

FCE Practice Test

Name:.....

Paper 1 Reading

Time: 1 hour

INSTRUCTIONS TO CANDIDATES

Do not open this booklet until you are told to do so.

Write your name, Centre number and candidate number on the answer sheet in the spaces provided unless this has already been done for you.

There are thirty questions on this paper.

Answer all questions.

For each question (1–30), mark one answer only.

Mark your answers on the separate answer sheet. Use a soft pencil.

INFORMATION FOR CANDIDATES

Questions 1–15 carry two marks.

Questions 16–30 carry one mark.

Part 1

You are going to read an extract from an autobiography. For questions 1–8, choose the answer (A, B, C or D) which you think fits best according to the text.

Mark your answers on the separate answer sheet.

There was nothing unusual about Wellington Street, or so I thought as I was growing up. The cobbled street, one of four identical streets next to each other, was calm, apart from the occasional sound of raised voices from the pub on the corner. Everybody said hello to each other, although rarely much more than that. It was the kind of street that in the past had covered the whole of the north-west of England, affordable housing for the workers, the kind of street that used to be the heart of a community. Now it was a relic, unchanged while the modern world went on around it.

The first time I got a sense that my childhood world was not going to remain the same forever was when a letter arrived from the local council saying that a meeting was being held locally to discuss the development of the area. I remember wondering why areas had to be developed and I asked my father. He said that people just liked changing things for the sake of it but my mum interrupted him and explained that the houses needed modernising. Even then I could see this as another move in their ongoing argument about money and location. Mum, with her keen sense of social position and always very aware of what the neighbours thought, wanted to move into a better house, which Dad took to mean a more expensive house.

The evening of the meeting came around and my dad and I went along. It had already started when we got there and one of the councillors was trying to explain the plans, although the general reaction from the audience was far from positive. I don't remember the details, but I remember some shouting, until finally one of our neighbours stood up and said that he wasn't giving his permission for any of it. I remember the councillor saying then, 'We don't need permission. We're telling you, not asking you.'

The mood when we got home was tense. Although she tried to hide it, I think Mum was secretly quite pleased. Dad sat and frowned at the TV for a while, before Mum brought him a cup of tea. I was surprised when it was he who broke the silence after a minute or two and said, 'There are one or two nice places up around Ladybridge.' Mum said nothing. She just sipped her tea and looked at me and smiled.

1 The writer describes the street as a place where

- A everyone could afford their own house.
- B people felt they were part of a community.
- C people resisted the fast pace of modern life.
- D everyone quietly got on with their own life.

2 Streets of this kind had been built in the past because they were

- A cheap.
- B long-lasting.
- C traditional.
- D comfortable.

3 What did the writer not understand when the letter arrived?

- A** why his parents were arguing
- B** who had organised the meeting
- C** where they were going to live next
- D** why things had to change

4 Why did the writer's mother want to move house?

- A** She didn't like the neighbours.
- B** She liked to impress other people.
- C** She knew it would annoy the writer's father.
- D** She thought the local council would help.

5 During the meeting, most people were

- A** sympathetic to the councillor.
- B** shocked by what they learned.
- C** confused by the explanation.
- D** unhappy about the proposals.

6 What was the result of the meeting on the people of Wellington Street?

- A** They could stay if they got permission.
- B** They could stay if they paid some money.
- C** They would have to argue at further meetings.
- D** They would have no choice but to leave.

7 Why was the writer surprised by what his father said?

- A** He thought his mother would have made the suggestion.
- B** He knew that his father was watching television.
- C** He knew that what his father said was wrong.
- D** He thought that it would upset his mother.

8 What would be the most suitable title for this extract?

- A** An unhappy childhood
 - B** A difficult marriage
 - C** Changing times
 - D** The wrong decisions
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Part 2

You are going to read an article about going to live in another country. Seven sentences have been removed from the article. Choose from the sentences A–H the one which fits each gap (9–15). There is one extra sentence which you do not need to use.

Escape TV ... a very moving story

Britons have become obsessed with the dream of moving abroad to start a new life, and TV shows telling us how to do it are more popular than ever. Why are we so keen to leave, asks Sara Wheeler? Barely a night goes by without a television programme showing people who either long to escape from Britain or who have already done so. Take Channel 4's hugely successful *A Place in the Sun*, for example, in which former estate agent Amanda Lamb shows potential buyers around a range of foreign properties. 9 ____

These 'escape TV' programmes represent Britain's most successful new theme in factual television, and, if the viewing figures are anything to go by, a large proportion are desperate to get away. 10 ____

The dream of living in a rural setting somewhere in mainland Europe has long been a British national fantasy. When Peter Mayle tapped into it with his book *A Year in Provence*, he sold millions of copies and the lanes around his old stone farmhouse at the foot of the Luberon mountains were soon jammed with tourist coaches. 11 ____ He wrote it to earn enough money to buy a tractor, and ended up with a bestseller.

But it's not all lazy afternoons for people who pack up and head abroad. Many see their dreams turn into nightmares before they've finished unpacking. *Living the Dream* featured two couples from Basildon who sold up to run a B&B in Almeria, Spain. 12 ____ *A Place in the Sun* once showed a British official in Benidorm warning that British-owned bars in the resort have a failure rate of 95 per cent.

