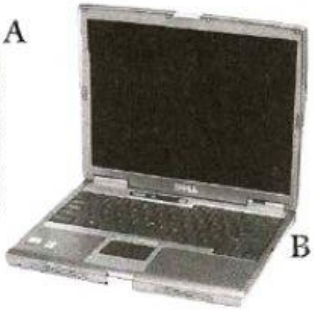
2 Past tenses 1

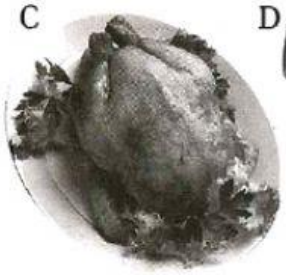
past simple; past continuous; *used to; would*

A Context listening

1 **You will hear a man giving a talk on the radio about protecting your home from burglaries. Before you listen look at the pictures below. Make a list of all of the items.**


A


B


C


D


E

F



2 2 **Listen and answer the following questions.**

1 Which three items from your list were stolen?

2 Why did the man tell this story?

A to show that crime has increased

B to show that crime can happen at any time

C to show that burglars can open any lock

3 2 **Listen again and complete these sentences.**

1 A few weeks ago a woman ..... to report a burglary.

2 It ..... at five in the afternoon when she ..... the news on TV.

3 This woman ..... the front door locked.

4 When her son got older she ..... the door unlocked whenever she was at home.

5 The burglar simply ..... in through the front door.

6 The son ..... anything because he ..... to music.

7 Then the burglar ..... into the front room, ... all the cupboards and ..... a valuable collection of CDs.

4 **Look at sentences 1–7 above and answer the following questions.**

1 Which two sentences provide a background scene and an action? .....

2 Which two sentences talk about a single completed action in the past? .....

3 Which sentence describes a series of completed actions in the past? .....

4 Which two sentences talk about a repeated action in the past? .....

5 Which four tenses or structures are used in sentences 1–7? .....

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C Grammar exercises

1 **Fill in the gaps in this model answer with verbs from the box in the past simple.**

Thanks to modern technology, there have been enormous changes in the workplace over the past 100 years.

What are the most significant changes that have occurred and what changes do you foresee in the next 100 years?

allow	be	be	be	invent	increase	lay
mean	own	receive	replace	ride	take	walk

The pace of change in the world of technology is amazing. It **1** wasn't (not) long ago that the postal service **2** ..... our only way to communicate over any distance. It **3** ..... days and sometimes weeks to receive letters from within the same country. As a result, the news in the letters **4** ..... already out of date when people **5** ..... them. In the workplace, this **6** ..... that business was mostly conducted locally, over relatively short distances.

When Alexander Graham Bell **7** ..... the telephone in 1876 it **8** ..... the foundation for the communication systems we have today. The telephone **9** ..... two people to communicate instantly across a great distance. Eventually computers **10** ..... typewriters and dramatically **11** ..... the speed of our daily work life. Nowadays the Internet is an essential part of every business.

However, it is not just communications that have changed. Only 50 years ago most people **12** ..... (not) a car. People **13** ..... to work or **14** ..... bicycles. Changes in travel as well as the increased speed of communications have led to the global business world that we have today.



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2 **Fill in the gaps with the past simple or past continuous form of the verbs in brackets. In which gaps could you use *used to*?**

I 1 had (*have*) a wonderful biology teacher, Mrs Hughes. She 2 ..... (*make*) us excited about the subject because she was so interested herself. I remember one lesson in particular; we 3 ..... (*study*) different types of plants, and Mrs Hughes 4 ..... (*describe*) the different parts of the flower. She 5 ..... (*pick up*) a purple flower, I can't remember exactly what it was, and then suddenly we 6 ..... (*notice*) that she 7 ..... (*cry*)! She 8 ..... (*apologise*) and 9 ..... (*say*) that sometimes nature was so beautiful it just made her cry! We 10 ..... (*not/know*) what to do at first, but it certainly 11 ..... (*make*) us think. Something similar 12 ..... (*happen*) while she 13 ..... (*show*) us how to work the microscope. She 14 ..... (*examine*) a slide of some plant tissue and she 15 ..... (*smile*) all over her face. She suddenly 16 ..... (*get*) all excited and 17 ..... (*say*), 'Isn't it wonderful?' Some students 18 ..... (*laugh*) at her when she 19 ..... (*not/look*) but I didn't. Somehow her enthusiasm 20 ..... (*inspire*) me, and I 21 ..... (*start*) to like biology.

3 **A teacher and student are talking about local customs. Fill in the gaps with the verbs in brackets in the correct form. Use *would* or *used to* where possible.**

Teacher: What sort of things 1 did you use to do (*you/do*) as a child?

Yoko: Oh, when I was a child growing up in Japan there were many customs that we 2 ..... (*follow*). For example, I remember we 3 ..... (*move*) house when I was seven and we 4 ..... (*visit*) our new neighbours with gifts. At that time the tradition was that people 5 ..... (*give*) gifts of Japanese noodles, but it is different now and people tend to give things like soap or towels or nothing at all.

Teacher: 6 ..... (*have*) one tradition that you particularly remember?

Yoko: Yes, one tradition that I 7 ..... (*really/like*) was in the spring when the cherry blossoms were out. As a family we 8 ..... (*go*) into the countryside and we 9 ..... (*spend*) the day eating, drinking and singing. One year my father 10 ..... (*take*) a lovely photo of me and my sisters and I still keep that picture on my wall today.

Teacher: And 11 ..... (*you/have to*) do anything you didn't like?

Yoko: Yes. I remember how we 12 ..... (*have to*) clean the house thoroughly. This ceremony is called Osoji and my sisters and I 13 ..... (*not/look forward to*) it very much!

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4 Read the test task and a student's response. Tick (✓) the underlined verbs if they are right, and correct them if they are wrong.

Describe an unforgettable trip you once made.
You should say:
where you went
why you went there
what happened
and explain why you remember it so well.



I remember a trip I once **1** made to my grandmother's house. She **2** would live about 30 kilometres away from us and we **3** used to going there quite often with our mother. On this occasion we **4** set off to my grandmother's after school on a cold winter's day. When we were about to leave we **5** were noticing that some snow was beginning to fall, and as we **6** were driving along we **7** were realising that it **8** snowed more and more heavily. Suddenly we had to brake hard as the car in front stopped suddenly. We **9** were skidding and **10** went off the road into a ditch! It was pretty scary, but we were lucky and none of us were hurt. We got out of the car, and my mother **11** was phoning for help on her mobile phone. While we **12** were waiting for help it **13** was stopping snowing and we **14** sang lots of songs to keep ourselves cheerful. Eventually the truck **15** was coming and pulled our car out of the ditch. The car wasn't badly damaged, but we **16** decided to turn round and go home. We didn't manage to see our grandmother that day, but it was so frightening that I will never forget it.

1 ✓
2 used to live / lived
3 .....
4 .....
5 .....
6 .....
7 .....
8 .....
9 .....
10 .....
11 .....
12 .....
13 .....
14 .....
15 .....
16 .....

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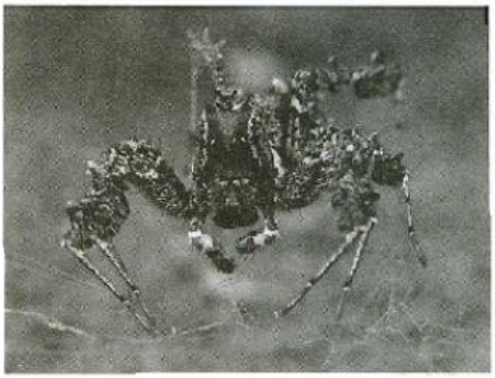
D Test practice

Academic Reading

*You should spend about 20 minutes on **Questions 1–13** which are based on the Reading Passage below.*

Jumping spiders

Peter Aldhons examines how Portia spiders catch their prey



A

For a stalking predator, the element of surprise is crucial. And for jumping spiders that sneak onto other spiders' webs to prey on their owners, it can be the difference between having lunch and becoming it. Now zoologists have discovered the secret of these spiders' tactics: creeping forward when their prey's web is vibrating.

B

The fifteen known species of Portia jumping spiders are relatively small, with adults being about two centimetres long (that's smaller than the cap on most pens). They habitually stay in the webs of other spiders, and in an area of these webs that is as out-of-the-way as possible. Portia spiders live mostly in tropical forests, where the climate is hot and humid. They hunt a range of other spiders, some of which could easily turn the tables on them. 'They will attack something about twice their own size if they are really hungry,' says Stimson Wilcox of Binghamton University in New York State. Wilcox and his colleague, Kristen Gentile of the University of Canterbury in Christchurch, New Zealand, wanted to find out how Portia spiders keep the upper hand.

