

THRILLER: MICHAEL JACKSON'S SURPRISING SUCCESS

The album that would become the most successful record in music history went unnoticed by the magazine *Time* when it was first **released** 35 years ago, on November 30, 1982. But it didn't take too long for that to change, as the album sat atop the charts for weeks and revolutionized the entire record industry and the music-video culture. About a year after its **release**, *Thriller* was still selling 200,000 copies a week. By the time Michael Jackson appeared on the cover of *Time* magazine in 1984, the album had become the best-selling album ever (and it still claims that title).

But, while it could be said that a success of that magnitude is always a surprise in some way, *Time*'s music critic Jay Cocks also suggests a deeper reason why the editors at *Time* may have **overlooked** the album when it was first released:

For the record industry, *Thriller* was a restoration of confidence, a rejuvenation. Its effect on listeners, especially younger ones, was nearer to a revelation. *Thriller* brought Black music back to mainstream radio, from which it had been **banished** in the mid-'70s. "No doubt about it," says composer-arranger Quincy Jones, who produced the albums *Off the Wall* and *Thriller* with Jackson. "He took us right up there where we belong. Black music had to **play second fiddle** for a long time, but its spirit is the whole motor of pop. Michael connected with every soul in the world."

Thriller does not have the mean, challenging immediacy of rap, but it is consummate contemporary rhythm and blues. Jane Fonda, one of Jackson's pals, put it as nicely as any music critic: "Michael had a fresh, original sound. The music is energetic, and it's sensual. You can dance to it, work out to it, make love to it, sing to it. It's hard to sit still to."

The pulse of America and much of the rest of the world **beat** in time to the tough **strut** of *Billie Jean*, the asphalt aria of *Beat It*, the cool chills of *Thriller*. *Thriller* was on the Japanese charts for 65 consecutive weeks, and local teens were copying Michael's moves and singing his songs. *Thriller* was also South Africa's top seller: "Jackson bridged the apartheid gap," declared one record executive. The Soviet press in Moscow denounced Jackson, and his fans couldn't buy his records in any stores, but **bootleg** tapes were swapped and treasured.

"Michael used to say, when he wrote, he'd write for everyone," says his mother Katherine, "even though the music business would list it as rhythm and blues because of him being Black." Jackson was the biggest thing in music since The Beatles. He was the hottest single phenomenon since Elvis Presley. He just may be the most popular Black singer ever.

This success, Jones says, "had never happened to a Black performer." Rock critics (who are mostly white) liked *Thriller* well enough and wrote respectfully of it when it was released in December 1982, but they were as surprised as record-company executives (who are mostly white) when the album started **burning its way into** the country's collective musical consciousness. The message is obvious anyway: soul is for sharing, not segregating.

When Jackson died in 2009, *Thriller* was still remembered by many as a high point in his career. "For a generation, the magic is partly nostalgic; everyone in his fifties remembers exactly where they were when they heard *Beat It* for the first time," wrote *Time*'s Richard Corliss in his remembrance of the pop idol. "As a piece of music, it remains the greatest pop album of all time."

Text adapted from an article by

Lily ROTHMAN. *Time* [online] (November 29, 2017)

to release: publicar

release: publicació / publicación

to overlook: passar per alt / pasar por alto

to banish: bandejar / desterrar

to play second fiddle: ser a l'ombra / estar en la sombra

to beat: marcar el ritme / marcar el ritmo

strut: estil de caminar fatxenda / pavoneo

bootleg: còpia pirata / copia pirata

to burn one's way into: establir-se ràpidament i amb força / establecerse rápidamente y con fuerza

Part 1: Reading comprehension

Choose the best answer according to the text. Only ONE answer is correct.

[3 points: 0.375 points for each correct answer. Wrong answers will be penalized by deducting 0.125 points. There is no penalty for unanswered questions.]

