ZNO PRACTICE: Reading

Read the text below. Fill in gaps 1-6 with choices A-H. There are two choices you do not need to use.

TASK 1

Shoelaces as a weapon!

It comes as no surprise that, throughout history, spies all over the world have used all sorts of secret skills, tools, and training 1 _____ And though the most famous secret agent of them all – James Bond – might have been a fictional character, his preferred methods and devices aren't all totally fictional.

One trick that 2 _____ in their arsenal during the Cold War, however, might surprise even Bond himself. In order to pass messages to one another in the most secret way possible, they 3 _____.

Even during the Cold War, CIA agents who 4 _____ had to tie their shoes in the morning just like everyone else. Only, when *they* did it, they would often tie them in specific ways 5 _____ to other agents. For example, if an agent were to approach another and glance down at his shoes to see a certain pattern, he would immediately know that the shoelaces signaled "I have information.", "Follow me." or "I brought someone with me."

This information comes from "The Official CIA Manual of Trickery and Deception," a guide that the agency commissioned from magician John Mulholland in 6_____. They wanted him to teach them easy to perform tricks so they could communicate more secretively in the field. Thus, shoelaces became secret messages.

A	CIA agents had
B	so another agent could read it
C	spies used to deceive
D	to complete their missions
E	were deep undercover
F	the middle of the Cold War
G	that acted as coded messages
H	cleverly used some everyday items

TASK 2

A great pirate

Born in 1780, Jean Lafitte, together with his brother, 1 _____. The Lafitte brothers earned a reputation for piracy because they sometimes attacked Spanish ships in the Gulf, but it was smuggling 2 _____. The local Governor Claiborne of Louisiana had been trying to imprison the heads of illegal smuggling operations, which included Lafitte, before the start of the war.

During the War of 1812, which saw the English fight against the United States, Lafitte was approached by the English. They planned to capture New Orleans and offered to 3 _____ and pay him $30.000 for his services.

Pretending to think about taking the offer, Lafitte waited for the English to leave and then 4 _____. He offered to help protect Louisiana.

Claiborne, 5 _____ ignored the offer. Sometime after, an American warship attacked and destroyed Lafitte's base and captured 80 of his men.

Claiborne offered a $500 reward 6 _____. When Lafitte saw this he made similar posters calling for the governor's capture and offering a bigger sum of $5.000.

A	who refused to deal with criminals,
B	make Lafitte a captain in the English navy
C	did not like the idea
D	for the capture of Lafitte
E	made his fortune through smuggling and piracy
F	position in the navy
G	told the local authority about the planned attack
H	that really made them rich

LIVEWORKSHEETS

ZNO PRACTICE: Reading

Read the texts below. Match choices A-H to the texts 1-5. There are three choices you do not need to use.

TASK 3

5 tips for taking the perfect selfie on your travels

1_____

One of the key things to think about when you're taking a travel selfie is to remember what's behind you. If you're taking a selfie with the Eiffel Tower, you don't want to place yourself where the tower looks like it's growing out of your head. Be mindful in a busy environment of other people in your shot. Just make sure you don't have anyone making any nasty hand gestures or pulling any funny faces. Trust me, you think you have the perfect shot then up pops a random tourist with their tongue out and ruins your picture – not a good look.

2_____

If you want all of the Eiffel Tower or the Leaning Tower of Pisa in your shot, you may have to think about holding the camera lower down so that the angle faces up. It's something to be aware of when looking at taking portrait selfies with tall monuments or buildings. Be creative; try tilting the camera slightly to fit everything in and to ensure you capture the best image of you and the best background.

3_____

There is nothing worse than taking a great selfie and then looking back at it and it's blurred and unclear. It can be difficult to keep the phone still and push the button on the screen at the same time. If it's possible, use your external button (depending on what phone you have). That way, you are not trying to do hand yoga with your camera while trying to take the image.

4_____

Too many times I see pouting or over-posed selfies. In a travel selfie, we are trying to capture a memory. You might never get back to this special location again in your life, so the last thing you want is a picture of a wonderful moment and location with you pouting or pulling a funny face. Relax, smile naturally, and remember where you are. Take in the wonder of that special location and enjoy who and where you are at that time. The picture will reflect you, if you are truly natural and yourself.

