Reading

1 Read the forum posts. Match texts A–D with questions 1–5. One text matches with two questions.

A Dale – Bread maker

I can't remember how many times our bread maker has been used since Mum got it at Christmas, but it's a lot. I was a bit worried because I read in a magazine that bread makers are one of those gadgets that people are often given as presents, but then they never use them. I don't know why that is because it looks really easy to use. You just put all the ingredients in, press a button, and a couple of hours later you have a fresh loaf of bread. It beeps once when it's ready! I love waking up to the smell of fresh bread each morning and Mum says she'll never buy a loaf of bread again, so I think it was a really successful present.

B Karen – Spider catcher

I'm a bit frightened of spiders. I don't mind the little ones, but I don't like the huge ones that are as big as your hand. I don't like killing them though, so when my friend bought me a spider catcher, I was delighted. It's a long stick with a kind of brush at the end that picks up the spider without hurting it. Then you can put the spider of out the window. I don't know who it was invented by, but I think it's a great idea.

C Jack – Key alarm

People say I'm a bit forgetful and they're probably right. I often lose my keys, so when I was given a key alarm for my birthday, I was really pleased. It's a gadget that you attach to your keys. Then, if you don't know where they are, you can whistle or clap your hands and you'll hear the alarm. It's very loud, and it only stops when you find your keys and press a button. It does save a lot of time when I'm leaving the house. Before I had the alarm, it took me five to ten minutes to find my keys. These days all I have to do is whistle and I'm ready to go. The only bad thing about is that the batteries run out quite quickly, so I'm trying to be a bit more careful with my keys in case the alarm's not working.

D Elliot – Ice lolly maker

I was surprised when Mum bought me an ice lolly maker for my birthday. It seemed like a present for a young child. But then I used it and realised that it was great. You put the ice lolly maker in the freezer. Then, when you want to make a lolly, you just pour fruit juice into the maker. It freezes in about ten minutes, so you don't have to wait very long to eat the lolly. And you can be really creative. I've used different fruit juices and put nuts and yoghurt in, too. It's perfect for a hot day – really quick and healthy, and great fun however old you are!

Which gadget does the writer say ...

1 makes a noise until you switch it off? ___
2 has made a family member happy? ___
3 allows people to use their imagination? ___
4 helps people solve a problem in a gentle way? ___
5 isn't usually a present people use very often? ___

Reading

LIVEWORKSHEETS

1 Read the text. Choose the correct answers.

Once, when I was teaching English to children in Cambridge, I died while eating my dinner. The children were eleven to fourteen years old and there were about one hundred and twenty of them in the large hall of a boarding school. We were all eating ice cream when I made strange noises and fell forward onto my plate.

This was not some unusual way of teaching the children about crime, but a murder mystery game. It was a bit like a play in the theatre, but the whole school was involved. All of the teachers were either victims or suspects and all of the children were detectives trying to find out who the murderer was. The children knew the situation was serious as many teachers were 'dying', so they were all very excited!

Lying next to my ice cream, I loved being a 'victim'. However, I had to remember not to smile as the teachers dragged me across the floor to get rid of my 'dead body' so the students knew I was really 'dead'. This was just the start of my murder mystery career!

Soon after that, one of my friends bought a murder mystery game and invited me and several other friends to a dinner party. We all had to dress up as different characters. The story was that one of our close friends had been murdered and we were all suspects. We had to tell the other characters important information and question people about the information they gave. Then, at the end of the evening, we tried to work out who had done it. I wasn't very good at the police investigation part, but I loved playing a part and the excitement of knowing that one of the people in the room was a 'murderer'.

Now I run my own company – Murder Mystery Occasions. I organise murder mystery parties in restaurants or historic buildings. Usually I hire a private room so that the 'murder' doesn't upset other guests. Castles are particularly popular with my guests because they're so atmospheric, so I use them if they're available. I write the scripts and employ actors to be some of the key characters. People pay to come along and join in with the fun while having a wonderful dinner. The murder usually happens somewhere between the starter and the main course and there is always a lot of excitement when the police arrive to take fingerprints and interview key suspects. People tell me that's the best part. Then, at the end of the evening, there is a prize for the table that guesses who is the murderer, but everybody who comes along seems to enjoy the drama. So, you could say I've made a good, honest career out of murder!

1 The writer wanted the students to
- a take part in a play.
- b pretend to be suspects.
- c participate in a game.
- d understand that crime is serious.

2 At her first murder mystery party, the writer enjoyed
- a. deciding who the murderer was.
- b. asking the other guests about themselves.
- c. being a different character.
- d. telling people her story.

3 The writer's job now involves
- a. investigating crimes.
- b. creating stories.
- c. doing some acting.
- d. cooking food.

4 Which part of the murder mystery parties does the writer say her guests enjoy most?
- a. the police investigation
- b. the prize ceremony
- c. the murder
- d. the food

5 What is the writer doing in this article?
- a. describing why she enjoys a certain activity
- b. advising people about a certain crime
- c. encouraging people to do an activity
- d. advertising a party

LIVEWORKSHEETS