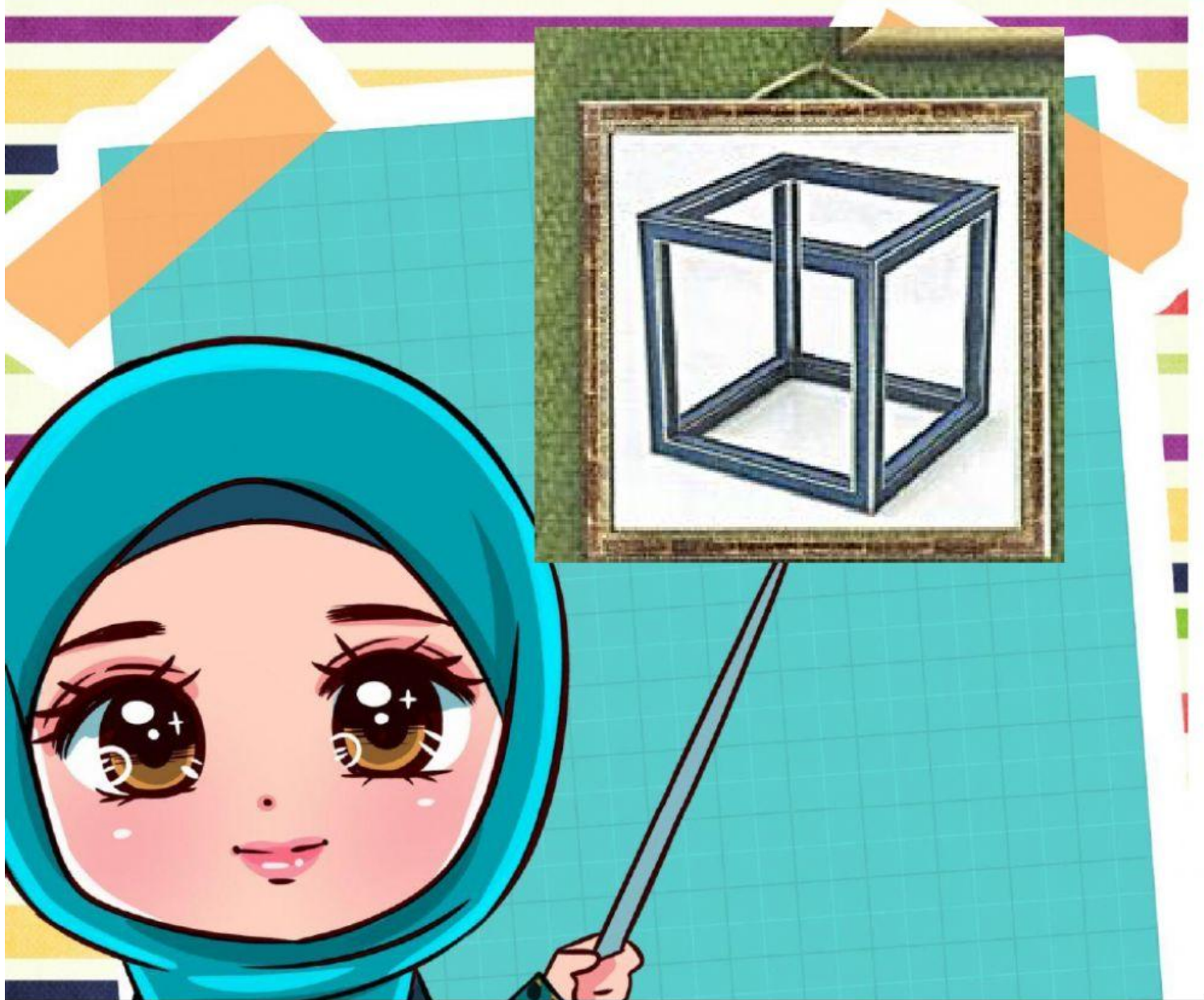


FORM 4

FULL BLAST PLUS

UNIT 8: IMAGE

Reading 3 : Page 124-125



Upgrade your English With **FULL BLAST PLUS!**

(Illustration)

Let's Read 4

A. Look at the picture and answer the questions.

- Where do you think the man and the child are?
- What dangers are they facing?

B. Read the text quickly and check your answers in exercise A.

On the great Alkali Plain

Somewhere in the centre of the great North American Continent there is a dry and inhospitable desert, which has for many years prevented the spread of civilisation. This miserable and barren landscape combines mountains, valleys, rivers and enormous plains, which in winter are white with snow, and in summer grey with dust. The only inhabitants of this land are the coyote and grizzly bears that search amongst the rocks for something to eat.

A lonely traveller stood on the northern slope of the Sierra Blanco, from which he could see this huge land of miserable nothingness. He looked at the great flat plain-land and the chain of mountain peaks on the horizon in despair. There was no sign of life, no movement on the dull, grey earth, and no sound to break the absolute silence. As he looked down, he saw a pathway that stretched across the desert. This was the path that so many adventurers had taken in the hope of finding water. However, what became of them was clear, as here and there were white objects which shone in the sun and stood out against the grey sand. They were bones: some large and some small. They belonged to oxen and men.

It is difficult to say if the traveller was nearer to forty or to sixty. His face was thin and worn; his eyes were sunken in his head; the hand which held the rifle was like a skeleton's. It was clear that he was dying – dying from hunger and from thirst. He had climbed here in hope of seeing some signs of water.

Now the plain stretched before his eyes, without a sign anywhere of a plant or tree which might indicate the presence of it. There was no sign of hope. He realised that his journey had come to an end and that he was about to die.

