Reading Test: Semester 1

English 9
Full Blast Plus

TASK 1

Read the texts and write *P* for Penny, *J* for Jack or *D* for Diana next to the statements.

Penny, Rochester
It was lunch break and my friends and I were all hanging out. There was a group of older girls near us. They were really popular girls who everyone wanted to be friends with. Suddenly one of the girls started waving at me and smiling. I couldn't believe she wanted to talk to me. I waved back and walked over to her with a big smile on my face. When I arrived, she gave me a strange look and said 'Can I help you?' so I said, '...you waved at me to come over.' She laughed and said 'I wasn't waving at you! I was waving at Susan!', and at that point a girl arrived from behind me and they all started laughing. I wanted to run away, but instead I just smiled and pretended I wasn't embarrassed. I walked back to my friends. I felt sad.

Jack, Farringdon
Last year I took part in the school dance contest. I love dancing and I was really excited about performing. Every student from school was there on that night. I was a bit nervous but I thought to myself 'If I remember my moves, I will win this contest!' I went onto the stage and the music started. I was sure of myself and I started to relax, so I decided to try to introduce some new and more difficult moves. For a moment, I forgot where I was and the next thing I knew, I fell off the stage in front of everyone. The music stopped and a teacher ran over to see if I was OK. I was fine, but I was so disappointed that I wasn't paying attention to the others laughing around me. My friends made fun of me for weeks. Thankfully, in the end I saw the funny side too.

Diana, Stratford
I was at the shopping centre with my friends and we were waiting to go to the cinema. Some kids from my school were there, as well as the new guy from my science class. As we were heading towards the cinema, I decided I would try to get his attention and wave at him. He saw me and smiled. I felt great and smiled back at him, but then suddenly there was a loud bang as I walked straight into a glass door. My friends started laughing, and the guy shouted 'Look where you're going!'. I was so embarrassed and I was also pretty annoyed with my friends.

1. I didn't like my friends' behaviour. _____
2. I was upset with myself because I didn't do well. _____
3. I was trying to make someone notice me. _____
4. I tried not to show how I was feeling. _____
5. I quickly forgot about feeling embarrassed. _____

TASK 2

Read the text and write *T* for True or *F* for False.

1. Computer games are still only popular with teenagers. _____
2. Computer games are as difficult to make as films. _____
3. Famous film directors and musicians are now working on computer games. _____
4. Games consoles can be used for a lot of different activities. _____
5. Computer game design is the top job choice for American teenagers. _____

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Computer games are here to stay

There was a time when computer games were only played by teenagers. However, today they attract the interest of all age groups. Educational games can be played by three-year-olds or people in their seventies and eighties. Computer games are easy to use, have excellent graphics, and allow people to play with others from the other side of the world. It is not surprising that in the entertainment world, computer games are becoming more popular and successful than music and films.

Making computer games can take as much time and money as making films. It needs thousands of hours of work by artists, animators, musicians, actors, writers, directors, and others. In addition, computer technicians and programmers who have to create virtual worlds for the characters of the game to exist in. Some online games have virtual worlds for millions of gamers, which makes these projects hard to complete.

Despite their success, computer games are still not considered to be quality entertainment. However, many top film directors, such as Steven Spielberg with his *Medal of Honor*, are now turning their creativity to computer games. At the same time, more and more games feature the voices of famous actors, and the soundtracks of many games are composed by famous musicians or recorded by well-known bands. Technology has played a huge part in the success of computer games. Games consoles can do a lot more than they could a few years ago. They are quickly becoming the only entertainment device that you need in your house, as they can play music, use TV services and even offer other internet services. In the future they might even make coffee for you!

There was a time when young people wanted to grow up to become astronauts or film actors, but a recent survey among teenagers in the USA showed that the most popular job was 'computer game designer'. The most amazing thing about computer games is that they have not been around for very long. So, as a means of entertainment they are still very young, and it will be very exciting to see how they develop.

TASK 3

Read the text and answer the questions. Choose *a*, *b*, *c* or *d*.

Smoke Signals

Smoke signals are one of the oldest means of communication. People used them to send messages across large areas. Making them involves covering a fire so that different shapes and sizes of smoke clouds rise into the air.

The Indigenous Americans are probably the most well-known users of smoke signals, and they often appear in westerns. Each Indigenous American tribe had their own system of signals. A fire was usually started with grass that was a bit wet. The position of the fire was also very important. If the fire was halfway up a hill, it meant everything was OK, but if the fire was on the top of a hill, this meant danger was near.

Smoke signals have been used throughout history in many different countries. In ancient China, soldiers were able to inform people about an attack by smoke signals. The Great Wall of China is a huge wall which stretches the length of the country, and at certain points along the wall there are towers. By signalling from tower to tower, they could send messages as far away as 750 km in just a few hours.

Some smoke signals are very simple, like those of the Aboriginal Australians. They used smoke signals when they entered land which was not theirs. This was just to inform others that they were there. A Greek historian called Polybius came up with a more confusing system of alphabetical smoke signals to inform people about something around 150 BCE. He invented a system of changing Greek letters into numbers. Messages were signalled by holding sets of torches in pairs.

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The Yahgan people who lived on the islands south of South America also used smoke signals to inform people about something. For example, when a whale got stuck on a beach, they needed to tell others that there was a lot of meat there, and it shouldn't go to waste.

1. How were smoke signals made, according to the text?
   - **a.** A fire was lit at the top of a hill every night.
   - **b.** Dry grass was burnt in large piles.
   - **c.** Smoke was sent through tubes between towers.
   - **d.** A fire was covered so that different shapes and sizes of smoke clouds rose into the air.
2. What did a fire halfway up a hill mean for Indigenous Americans?
   - **a.** Danger was near.
   - **b.** A tribe was moving to a new land.
   - **c.** Everything was OK.
   - **d.** A message had to be repeated.
3. How could messages travel as far as 750 km in just a few hours in ancient China?
   - **a.** Soldiers on horses carried them.
   - **b.** Signals were passed from tower to tower along the Great Wall.
   - **c.** They were written in Greek letters.
   - **d.** Every town had its own smoke tower.
4. Why did Aboriginal Australians use smoke signals?
   - **a.** To let others know they had entered land that was not theirs.
   - **b.** To warn others about an attack.
   - **c.** To tell others where food was.
   - **d.** To send messages as far as 750 km.
5. What was special about the system of Polybius?
   - **a.** It was simpler than the signals of the Aboriginal Australians.
   - **b.** It was used by the soldiers on the Great Wall of China.
   - **c.** It was invented to tell people where to find food.
   - **d.** It changed Greek letters into numbers, and sets of torches were held in pairs.
6. Why did the Yahgan people use smoke signals when a whale got stuck on a beach?
   - **a.** To ask others to move the whale back into the sea.
   - **b.** To tell others there was a lot of meat, so that it would not go to waste.
   - **c.** To warn others about a dangerous animal.
   - **d.** To invite other tribes to a festival.

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