

## Part 1:

**Reading Comprehension:** Read the following article and then say true or false.

### Where are they now?

“Wanted: Island caretaker”

## The best job in the world?

Ben Southall tells us how it all turned out



Whatever happened to the man who got the best job in the world on a desert island paradise? He worked too hard and got stung by a \_\_\_\_!

Ben Southall, from Petersfield, Hampshire, beat nearly 35,000 applicants for the dream position. But was life on the doorstep of the Australian surf truly idyllic or was it not always plain sailing? He may have been surrounded by paradise but Ben found his role exhausting.

‘At the time I saw the advert, I thought it would be like living on a desert island like Tom Hanks in *Castaway*,’ the former charity fundraiser told the BBC.

Although part of his work sounded fantastic – writing about staying in five-star resorts, jet skiing and diving – he did find it exhausting due to the combination of long hours and a strong work ethic. His passion for adventure led to him visiting as much of the area as he could. He even managed to squeeze in a six-part show for National Geographic – where he retraced the route taken by James Cook more than 240 years ago. Calling it ‘the best expedition in the world’, he spent four months kayaking, cycling and sailing 1,600km along the length of the Great Barrier Reef.

‘It should have been called “the busiest job in the world”,’ he joked.

And also a dangerous one. Soon after he started, Ben had a brush with death after being stung by a poisonous jellyfish. The seas off Queensland can be filled with danger with threats from sharks, poisonous stonefish – and the irukandji jellyfish, which gave him a painful reminder that it lurks in reef.

‘I was enjoying a post-Christmas jet ski session with some friends at a quiet beach on Hamilton Island,’ he wrote on the blog which he had to update frequently as part of his job touring the reef islands to promote their beauty.

‘As I climbed off the back of the ski and onto the beach, I felt a small bee-like sting on my forearm.’ What he didn’t realise at the time was that he had been stung by the jellyfish, which is no bigger than a fingernail. He went on to describe the effects as the poison spread: ‘I was feeling pretty hot and sweaty, had a headache and felt pretty sick too with pain in my lower back and a tightness in the chest and a really high blood pressure. I had a minor brush with what can be a very serious jellyfish.’

The incident did not deter him, however, and he excelled at his job – so much so that his job title was changed to ‘tourism ambassador’. This extended his remit to promote not just the reef but the whole of Queensland – including the outback, the rainforest and Gold Coast. He continues to write his blog and also acts as a roving reporter, armed with a video camera. He said: ‘Looking back on the past three years, I didn’t expect to stay out here. I’ve always travelled and had wanderlust. This is the longest time I’ve stayed in one place.’

‘The job has allowed me to have adventures and keep exploring, write about it and learn new skills like filming, editing, presenting, public speaking and TV work,’ he said. He is the first to admit that if it hadn’t been for that competition, life could have been very different.

- 1)- Part of ben's problem was that he was quite lazy.
- 2)- He travelled around a lot because he was told to.
- 3)- He knew immediately that he had been stung by a jellyfish.
- 4)- Ben did so well at his job that he was given more responsibility.
- 5)- He hadn't intended to stay in one place so long.
- 6)- In the end, the competition didn't make much difference to Ben's life.

**2)- Writing:**

Write an e- mail to a friend about a film you have recently seen. ( Write 150 words)

- What was the film? When and where did you see it?
- What was it about, and when and where was it set?
- Who played the main characters, and what were they like?
- What did you particularly like and/ or dislike about it?

3)- **Listening:**

Listen and choose the best option; A, B, or C-



- 1 When was Lucy Irvine's memoir *Castaway* published?  
A 1986 B 1989 C 1983
- 2 In Rachel's opinion, most people  
A would have enjoyed a year on a tropical island.  
B wouldn't have done what Lucy Irvine did.  
C wouldn't even have considered replying to the advert.
- 3 Rachel thinks that Lucy was  
A brave to accept the challenge.  
B stupid to give up her job.  
C mad to spend a year with a stranger.
- 4 One problem that Lucy and Gerald faced on the island was  
A the feeling of abandonment.  
B the clash of personalities.  
C the lack of company.
- 5 After nearly dying on the island, Lucy  
A wished she had never gone there.  
B felt lucky to be alive.  
C thinks she benefited from her experience.
- 6 Gerald Kingsland's book was  
A not as popular as Lucy's.  
B not as truthful as Lucy's.  
C published before Lucy's.
- 7 Lucy went to the Solomon Islands  
A when her children had all left home.  
B because she was writing a book about them.  
C at the invitation of a long-term resident.