How to make knots is essential for sailors and for navigation in general. Every sailor must know how to make knots, because they are very important both in case of danger and also in mooring a ship or a small leisure boat, which is important for the trade. When the students of a nautical school see a knot, they immediately know whether that knot has been made by expert hands or not.

The three most popular knots are the hitch, the Bowline, and the Franciscan knot. A hitch is a knot used to moor a big ship, and it is considered the 'knot par excellence'. It is used to secure the rope of a ship to dock.

The term Bowline (Bowline knot, Bowline hitch) refers to the knot used by a sailor to tie a line to his bow. In the past it was an important knot to the seaman in case of emergencies and a sailor learnt to tie it quickly, and while he was blindfolded by other sailors. This led to sayings such as: 'to know the ropes', or 'to show someone the ropes'. It was a knot which did not slip, however hard it was pulled.

The Franciscan Monk's knot is easy to tie or untie and works well as a stopper. Its name comes from the Franciscan Monks. Three knots tied in one end that hangs down on the right side are symbols of their vows (poverty, chastity, and obedience). However, the knot itself seems to have no symbolic significance. Probably this knot gave the rope just enough weight to assure it hung straight at the side (keeping it out of the way) and helped identify them as Franciscans. No doubt the knot itself was well known to many.

Knots are obviously important for practical reasons all over the world, but in China they also have great artistic and symbolic value. Symbolism is very important to the Chinese: in the written language, the character for the knot is represented by the letter for silk or rope, combined with the ones representing prosperity, long life, luck and health. The character used to represent the string is thought to resemble a moving dragon, and the dragon is considered the greatest animal of all in Chinese culture. Different colours are used, but the colour red is the most common because red symbolises luck and prosperity. The knot can also symbolise relationships, strength, harmony and emotions, and many different types of knot exist to show this: decorative, like the butterfly or flower knot, practical, like the button knot, which is also used as a button; and purely symbolic, like the good luck knot.

The ancient art of knot tying lost importance in the 20th century of the New China under communist rule, but in recent years it has seen a revival, and is once again popular in all the Chinese-speaking world.

**I Answer the following questions about the text, choose one answer – A, B, C, or D.**

1) Why must every sailor know how to make knots?

a) For emergencies

b) Because it’s essential for the job

c) In order to know if other people are experts or not

d) Because they ask them that in school

2) Why do people now say ’to know the ropes’ as an expression?

a) Because sailors had to know how to tie them by heart, without looking

b) Because the knot never slipped

c) Because knots were used only for emergencies

d) None of the above

3) What is symbolic about the Franciscan Monk’s knot?

a) the knot itself

b) the weight of the knot

c) the colour of the knot

d) where and how the knots are tied

4) Why are knots so valued in China?

a) Because the rope reminds them of a dragon

b) Because the Chinese language showed appreciation for knots

c) Because they do not only have practical purposes, but are also used as ornaments and metaphors

d) Because they were forbidden during communism.

5) Which knots have symbolic meaning on their own?

a) The Bowline and the Chinese knots

b) The Franciscan and the Chinese knots

c) Just the Chinese knots

d) All three of the above

**II Find the synonyms of these words in the text:**

Mariner (paragraph 1) : \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

The front of the ship (paragraph 3): \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Respectfulness (paragraph 4): \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Importance (paragraph 4): \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Wealth (paragraph 5): \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Comeback (paragraph 6): \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**III Write questions for the following sentences, so that the answer to the question is the underlined part of the sentence:**

1. The term Bowline refers to the knot used by a sailor.

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1. The ancient art of knot tying lost importance in the 20th century.

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