5_____

If you've managed to get the best light for your selfie, then in reality you won't need to edit it. Remember you are trying to take a picture that encapsulates the memory of your travel experience, so a lot of editing can actually make that memory completely different or false. If you feel a little extra saturation may be a help, or changing the image to black and white will help with over exposure, then these are the only things I would edit, along with a little cropping.

A	Don't over-edit
B	Hold steady
C	Adjust angles
D	Enjoy the moment
E	Remember about your background
F	Light it up
G	Avoid people
H	Relax wherever you are

LIVEWORKSHEETS

Read the texts below. Match choices A-H to the texts 1-5. There are three choices you do not need to use.

TASK 4

Rules to follow if you go to Denmark

1_____

Riding a bike can cost you 231 dollars if you do it while drunk. There isn't a legal limit for alcohol intake, but if a policeman believes a rider cannot ride a bike properly, that person will not only get a fine but will also have to leave their bicycle and walk home as well.

2_____

At the entrance of Freetown Christiania, visitors will see a sign with the district's rules. Sometimes foreigners don't notice it or just ignore it. However, the sign clearly stresses that running and taking photos on Pusher Street isn't allowed because running causes panic and Christianites prefer not to have pictures taken of them.

3_____

Many have felt the need to stroke someone else's dog that is just too cute to ignore and pass by. In most cases, the owner waits patiently and smiles before getting on their way. That's not the case in Denmark. Danes prefer to be left alone. Strangely enough, their dogs share the same look of disapproval when a stranger approaches them, so it's better to just admire them from afar.

4_____

While packing for a summer trip, travellers usually include T-shirts, flipflops, sunglasses, and sunscreen lotion. When traveling to Denmark, make sure to add an extra sweater, a raincoat, and winter shoes no matter the time of year. Summer doesn't always reach Denmark and even if it does, it may only be for a couple of days or even hours. It's better to be prepared than to have to deal with the harsh-Scandinavian temperatures wearing summer clothes.

5_____

It's an unspoken rule among Danes that privacy is to be respected at all times. That is probably why they rarely bother to close their windows or even to hang curtains. While walking around the streets of a Danish city, you're likely to see buildings and houses that offer a clear view inside a ground-level bedroom or a living room. Most foreigners are tempted to peak inside to see what a typical-Danish house looks like. To avoid any misunderstandings, try not to stare.

A	Don't interact with Danes' dogs
B	Don't drink and bike-ride
C	Don't ride a bike if you do not know the rules
D	Don't take summer clothes to Denmark
E	Pack carefully
F	Do not try out your Danish skills
G	Resist the desire to peep
H	Do not take pictures in forbidden places

LIVEWORKSHEETS

ZNO PRACTICE: Reading

Read the texts below. Match choices A-H to the texts 1-6. There are two choices you do not need to use.

TASK 5

Old-fashioned ways of keeping time

1 Sundial

As the sun moves across the sky, shadows change direction and length, a simple sundial can measure the length of a day. It was quickly noticed that the length of the day varies at different times of the year. Another discovery was that sundials had to be specially made for different latitudes because the Sun's altitude in the sky decreases at higher latitudes, producing longer shadows than at lower latitudes.

2 Obelisk

Obelisks aren't just impressive monuments, they also have long shadows that are perfect for timekeeping. In Paris, you can still see an obelisk being used as a sundial: The Luxor Obelisk in the center of the Place de la Concorde aligns its shadow with points on the pavement to show pedestrians the time.

3 Water clock

A sundial becomes rather useless after sunset, so another ancient timekeeping device appeared. The water clock dates back to at least 1500 BC, basically it's a device that uses the reliable flow of water to represent the passing of time. Water clocks appear throughout the ancient world, from Egypt to Greece to the Arabic world, and became quite incredible in their complicated designs.

4 Church bells

Before every household had a clock, communities could keep track of time by listening for the local church bells. The word clock actually comes from *clocca* – Latin for bell – as many of the church clocks that began to be built in the 14th century involved striking bells. If you live near a church that still rings the bell every hour, you're getting the time like a medieval person.

