Czytanie ze zrozumieniem

TASK 6. (0–4)

Read the text. For questions 6.1.–6.4., choose the appropriate paragraph and write the corresponding letter (A–E) in the table. One paragraph does not match any of the questions.

In which paragraph does the author		Answer
6.1.	mention a legal requirement which applies to couples from overseas?	
6.2.	show how a law implemented elsewhere prompted elopements to Scotland?	
6.3.	refer to someone's adverse opinion on the act of elopement?	
6.4.	point to Gretna Green's improved accessibility as a reason for its increased popularity?	

GRETNA GREEN

A. The Scottish village of Gretna Green – population 2,700 – hosts around 5,000 weddings per year, that is almost two weddings per resident, and has been a hotspot for tying the knot since the 18th century. Gretna's fame began in 1754, when Lord Hardwicke's Marriage Act came into force in England. Under the Act, if the parents of a child under 21 objected to the marriage, they could legally veto the union. The Act tightened the requirements for marrying in England and Wales but did not apply in Scotland, where marriage without parental consent was permitted for girls from the age of 12, and boys from the age of 14. This gave impetus to marriage ceremonies in the village that was located just over the Scottish border.

B. There were two factors that made Gretna tempting for runaway sweethearts. Firstly, the construction of a toll road passing through the hitherto obscure village made Gretna Green the first easily reachable place over the border. Secondly, Scottish law allowed for "irregular marriages", meaning that it was enough for a couple to make a declaration before two witnesses in order for a marriage to be valid. Enterprising blacksmiths set themselves up as "anvil priests" to conduct such "irregular marriage" ceremonies. The record-holder, Richard Rennison, is claimed to have performed 5,147 of them.

C. Several attempts were made to curb the runaway marriages – which the MP for Newcastle described in 1855 as "lowering the habits, injuring the character, and destroying the morality of the people of the northern counties of England". A year later new legislation was introduced which required a cooling-off spell of 21 days' residency in the parish in which a couple wished to marry. The institution of "marriage by declaration" was outlawed in Scotland in 1940, and from 1977 couples in England could finally get married without parental consent at 18. But despite the whittling away of the legal factors that made Gretna Green a marriage capital, it still retains its romantic allure.

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D. "Running away to Gretna Green" remains a commonly used phrase. And couples still choose to walk down its many aisles. They just don't tend to be teenagers these days. Mark and Sarah Miles, 52 and 49, "eloped" from Bognor Regis on the English south coast without telling their families. "We've both been married before and we didn't want any fuss," they explained. However, like the 24-hour wedding chapels of Las Vegas, the commercial element of a Gretna wedding is not to everyone's taste. "Either you love all the fanfare or you see it as a bit tacky," the local shopkeeper says.

E. As the law stands, if the future bride and groom are domiciled in another country, they should provide a certificate of no impediment to marriage, issued by the competent authority. Current residents in the UK who have lived in Great Britain for the last 2 years do not need to submit such papers. And regardless of where you come from, think twice before "getting hitched" in Gretna Green as marriage annulment or release from matrimony are not that easy. "It's not what we're famous for," comment indigenous entrepreneurs.

adapted from www.gretnagreen.com; www.bbc.com

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