| | | Espai per al corrector/a | | |
|----|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| | | Correcta | Incorrecta | No contestada |
| 1. | When Michael Jackson's <i>Thriller</i> was released, <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Time</i> magazine didn't pay much notice to it. <input type="checkbox"/> it sold 200,000 copies on the first week. <input type="checkbox"/> it was considered the best album ever. <input type="checkbox"/> it didn't reach the charts immediately. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 2. | After <i>Thriller</i> , <input type="checkbox"/> Black music was forbidden on the radio. <input type="checkbox"/> young people started listening to the radio again. <input type="checkbox"/> only Black people listened to the radio stations playing Jackson's music. <input type="checkbox"/> Black music was heard on radio stations aimed at a general audience. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 3. | Which of these things does Quincy Jones NOT say? <input type="checkbox"/> Michael Jackson made Black music important again. <input type="checkbox"/> Pop music has a strong influence of Black music. <input type="checkbox"/> Michael Jackson had connections all over the world. <input type="checkbox"/> Black music was considered secondary for years. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 4. | When Jane Fonda said that "It's hard to sit still to [Michael Jackson's music]", she meant that <input type="checkbox"/> his music makes you want to move. <input type="checkbox"/> his music makes you want to sit down. <input type="checkbox"/> it's difficult to listen to his music. <input type="checkbox"/> it's difficult to dance like he did. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 5. | In Moscow, Michael Jackson's records <input type="checkbox"/> were widely available in music stores. <input type="checkbox"/> were only available as pirate copies. <input type="checkbox"/> reached the top position in the charts. <input type="checkbox"/> were played regularly on state-owned radio stations. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 6. | Michael Jackson's mother says that <input type="checkbox"/> he didn't make music for a specific group of people. <input type="checkbox"/> he composed music for a Black audience. <input type="checkbox"/> he composed mainly rhythm and blues. <input type="checkbox"/> he wrote for the music business. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 7. | Rock critics <input type="checkbox"/> worked together with record companies. <input type="checkbox"/> thought that Jackson's music would promote segregation. <input type="checkbox"/> predicted the success of the album. <input type="checkbox"/> didn't expect the album to be so successful. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 8. | Many people believe that <i>Thriller</i> <input type="checkbox"/> is the most famous song of the 20 th century. <input type="checkbox"/> marked the end of a music era. <input type="checkbox"/> is one of the best albums in Michael Jackson's career. <input type="checkbox"/> is a song with a strong political message. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

LEONARDO'S SALVATOR MUNDI: ART OR BUSINESS?

Salvator Mundi, the long-lost Leonardo da Vinci painting of Jesus Christ ordered by King Louis XII of France more than 500 years ago, has been sold in New York at Christie's, the well-known auction house, for more than \$450 million, breaking the world record of any work of art sold at auction. It far surpassed Picasso's *Women of Algiers*, which was sold for \$179.4 million at Christie's in May 2015.

Christie's marketing campaign was unprecedented in the art world. It was the first time the auction house had paid an agency for an advertising campaign. Christie's produced a video that compared the painting to "the discovery of a new planet" and showed celebrities like Leonardo di Caprio and Patti Smith viewing it. Christie's called the work "the last da Vinci," the only known painting by the Renaissance master still in a private collection (some fifteen others are in museums), and "the biggest discovery of the 21st century." In short, Christie's ran a brilliant marketing campaign for a painting with a very complicated history.

The oil on wood panel painting **depicts** a half-length figure of Christ as Savior of the World, facing frontally and dressed in flowing blue and **crimson** robes. He holds a crystal orb in his left hand as he raises his right hand in benediction.

Leonardo, who died in 1519, is thought to have painted *Salvator Mundi* sometime after 1500, during the same period that he produced the *Mona Lisa*. It became part of the British Royal collection in the early 17th century. It then disappeared in 1763 until 1900, when it was acquired by Sir Charles Robinson, an art collector, for the Cook Collection in Richmond, England. At the time, the painting was thought to have been by Leonardo's follower, Bernardino Luini. In 1958 the painting was sold by Sotheby's (Christie's rival auction house) for just £45 and the painting disappeared once again until it showed up in Louisiana in 2005.

It was acquired, badly damaged and partly painted-over, by a consortium of American art dealers who paid less than \$10,000 for it. They restored it extensively and documented its authenticity as a work by Leonardo.

The masterpiece was long believed to have existed but was generally presumed to have been destroyed. In 2011, following six years of investigations, the work was confirmed as a genuine work of art by Leonardo and **unveiled** publicly at London's National Gallery, making it the first discovery of a painting by Leonardo since 1909. The painting was then sold to a Swiss art dealer, who then sold it to a Russian billionaire in 2013 for \$127.5 million in a private sale that became the subject of a continuing **lawsuit**. The Russian family has sold the painting, which was bought by a prince from Saudi Arabia and will eventually be displayed in the new museum, Louvre Abu Dhabi.

Christie's says most scholars agree that the painting is by Leonardo, though some critics have questioned the attribution and some say the extensive restoration makes it impossible to determine the work's authorship. Before the auction, over 27,000 people had lined up at viewings in Hong Kong, London, San Francisco and New York to see the painting. Most of the people in line did not seem to care if Leonardo had actually made the work himself, or how much of the canvas had been repainted and restored. They just wanted to see a masterwork that dates from about 1500 and was rediscovered in 2005.

