

The perceivers

perceive - to gain knowledge of through one of the senses; discover by seeing, hearing, etc.
(www.macquariedictionary.com.au)

Uros-54A is a high-functioning community, respected by the Central Government of Uran, as well as being the preferred intelligence provider for the Interplanetary Commission. We are the genetically-cultivated elite: a team of 54 males and females all under the age of 15, bred specifically so that our input senses (smell, hearing, sight, touch and taste) are refined to a point of effectiveness that no cybnaut or android can match. Our solutions to environmental problems consistently surpass those based on electronic input and artificial intelligence. Not only do we synthesise large amounts of sensory information, we also think laterally and globally, doing so much faster and more accurately than any of the currently available thought models.

Conventional wisdom would suggest that as long as we remain useful to bureaucracy – no matter which faction – and if we remain impartial and continue to provide equal access to information, we are safe from the collection and culling that has decimated other communities. The flaw in conventional wisdom became brutally apparent yesterday. We had been raided by the Xenons, an extremist splinter group of the Central Government, on several occasions. Mostly they took our work notes, asked lots of stupid questions and left. This time was different – they took some of us. Of course we knew they were coming; we sensed the vibrations, heard their voices and smelled their sour odour long before we could see them. Most of us had already determined the purpose of the raid: to disrupt the flow of intelligence to opposition factions. But we hadn't anticipated such an aggressive assault.

They had done their homework, targeting several lead thinkers who regularly performed in the 95th percentile for problem-solving. The selected five were roughly handcuffed and bundled into waiting transport tubes. We could only observe, something we did exceptionally well. I could smell fear and uncertainty on a few of the Xenons. Not all of them seemed to agree with these invasive methods. Too many dissenters – they wouldn't last long as a cohesive group. Too many errors as well. We pooled our observations. T03A identified the digital destination code. She had counted the number of strokes as one of the Xenons pushed each button on the control panel, and interpreted the subtle difference in sound that each key made. They were taking our colleagues to Genor, a remote base 1200 kilometres north-east of our station. T27A provided detailed descriptions of each Xenon, which we matched to images in our database. Within a few minutes we had assembled the data. Determining the action to be taken was another matter and largely beyond our capacity. We needed outside support if we were to be of any use to our colleagues. Who could we trust?

29. The specific skills of the Uros-54A team have been developed mainly for the purpose of
- (A) putting an end to space conflict.
 - (B) launching an attack on Xenon.
 - (C) seeking and destroying androids.
 - (D) analysing data and sharing information.
30. What is the function of the colon in the first paragraph?
- (A) to indicate that an elaboration follows
 - (B) to indicate that an instruction follows
 - (C) to separate two unrelated ideas
 - (D) to separate present and future events
31. The word 'surpass' means that compared to solutions based on other methods, the Uros-54A team's solutions were
- (A) as successful.
 - (B) superior.
 - (C) superseded.
 - (D) surprisingly useful.
32. The Uros-54A team initially felt they were protected from an attack by the Central Government because
- (A) they remained neutral and delivered information on request.
 - (B) they could sense when an invasion was imminent.
 - (C) they were the only ones who could solve problems efficiently.
 - (D) they relied on conventional wisdom to make decisions.
33. 'This time was different—they took some of us.'
- The main purpose of the dash in this sentence is to emphasise
- (A) a change of mood in the text.
 - (B) the character's involvement.
 - (C) a shocking new development.
 - (D) two opposing ideas.
34. Which combination of weaknesses did members of the Uros-54A team identify in the Xenon raiders?
- (A) a lack of planning and confusion about who was in control
 - (B) disagreement among the raiders and flaws in their operating methods
 - (C) a disregard for their team leader's authority and underestimation of the strength of Uros-54A team members
 - (D) inexperience in conducting a raid and lack of attention to speed
35. The Uros-54A team identified individual Xenon raiders by
- (A) comparing photographic records with images in a database.
 - (B) searching for images of criminals in a database of likely suspects.
 - (C) recalling details from previous raids and comparing those with database images.
 - (D) matching observations with database images.