



Warmer

Work with a partner. Ask and answer the questions.

Have you ever...

- 1 ...tried a hobby only because a friend was interested in it?
- 2 ...tried a new hobby and got annoyed because it was too tough?
- 3 ...wanted to try an expensive hobby?
- 4 ...tried a new hobby and found that it was really easy?
- 5 ...wanted to give up a hobby?
- 6 ...felt embarrassed about a hobby of yours?

Reading

- 1 Look at the extract below and complete the gaps in A, B and C to guess the meaning of the word in bold.

*"My brother is a software engineer and he goes on and on about how **engrossing** he thinks computer programming is. It's all he talks about."*

A If a person talks about a topic a lot, it probably means that they think the topic is very _____

B If a person decides to study a subject at university, it probably means that they think the subject is _____

C So, "engrossing" means _____

- 2 The following words have been highlighted in bold in the article. Using the strategy in exercise 2, try to work out the meaning of the words.

- 1 extortionate (A): _____
- 2 let off some steam (B): _____
- 3 arduous (C): _____
- 4 get away with (D): _____
- 5 a breeze (E): _____

- 3 You are going to read a magazine article about five people who tried the 30 day challenge. For question 1–10, choose from the sections A–E. The sections may be chosen more than once. Try to work out the meaning of the words in bold using the tip boxes provided.

Which speaker...

- 1 didn't expect the activity to be as hard as it was?
- 2 found the activity to be very expensive?
- 3 was surprised at how easy the activity was?
- 4 kept on going thanks to someone else's support?
- 5 took on the challenge out of fear for their own health?
- 6 did something they had been interested in for a few months?
- 7 has continued doing the activity every day since the challenge?
- 8 chose the activity based on someone else's interests?
- 9 doubted their ability to complete the challenge?
- 10 felt annoyed at their own failure?

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The 30 day challenge

Matt Cutts invites you to try something new every day, for 30 days. He tried cycling to work, taking a picture every day, cutting out sugar from his diet and even writing a whole novel in a month. Here are what our readers thought of it all after taking on the challenge.

A Ifred from Newcastle

I picked up one of those maximum five ingredients recipe books, and made a promise to myself that I'd cook for a whole month. I enjoyed my 30 day challenge and I found the cooking to be remarkably straightforward. Well, I didn't feel like throwing the recipe book away out of frustration, in any case. I've expanded my repertoire of recipes so I'll definitely be cooking more often than before, but there was a downside. The only shop open on my way home after work is **extortionate**, so unfortunately our bank balance didn't benefit from the challenge. Overall, it was worth it, though.

B Soren from Munich

I'd always thought that keeping a diary was a bit of a childish concept, so if you'd told me last year that I was going to write my thoughts down every day for a whole year, I wouldn't have believed you. I took up the challenge because I was feeling stressed at school, and I needed a way to **let off some steam**. I had been bottling up my feelings for too long, and I was starting to feel the physical symptoms of stress, like headaches and insomnia, so I decided to give it a go. I'm so glad I did as it really helped me out and made a huge difference to my life.

C Meritxell from Barcelona

My brother is studying software engineering and he goes on and on about how engrossing he thinks computer programming is. It's all he talks about. I understood none of it, so during the summer break I decided to secretly take an online beginner coding class for 30 days, so we could have real conversations about it next time he was back from university. Overall, I found it really **arduous**, and I felt like quitting on a daily basis, but the thought of his surprise at my saying words like "compiler", "protocol" or "database" kept me going. At the end, when I did finally show off all my new knowledge, I felt really proud of myself.

D Jane from Cambridge

A friend of mine had started taking classes to learn how to dance the Lindy Hop, which is a type of 1930's dance, similar to Swing. I always liked salsa so I'd been into the idea of Lindy Hop since she first mentioned it, but it took her over half a year to finally convince me to give it a go. Needless to say, I was very nervous the first day, but as it turns out there were people of all ages and abilities, and quite a lot of beginners as well, so I relaxed straight away. I had the time of my life, and I've been going once a week ever since. It's exhausting though, so some days I wish I could skip it and just put my feet up at home, but I know my friend would never let me **get away with it**.

E Fiona from Oslo

I did a lot of drawing in secondary school and I'd almost studied art at university, so naturally I thought a 30 day art challenge would be **a breeze**. The prospect of taking the time to do one drawing a day was really exciting and I couldn't wait to start. Little did I know that it's much easier to find inspiration when you are 17 than when you are 30. In the end, I think I only managed to finish five or six, which was hugely irritating. My imagination is just not what it used to be but at least I know not to feel guilty whenever I don't have the energy to draw. I just need to look for a different hobby.