Text adapted from *The New York Times* (November 15, 2017), *The Telegraph* (November 16, 2017) and *The Guardian* (November 20, 2017)

to depict: representar

crimson: carmesí

unveiled: descobert / descubierto

lawsuit: demanda judicial

Part 1: Reading comprehension

Choose the best answer according to the text. Only ONE answer is correct.

[3 points: 0.375 points for each correct answer. Wrong answers will be penalized by deducting 0.125 points. There is no penalty for unanswered questions.]

| | | Espai per al corrector/a | | |
|----|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| | | Correcta | Incorrecta | No contestada |
| 1. | The first owner of <i>Salvator Mundi</i> was <input type="checkbox"/> the auction house Christie's. <input type="checkbox"/> King Louis XII of France. <input type="checkbox"/> a Russian art dealer. <input type="checkbox"/> an anonymous American collector. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 2. | Before they put the painting up for sale, Christie's <input type="checkbox"/> showed it to professional collectors in France. <input type="checkbox"/> had the painting put in a new frame. <input type="checkbox"/> made a video to show the painting. <input type="checkbox"/> tried to cover up the painting's complicated history. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 3. | Most of Leonardo da Vinci's paintings that still exist are <input type="checkbox"/> on exhibit in museums. <input type="checkbox"/> owned by private collectors. <input type="checkbox"/> currently being restored. <input type="checkbox"/> in very poor condition. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 4. | <i>Salvator Mundi</i> has been in known hands <input type="checkbox"/> since the 16 th century. <input type="checkbox"/> for seven years, when it was first shown to the public. <input type="checkbox"/> only since it was acquired by a group of American art dealers thirteen years ago. <input type="checkbox"/> only for a short time compared with its 500+ years of existence. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 5. | In 2005, a group of Americans <input type="checkbox"/> bought the painting from a museum in Richmond, England. <input type="checkbox"/> found the painting in a garage in San Francisco. <input type="checkbox"/> purchased the painting and then had it cleaned and restored. <input type="checkbox"/> lent the painting to the National Gallery in London for a major art exhibition. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 6. | Which of the following is NOT true? <input type="checkbox"/> Christie's auctioned the painting for a Russian family. <input type="checkbox"/> Christie's sold the painting to a Russian family. <input type="checkbox"/> A Russian family bought the painting after it had been restored. <input type="checkbox"/> A Swiss art dealer made a controversial sale to a Russian billionaire. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 7. | Which of the following best describes this painting of the <i>Salvator Mundi</i> ? <input type="checkbox"/> There is no doubt that the painting is by Leonardo da Vinci. <input type="checkbox"/> There is little evidence to support that Leonardo da Vinci was the painter. <input type="checkbox"/> A few art critics claim that the painting is by Leonardo da Vinci. <input type="checkbox"/> Despite extensive restoration, most experts believe the painting was done by Leonardo da Vinci. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 8. | According to the text, most of the people who lined up to see the <i>Salvator Mundi</i> <input type="checkbox"/> did not believe that it was done by Leonardo da Vinci. <input type="checkbox"/> were not very concerned about the details of restoration. <input type="checkbox"/> were celebrities like Leonardo di Caprio and Patti Smith. <input type="checkbox"/> were representatives of potential buyers from around the world. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

THE EMOJI IS THE BIRTH OF A NEW TYPE OF LANGUAGE (NO JOKE)

Tyler Schnoebelen has discovered something curious about why people use the skull emoji. Schnoebelen is a linguist and the chief analyst for Idibon, a firm that interprets linguistic data. Recently he got interested in emoji. He analyzed a million social media posts containing those familiar little pictograms and found that when people talk about their phone, they're 11 times more likely to use the skull. Weird, right? But to Schnoebelen, it makes sense. Our phones, he points out, are social lifelines, and when they malfunction—a weak signal, short battery life—we're upset. "When you don't have access to your phone, or when nobody's texting you, you're socially dead," he says. So we reach for a metaphorical emoji: the skull.

Fully 92 percent of all people online use emoji now, and one-third of them do so daily. On Instagram, nearly half of the posts contain emoji, a trend that began in 2011 when Apple's iOS added an emoji keyboard. Rates increased when Android did the same two years later. Emoji are so popular they're killing off **netspeak**. The more we use emoji, the less we use LOL and OMG.

In essence, we're watching the birth of a new type of language. Emoji assist in a peculiarly modern task: conveying emotions in short, online texts. "They're trying to solve one of the big problems of writing online, which is that you have the words but you don't have the tone of voice," as Gretchen McCulloch, a linguist, says.

Purists are not so convinced. What have we become, children with **crayons**? Surely words alone can convey emotional tone. Maybe—if you're a novelist with years of experience. But most of us write speedily and conversationally on Instagram or WhatsApp. Of the 20 most frequently used emoji, nearly all are hearts, smilies, or hand gestures—the ones that express feelings. In an age of rapid chatter, emoji aid communication by adding an emotional meaning to the message.