C

All jumping spiders have large eyes that look like binocular lenses, and they function pretty much the same way. Most jumping spiders locate their prey visually, and then jump and capture from one centimetre to over ten centimetres away. Only a few species of jumping spiders invade the webs of other spiders, and the Portia spider is among them. Jumping spiders, including Portia spiders, prey on insects and other arthropods by stalking. Sometimes the spiders lure their victims by vibrating the web to mimic the struggles of a trapped insect. But many web-weaving spiders appear to be wise to these

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tricks, so stalking is often a better strategy. Sometimes, the researchers found, Portia spiders take advantage of the vibrations created in the web by a gentle breeze. But, if necessary, they will make their own vibrations.

D

The researchers allowed various prey spiders to spin webs in the laboratory and then introduced Portia spiders. To simulate the shaking effect of a breeze the zoologists used either a model aircraft propeller or attached a tiny magnet to the centre of the web which could be vibrated by applying a varying electrical field. The researchers noticed that the stalking Portia spiders moved more when the webs were shaking than when they were still, and they were more likely to capture their prey during tests in which the webs were periodically shaken than in those where the webs were undisturbed. If the spiders were placed onto unoccupied webs, they would make no attempt to change their movements.

E

It is the Portia spider's tactic of making its victims' webs shake that has most intrigued the researchers. They noticed that the spiders would sometimes shake their quarry's web violently, then creep forwards up to five millimetres before the vibrations died down. 'They'd make a big pluck with one of their hind legs,' says Wilcox. These twangs were much more powerful than the gentler vibrations Portia spiders use to mimic a trapped insect, and the researchers were initially surprised that the prey spiders did not respond to them in any way. But they have since discovered that the violent twanging produces a pattern of vibrations that match those caused by a twig falling onto the web.

F

Other predators make use of natural 'smokescreens' or disguises to hide from their prey: lions hunting at night, for example, move in on their prey when clouds obscure the moon. 'But this is the first example of an animal making its own smokescreen that we know of,' says Wilcox. 'Portia spiders are clearly intelligent and they often learn from their prey as they are trying to capture it. They do this by making different signals on the web of their prey until the prey spider makes a movement. In general, Portia spiders adjust their stalking strategy according to their prey and what the prey is doing. Thus, Portia spiders use trial-and-error learning in stalking. Sometimes they will even take an indirect route to reach a prey spider they can see from a distance. This can sometimes take one to two hours following a predetermined route. When it does this, the Portia spider is actually solving problems and thinking ahead about its actions.'

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Questions 1–9

The Reading Passage has six paragraphs labelled **A–F**.

Which paragraph contains the following information?

*Write the correct letter **A–F** next to Questions 1–9.*

***NB** You may use any letter more than once.*

1 the reaction of the Portia spider's prey to strong web vibrations

2 a description of how the researchers set up their experiment

3 a comparison between Portia spiders and another animal species

4 an explanation of how the researchers mimicked natural conditions

5 a comparison between Portia spiders and their prey

6 the reason why concealment is important to Portia spiders

7 a description of the Portia spider's habitat

8 the number of species of Portia spiders

9 an example of the Portia spider's cleverness

Questions 10–13

*Choose the correct letter, **A**, **B**, **C** or **D**.*

10 In their laboratory experiments, the researchers found that the Portia spiders moved most when the web was

A vibrating.
B motionless.
C undisturbed.
D unoccupied.

11 What discovery did the researchers make about Portia spiders?

A They make very strong vibrations with one leg.
B They move 5 mm at a time on a still web.
C They move slowly when vibrations stop.
D They use energetic vibrations to mimic a trapped insect.

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12 Portia spiders are the only known animal to

A use the weather to disguise themselves.
B mimic other prey-eating animals.
C create their own smokescreen.
D stalk using 'trial and error'.

13 The Portia spider demonstrates 'thinking ahead' when it

A chooses prey that is a short distance away.
B takes a longer route to reach its prey.
C reaches its prey in a short time.
D solves the problem of locating its prey.

Grammar focus task

Look at the underlined verbs in these sentences from the text. Match the sentences (1–3) to the explanations (a–c).

1 The researchers allowed various prey spiders to spin webs in the laboratory and then introduced Portia spiders.
2 Portia spiders moved more when the webs were shaking than when they were still.
3 They noticed that the spiders would sometimes shake their quarry's web violently.

a a series of single past completed actions
b a repeated action in the past
c a background scene and an action

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