Full name:.....

Lesson 5	**Topic: The natural environment**		**WID:** IELTS5.5_05_R
Skills	**IELTS Reading skills:** - Yes/No/ Not Given - True/ False/ Not given - Summary completion	**..... pts/10**	**QR code:**

<u>Exercise 4.</u> [IELTS Reading: T/F/NG] Read the passage and answer the questions.

Every April, along with many other species of birds, the swallow arrives to spend the summer months in northern Europe, in Russia, Iran and parts of Siberia. Here it will breed and raise its young.

The swallow is well known for several reasons. Firstly, it is very distinctive, with its forked tail and characteristic acrobatic swooping flight. Secondly, it is very common, and, like its near relative the house martin, lives in close proximity to human habitation, at least in rural areas. It is, however, rarely to be encountered in towns or cities.

For centuries, people have observed swallows, noted their arrival and their patterns of feeding. In several countries, these observations have passed into the language as proverbs or sayings. In England, people comment on unpredictable late spring weather by saying, 'one swallow does not a summer make'. Similarly, 'the swallows are flying low' was held to predict rainy, even stormy weather. There may be some truth in this observation, though it is the insects the swallows feed on that seem to be more susceptible to the fall in barometric pressure that heralds a storm. Insects keep low in these conditions, and so do the swallows that hunt them. At the end of the summer season, when the swallows are about to leave, they frequently flock together in large numbers on convenient high open perches, like roof ridges and telegraph wires. When people remark that 'the swallows are gathering', they mean that autumn has arrived.

At some point in mid-September the swallows leave together, usually all on the same day. One day there are thousands, the next there are none, and none will be seen again until the following spring. For centuries, this was a complete mystery to people. The Hampshire naturalist Gilbert White, writing in the late eighteenth century, believed that the swallows dived into ponds and rivers in autumn and remained in the bottom mud the whole winter, re-emerging the following spring. This idea seems extraordinary to us, but White was not a stupid man: many of his other observations of natural life were informed and accurate. In this case, however, he simply had no

means of determining the truth and was forced to make a random guess. The idea that swallows migrate to central or southern Africa would have seemed as fanciful to him as his theory seems to us.

Although we now know that swallows migrate, there are still unanswered questions. Why do they go so far? Why not stay on the shores of the Mediterranean? The majority continue to equatorial Africa, and some even further south. Also it appears that populations of swallows that have bred in different countries also spend the winter in different areas. Those from France, Germany and much of western Europe have mostly been traced to East Africa, Kenya or Tanzania for example. Above all, how does a bird weighing approximately twenty grams find its way across mountain ranges, ocean and desert to winter in the south, and then return the following year to the very location it was born, in some cases to the very same nest?

Birds can navigate by the Sun, and are also able to detect the magnetic field of the Earth. Species that migrate at night are also able to navigate by the stars. By these means, they travel long distances. The close navigation that brings them back to the same field or nest appears to be related to memory of local landmarks imprinted on the minds of young birds as they crisscross the area in the weeks before departure.

Nevertheless, the journey is very dangerous. Long sea crossings, where there is little available food or water, are generally avoided. In western Europe, most swallows cross to Africa via the Straits of Gibraltar, or fly the length of Italy before tackling the relatively short crossing to Tunisia in North Africa. However, in storms they may be blown hundreds of kilometres off course. Exhausted swallows sometimes come to rest on ships way out in the Atlantic Ocean. They have to cross mountain ranges too, where again the weather may be unpredictable and food scarce. Along the coast of North Africa, many young swallows become the prey of Eleonora's falcons, which time their breeding to coincide with the migration of young birds southwards. But the most dangerous part of the journey is the crossing of the Sahara desert. Here, there is little food or water, sandstorms may delay and exhaustthe already weakened birds, and many die. It is estimated that around 50 per cent of adult birds die, and up to 80 per cent of young birds, but enough survive to ensure the continuation of the species.

Do the following statements agree with the information given in the passage?

Write TRUE if the statement agrees with the information

FALSE if the statement contradicts the information

NOT GIVEN if there is no information on this

1. The swallow is the only species of bird that migrates to spend the summer in northern Europe.

2. The swallow is easily noticeable because of its tail and the way it flies.

3. The swallow is frequently seen in cities.

4. The insects, not the swallows themselves, appear to predict stormy weather.

5. Swallows form larger flocks than other birds when they depart in the autumn.

6. White's theory seems strange to people now.

Exercise 5. [IELTS Reading: Y/N/NG] Read the information. Then read the passage and decide if the statements agree with the views of the writer.

Write YES if the statement agrees with the views of the writer of the text

NO if the statement contradicts the views of the writer

NOT GIVEN if it is impossible to say what the writer thinks about this.

Nowadays, tourism continues to change, most of those changes having been brought about by technology. Statistics show that 148.3 million travel bookings are made online each year, 39% of which are accommodation bookings, and 37% are plane tickets. It is now estimated that people spend at least three hours online researching their trips, even if they go to a travel agent to make a final purchase. In addition, it is increasingly common for people to create online reviews of hotels, restaurants and so on, after having experienced something while travelling. Although this is very useful for travellers, the effect is that the tourism industry is becoming much more consumer-oriented than ever before, and much more alert to the needs of travellers, in the hope of receiving good reviews. A good travel experience is something you can actively seek out and pay for.

