

EXAM SKILLS 1

11 Read the text and answer the questions which follow.

In January or February, Venice plays host to the most magical of carnivals. During the carnival, the city is filled with a mass of masked party-goers, posing and dancing, in an attempt to reinvent one of the great traditions of the city. Naturally, it is very crowded and hotels and restaurants are expensive, but it is a unique occasion and a great time to experience this beautiful city.

The carnival was first held in Venice in the 11th century and lasted for over two months. Activities involved a series of formal parties in St Mark's Square and playing games for money. Regardless of social status, participants wore costumes and masks. Images of the time and occasion are still displayed throughout the city today. During the 18th century, however, this period of festivities came to an end, and the carnival did not return until 1979. Today, the carnival is extremely popular with people eager to dress up and parade around the city in their masks and costumes.

The weekends are the busiest times at the carnival – the final weekend in particular. During the festivities, you can enjoy live music and take part in a large open-air festival. Costumes are also a major feature of the occasion and there is even a competition to judge the best one. The best ones are usually displayed at the centre of carnival festivities, in the breathtaking St Mark's Square. Numerous shops in Venice sell these costumes and masks in preparation for this great event.

Perhaps the most attractive aspect of the Venice carnival, though, is the variety of masked balls and parties there are to attend. You do have to pay for these, however, and they can be quite costly. One of the most expensive parties is the Valentine's Grand Masquerade Ball, held on February 14th at the Palazzo Flangini.



Do these statements agree with the information given in the text?

Look at the statements and write

TRUE if the statement agrees with the information

FALSE if the statement contradicts the information

NOT GIVEN if there is no information on this

- 1 Before the 20th century, only the rich participated in the carnival.
- 2 The Venice carnival was banned in the 18th century.
- 3 The most popular days at the carnival are during the week.
- 4 None of the festivities take place outside.
- 5 There are few places in Venice where you can purchase your costume and mask.
- 6 In order to take part in the costume competition you need to be Italian.
- 7 The tickets for the Valentine's Grand Masquerade Ball are worth a lot of money.