

◀ Page 24 Task information**◀ Page 26** Action plan**Review**

Tick (✓) the pieces of advice which you think are good tips for Reading and Use of English Part 5.

- 1 Read the text carefully before looking at the questions.
- 2 Read the questions carefully and make sure you choose the answer that matches the question.
- 3 When answering a question, find the relevant bit of text and read it again very carefully.
- 4 Do not expect to understand every word in the text.
- 5 You can often work out the meaning of unfamiliar words and expressions from the context.
- 6 Do all the questions you can first, then go back and look again at the harder ones.
- 7 Do not leave any questions out – if you are not sure of the answer, pick the one that seems most likely.

Follow the exam instructions, using the advice to help you.

You are going to read an article from a magazine written by a man who teaches survival skills. For questions 31–36, choose the answer (A, B, C or D) which you think fits best according to the text.

Mark your answers on the separate answer sheet.

Tip! Help yourself prepare for the Reading and Use of English paper by reading a variety of types of text in English.

Tip! Remember that many words in English have a number of different meanings. If something does not seem to make sense in its context, consider whether it might have a different meaning.

The importance of fire

We share our lives on this incredible planet with many other creatures, each of which has its own special trait or survival skill, a characteristic attribute by which it can be defined. Our special trick gives us the impression that we are in some way elevated above other animals, but of course we are not; it is important to remember that we are mammals, upright walking creatures, descended from an ancient line of apes believed to have originated in Africa. With a free thumb, we have the ability to fashion tools easily. It is believed that we have been making tools for more than 2.5 million years. Yet that does not define us. Other animals can make tools, too: sea otters use stones to break open oyster shells, and other primates even fashion weaponry for hunting.

What I believe defines us as human is our mastery of fire. Before we assume that we are the only users of fire in nature, we should think again. Just last year I watched hawks in Australia pick up burning sticks from a bushfire and drop them to spread the fire, flushing out or scorching potential prey. But no other creature has been found who can make fire at will.

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In the world of archaeology, the earliest sign of human control of fire is a hotly debated topic, with few definite remains surviving from such antiquity. However, evidence appears to show fire hearths dating from one million years ago. It is reasonable to assume that fire was originally obtained from natural sources such as bushfires, which could then be kept burning.

Fire altered humankind's potential for ever. Now, we wielded a tool powerful enough to keep even the most ferocious early Palaeolithic predators at bay; the fear of nocturnal dangers was dispelled; and the fire became a focus for life, around which our forebears could gather in good cheer. (That sight is still played out nightly in the villages of the San Bushmen of the Kalahari.) In the flames and coals of their fires, our ancestors learned to alter their food, to improve its flavour, to neutralise plant toxins and destroy harmful bacteria. Consequently, our dietary range grew and diversified. It has been argued that our 'fire-improved' diet may well have been a catalyst for the development of our large brain.

Until fire was harnessed, the length of the day was determined by sunlight; firelight extended the working day, made time available to communicate, to share ideas and be creative. In the sign language of Native Americans, the concept of meeting for a talk is defined by coming to a fire and sharing ideas, and even today the footlights of our theatres mimic the flickering light of a fire on the face of an ancestral storyteller. We don't have to have been there to realise that the question of how to make fire from scratch would have occupied the minds gathered at the campfire. If I could travel back in time, I would hope to witness the first of our ancestors achieving this remarkable skill. The consequences of that first ember were astonishing. No modern invention comes close in importance to the creation of the first fire. For more than 30 years, I have been teaching students how to make fire, by every primitive means known. Although we will never know which was the first method of fire-lighting, some things never change. Each time a student succeeds in friction fire-lighting, their face lights up with a huge sense of achievement. Like an ancient ritual, the drama of the first fire is relived.

Being able to make fire at will brings confidence. Our ancestors were able to spread out, exploring their landscape in smaller foraging parties with fire for safety and with smoke to locate each other again. (I have witnessed Aboriginals in Australia's Arnhem Land watching for smoke across flooded swamps to track the movements of family members.) Now, even colder landscapes posed little obstacle as our ancestors migrated across the planet, perhaps clinging to the unexplored coastline or following seasonal migrations of game inland. The fireside became our most important laboratory. Here, as we stared into the flames, we observed the way fire could transform materials. We learnt to harden the points of wooden spears, to soften thermoplastic tree resins and use them as adhesives. Here, too, we would discover that clay could be hardened into pottery. The process of scientific investigation was reinforced along the way through observation, hypothesis and experimentation. Inevitably, we discovered metal and the rest is history. Everything flows from here, from the clothes we wear to the incredible devices contained in our pockets and the means by which my words reach you now. All this derives from our mastery of fire.

31 What is the main point the writer is making about the human ability to make tools?

- A It is only possible because of the way the human hand is structured.
- B It is important but not the unique talent that it is sometimes considered to be.
- C It is one of the characteristics that sets people apart from most other creatures.
- D It has allowed human beings to develop the way of life that they have.

32 What impressed the writer about the hawks he observed in Australia?

- A They were not afraid of fire.
- B They seemed to be cooking their prey.
- C They were able to start a fire.
- D They took advantage of a bushfire.

33 The writer says that archaeologists investigating people's relationship with fire

- A have proved that humans have sat round fires for at least a million years.
- B disagree about exactly when and how people began to master fire.
- C have found evidence to show people first took fire from fires occurring in nature.
- D are still searching for remains to support their theories about the control of fire.

34 According to the text, the San Bushmen of the Kalahari

- A continue to gather around a fire every evening.
- B still cook their food on an open fire in their villages.
- C live in the same way as many generations of their ancestors.
- D use fire to destroy harmful elements in their food.

35 What does the writer say he would like to have experienced?

- A the very first stories that were told around a fire
- B the discussions that led to people being able to make fire
- C the original creation of fire by human hand
- D the way the discovery of fire transformed life for ancient peoples

36 The writer says that being able to light a fire whenever you wished brought confidence because

- A it stopped people fearing the cold.
- B it led to the discovery of metal.
- C it started a scientific revolution.
- D it enabled safer travel.

Advice

31 If a question asks about the main point or the main reason, then the text is likely to mention several points or reasons, but one will be identifiably more significant than the others.

32 Think carefully about not only what the writer saw but also about what impressed him.

33 Notice the extent of the evidence and proof that archaeologists have uncovered.

34 The information in parenthesis about the Bushmen is referring back in the paragraph rather than forward.

35 The expression 'from scratch' in the relevant section of text means 'from the very beginning', i.e. without making use of naturally starting bushfires.

36 The sentence that follows the one about confidence expands on the idea, explaining why increased confidence was a result of the discovery of how to start a fire whenever one was needed.