Task 1. Read the article and decide which statement (**A, B** or **C**) is true according to the text.
An example (0) has been done for you.

EARWORMS: WHY CATCHY TUNES GET TRAPPED IN OUR HEADS

Psychologist Tom Stafford reveals why our brains find it hard to get rid of annoying, catchy songs, but he offers a possible solution. "Earworms", some people call them. Songs that get stuck in your head and go round and round, sometimes for days, sometimes for months. For no apparent reason, you cannot help yourself from humming or singing a certain tune. The most interesting thing about earworms to psychologists is that they show a part of our mind that is clearly outside of our control. Earworms arrive without permission and refuse to leave when we tell them to. They are parasites, living in a part of our minds that rehearses sounds.

We all get these musical memories, and people appear to have different ones, according to a team at Goldsmiths University in London, who collected a database of over 5,000 earworms. True, the songs that we get stuck with tend to be simple and repetitive, but it seems we are not all singing the same number one song at the same time. Music is defined by repetition, just like earworms, and this might make earworms so hard to shake — they are musical memories that loop, say a particular verse or a hook, forever repeating rather than running to completion. Some people report that singing an earworm to the end can help get rid of it (others report in frustration that this does not work at all).

Another fact about earworms is that they often seem to have something interesting or unusual about them. Although they will often be simple and repetitive bits of music, tunes that become earworms have a little peculiarity, something that makes them "catchy", and perhaps this is a clue as to why they can take hold in our memory system. If there was nothing unique about them, they would be swamped by all the other memories that sound similar too.

If you have got a particularly persistent earworm, you can suffer an attack of it merely by someone mentioning the tune, without having to hear it. This proves that earworms are a phenomenon of long-term memory, rather than merely being a temporary "after-image" in sound. But this is not the whole story. Human memory researchers have identified so called "slave systems" in our short-term memory, components of the mind which capture sights and sounds, keeping them alive for a short time while we focus on them. One slave system is the "inner ear", the part we use for remembering phone numbers, for instance. It is this part that seems to get infected with earworms. Rather than rehearse our plans for the day, idle thoughts, or lists of things to remember, the inner ear gets stuck on a few short bars of music or a couple of phrases from a song. A part of us that we normally do not have to think about has been turned against us, tormenting us with a jukebox request that we never asked for.

Fortunately, psychology can provide some vital intelligence on how to deal with an unruly mind. One option is to try not to think about the problem. This, however, involves a paradox: by trying not to think of a thing you constantly have to be checking if you are still thinking of it — re-invoking precisely the thing you are trying not to think of.

The general solution for the problem is to do something else to avoid thinking of it. For earworms, the solution may be the same. Our inner ear, a vital part of our cognitive machinery for remembering and rehearsing sounds, has become infected with an earworm. This is a part of ourselves which is not under our control, so just sending in instructions to "shut up" is unlikely to be of much help. Much better is to employ the inner ear in another task, preferably something incompatible with rehearsing the earworm.

If earworms survive because of their peculiarity, the hook that makes them catch, then Stafford's prediction for ridding yourself of an earworm is to sing songs that are similar. By this theory it will erode the uniqueness of the memory habitat that lets the earworm survive. *www.bbc.co.uk*

LIVEWORKSHEETS

0. What are earworms?

A *Catchy songs played on the radio.*
B *Irritating tunes in your head.*
C *Parasites living in your ears.*

1. Psychologists say that earworms

A are an involuntary phenomenon.
B can be controlled by will.
C need our permission to activate.

2. Earworms are usually

A number one hits.
B complete songs.
C parts of songs.

3. Singing an earworm song to the end

A magnifies your irritation.
B may help you discard it.
C is a proven way to get rid of it.

4. Songs that become earworms usually have

A a simple rhythm.
B repetitive lyrics.
C a unique twist.

5. The exact part that an earworm corrupts is our

A inner ear.
B long-term memory.
C short-term memory.

6. Sounds and sights in our brain are captured by

A temporary focal memory systems.
B parts of long-term memory systems.
C specific short-term memory systems.

7. Intentionally not thinking about an earworm

A causes it to disappear.
B creates a contradiction.
C re-invokes certain memories.

8. One way to get rid of an earworm is to

A get engaged with something different.
B tell yourself to stop humming the tune.
C keep repeating the tune until it disappears.

Task 2. Put the correct words from the table below in the above article.

CUT MUSIC TO AN HOUR A DAY **March, 2014**

The World Health Organisation (WHO) is (1) ____ that 1.1 billion teenagers and people in their twenties and (2) ____ thirties are damaging their hearing by listening to loud music. It says nearly half the young people in middle- and high-income countries risk hearing (3) ____ because of the "unsafe use" of personal music players, including smartphones. Loud music in nightclubs, bars and at sporting events also increases the risk. The WHO recommends a safe (4) ____ of listening to music for just one hour a day. The WHO director for injury (5) ____, Dr Etienne Krug, told the BBC that: "What we're trying to do is raise awareness (6) ____ an issue that is not talked about enough." He said hearing loss is easily preventable.

Dr Krug said keeping the volume down and limiting the (7) ____ of personal audio devices to less than one hour a day would save a lot of people's hearing. However, he also said that, "(8) ____ an hour can be too much if the volume is too loud". Ralph Holme, a biomedical researcher, explained how loud noise can damage ears. He said: "Loud sounds damage your hearing (9) ____ killing off thousands of little hair cells in the inner ear. The cells (10) ____ different pitches of sound through vibration…but they are very (11) ____ and if they vibrate too much due to loud sounds for too long, they get damaged and die." He warned that: "The problem is they don't grow back and the ear can (12) ____ longer detect sound."

LIVEWORKSHEETS

1.	(a)	worries	(b)	worrier	(c)	worry	(d) worried
2.	(a)	fast	(b)	early	(c)	small	(d) few
3.	(a)	lost	(b)	losing	(c)	loss	(d) lose
4.	(a)	limit	(b)	bar	(c)	sound	(d) noise
5.	(a)	perversion	(b)	pretension	(c)	prevention	(d) pretention
6.	(a)	by	(b)	of	(c)	for	(d) at
7.	(a)	hour	(b)	listen	(c)	play	(d) use
8.	(a)	even	(b)	such	(c)	though	(d) usual
9.	(a)	to	(b)	of	(c)	by	(d) as
10.	(a)	defect	(b)	detect	(c)	detest	(d) detract
11.	(a)	fragile	(b)	fragility	(c)	fragrantly	(d) fragilely
12.	(a)	non	(b)	not	(c)	now	(d) no

Task 3. Complete the gaps with a word from the box.

can't afford	a good bet	the right coaching	lends itself to	physical shortcomings
dazzling	put off by	drive your neighbours crazy		

1. Many people are _____ (discouraged by) not knowing which instrument to learn. 2. The saxophone _____ (is suitable for) jazz. 3. The initial attraction of playing a _____ (amazing, brilliant) solo instrument might fade when you realise how many other people play it as well. 4. Playing the drums is _____ (a clever choice) if you want to play in a band. 5. Practising a loud instrument late at night will _____ (make your neighbours extremely irritated or exasperated). 6. You can borrow or hire an instrument if you _____ (don't have enough money to buy) one. 7. Even small, slim people can play the tuba, so don't let your perceived _____ (problems or limitations with your body) put you off. 8. Everyone can develop the right technique with _____ (someone teaching them to do it well).

LIVEWORKSHEETS