a book.
B. She hoped to document everyday events.
C. She was forced to stay home during a war.
D. She wanted to copy the work of other writers.

Q.6.

Based on paragraph 8, what is the **most likely** reason the author puts the term "underachievers" in quotation marks?

A. to show that the term is outdated
B. to show that the term is not easy to define
C. to show that the term is being spoken out loud
D. to show that the term does not apply to the students

Q.7.

Based on the foreword, what does the author suggest when she calls the Freedom Writers "historical figures"?

A. The Freedom Writers will be remembered for their accomplishments.
B. The Freedom Writers have grown up since their book was published.
C. The Freedom Writers based their work on events of long ago.
D. The Freedom Writers helped record the pain of war.

Q.8.

Based on paragraph 8, a *mentor* is a person who

A. guides others.
B. collects diaries.
C. fights injustice.
D. overcomes difficulties.

This poem tells the story of Pablo and his tennis shoes. Read the poem and answer the questions that follow.

ODE TO PABLO'S TENNIS SHOES

They wait under Pablo's bed,
Rain-beaten, sun-beaten,
A scuff of green
At their tips
From when he fell
In the school yard.
He fell leaping for a football
That sailed his way.
But Pablo fell and got up,
Green on his shoes,
With the football
Out of reach.
Now it's night.
Pablo is in bed listening
To his mother laughing
To the Mexican *novelas* on TV.
His shoes, twin pets
That snuggle his toes,
Are under the bed.
He should have bathed,
But he didn't.
(Dirt rolls from his palm,
Blades of grass
Tumble from his hair.)
He wants to be
Like his shoes,
A little dirty
From the road,
A little worn
From racing to the drinking fountain
A hundred times in one day.
It takes water
To make him go,
And his shoes to get him
There. He loves his shoes,
Cloth like a sail,
Rubber like
A lifeboat on rough sea.
Pablo is tired,
Sinking into the mattress.
His eyes sting from
Grass and long words in books.
He needs eight hours
Of sleep
To cool his shoes,
The tongues hanging

Out, exhausted.

—*Gary Soto*

Q.9.

What do lines 1–12 suggest about the tennis shoes?

A. They do not fit Pablo.
B. They are not Pablo's favorites.
C. They remind Pablo of his family.
D. They keep a record of Pablo's experiences.

Q.10.

What is the purpose of the parentheses in lines 22–24?

A. to provide additional details
B. to represent the main idea of the poem
C. to represent the turning point of the poem
D. to provide the thoughts of other characters

Answer

1. **D**
2. **B**
3. **D**
4. **D**
5. **B**
6. **D**
7. **A**
8. **A**
9. **D**
10. **A**