Cycling in the countryside

By Chris Jones, aged 14

Have you ever been cycling? This spring my older brother and I left the busy city and spent a long weekend cycling in the countryside. Our average speed was only around 14 kph, but that didn't matter. We hadn't come to break any speed records, or to get fit and healthy. All we wanted was some fresh air and a break from schoolwork. My bike only once went more than 30 kph, and that was when I raced my brother down the only hill on our route.

We really enjoyed cycling along flat, traffic-free country paths. There was plenty of spring sunshine, but it was quite cold, especially in the mornings. We didn't mind, though – and we soon warmed up as we rode along. Our only problem was when my brakes started making a terrible noise. But I didn't mind as it gave us an excuse to visit a café while a helpful bike mechanic had a look at it.

That was one of the best things about our route: every few kilometres there was a village where we could find everything we needed. All the local people were really friendly, too. However, most places we stopped at served chips with all the meals, which soon got fairly boring.

One night we were woken at 4 a.m. by a group of rugby fans singing loudly in the hotel corridor. We were tired and bad-tempered when we set off the next morning and very nearly got lost, but soon felt more cheerful when the sun came out. That's what I like about cycling – it's simple and it's fun. If you're looking for a short break that's active and cheap, then cycling is a great choice!

21 What is Chris Jones doing in this text?

- **A** describing the different places he saw while cycling
- **B** comparing cycling to other forms of exercise
- **C** suggesting places to stay on a cycling holiday
- **D** recommending cycling as a good type of holiday

22 What do we find out about Chris's bike?

- **A** It wasn't as good as his brother's.
- **B** It was too old to go fast.
- **C** It needed attention at one point.
- **D** It had trouble going up hills.

23 Chris was pleased because

- **A** he and his brother had chosen a good route.
- **B** he felt much healthier than before he began his trip.
- **C** he met other people who were keen on cycling.
- **D** he went away at the best time of year for cycling.

24 What did Chris dislike about his trip?

- **A** breaking down
- **B** the food
- **C** the weather
- **D** getting lost

25 What might Chris say in a postcard to a friend?

A

I'm having a great holiday, spending lots of time in friendly cafes and enjoying being by myself for once!

B

I'm having really fit cycling so fast up and down the hills in this part of the countryside.

C

I'm pleased to be away from cars and lorries for a change. Having a good time, despite some problems.

D

I'm enjoying cycling with my brother this weekend, and staying at a very quiet hotel in this countryside.

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