5 Hour glasses or sandglasses

As the technology of glass-blowing developed, somewhere in the 14th century it became possible to make sandglasses. Originally, sandglasses were used as a measure of periods of time, but then sandglasses were adjusted to measure specific periods of time, and to decide the correct duration of university lectures and even periods of torture.

6 Candle clocks

Marked candles were used for telling the time in China from the 6th century. There is a popular story that King Alfred the Great invented the candle clock, but we know they were in use in England from the 10th century. However, the speed of burning depends on air blowing, and the quality of the wax. This is why candles were used to mark the passage of time from one event to another, rather than to tell the time of day.

Which time-tracking device _____?

A	depended on the quality of the material and on the wind
B	had to be specially made for a specific area
C	could measure time only during the night
D	signalled the time to everyone, who lived nearby
E	used different colours to signal the time
F	also has architectural value
G	was used to tell how long a certain event should be
H	was already used a couple thousand years ago in a number of Arabic countries

LIVEWORKSHEETS

ZNO PRACTICE: Reading

Read the texts below. Match choices A-H to the texts 1-6. There are two choices you do not need to use.

TASK 6

Wedding traditions around the world

1 Germany

Guests at traditional German weddings bring the happy couple different porcelain plates, and then smash them in the belief that this will scare off evil spirits. The couple are then expected to clean up the mess together, learning that married life will not be easy, but that by working together, they can overcome any challenge.

2 Ireland

In Ireland, the bride's feet must stay on the floor at all times when she and the groom are dancing. This is due to the belief that if they don't, evil fairies will come and sweep her away.

3 Mauritania

In Mauritania, girls aged between five and fifteen are sent to "fat farms" before their wedding to put on the pounds. If a bride has stomach rolls, stretch marks and overlapping thighs, it signals that her husband is wealthy enough to keep her satisfied.

4 Guatemala

After the wedding, everyone typically goes to the groom's house. Hanging over the doorway is a white ceramic bell filled with rice, flour, and other different types of grain – all of which represent wealth. As the couple arrives, the mother of the groom welcomes them and ceremonially breaks the bell, bringing the couple wealth and good luck.

5 India

When the groom takes off his shoes on the way to the mandap (altar), the bride's family promptly tries to steal and hide his footwear. The groom's family must try and protect the shoes at all costs – and so the battle of the families begins! If the bride's family gets away with the shoes, the groom must pay a ransom to get them back.

6 Spain

After the wedding, usually during the reception, the groom will be surrounded by his groomsmen and closest friends, who will cut the tie from around his neck! The tie will then be cut into small pieces and auctioned off to the wedding guests, bringing good luck to everyone who manages to get a piece.

In which country _____?

A	should a bride be fat
B	is a part of the groom's clothing cut into pieces
C	is it good luck to break plates at a wedding
D	should a couple eat together from one bowl
E	can bad creatures steal a bride
F	must a bride pay to get her family back
G	is a bell broken to bring money
H	might the groom have to pay for his shoes

LIVEWORKSHEETS

ZNO PRACTICE: Reading

Read the text below. For questions 1-5 choose the correct answer A, B, C or D.

TASK 7

What is the official language of the US?

Do you know what the official language of the United States is? If you answered English, guess again. Although, at the moment English is the most widely spoken language in the nation, Spanish is catching up with over forty million Hispanics speaking their native language at home, at work, and in their daily lives.

This brings us to another point: Why does the US, which is considered an English-speaking country, feel obliged to offer services for Spanish speakers and those speaking many other languages, some of which you might not even know about?

Well, let's not forget that since 1776 the US has been – and continues to be – a multilingual nation. Back then, it wasn't uncommon to hear up to 20 different languages spoken in daily life.

Today 322 languages are spoken in the country. So having one official language would limit the rights of individuals who cannot communicate in English, individuals who are paying taxes and who should have the same rights as those who speak English.

Nevertheless, in 1780, John Adams proposed to the Continental Congress that English should be declared the official language of the United States. Debate over the official language has been going on for years, with people on both sides of the fence, but so far a decision has not been made. This doesn't mean that the individual states have not declared an official language because many already have. Twenty-seven states, to be exact, have declared English as their official language.

But, to protect the rights of those speaking any other languages, there is something called Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. Although twenty-seven states have declared English as their official language, in order to receive federal financial assistance these states still have to follow Title VI, which requires that important materials be available in the language the person speaks if they want to be subsidised by the Federal Government.

Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the 2000 Executive Order No. 13166 require that public organizations receiving federal funds must have all vital documents available in every language that their clients speak; every language, not just Spanish. Why? Because the US has never declared an official language and because of this, the Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 still applies.

1 What is **NOT** true about the Spanish language in the US?

A over 40 million people use it
B Spanish is spoken at home and at work
C the number of people who speak it is growing
D it is the most widely spoken language

2 Why isn't there an official language in the US?

A because of the immigrants that might come to the country
B because every citizen speaks many languages
C to encourage people to pay taxes
D to protect the rights of those whose English is limited

3 What language was suggested to be made the official language of the US in the 18th c.?

A English
B Spanish
C German
D none

4 Where in the US is English the official language?

A in 27 states
B everywhere but for 27 states
C it is not
D everywhere with few exceptions

5 What language must all important documents be in?

A English
B any language, just not Spanish
C any language the person speaks
D any official language

LIVEWORKSHEETS

Read the text below. For questions 1-5 choose the correct answer A, B, C or D.

TASK 8

Why is a baker's dozen not 12?

Request a dozen eggs from a farmer, a dozen steaks from a butcher, or a dozen pencils from a travelling office supplies salesman, and you will almost certainly receive 12 of your chosen item (although counting errors do happen). But a *baker's* dozen is commonly understood to mean 13. Are bakers just bad at counting? Not quite.

There are a few theories as to why a baker's dozen became 13, but most think it has its origins in the fact that many societies throughout history have had extremely strict laws concerning bakers' products. This is due to the fact that it is fairly easy for bakers to cheat customers and sell them less than what they think they are getting.

These societies took this very seriously as bread was a primary food source for many people. So in Britain from the mid-13th century up to the 19th century there was the Assize of Bread and Ale law. This law set the price of ale and what weight a loaf of bread should be. So basically, in terms of bread, it settled the relationship between the price and quality of wheat and what the price and quality of a loaf of bread from a certain quantity of wheat should be.

Even though this law appeared at the request of bakers, it still caused a problem for them. If they happened to accidentally cheat a customer by giving them less than what they were supposed to according to the law, the punishment and fines were severe. Depending on where the lawbreaker lived, it could include for example losing a hand.

In those times it wasn't that hard to accidentally cheat a customer. Making a loaf of bread with an exact weight was nearly impossible by hand without modern day tools. So, bakers began giving more than what the statute outlined to make sure they went over and never under. Specifically, in terms of the "baker's dozen", if a vendor or other customer were to order a dozen or several dozen loaves of bread from a baker, the baker would give them 13 for every dozen they ordered. Likewise, when selling quantities of anything, they'd give 13 measures when only 12 were purchased.

This practice eventually made its way into the Worshipful Company of Bakers (London) guild code. This guild was actually started in the 12th century and had a large part in putting together the conditions of the Assize of Bread and Ale law.

1 Why did many societies have strict laws about bread products?

A Customers wanted more bread than bakers could produce.
B Bakers were not very good at counting.
C It was not very difficult for bakers to give customers less than they paid for.
D It was easy for bakers to sell more bread.

2 What did the Assize of Bread and Ale law regulate?

A the weight of a loaf
B the price of bread
C the quality of bread
D all of the above

3 Why was the Assize of Bread and Ale statute a problem for bakers?

A They did not want it to appear.
B They had to pay money or recieve another punishment if caught cheating.
C They had to take less money for products.
D They all lost a hand if they made a mistake.

4 Why wasn't it hard to accidentally cheat a customer?

A All the loaves were underweight.
B No one knew how big a loaf should be.
C It was hard to make loaves which were all the same weight.
D They did not use any tools.

5 How did the bakers make sure they did not cheat customers?

A They gave one extra loaf if anyone bought 12 loaves.
B They always sold 13 loaves.
C They did not sell bread to vendors.
D They always gave the exact amount of bread the law ordered.

LIVEWORKSHEETS