erasmus exchange programmes

_____ When I decided to apply for an exchange place in Portugal to study Management, I knew very little about the country although I had been studying Portuguese at Southampton University for a year. I had met Portuguese students who were on similar Erasmus exchange programmes and had naturally talked about differences between England and Portugal, but I cannot say that I was fully prepared.

_____ As soon as I arrived I noticed things were a bit different – there were people smoking while they were waiting for their luggage, ignoring the non-smoking signs, which is something that would never happen at home. Then something interesting happened. The Portuguese friend who picked me up took me to a terrace for a "bica" and asked me whether I was hungry. I looked at my watch – 4 p.m. I started thinking: "When did I have lunch? Was this the right time to eat something?" He started laughing and asked: "Why do you check your watch when I ask if you're hungry?" Then I realised that the Portuguese don't live by the minute. Take your time is their motto, especially when it concerns food. I had never seen business people having a three-course lunch with wine before! At home we take a 30-minute lunch break and eat a sandwich or something light.

_____ Also social contacts seem to be very important. At the University in Lisbon one cannot walk without stopping every ten metres to have a chat with Mr and Mrs so and so. Sitting on the "esplanada" all afternoon, talking a lot and saying nothing also seems to be a national sport. Students also love complaining about everything, like the bad food in the canteen or the fees they pay.

_____ I was also surprised by the way classes are run. Students miss so many classes and are allowed to arrive late, whereas in my University we all have to be in class when the class starts, and if we are more than 5 minutes late we are not allowed in. On the other hand, the teachers speak while the students listen and take notes. There is hardly any discussion or interaction. At home students are encouraged to have strong opinions and to show them in class.

_____ I shall be staying in Portugal for a whole semester, and I will be going home just after the end of the exams. I am not saying I am not having a good time – don't get that idea; I have enjoyed the weather, made new friends, and learned a lot since I arrived. It just takes a while to get used to different ways of doing things.

A. Identify the paragraphs which deal with the headings below.

1) Cultural differences

2) Studying in Portugal

3) Expectations

4) Positive aspects

5) Student social life

LIVEWORKSHEETS

B. Choose the correct option according to the text.

1) Monica came to Portugal
a) to study Portuguese.
b) on an Erasmus programme.
c) to learn about the differences between England and Portugal.

2) Monica noticed that people in Portugal have a very
a) relaxed
b) stressful
c) healthy lifestyle.

3) In England classes are
a) a one-way thing.
b) quite boring.
c) more dynamic.

4) Monica will be in Portugal for
a) six months.
b) six weeks.
c) a year.

5) It took her some time
a) to make new friends.
b) to learn Portuguese.
c) to adjust to the difference.

WRITING

Imagine you are spending a year studying abroad.
Write a letter to your parents
telling them about how things are going.
Remember that studying abroad may be fun,
but not a piece of cake for everyone.

C. TRUE or FALSE? Quote from the text to support your answer.

1) Monica didn't know much about Portugal.
TRUE **FALSE**

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_____

2) When she arrived in Portugal she noticed that people had a problem with following rules.
TRUE **FALSE**

_____

_____

3) In England people have something quick for lunch.
TRUE **FALSE**

_____

_____

4) Portuguese students must always be punctual for classes.
TRUE **FALSE**

_____

_____

5) English students can discuss their ideas freely in class.
TRUE **FALSE**

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LIVEWORKSHEETS