

Mai is my neighbor. She turned sixteen recently and her parents (1) _____ a birthday party for her. I was one of those invited. The party began at about three (2) - _____ the afternoon. There were about twenty of us gathering in Mai's house. She didn't like having the party at a restaurant (3) _____ it is noisy and expensive. We gave presents to Mai and she (4) _____ opened them. It must really be exciting to receive all those presents. After that Mai's mother served us soft drinks and biscuits. We then listened to music and played cards. The winners were given prizes. At about four thirty Mai's mother brought out the birthday cake. It was beautifully decorated with pink and white icing. (5) - _____ colorful candles sat in the middle of the cake. We all clapped our hands eagerly and sang "Happy Birthday" as she blew out the candles and cut the cake. We helped ourselves to slices of the delicious cake and sang all the songs that we knew. Finally at about six in the evening the party came to an end. We were all tired but happy. The parents of other children came to collect them by motorbikes. I helped Mai and her mother clean up the mess we had made. After that I walked home, which was only three doors away.

1. A. celebrate	B. gives	C. held	D. hold
2. A. on	B. in	C. up	D. at night
3. A. because	B. but	C. so	D. however
4. A. willing	B. happy	C. happily	D. unhappy
5. A. eighteen	B. seventeen	C. sixteen	D. sixty

All over the country, young people are entering a world of homelessness and poverty, according to a recent report by the housing group, Shelter. Nearly 150,000 young people aged between sixteen and twenty-five will become homeless this year, says Shelter. Some of the young homeless may sleep out in the open in such places as the "cardboard city" in London, where people of all ages sleep in the open air in their only homes – cardboard boxes. Others may find accommodation in shelters run by voluntary organisations or get a place in a hostel, which gives them board up to ten weeks. But who are these people? Those who are seeking a roof over their heads are mostly not runaways but "throwaways" – people who have been thrown out of their homes or forced to leave because of parental divorce, an unsympathetic step-parent or one of many other reasons. Take the case of one sixteen-year-old schoolgirl, Alice. She did not come from a poor home and had just passed her exams with good results. The Shelter team met her in a hostel where she was doing her physics homework. Her parents had thrown her out of her home for no other reason than she wanted to do Science Advanced Level Exams – which her parents refused her permission to do, saying that studying sciences was unladylike!

Shelter says that the government's laws do nothing to help these youngsters. Rising rents, the shortage of cheap housing and the cut in benefits for young people under the age of twenty-five are causing a national problem, according to Shelter. The recent changes in the benefit laws mean that someone aged between sixteen and twenty-five gets less than

older people and they can only claim State help if they prove that they left home for a good reason.

Shelter believes that because of the major cuts in benefits to young people, more and more are being forced to sleep on the streets. Shelter also points out that if you are homeless, you can't get a job because employers will not hire someone without a permanent address; and if you can't get a job, you are homeless because you don't have any money to pay for accommodation. It's an impossible situation.

1. According to a recent report by Shelter, it appears that _____ .

- A. Hostels are too full to offer accommodation to homeless young people
- B. More and more young people all over the world are finding themselves homeless
- C. Nearly 150,000 young people live out in the open
- D. Young homeless people live in places like “cardboard city”

2. The word “Others” in paragraph 2 refers to _____ .

- A. People of all ages
- B. young people
- C. The young homeless
- D. voluntary organisations

3. Why was Alice turned out of her home?

- A. Her parents didn’t agree with what she wanted to do.
- B. She didn’t want to study for her Advanced Level Exams.
- C. She had not obtained high marks in her exams.
- D. She refused to do her homework in the evening.

4. According to Shelter, once young people have been forced onto the streets,

- A. Their benefits will be severely cut
- B. They will find it difficult to find work
- C. They will never go back home again
- D. they will encourage their friends to do the same

5. The word “permanent” in the last paragraph is closest in meaning to .

- A. flexible
- B. obvious
- C. stable
- D. simple