We also use emoji to express a sort of ambient presence, when words alone aren't enough. Ryan Kelly, a computer scientist at the University of Bath, has found that texters often exchange a few emoji as nonverbal conclusion to a conversation. "You might not have anything else left to say," Kelly says, "but you want the person to know that you're thinking of them." So you send a couple of pandas. Or telescopes! Or some other symbol that seems **witty**. This is another aspect of emoji—many are open-ended. In fact, it is known that friends use that flexibility to assign their own private meanings to specific emoji. (My wife and I use the Easter Island head to connote absurdity.)

People are even developing syntax and rules of use for emoji. Schnoebelen found that when face emoji are used, they tend to occur before other objects. If you text about a late flight, you'll put an unhappy face followed by a plane, not the reverse. In linguistic terms, this is called conveying "**stance**." Just as with face-to-face talk, our expression illustrates our stance before we've spoken a word.

Social pessimists can stop worrying; no linguist thinks that this means the end of writing. Natural language is our most powerful communication tool. For most people, these ideograms represent an upgrade. Language always changes: slang is born, develops and becomes obsolete, for example. But it's exceedingly rare—maybe unprecedented—for languages with phonetic alphabets to suddenly acquire a big expansion pack of ideograms. In an age when we write more than ever, emoji are the new language of the heart.

Text adapted from an article by
Clive THOMPSON. *Wired* [online] (April 19, 2016)

netspeak: llenguatge del ciberespai / lenguaje del ciberespacio

crayon: llapis de cera / lápiz de cera

witty: enginyós / ingenioso

stance: actitud

Part 1: Reading comprehension

Choose the best answer according to the text. Only ONE answer is correct.

[3 points: 0.375 points for each correct answer. Wrong answers will be penalized by deducting 0.125 points. There is no penalty for unanswered questions.]

| | | Espai per al corrector/a | | |
|----|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| | | Correcta | Incorrecta | No contestada |
| 1. | Many people use the skull emoji when talking about their phone <input type="checkbox"/> to tell friends that they don't feel well. <input type="checkbox"/> to explain that it is not working well. <input type="checkbox"/> to complain that nobody's sending them text messages. <input type="checkbox"/> because they like using metaphorical language. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 2. | Which of the following sentences is NOT true? <input type="checkbox"/> Instagram incorporated emoji in 2011. <input type="checkbox"/> Emoji usage increased after Android included them. <input type="checkbox"/> Since we have emoji, we use netspeak less. <input type="checkbox"/> Emoji in Instagram posts are very frequent. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 3. | The author believes that we are watching the birth of a new type of language because <input type="checkbox"/> writing online presents big problems. <input type="checkbox"/> emoji replace voice messages. <input type="checkbox"/> emoji have stable meanings. <input type="checkbox"/> emoji help us transmit our feelings in writing. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 4. | Emoji have become so popular so quickly because <input type="checkbox"/> people no longer know how to spell. <input type="checkbox"/> we want to convey emotional tone. <input type="checkbox"/> alphabet keyboards are difficult to use online. <input type="checkbox"/> we need new words to express our feelings. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 5. | According to the author, smiley, hand and heart emoji <input type="checkbox"/> seldom occur in online messages. <input type="checkbox"/> are the only way to communicate our feelings online. <input type="checkbox"/> have become effective tools of communication. <input type="checkbox"/> often result in miscommunication. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 5. | According to the author, smiley, hand and heart emoji <input type="checkbox"/> seldom occur in online messages. <input type="checkbox"/> are the only way to communicate our feelings online. <input type="checkbox"/> have become effective tools of communication. <input type="checkbox"/> often result in miscommunication. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 6. | Many emoji are open-ended. This means that <input type="checkbox"/> different people may assign them different meanings. <input type="checkbox"/> they are sometimes used to end a conversation. <input type="checkbox"/> you can use them when you don't know what to say. <input type="checkbox"/> some people use them to express absurd things. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 7. | We tend to put an emoji face before an object because <input type="checkbox"/> it's impossible to convey stance in a message. <input type="checkbox"/> we don't need to speak words in an online conversation. <input type="checkbox"/> when we speak, we see the person's facial expression first. <input type="checkbox"/> that's what the new syntax rule for emoji use tells us to do. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 8. | According to the writer, <input type="checkbox"/> we write so much today because language always changes. <input type="checkbox"/> emoji do not represent a threat to writing. <input type="checkbox"/> emoji are a form of slang. <input type="checkbox"/> emoji communicate more powerfully than text. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |