A Song on the Brain reading passage

A Song on the Brain

A. Everyone is familiar with the experience of being unable to get a song out of their brain. You hear a pop song on the radio - or even just read the song's title - and it haunts you for hours, replaying in your head until you're sick of it. The medical term for this ailment is now known as"song-in-head syndrome.”

B. However, why does the mind irritate us in this way? Nobody can say for sure, but it's likely due to the brain's superior ability to retain information over its worse ability to discern what information is crucial. It's a representation of a memory feature that is typically helpful to us, but in this situation, it might be annoying, according to Roger Chaffin, a psychologist at the University of Connecticut.

C. This brain's propensity for eager acquisition may have assisted our ancestors in the past in recalling the crucial information. These days, musicians rely on it to memorise challenging compositions, and students utilise it to master new material. However, if this helpful feature malfunctions, you risk becoming stuck on a song. Unfortunately, shallow, repetitious pop songs are more likely to become classics than creative music because of their very character.

D. The auditory cortex is likely where the unpleasant playback starts. This area, which is at the front of the brain, is in charge of both listening to music and playing it back. By having participants repeatedly play the theme from the television show Dallas in their brains, neuroscientist Robert Zatorre of McGill University in Montreal demonstrated this several years ago. According to brain imaging studies, this engaged the same area of the auditory cortex that was active when the participants heard the song.

E. However, not every musical memory that has been stored returns to consciousness. Which thoughts are put away and which ones become conscious is a decision made by the frontal lobe of the brain. According to Susan Ball, a clinical psychologist at Indiana University School of Medicine in Indianapolis, it can turn tired or depressed, which is when people most frequently experience song-in-head syndrome and other intrusive thoughts. It's also challenging to bury the undesirable music once it comes to the surface. Ball asserts that you become more aware of thought the more you attempt to suppress it. The pink elephant phenomenon is what we refer to as. You can assure that the brain will stop thinking about pink elephants by telling it to.

F. Simply avoiding some musical genres can be helpful for people who are not seriously affected. According to Steven Brown, a former classical pianist who is now a neuroscientist at the University of Texas Health Science Center in San Antonio, "I know some pieces that are kind of "sticky" to me so I will not perform them in the early morning for fear that they will go around in my head all day." He claims that he always has a tune playing in his head, and to make matters more bothersome, the music never appears to finish. It often consists of brief segments between, say, 5 and 15 seconds. He claims that they occasionally appear to become looped for hours.

G. According to Caroline Palmer, a psychologist at Ohio State University in Columbus, Brown's experience with repeated musical loops might be a case of a process known as

"chunking," in which people retain musical lines as a single memory chunk. The majority of listeners have little control over which passages they recall. If you hear specific portions frequently or if they adhere to certain recognisable patterns, like the chord sequence in rock 'n' roll music, they may become very "sticky." According to Palmer's research, a musical composition is simpler to remember the more closely it resembles certain patterns. Because of this, pop music melodies are more likely to haunt you than those by a classical composer like J. S. Bach.

H. But in addition to being annoying, this power can be used for good. By putting their lessons to music, teachers can take advantage of memory reinforcement. According to Sandra Calvert, a psychologist at Georgetown University in Washington, DC, students who heard a history book presented as the lyrics of a popular song remembered the words better than those who simply read them.
I. Even the birth of music may be explained by this kind of memory improvement. According to Leon James, a psychologist at the University of Hawaii, humans memorised history in songs before it could be recorded in writing. And it's possible that music played an even bigger role. According to him, "every song has a message." The message states, "This message serves to standardise people's cognitive processes in society and to unite society."

A Song On The Brain reading questions

Questions 1 - 6

The Reading Passage has nine paragraphs labelled A-I.
Which paragraph contains the following information?
Write the correct letter A-I in boxes 1-6 on your answer sheet.
NB. You may use any letter more than once.

1. a claim that music strengthens social bonds.
2. two reasons why some bits of music tend to stick in your mind more than others
3. an example of how the brain may respond in opposition to your wishes
4. the name of the part of the brain where song-in-head syndrome begins
5. examples of two everyday events that can set off song-m-head syndrome
6. a description of what one person does to prevent the song-in-head syndrome

Questions 7 - 10

Look at the following theories (Questions 7-10) and the list of people below. Match each theory with the person it is credited to.

Write the correct letter A-F in boxes 7-10 on your answer sheet.

List of people:

A. Roger Chaffin

B. Susan Ball
C. Steven Brown
D. Caroline Palmer
E. Sandra Calvert
F. Leon James

7. The memorable nature of some tunes can help other learning processes.
8. Music may not always be stored in the memory in the form of separate notes.
9. People may have started to make music because of their need to remember things.
10. Having a song going around your head may happen to you more often when one part of the brain is tired.

Questions 11 - 13

Choose the correct answer, A, B, C or D.
Write your answers in boxes 11-13 on your answer sheet.

11. According to the author, the song-in-head syndrome may happen because brain

A. confuses two different types of memory.
B. cannot decide what information it needs to retain.
C. has been damaged by harmful input.
D. cannot hold onto all the information it processes.

12. A tune is more likely to stay in your head if

A. it is simple and unoriginal.
B. you have musical training.
C. it is part of your culture.
D. you have a good memory.

13. Robert Zatorre found that a part of the auditory cortex was activated when volunteers

A. listened to certain types of music.
B. learned to play a tune on an instrument.
C. replayed a piece of music after several years.
D. remembered a tune they had heard previously.