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Chuyên cung cấp giáo viên gia sư ngoại ngữ chất lượng
Mọi ngôn ngữ - Mọi lứa tuổi - Mọi trình độ
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The plane circled and the pilot pointed down into the Australian desert below. "That's the runway there," he said, "next to the store." Nancy looked. There was a strip of level ground next to a few wooden buildings. It looked small and unimportant in the middle of the empty stretches of red earth and small bushes that stretched as far as the eye could see, but Nancy knew that it was a vital link to the outside world for the farmers in the area. As she looked, a figure appeared at the door of one of the buildings and waved up at them. The pilot turned the plane expertly and they soon touched down on the line of hard sand. They came to a stop by the largest building and Nancy stepped out. A woman of perhaps forty held out her hand.

"Hi. Welcome to Carter's Cross. I'm Shelley." Nancy looked at her. She was not unattractive, although long hours in the sun were

beginning to take their toll and she had a number of lines and wrinkles. Nancy was surprised to see that her clothes were quite fashionable, despite a bit of dust. Something in Nancy's expression must have communicated itself to Shelley because she laughed and said, "We're not quite as backward as you might think. This is the 21st century. Come on into the store."

They went inside while the pilot checked his plane. The store was well stocked with farming equipment, tinned food and clothes. An old man was cleaning the counter. He looked up when they entered and then carried on with his task without catching Nancy's eye. "Now, come on, Dad," Shelley said. "We all know how you feel about them finding oil outside Carter's Cross, but that's no reason to be rude. This is Nancy Edwards, from the university." She turned to Nancy. "He's stuck in his ways. Thinks it'll mean the end of farming round here. Not such a bad thing, if you ask me."

"Well, nobody did ask you." It was the old man. "My granddad farmed this land, and so will my grandson. I'm not having this land turned into a great big ugly oil refinery." He looked at Nancy. "And I won't be bought off, either."

Nancy had heard from her colleagues that this kind of resistance just disappeared when people realised quite what the find was worth and they happily packed up and headed for the comforts of the nearest city. She hoped this time would be no exception.

"I'm here to assess the environmental impact, Mr Williamson," Nancy said. "I have no intention of building anything." The old man looked at her and then walked to the door. He pointed out at the land.

"Environmental impact?" He shook his head. "What environment? It's a baking desert and a person's got to work hard to make a living off sheep in a land like this. You aren't going to find any endangered species out there, and so you'll go back and write your report and the oil companies will move in. But there's one thing that I bet you don't mention in your report. The village." He looked out into the sun again. Nancy was a little confused. There had been no mention of a village in any of the information she had read. "What village?" she asked.

"There are ten farms that rely on this store. Together, they cover an area of nearly 400 square kilometres. And they're our neighbours. We never miss a birthday, or a wedding, or any other event. You're going to destroy our village." Nancy could think of nothing to say. Shelley shrugged her shoulders. Nancy wandered back to the plane to get her equipment.

1. The buildings Nancy sees from the plane are _____.
A. smaller than she expected.
B. very important to the local people.
C. left empty most of the time.
D. used to store farming equipment.
2. The phrase "take their toll" in paragraph 2 means that _____.
A. the sun has improved Shelley's appearance.
B. Shelley enjoys spending time in the sun.
C. Nancy and Shelley both find the sun too hot.
D. the sun has damaged Shelley's skin.
3. Shelley laughs when she realises that Nancy _____.
A. wasn't expecting her to be wearing new clothes.
B. didn't know that there would be so much dust.
C. is using strange expressions.
D. wants to be invited into the building.
4. The man ignores Nancy at first because he doesn't _____.
A. like meeting new people.
B. approve of what is happening.
C. see her behind Shelley.
D. want her to see how upset he is.
5. Nancy hopes that the old man will change his mind when _____.
A. he learns how comfortable the city is.
B. he sees there is no point hiding his true feelings.
C. he is offered enough money.
D. she explains how important the find is.
6. Mr Williamson believes that _____.
A. Nancy has no intention of doing her job properly.
B. the discovery of oil threatens the local wildlife.
C. the oil companies will ignore what Nancy tells them.
D. there is no wildlife worth saving in the area.
7. Nancy doesn't understand Mr Williamson's reference to "the village" because _____.
A. it covers a large area and is never marked on maps.
B. the oil company didn't give her all the relevant information.
C. he's talking about relationships and not a physical place.
D. it's a long way from where they are.