Before sitting down, he put his useless rifle and a large bundle, which he was carrying with immense difficulty, on the ground. The minute the bundle touched the ground, a cry was heard and a small, scared face, with bright, brown eyes appeared from it. 'You've hurt me!' said a 59 child's voice.

'Have I?' the man asked gently, 'I didn't mean to.' As he spoke, he unwrapped the grey blanket that held the bundle together and took out a little girl of about five years of age. The child was pale and weak, but her healthy arms and legs showed that she had suffered less than her companion.

'How is it now?' he asked anxiously, as she was still rubbing the back of her head.

'Kiss it and make it well,' she said showing the injured part to him. 'That's what mother used to do. Where's mother?'

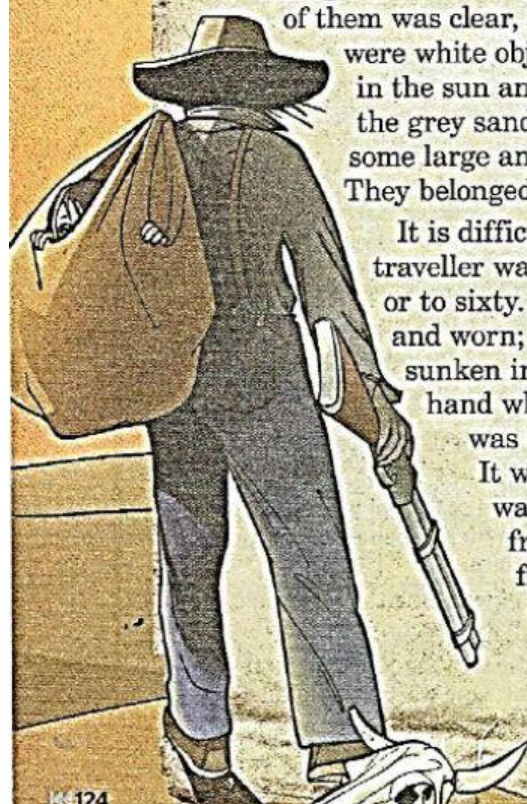
'Mother's gone. I guess you'll see her before long.'

'Funny she didn't say goodbye. She's been gone for nearly three days! Say, it's very dry, isn't it? Isn't there any water or anything to eat?'

'No, there isn't anything, dearie. You'll just need to be patient for a while, and then you'll be all right. Put your head up against me like that, and then you'll feel better.'

After she had done that, the child fell asleep. He watched over her for some time, but then he too fell asleep.

Far away in the distance a cloud of dust began to rise and as it came nearer to where the child and man were sleeping, it became clear that a group of nomads was heading in their direction.



C. Read again and answer the questions.
Choose a, b, c or d.

1. What is characteristic of the landscape?
 - a. It is always covered with grey dust.
 - b. It consists only of enormous plains.
 - c. It combines various natural features.
 - d. It is inhabited by a wide variety of animal species.
2. The pathway proves that
 - a. the man was not alone.
 - b. there was no reason to despair.
 - c. other travellers had found water.
 - d. other travellers had tried to cross the desert.
3. What does the traveller see on the pathway?
 - a. man-made objects
 - b. white sand
 - c. bones
 - d. men and oxen
4. What conclusion do we reach after reading the description of the traveller?
 - a. He is very weak.
 - b. He is sixty but looks forty.
 - c. He is tired but feels optimistic.
 - d. He has a strong chance of survival.
5. Why had the man climbed the Sierra Blanco?
 - a. to see the dry land
 - b. to look for signs of water
 - c. to find the pathway
 - d. to view the plain from above
6. What do we learn about the girl?
 - a. She is dying.
 - b. She is big for her age.
 - c. She has injured herself badly.
 - d. She is healthier than the man.
7. It is evident from the passage that
 - a. the man doesn't care about the girl.
 - b. the man is concerned about the girl.
 - c. the girl's mother is going to join them.
 - d. the man is sure that everything is going to be alright.

D. Read the note and answer the questions.

NOTE: The writer of the story uses the following techniques:


- **Foreshadowing:** giving the reader a hint of what will happen later
- **Cliffhanger:** ending a chapter or an episode in suspense
- **Direct Speech:** citing the character's exact words in quotation marks

1. What effect does the direct speech have on the reader?
2. From the exchange between the man and the girl (lines 59-83), what can you infer about the character of the girl's father and mother?
3. From the same exchange as above, what assumptions can you make about what has happened to the girl's mother?
4. The story ends in a cliffhanger. What are you led to believe may happen?
 - a. The nomads will get lost in the desert.
 - b. The man and the girl may never wake up.
 - c. The girl's mother will return with the nomads.
 - d. The man and the girl may be saved by the nomads.

E. Look at the highlighted words in the text and match them with their meanings.
Then check your answers in a dictionary.

- | | | |
|-----------------|-----------------------|-------------------------------------|
| 1. inhospitable | <input type="radio"/> | a. great |
| 2. barren | <input type="radio"/> | b. complete |
| 3. miserable | <input type="radio"/> | c. not pleasant to live in |
| 4. absolute | <input type="radio"/> | d. causing unhappiness |
| 5. indicate | <input type="radio"/> | e. dry and without any plants |
| 6. immense | <input type="radio"/> | f. a person you are travelling with |
| 7. companion | <input type="radio"/> | g. show |

Project

 Do some research on the Internet and find another story that takes place in the desert. Take notes (plot, main characters, interesting features) and present it to the class.