In the wild

Lesson code: 12PL-E26E-V91C

INTERMEDIATE

1 Warm-up

Are you originally from the city or countryside? Which lifestyle do you prefer?

2 Key words

Match the following words with their correct definition:

1. a hermit	a. an area where nobody lives because it is difficult to live there
2. the wilderness	b. a person who is able to live in the wild by hunting animals and looking for food
3. a landlord	c. a person who lives alone and usually far from the rest of society
4. unconventional	d. a person who owns a house or building and receives money from the people who live there
5. damp	e. a time when people choose their political leaders
6. a hunter-gatherer	f. different, unusual
7. mean	g. not willing to spend money or share things
8. the elections	h. simple and easy to understand
9. straightforward	i. slightly wet

3 Predict the answers

You are going to read about Jake Williams, a hermit who has been living in the wilderness of Scotland for 30 years. Discuss what you think he is going to say about ...

1. the reason why he became a hermit
2. how he spends his time every day
3. what he eats
4. how often he meets other people
5. his means of transport
6. how he feels about his life

Now read the article on the next page and compare your predictions.

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THE INDEPENDENT

Life as a hermit: 'My life is a great adventure'

For nearly 30 years, Jake Williams has lived as a hermit in the Scottish wilderness. He explains why he could never go back to a 'normal' life.

1 I always fancied being a hermit. There was a tradition in the 18th century to pay hermits to live on your grounds and entertain the guests; I would have liked that. I live alone in an old house in the Scottish wilderness, near Aberdeen.

2 I've lived like this since I got the house 30 years ago. I did it because I was sick of dealing with landlords. I was living in Aberdeen with friends, we'd made the place nice and then suddenly had to move out. It was a nightmare. I decided to save money and buy the first place that I could afford. I always thought people would come and live with me eventually - I'm not impossible to live with, I'm very friendly - but it just hasn't happened yet.

3 I don't think my life is unconventional. At first I worked in order to save up - I didn't want to take out a mortgage. I moved in the first day I got the place. There weren't any windows and it was very damp. Nobody had lived there for 20 years. I started making fires and making the house dry. That was about Halloween so I needed to get it ready for winter. It was a happy adventure.

4 I've got a garden with a lot of kale - it's like a primitive cabbage. It's 1,000ft up where I live and that affects the climate. I'm not very good at growing carrots here, but I've got a lot of redcurrants. I consider myself to be a hunter-gatherer, so when I see some wood, I pick it up. I don't like to miss a chance to get something for nothing. I like to do a lot of different little jobs. I am always busy boiling a pan of potatoes on the fire for tomorrow or looking for something I've lost.

5 I've always had an open house and people visit me. I've been in Scottish dance bands, I write letters and freelance articles for a magazine and I even represented the Green Party in the elections earlier this month - I got 6 per cent of the votes, which they told me is quite good. But mostly I spend my days alone.

6 Summer is the best time. You can go outside and cook with an outdoor fire. It's lovely. It's an easy life. If I want to stay at home I can. I stock up on food and firewood so I won't starve if I don't go out.

7 Three winters ago a guy from Latvia was with me and the cold was nothing to him. We went skiing in the hills and had a great adventure. Having two people was good because we could keep the fire nice and toasty.

8 Then two winters ago it was a hard life... it was a hard winter everywhere. Somebody had tried to sue me and I had to go to Aberdeen to the court. I had to ski for six miles, then stay with a friend and then ski six miles back home regularly for about five months. When I came home, the fires were out and I was cold and wet. It was a nightmare. It's usually not that hard, that year was the exception, but I've survived.

9 To me, this seems like normal life. Having a career seems strange. My main reason for doing this is just meanness. It is not enough to work in a job and take money home. This seems more straightforward or easier than that. It sounds sort of depressing, but it's not - it's a great adventure.

Interview by Emily Jupp, adapted from The Independent, Tuesday, 22 May 2012

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4 Checking understanding

Put T (True) or F (False) next to the statements below. Correct the statements which are false.

1. Jake always liked the idea of being a hermit.
2. He became a hermit because he wanted to live alone.
3. It is difficult for him to grow vegetables because of the climate.
4. Jake has nothing to do most of the time.
5. Jake does not have any contact with the outside world.
6. He has to stay indoors for most of the year.
7. He had to go to Aberdeen regularly for about five months.
8. Living alone is depressing for him.

5 Find the words

Find the words and phrases from the text which mean ...

1. tired and annoyed about *(phrase P2)*_____
2. stopped living somewhere *(phrasal verb, P2)* _____
3. keep money so that you can buy something in the future *(phrasal verb, P3)* _____
4. started living somewhere *(phrasal verb, P3)* _____
5. borrow money from a bank in order to buy a house *(phrase, P3)* _____
6. a situation in which visitors are welcome at any time *(two-word noun, P5)* _____
7. store a large quantity of something *(phrasal verb, P6)* _____
8. become weak or die because there is not enough food *(verb, P6)* _____
9. take somebody to court *(verb, P8)* _____

Now complete the sentences below with the above words/phrases:

1. The supermarket is closed this weekend, so we need to _____ food.
2. I'm _____ being told what to do all the time!
3. In the end, Joanne decided to _____ her company because of the unfair way in which she was treated.
4. You can come any time you want. I have an _____ .
5. We don't have enough money to buy our dream home, but we can go to the bank and _____ .
6. You can't afford that car right now. You'll need to _____ .
7. Anna's neighbourhood was getting very dangerous, so she decided to _____ . She found a new house in a safer area and decided to _____ .
8. He can't survive that long without food. He'll _____ !

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6 Grammar in the text - Present perfect

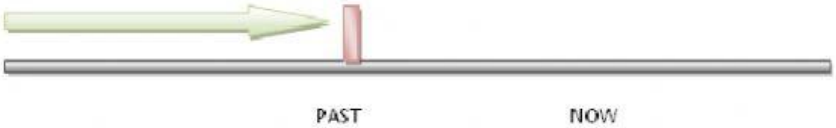
Complete the rules below with ...

present perfect (*have/has + past participle*) **past simple** **past perfect** (*had + past participle*)

1. We use the _____ to talk about a completed event in the past:

2. We often use the _____ to talk about a situation that began in the past and continues up to the present or future.

3. We often use the _____ to talk about past actions or situations that happened before a specific time in the past.



In pairs, find examples of each rule in the article.

Now complete the sentences below:

1. I _____ (wake up) very late this morning.
2. When we arrived at his house, he _____ (already/leave).
3. Until now, it _____ (hardly ever/rain).
4. Duncan _____ (move out) of his apartment four years ago.
5. It was my first time in Scotland. I _____ (never/be) there before.
6. I _____ (never/visit) London. What's it like?
7. When you called me, I_____ (just/finish) cooking dinner.
8. The house is really damp. Nobody _____ (live) there for years.
9. _____ (you/see) James at the party last night?
10. I don't want to go to Paris again. I_____ (visit) the city so many times.

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7 Talking point

Discuss any of the questions below:

1. Would you like to live like Jake Williams?
2. How difficult would it be for you?
3. Why do you think people generally choose to be hermits?

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