

## Task 1

- **Read this text about the history of high heeled shoes and then read the sentences that follow.**
- **For each number (1-5) choose the option (A-D) that best summarises the given paragraph.**
- **Write the letters in the white boxes as in the example (0).**



### WHY DID MEN STOP WEARING HIGH HEELS?

Even their most ardent fans wouldn't claim high heels were practical. They are not good for hiking or driving. They get stuck in things. And high heels don't tend to be very comfortable. It is almost as though they weren't designed for walking in.

Originally, they weren't. The high heel was worn for centuries throughout the Near East as a form of riding footwear. Good horsemanship was essential to the fighting styles of Persia – the historical name for modern-day Iran. When a soldier stood up in his stirrups, the heels helped him to secure his stance so that he could use his bow and arrow more effectively.

At the end of the 16th century, the Persian Shah was keen to forge links with rulers in Europe. So he sent a diplomatic mission to the courts of Russia, Germany and Spain. A wave of interest in all things Persian passed through Western Europe, and Persian-style shoes were enthusiastically adopted by aristocrats.

In the muddy streets of 17th century Europe, these new shoes had no utility value whatsoever – but that was the point. The upper classes have always used impractical, uncomfortable and luxurious clothing to announce their privileged status. Louis XIV of France, who stood 1.63m, supplemented his height by a further 10cm with heels.

The heels and soles were always red – the dye was expensive and carried a martial overtone. The fashion soon spread overseas – Charles II of England's coronation portrait of 1661 features him wearing a pair of enormous red, French-style heels – although he was over 1.85m to begin with.

In the 18th century the Enlightenment brought with it a new respect for the rational and useful, and men's fashion shifted towards more practical clothing. High heels came to be seen as foolish and effeminate. By 1740 men had stopped wearing them altogether.

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0) A) You have to be a fan to say high heels are practical.  
 B) If well made, high heels can be quite comfortable.  
 C) *The main point about high heels is not their practicality.*  
 D) Well designed shoes with heels are suited to most occasions.

1) A) Horsemen in the Near East have worn high heels for centuries.  
 B) High heels were originally worn by horsemen in the Near East.  
 C) The high heel was an essential fashion item in Persia.  
 D) Persian soldiers were the best horsemen of the time.

2) A) At one time, anything Persian was regarded as fashionable in Europe.  
 B) In the 16th century people travelled widely between east and west.  
 C) The Persian Shah sent expensive shoes as presents to European monarchs.  
 D) In Europe it became fashionable for aristocrats to wear shoes made in Persia.

3) A) In the 17th century people preferred impractical but luxurious clothes.  
 B) If you wore high heels, walking in muddy streets was less tiresome.  
 C) Those of a higher social status have always dressed to show off their rank.  
 D) Shorter people, like Louis XIV, liked high heels to add to their height.

4) A) The price of the red dye was too high even for aristocrats.  
 B) High-ranking diplomats in European courts wore high heels.  
 C) The fashion of wearing high heels reached England quite quickly.  
 D) A very tall man, Charles II only wore high heels on special occasions.

5) A) In the 18th century only women with bad reputations wore high heels.  
 B) In 1740 new laws were passed banning high heeled shoes altogether.  
 C) Despite its rationality, the Enlightenment had little effect on fashion.  
 D) The rational attitudes of the Enlightenment influenced the way people dressed.

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