

Budapest 2015 – Intersteno  
Contest “Note taking and reporting” (NT)

**English dictation text, in accordance with the first column of the table in article 19.1 of the Regulations for the INTERSTENO competitions – Budapest 2015. *The surplus of 45 syllables has been spread over the dictation minutes.***

Test dictation

*(1 minute, 131 syllables)*

Secret agents may be all around us, working for government agencies or private organizations to collect infor/mation and report back. If you think that you have what it takes to be a good field agent, you can learn how to build the real skills neces/sary to get the job done. But before signing up, remember that nearly every country has very strict laws concerning / espionage. The penalty for being caught is often severe, and it may include, among others, imprisonment for many years. //

**1 minute (131 syllables)**

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The competition dictation

*(10 minutes, 1795 syllables)*

Some interesting facts about the world of espionage and secret agents

1. Tell me, please: what is espionage?

In plain words / espionage is also called spying. It is a form of information or intelligence gathering. But gathering infor/mation from newspapers or on the public internet is not considered espionage. Espionage then is the act of / secretly obtaining information against the will of the holder or keeper of that information. It is understood, of course, that //

**1<sup>st</sup> minute (133 syllables)**

secretly obtained information will benefit a government or country, given the dangers and risks that usually accompany the / work of a spy. Looking at history we can see that espionage mostly occurs between states, for example, between enemy states in / times of war. But it also happens, as we know, in peacetime. In short, the information obtained by espionage supplements, or adds, to the / information governments need to do their work, meaning guarding national security and all it entails. Espionage is not only //

**2<sup>nd</sup> minute (144 syllables)**

targeted at the national defence of another country, including its military capabilities and arms industry, but also the / way a country prepares and conducts its foreign policy is of interest to the spying nation.

## 2. Spies have been among us since a long time /

Espionage, as done by spies, has a long history, dating back to the Roman Empire where, for instance, emissaries were sent abroad to find out about / the military strength and hostility of neighbouring tribes and nations. During the next several centuries, there were no big changes in the methods //

**3rd minute (154 syllables)**

and scope of espionage. The First World War, lasting from 1914 until 1918, enhanced espionage activities / between nations, such as between England and Germany. We should note, however, that their spies or, using the modern title, their secret agents lacked professionalism and, / therefore, were not very effective in gathering trustworthy information. The approach was different in World War II, which lasted from 1939 / until 1945 and greatly involved the United States in its military operations. Governments had learned their lessons, //

**4<sup>th</sup> minute (164 syllables)**

which resulted in the countries at war engaging in better organized and more professional espionage activities. Well-trained agents did their work around the / globe, especially in gathering information about the development of new weapons, such as Germany's rocket technology, and about the routes and movements / of ships and submarines between England and the United States.

## 3. The Cold War was the heyday of traditional espionage

The Cold War was a period of severe / tension, which began right after World War II. This tension was between, on the one hand, the United States, representing capitalism, and, on the other hand, the former Soviet //

**5<sup>th</sup> minute (175 syllables)**

Union, representing communism. Both these superpowers had nuclear arms at their disposal and seriously distrusted each other. Thus, there was also the constant threat of the / outbreak of nuclear war. It is understandable that under these circumstances, there was a strong need to be informed, as much as possible, about the other side's military / capabilities and intentions. Given the secrecy and strict security measures that surrounded all of these issues on both sides, the most effective way of obtaining this infor/mation turned out to be espionage. Because the Internet had not yet been invented, this endeavour meant calling upon the trusted assistance of numerous spies. They secretly //

**6<sup>th</sup> minute (185 syllables)**

infiltrated the other side's country, hoping to secretly gain entrance inside its government offices, its military departments, et cetera. These spies, or agents, tried to / gather information by traditional, surreptitious means, thereby seriously risking their lives. For example, they tried to bribe employees and steal documents. The spies reported the / information they had collected to their governments also by traditional methods, using transmitters or couriers.

