## Stage 3

## Lesson 2 国民性

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2013東北学院大·2010成蹊大·2008関西大·2006態本県立大

次の文章を読み、設問に答えなさい。【50点】

429 words



Any discussion of English conversation, like any English conversation, must begin with the weather. And in this spirit of following tradition, I shall, like every other writer on Englishness, quote Dr. Johnson's\* famous comment that "When two Englishmen meet, their first talk is of the weather," and point out that this observation is as accurate now as it was over two hundred years ago.

This, however, is the point at which most commentators either stop, or try (and fail) to come up with a convincing explanation for the English fascination with the weather. They fail because their premise is mistaken: they assume that our conversations about the weather are conversations about the weather. In other words, they assume that it is the weather that we are interested in. Most of them then try to figure out what it is about the English weather that is so fascinating.

The American-born writer Bill Bryson, for example, concludes that the English weather is not at all fascinating, and that our interest in it is therefore a mystery: "To an outsider, the most striking thing about the English weather is that (4) there is not very much of it. All those phenomena that elsewhere make nature exciting, unpredictable and dangerous — tornadoes, monsoons, blizzards, hailstorms — are almost wholly unknown in the British Isles."

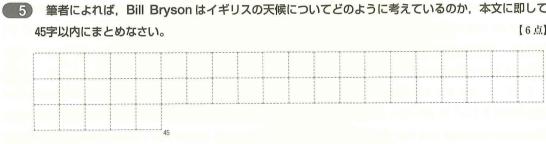
The English Journalist Jeremy Paxman, in an uncharacteristic and surely unconscious display of patriotism, objects to Bryson's comments, and argues that the English weather *is* fascinating:

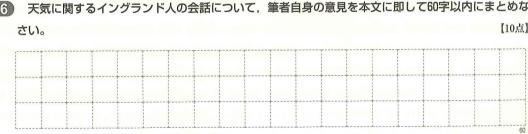
Bryson misses the point. The English fixation with the weather has nothing to do with drama: the English weather is, for the most part, dramatically undramatic, just like the English countryside. The interest is less in the phenomena themselves, than in their *uncertainty* ... one of the few things you can say about England with absolute certainty is that it has a *lot* of weather. It may not include tropical cyclones but life at the edge of an ocean and the edge of a continent means you can never be entirely sure what you're going to get.

My research has convinced me that both Bryson and Paxman are missing the point, which is that our conversations about the weather are not really about the weather at all: English weather-talk is a form of code, developed to help us overcome our natural shyness and actually talk to each other. Everyone knows, for example, that "Nice day, isn't it?", "Ooh, isn't it cold?", "Still raining, eh?" and other variations on the theme are not requests for information about weather conditions: they are ritual greetings, conversation-starters or just sounds.

**I Dr. Johnson** ジョンソン博士(1709-1784;英国のエッセイスト・辞書編集者)

下線部(1)を、"this observation"の内容を明らかにしながら、日本語に訳しなさい。 [6点] 【3点】 下線部(2)の意味に最も近いものを、(a)~(d)から1つ選びなさい。 (d) imagine (a) make sure (b) give up (c) produce 【6点】 下線部(3)を日本語に直しなさい。 下線部(4)の意味に最も近いものを, (a)~(d)から1つ選びなさい。 【4点】 There is nothing safe about the English weather. England does not have enough warm days. (c) The English weather is very monotonous and dull. (d) It is very difficult in England to forecast the weather.





- でである。 ② 本文の内容と一致するものには○を,一致しないものには×をつけなさい。 【3点×5 = 15点】
  - (a) Foreigners visiting England usually think the English weather is rich in variety and full of danger.
  - (b) Paxman thinks that the remarkable thing about the English weather is that it reminds you of the English countryside.
  - (c) The author senses a kind of patriotic sentiment in Paxman's comment on Bryson.
  - (d) The author considers that there is some truth in what both Bryson and Paxman say.
  - (e) The author thinks that the English often talk about the weather because they are interested in it.

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