

Mutual Improvement and Literary Society Quiz:
‘Do you have what it takes to be a nineteenth-century mutual improvement society member?’

14 June 2021

1. You are a young man from Kinross (a burgh near the east coast of Scotland where many of the people were weavers) who just arrived in Glasgow in 1850. What are your motivations for joining a literary society? (Circle all that apply.)
 - a. To learn to read and write
 - b. To meet other young men from your home county
 - c. To meet young women
 - d. To find a job

2. The year is 1887 in Glasgow. Can you identify which of the following clubs are ‘literary societies’ (i.e. one type of mutual improvement society) running in the city?
 - a. Irving Club (12 June 1879-?)
 - b. Spoutsmouth Bible Institution (Prior to September 1893-?)
 - c. Glasgow Juridical Society (6 November 1847-?)
 - d. Clydebank Burns Club (1897?-1910)

3. Congratulations! You have been fortunate to be nominated and accepted to a mutual improvement society, and you are now an ‘Ordinary Member’ of a ‘typical’ nineteenth-century group. How often does your society meet?
 - a. Once a week
 - b. Twice a month
 - c. Once a month
 - d. You don’t remember any more because you hardly ever go

4. Which of the following activities could have taken place at your mutual improvement society meeting? (Circle all that apply.)
 - a. Debating
 - b. Papers being read aloud
 - c. Poetry readings
 - d. Musical recitals
 - e. Society members criticising the papers being read
 - f. Gymnastic displays
 - g. Hat Nights

5. Your society president announces that a proposal has been put forward to start a magazine for the group, and you and the other members respond to this with ‘great applause’. However, your society does **NOT** in the end found a society magazine. What happened? (Circle all that apply.)
 - a. You really didn’t know what a society magazine was.
 - b. The cost for the society to provide all the paper was found to be too high.

- c. You changed your mind: you and the other members thought you wrote enough papers to read aloud at the society's meetings.
6. In the end, your society did decide to found its own 'manuscript magazine' for its members. In the paper that you wrote for its first issue, why did you say you wanted to contribute? (Circle all that apply.)
- To practice your penmanship
 - To share your insights on ants and their ways of life
 - To display your latest watercolour of Bass Rock
 - To have the other members of your literary society criticise your latest watercolour of Bass Rock
7. You are the Editor of your society's newly-founded manuscript magazine. You have just received an essay entitled 'Ants and Their Ways of Life' by one of the society's newest members. The essay is full of spelling errors, poor grammar, and illustrations of dubious artistic merit. According to the rules of the magazine, you must: (Circle all that apply.)
- Return the essay to the author with apologies that you could not accept it as it was so poorly written
 - Return the essay to the author and tell him/her that you don't think 'Ants' are a suitable subject for the magazine
 - Correct the spelling and grammar, return it to the author, and ask him to re-write and re-submit it
 - Don't edit the article and leave the artwork, and include the entire contribution in your next issue
8. You have just finished reading the latest issue of your mutual improvement society's magazine. According to the magazine's list of rules, what must you do next? (Circle all that apply.)
- Turn to the blank pages at the back of the magazine and write down that you thought it was a brilliant issue and highly praise all the contributions
 - Turn to the blank pages at the back of the magazine and write down that you thought this issue contained mostly badly-written pieces, that the poetry was particularly terrible, and that the other members should really learn to spell and write better before they write anything again
 - You do NOT write in the magazine at all, but simply hand over the issue to the next person on the list of readers

How did you do? One point for each correct answer.

- 0-6 points: Sorry, your membership application has been rejected by the committee.
- 7-12 points: Congratulations, your membership application has been accepted.
- 12+ points: You're clearly well-versed in all matters connected with Mutual Improvement and we'd like to invite you to join the committee!
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Contact details:

Dr Lauren Weiss

Research Associate, '[Piston, Pen and Press](#)'

Project Editor, [Glasgow's Literary Bonds](#) and [Literary Bonds](#)

University of Strathclyde

lauren.weiss@strath.ac.uk

@LiteraryBonds