By taking a mobile device on holiday, you can clearly save time, money and effort. The contents of a restaurant menu can be quickly checked. The opening times of a museum can be found immediately. It may be, however, that these are making the travel experience less of an adventure. It is possible that we have lost the notion of going to a new place in order to explore it. It is, perhaps, regrettable if we go to a place and already know what we will find there.

Indeed, a recent survey shows that over 1.8 billion photos are shared online each day. A great many of these are images from holidays, and can share worthwhile information with other travellers. Such photographs can tell you more about a place than any professional advertisement could, and it's likely that they are more honest. Just one amateur photo can give an accurate impression of whether or not a particular festival, ski resort or hotel is the best one to choose.

It seems also that the average traveller is less likely to pack large amounts of clothes, and more likely to take equipment for recording their journey and sharing it with others. According to another survey, the most common things to take are laptops, smartphones, tablets, digital cameras and e-readers (not to mention the adaptors, cables and chargers that accompany them). One recent innovation that is certain to attract consumer attention is a suitcase with its own GPS. Even if the owner loses it, it is easily tracked, wherever it goes.

Back in the 19th century, many of the explorers sat down at the end of a long day to write an entry in their diaries, some of which are now regarded as historical treasures. In the 20th century, it was common for tourists to buy postcards, spend an afternoon writing brief messages, and post them home. Nowadays, we have social media. Regardless of the convenience, and the easily accessed information, if the point of travelling is freedom, it's hard to say that this is what technology allows us to gain. There is a constant pressure nowadays to update others about our lives and the experiences we are having. Many people feel forced into checking everything before they go there, and relying on other people's recommendations about what to do. Surely a holiday is the one time when people shouldn't feel the need to do this.

1. It is best to avoid using online reviews as a way of choosing a hotel to stay in.

2. The use of a mobile device on holiday may have negative effects on people's experience on the holiday.

3. An individual traveller's photo is far more useful to other travellers than an official one.

4. It is a good idea for travellers to limit the number of devices that they take with them on their trip.

5. A clear benefit of technology is that it gives people a lot more freedom when they are travelling.

<u>Exercise 6.</u> [IELTS Reading: Y/N/NG] Read the passage and answer the questions.

Spoilt for choice

A Choice, we are given to believe, is a right. In daily lite, people have come to expect endless situations about which they are required to make decisions one way or another. In the main, these are just irksome moments at work which demand some extra energy or brainpower, or

during lunch breaks like choosing which type of coffee to order or indeed which coffee shop to go to. But sometimes selecting one option as opposed to another can have serious or lifelong repercussions. More complex decision-making is then either avoided, postponed, or put into the hands of the army of professionals, lifestyle coaches, lawyers, advisors, and the like, waiting to lighten the emotional burden for a fee. But for a good many people in the world, in rich and poor countries, choice is a luxury, not a right. And for those who think they are exercising their right to make choices, the whole system is merely an illusion, created by companies and advertisers wanting to sell their wares.

B The main impact of endless choice in people's lives is anxiety. Buying something as basic as a coffee pot is not exactly simple. Easy access to a wide range of consumer goods induces a sense of powerlessness, even paralysis, in many people, ending in the shopper giving up and walking away, or just buying an unsuitable item that is not really wanted in order to solve the problem and reduce the unease. Recent surveys in the United Kingdom have shown that a sizeable proportion of electrical goods bought per household are not really needed. The advertisers and the shareholders of the manufacturers are, nonetheless, satisfied.

C It is not just their availability that is the problem, but the speed with which new versions of products come on the market. Advances in design and production mean that new items are almost ready by the time that goods hit the shelves. Products also need to have a short lifespan so that the public can be persuaded to replace them within a short time. The classic example is computers, which are almost obsolete once they are bought. At first, there were only one or two available from a limited number of manufacturers, but now there are many companies all with not only their own products but different versions of the same machine. This makes selection a problem. Gone are the days when one could just walk with ease into a shop and buy one thing; no choice, no anxiety.

D The plethora of choice is not limited to consumer items. With the greater mobility of people around the world, people have more choice about where they want to live and work - a fairly recent phenomenon. In the past, nations migrated across huge swathes of the earth in search of food, adventure, and more hospitable environments. Whole nations crossed continents and changed the face of history. So the mobility of people is nothing new. The creation of nation states and borders effectively slowed this process down. But what is different now is the speed at which migration is happening.

Read the passage and decide if the statements agree with the views of the writer.

Write YES if the statement agrees with the views of the writer of the text

NO if the statement contradicts the views of the writer

NOT GIVEN if it is impossible to say what the writer thinks about this.

1. Having more choice is good because it helps the economy to grow.

2. Making decisions about minor issues is irritating.

3. People should seek the help of professionals when making a decision which can have adverse consequences.

4. If people in poor countries had the same range of choices as those in rich countries, their lives would be easier.

5. Only people in poor countries do not have any real choices.

6. Advertisers encourage the mistaken idea that more choice is beneficial.