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Whether you call it a “gap year”, a “year out” or a “year off”, the decision to delay going to university for a year after leaving school is a difficult, but important, one.

Becky Roberts, now studying history at the University of Warwick, doesn't regret her decision to take a year off. “I'd worked so hard for my A levels,” she says. “I knew it would do me good to do something totally unrelated to studying before embarking on a three-year degree course. My year off working for my dad's company wasn't a holiday by any means, but it was a break from the world of education, and that's just what I needed.”

Carl Sanchez agrees. Now halfway through a biology degree at Cardiff University, Carl spent much of his gap year travelling. “I worked for about three months to save up enough money, then went to stay with some friends who live in France. I ended up travelling round most of Europe, and even got over to Russia for a few weeks, which was fantastic.” Both Becky and Carl enjoyed their year off, but do they feel it's benefited them in terms of their university life now? “Definitely,” says Carl. “When I left school, I was a normal, fairly irresponsible eighteen year-old. I hadn't been anywhere, I hadn't done anything. A year later, when I went to university, I felt much more like an adult than a child.”

“I know a few people at Warwick who took a year off,” says Becky. “Generally, we're more dedicated to our studies than those students who came straight from school. We've got different priorities. We want

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to have fun, of course, but we realise we're here to get our degrees. I don't think some of the others have quite realised why they're at university yet."

There are drawbacks to taking a gap year, though. Penny Cartwright went straight from school to study medicine at Imperial College, London. "I thought about taking a gap year but decided against it and don't regret the decision for a minute. Becoming a doctor takes such a long time - I'll be about 26 years old before I can start earning any money - that the sooner you start, the better, in my opinion. It might be fun, but it's really just a wasted year in terms of career development."

There's also the financial consideration. If you do decide to take a year off, and you don't want to work the whole time as Becky did, you have to be able to pay for it. Susan Jenkins, a Careers Officer, points out that parents are now less likely to fund their child's year off. "Twenty years ago, it was fairly common for parents to say to their son or daughter, 'Here's two thousand pounds, go and have fun abroad for a few months.' Nowadays, because parents have to pay so much more for their child's education while they're at university, they just can't afford to pay for this extra year too."

One option, of course, is to do what Carl did: work for a few months in order to save up for a trip abroad. Another option is to find casual work while travelling abroad. "There are now a lot of books and websites with loads of information for people who want to do this," says Susan. "It's a great way to see the world, gain experience, and get money for living expenses all at the same time. But don't expect to earn enough to save any money."

So, should you take a gap year? The answer is: it depends. If you want a break from books and essays, then it's probably a good idea - as long as you, or your parents, can afford it and as long as you're going to do something worthwhile during your time off. Sitting at home watching TV doesn't count! If you want to get your degree and start regular employment as quickly as possible, a gap year may not be so sensible.

1. Becky took a year off because she _____.
 - A. needed to see what working for her father was like.
 - B. felt she needed a long holiday before university.
 - C. had done so well in her A level exams at school.
 - D. wanted to do something different for a while.
2. Carl says that a year off helped him _____.
 - A. learn the importance of saving money.
 - B. become more mature and experienced.

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- C. make friends in many different countries.
D. become more knowledgeable about geography.
3. According to Becky, students who didn't take a year off _____
A. are less hard-working than those who did.
B. probably won't end up with a degree.
C. don't want to have fun at university.
D. are less intelligent than those who did.
4. According to Penny, a year off _____
A. should be taken when you're about 26 years old.
B. is better once you've actually started your course.
C. merely delays the time when you can get a job.
D. can be enjoyable and useful for your future work.
5. In the past, parents were more likely to _____
A. pay for their child's education at university.
B. encourage their child to go straight to university.
C. force their child to take a year off before university.
D. give their child money to help with their year off.
6. Susan issues a warning about _____
A. information from books and websites.
B. low wages for casual work abroad.
C. paying for everyday expenses abroad.
D. the difficulty of finding casual work.
7. This article would probably NOT appear in _____
A. a textbook for university students.
B. a handbook for school-leavers.
C. a magazine for young people.
D. the education section of a newspaper.

When they first saw the dog, they weren't sure, in fact, that it was a dog. A small pile of rubbish by the side of the litter bin began to move. Verity and Sally, walking past on their way to the beach, both jumped back, expecting a rat to emerge from the litter. What they saw instead was the back end of a small brown dog, which seemed to be connected to a plastic bag. They both let out shrieks of delight.

"Oh, it's a puppy!" cried Verity, and bent down to release the dog's head from the plastic bag. The dog looked up at them with ketchup on its face. Now that they could see the whole animal, it was clear that it was not quite as young as Verity had thought at first sight. It carried one or two scars of life on the streets – it had a cut below one eye and one ear seemed to be permanently at an angle – but on the whole it was not in bad health for a stray dog. Its coat was shiny and you couldn't see its ribs under the skin, like you could with many dogs in a similar position. Judging by the litter bin, visitors to the beach were a good source of chips, hot dogs and hamburgers without knowing it. The dog sat, looking up at the girls with its tongue hanging out as it panted.

"Come on," said Verity. "Let's take him down to the beach!" Sally hesitated a moment before agreeing. She could see where it was leading. Her father always told her to walk away from a stray animal because there was a danger you would want to keep it. Then it would be harder when you actually did have to walk away. However, she couldn't deny that the dog was cute, so she was pleased when it trotted along behind them on the way to the beach.

They spread their towels on the beach and got suncream out of their bags. When they turned round, the dog had settled on one of the towels as if he owned the place. He seemed glad of the opportunity to rest and Verity could imagine the constant battle he faced each day to survive. Apart from the search for food and shelter, which perhaps were less of a problem here than they would have been in the city centre, there was the competition from other dogs. This dog must be pretty smart, she decided, to survive against the others because he certainly wouldn't win too many fights, even if his injuries showed that he didn't give up easily.

They spent the day lazing in the sun, swimming and playing beach tennis. The dog joined in after resting for a while. To the casual observer, it would have looked like two girls and their dog playing together. Sally knew, however, that that wasn't the case and she was dreading the moment when they would have to leave. Eventually, the sun began to set and it got cooler. Verity stared at the sun, as if willing

it to stay in the sky for another hour. She avoided looking at Sally and didn't seem to notice Sally looking at her watch. Verity stroked the dog, which was lying on the towel next to her. Sally knew that they couldn't put it off any longer.

"It's probably time we were getting back," she said at last. Verity turned round and Sally saw tears running down her face. The dog looked from one of them to the other and waited.

1. Verity and Sally's first reaction is _____.
 - A. amusement at the dog's appearance.
 - B. worry about the dog's condition.
 - C. fright at what might be under the rubbish.
 - D. curiosity at the dog's behaviour.
2. The dog seems to be _____.
 - A. in good condition despite its injuries.
 - B. in a worse state than most stray dogs.
 - C. rather overweight for its size.
 - D. in urgent need of medical attention.
3. It seems that people who go to this beach _____.
 - A. enjoy feeding the stray dogs.
 - B. are careless with their rubbish.
 - C. throw a lot of food away.
 - D. don't know they are harming the dogs.
4. Sally doesn't immediately agree to take the dog to the beach because _____.
 - A. they don't have a lead to put on the dog to control it.
 - B. her father stops her from doing what she wants to do.
 - C. she thinks the dog might be dangerous, in spite of his appearance.
 - D. she doesn't want to form a relationship with the dog.
5. Verity thinks that the dog _____.
 - A. needs their help to avoid the other dogs.
 - B. is a coward when it comes to fighting other dogs.
 - C. is more attractive than the other dogs.
 - D. uses his brains to beat the other dogs.
6. The girls don't want to leave the beach because _____.
 - A. they think the dog will be attacked.
 - B. they want to sunbathe for another hour.
 - C. they want people to think it's their dog.
 - D. they are trying to delay leaving the dog.

7. Sally feels uncomfortable because _____

- A. she and Verity have argued about the dog.
- B. she thinks that someone is watching them.
- C. she knows that leaving the dog will be hard.
- D. she wants to get rid of the dog without Verity knowing.

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