This, of course, is the appeal of escape TV – the risk of failure, and the nasty pleasure we feel as we witness disaster unfolding on the Costa Brava. And, according to the unwritten rules of escape TV, you must be self-employed, and preferably want to do something fun – running a bar, for example, is ideal. 13 ____

The persistent appeal of finding the good life abroad begs an obvious question: Why can't British people find the good life in their own village or town? The weather is, of course, a key factor. You never see programmes about beginning a new life in Finland. Similarly, the ideal new life is always to be found close to the countryside, far from traffic jams, superstores and concrete. 14 ____ They had their ups and downs, but, in the end, they said that the only thing they missed was a Chinese takeaway.

It seems this escape fantasy is peculiarly British. American networks are not busy producing shows about Mexican villas as the US equivalent of 5's *Dream Holiday Home*. Yet the phenomenon is not restricted to western Europe. 15 ____ Amanda Lamb has even been showing people around the 'Romanian Riviera'.

It is, of course, all based on an illusion. Change your surroundings, we think, and you can change your destiny, or at least cast off the bits of your life that you don't like and replace them with a few nicer ones. Well, dream on. You can go to the very ends of the earth, to a paradise untroubled by human footprints, and you'll

still find someone vaguely familiar waiting patiently for you there: yourself. And do you know what? You will find that it's the same grumpy person you thought you'd left behind.

- A** The cameras followed them as they ran out of cash, were conned by builders and failed to get the project off the ground.
 - B** Similarly, a decade later, Chris Stewart wrote *Driving Over Lemons*, about the joys and tribulations of setting up as a small-time farmer in Spain.
 - C** Or BBC 2's *Living the Dream*, which followed the progress of couples who have sold up and moved abroad in pursuit of the good life.
 - D** According to *Escape to the Sun*, BBC 1's documentary series fronted by *Pop Idol* judge Nicki Chapman, a whopping 15,000 Britons own homes in the Orlando area of Florida.
 - E** When you come back, you feel refreshed from the break, and ready to carry on with your old life.
 - F** *Living the Dream* regularly pulls in four million viewers, and 90 episodes of *A Place in the Sun* have been screened.
 - G** In contrast, an accountancy job in Provence just wouldn't make good viewing.
 - H** *Living the Dream* featured one couple who moved to France, where they bought their own farm.
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Part 3

You are going to read a magazine article in which people are interviewed. For questions 16–30, choose from the people (A–H). Some of the people may be chosen more than once. When more than one answer is required, these may be given in any order.

Mark your answers on the separate answer sheet.

Making the most of your free time

What do you do when all the work is done and there's nothing on TV? What makes someone choose a particular hobby? Tina Robinson finds out.

A Martine, 24, sales rep

For me, karate is more like a way of life. It's about much more than the time I spend in the gym practising. Karate also has a spiritual side and that helps me to stay focused when I'm out on the road, dealing with clients. As well as keeping you fit, it also trains your mind, and I think that's the part that's most important to me.

B Vivian, 31, plumber

I collect antique dolls. I've got around a hundred of them now, some of them actually quite valuable. It began when an aunt of mine gave me a doll she'd had as a child. It's funny, but I think that people expect a woman in my line of work to like manly things, like sport, but I don't see any connection. I like my job and I like my dolls. What's wrong with that?

C Destiny, 26, primary school teacher

It's not always easy to find the time to get away from work. Most of my evenings are spent preparing for the next day at school. I try hard to make time for snowboarding, though. In fact, if I was forced to choose, then I'd probably change job before I gave up snowboarding. There's nothing like speeding down the side of a mountain.

D Claudia, 21, trainee manager

I first took cooking lessons because I was bored with eating the same old thing every week.

I found that I'm naturally quite good at it. I like to try different cuisines from around the world. At the moment, it's Chinese. My family love my hobby, because they get to eat what I make! We all feel a lot better now – and I've even lost some weight!

E Tracy, 24, radio DJ

I think of it as an interest, rather than a hobby, but I love the theatre. I try to go at least once a fortnight. Since my father took me to the local theatre to watch an amateur production, I've been in love with the whole thing. Sitting in the theatre is like stepping into a different world.

F Lydia, 30, unemployed

I spend a lot of my time during the day looking for jobs, but in the evening I like making jewellery. It means I can look good and it doesn't cost me a fortune. I keep trying to get friends to take it up so that we can do it together, and my best friend has just started. It's actually very creative. We're planning on selling our things at the flea market. If things go well, we may start doing it full time.

G Victoria, 25, factory worker

The thing about chess is that it's a very demanding game. That's exactly why I love it. To be honest, my job can be a little bit boring. The club meets once a week and we hold regular competitions. I've won quite a few locally, and even a couple of national competitions. Some of the others think I could turn professional, but I know it's very difficult to make a living out of it. Still, I'm thinking about it. It's not like I love my job!

H Stephanie, 22, actress

I started making my own clothes because I couldn't afford to buy expensive clothes. I just never stopped, even though I can buy designer labels now. I do buy expensive clothes, but I like to wear something I've made myself and see if anybody can tell the difference. Often, they can't!

Which of the people A–H says or say:

- | | |
|---|-----------------|
| she doesn't always have enough time for her hobby? | 16 ____ |
| she tries to introduce other people to her hobby? | 17 ____ |
| her hobby is more important to her than her job? | 18 ____ 19 ____ |
| she is considering turning her hobby into a career? | 20 ____ 21 ____ |
| her hobby helps her at work? | 22 ____ |
| some people are surprised by her hobby? | 23 ____ |
| somebody else first introduced her to this? | 24 ____ 25 ____ |
| her hobby benefits her health? | 26 ____ 27 ____ |
| she realised she had a talent for her hobby? | 28 ____ |
| her hobby has helped her to save money? | 29 ____ 30 ____ |

