UNIT 6- FOCUS 5

Reading

Read the text. Complete each gap 1-5 with the excerpt which best fits and put the appropriate letter A-F in the gap. There is one extract which you do not need.

WHY LEAVING FACEBOOK HAS MADE ME HAPPIER

According to new research this week, by the Happiness Research Institute in Copenhagen, giving up Facebook for even just seven days boosts happiness and reduces anger and feelings of loneliness.

The report suggests that Facebook distorts our perception of reality - we buy in to the oh-so-fabulous commentary on other people's lives to such an extent that we can't help but evaluate our own less than perfect lives as being inadequate.

These findings don't come as a surprise to me. I used to love Facebook, but almost a year ago the crappiness of real life pulled me away when our youngest daughter, aged nine, was taken ill with a painful form of inflammatory disease and we had a terrible and protracted time getting a diagnosis. (1) _____ I needed physical hugs, not cyber-embraces.

Now, she's on the mend and life is enjoyable again. I came back to my online social life in the summer but found myself on the outside looking in. But instead of throwing myself back into the Facebook frenzy, I sat back. I wasn't inclined to go back because I realised that being away from Facebook I felt better - dare I say, happier.

Before my daughter's illness, I was pretty much addicted to Facebook: I would post up to four times a day, sometimes more and it was the last thing I checked on at night and the first place I turned to upon waking. I'd be engaging in online conversations via the site in parallel to the rest of my life. All of this was costing me a good three hours out of every day. (2) _____

As a result, I have more energy and I'm sleeping better - research has shown that the blue light emitted from screens is especially effective at keeping you awake because it suppresses the production of the sleep-inducing hormone: melatonin.

I also feel more fulfilled professionally (comparing myself less to my peers probably has helped me simply 'be'), and things are less chaotic on the domestic front as I am more engaged with the things in front of me and less distracted by those far away.

I can't remember the last time my nine-year-old pleaded with me to get off my phone, or accused me of loving my mobile more than I do her. (3) _____. For me, it is very real, almost too real and that is one of the things about it I now realise that was making me feel bad.

The scattergun approach to making friends on Facebook meant that I was suddenly sharing relative intimacies with people I'd normally make only the vaguest pleasantries with in passing.

Suddenly, the friend of a friend who takes her children to the local park had added me and found her way into my social circle. Now my newsfeed was full of her controversial jokes, offensive language and questionable views on child rearing. In turn, she had been privy to everything from my husband's infuriating obsession with recycling to how sad I was about the death of a family friend.

Of course, I used Facebook's settings to obscure her posts and deny her access to mine. But it exposed the façade of the niceties we once shared when we pushed our toddlers on the swings. (4) _____ I've also got embroiled

in enormous rows on the site on the two subjects that should never come up in polite conversation: religion and politics. There are people who now view me as differently as I do them as a result, which is a shame. They haven't changed, nor have I - but our perceptions have forever more.

But that's not to say I'm off Facebook altogether. It's still my go-to place to find out what the people who interest me have been up to. I still enjoy seeing their holiday snaps and baby pictures. I love the way I discover new music, books and even TV programmes through the recommendations by people who probably have a healthier relationship with Facebook than I used to.

The site has become such an intrinsic part of the fabric of our lives that to walk away from it would be to cut myself off from great people who have interesting things to say. (5) _____ Being on the outside looking in has become my happy place.

A But while all of this does make me feel more engaged in the world, I disagree with anyone who says that Facebook isn't real life.

B Today, those hours are filled with fresh air down at my allotment, socialising with friends face to face, organising my life and increasing my work output.

C It's an enormous fount of knowledge and opinion that I'd hate to lose access to. But I have to mind my work, life and social media balance.

D The all-consuming aspects of endless hospital visits and months of sleep-deprivation and worry meant that for much of the last year posting on Facebook was the last thing on my mind.

E It's all the stuff of any standard Facebook newsfeed; the stuff of real life, guaranteed to prompt great cyber conversations that would pull in friends from various parts of my life.

F I now know so much about what goes on in her head that I'd cross the busiest main road to avoid her.

Vocabulary

1 Complete the sentences with the correct prepositions.

1 We've packed our bags and printed our boarding cards - we're heading _____ tomorrow.

2 Don't light a candle in your tent - do you want to burn it _____?

3 'Is this what passes _____ first class nowadays?' the angry guest shouted at the receptionist.

4 The weather forecast says next week's going to be sunny and warm, but let's not bank _____ it. We'd better take some warm clothes.

5 We were ripped _____ by a taxi driver - we paid about three times the normal fare.

2 Complete the sentences with the words from the box. There are more words than you need.

daunt	**exercise**	**flow**	**soak**	**stead**	**words**

1 Learning basic bicycle maintenance will stand you in good _____ if you go on a biking holiday.

2 I always try to stay in small local guesthouses; I don't believe you can _____ up the atmosphere of a place if you're staying at a huge international hotel.

3 If you go with the _____ instead of having a rigid plan, you may discover things you had no idea existed.

4 Can't you leave your guidebook alone for a moment and just take in the view? This isn't a tick-box _____, you know.

5 It's a website on which backpackers share their experiences and _____ of wisdom about travelling.

Words and phrases with *ever*

1 Complete the sentences with the words from the box.

however	**whatever**	**wherever**	**whichever**	**whoever**

1 _____ of these hotels we choose, we're going to be close to the historic centre.

2 I always carry a Swiss knife with me _____ I go.

3 _____ hard I tried, I couldn't make the tent stay upright in the wind.

4 _____ you do, don't eat food from street stalls in that area.

5 _____ said this was an uninteresting city clearly hadn't seen very much of it.

2 Complete the sentences with the phrases from the box. There are more phrases than you need.

as ever	**ever-increasing**	**ever-present**	**ever so**	**than ever**	**worst ever**

1 In the twentieth century travelling became easier _____ before.

2 I am, _____, impressed and moved by your extraordinary hospitality.

3 The guidebook you gave me was _____ useful. Thank you very much.

4 'Did you have a good flight?' 'The _____! There was a storm on the way.'

5 The island is gradually being destroyed by _____ numbers of tourists.

Speaking

1 Complete the sentences with a word or expression from the box

whereas	**alike**	**hand**	**similarities**	**crucial**	**both**

1. I can see a number of _____ in photos A and B. They _____ show people enjoying their free time.
2. In picture A, people are doing sports, _____ in picture B, they are listening to music.
3. These pictures are _____ because both show big cities.
4. One _____ difference is that in picture A, people seem to be amused but in picture B they appear to be frightened
5. On the other _____, the kids in picture B look as if they are having the time of their lives.