## 4. Spying in the digital age

We live in the digital age, where / computers have taken the place of typewriters, and offices are almost paperless. Nowadays, reports and other written information are digitalized and stored in computers instead of //

**7<sup>th</sup> minute (195 syllables)**

in a desk drawer. Almost all communication, whether written or spoken, now goes through computers that are connected by the Internet and mobile phones. However, both computers and mobile phones / can be hacked, and their communication networks can be tapped, which makes it possible to access this information and communication from the outside. These developments have changed espionage, as / it is no longer the lonesome spy doing all the work. Today national intelligence agencies have hundreds of employees who use computers with special search capabilities to spy across / the Internet and all over the world. Espionage consists of worldwide digital surveillance, such as tracking people and organizations on the basis of their activity online. Moreover, //

**8<sup>th</sup> minute (205 syllables)**

these agencies are busy with the interception of millions of calls and text messages, both nationwide and worldwide. This monitoring is done in a serious and time-consuming effort to prevent / organized crime and terrorism.

#### 5. How to be a successful field agent

When spies or secret agents are doing their field work, they should not be noticeable. Therefore, they have to be, first and foremost, persons who do /not stand out, both in terms of clothing and in behaviour. This phenomenon is easily explained when we realize they have to be careful in maintaining their cover. The work of field agents consists of acquiring / and reporting vital, non-public information about a specific target that has been assigned to them. Such a target can be, for example, a terrorist organization. To obtain the desired infor- //

**9<sup>th</sup> minute (215 syllables)**

mation, a field agent has been trained in applying special techniques, such as infiltrating the targeted organizations. Field agents need to have a good general education, preferably at the / university level, and should speak several languages more or less fluently. They must be always on call and ready to leave home at all times, which, needless to say, interferes with family life. A field agent should be / able to cope with unexpected situations that may suddenly arise. This aptitude implies that he can get along with all types of people and personalities in the interest of performing the job at / hand and possesses technical skills, such as being able to repair a car that has broken down. Furthermore, the agent should be in good physical condition, including having a command of self-defence techniques. //

**10<sup>th</sup> minute (225 syllables)**



## The model report (overview of key sentences per section)

Credit points  
to be earned

### Some interesting facts about the world of espionage and secret agents

1. Tell me, please: what is espionage?
  - 1.a. **Espionage/spying is secretly obtaining information,** 4  
b. **against the will of the holder of the information.** 4
  - 2.a. **Espionage adds to the information governments need,** 4  
b. and **concerns another state's national defence and foreign policy.** 6
2. Spies have been among us since a long time
  1. Already the **Roman empire made use of espionage.** 4
  2. **Espionage in the First World War lacked professionalism/effectiveness.** 6
  - 3.a. **The Second World War had better organized/more professional espionage,** 4  
b. **directed at new weapons and shipping.** 4
3. The Cold War was the heyday of traditional espionage
  - 1.a. **The Cold War was a period of tension and threatening nuclear war** 6  
b. **between the US/capitalism and the Soviet Union/communism.** 4
  - 2.a. **Military information came through espionage.** 4  
b. **Spies infiltrated each other's territory,** 4  
c. **gathering and reporting information in traditional ways.** 4
4. Spying in the digital age
  - 1.a. **Computers and mobile phones offer external access** 4  
b. **to the information and communication they process.** 6
  - 2.a. The **spying is mainly done by intelligence agencies,** 4  
b. **practising digital surveillance and interception** 4  
c. to **prevent organised crime/terrorism.** 4
5. How to be a successful field agent
  1. **Spies/secret agents in the field have to be unremarkable persons.** 2
  - 2.a. A **field agent acquires and reports back information about a target.** 4  
b. **To do his work he uses special techniques.** 4
  - 3.a. **Agents need to be well-educated and speak several languages,** 4  
b. **must be on call, be able to cope with situations, be in good physical shape** 6

100

#### General remarks:

- 1) Each key sentence is divided into separately underscored key phrases in bold print. To earn all the credit points of a key sentence at least 80% of its key phrases must, in his or her own words, be present in a competitor's summary. If not, only half the points are awarded — or zero points in case less than 20% of the key phrases is present. A further explanation is given in the instructions for jury and correctors.
- 2) When two keywords are separated by a slash, it suffices if one of them is present in a competitor's report.