

1 Read the texts and answer questions 1-6.

Text 1.

THE GROWING PROBLEM OF OBESITY

Obesity levels in western countries are rising fast. In the United States, obesity rates have more than doubled in the last thirty years from about 14.5% to over 30%. Some people think that over half the population will be obese within a few years. In Britain, around 20% are obese, the largest percentage in Europe. This is mainly because we eat more but also because we get less exercise. Although food labeling shows us the number of calories we are consuming, we don't seem to take any notice. However, we should because obesity reduces our life expectancy and causes many other health problems. We need to alter our eating habits and eat more fresh products and less packaged food. We should cut down on salt, sugar and fat and cut out certain things, such as fizzy drinks and crisps, which have no nutritional value at all.

Text 2.

MINI-MISE YOUR WEIGHT

These days, people have less time to create meals from fresh ingredients. We know that it would be better for us but we also know that pre-cooked or frozen meals are quick and tasty. Unfortunately, they are also full of calories and contain unhealthy levels of salt and sugar. That's why Mini-Mise is such an important new product. Unlike most diet pills, Mini-Mise don't make you feel full and they don't provide you with vitamins or minerals that you may be lacking. They don't need to. They allow you to eat all the food that you want but they then destroy the salt, sugar and fat in the blood. They have been recommended by nutritionists and doctors as a way to improve our health. Mini-Mise means you can lose weight without worries – and all for the price of a large burger and fries a day!

Text 3.

Who is in charge?

We all know that obesity levels are rising and that people are eating the wrong things. We also know that when governments want to act, they can. You only have to look at the laws to stop smoking in public places and the tax increases which have made smoking much less popular than it was. The same results could be achieved by similar taxes on fast food and fizzy drinks. Governments could also limit the numbers of fast food restaurants or bring in laws to reduce the amount of salt and sugar used in packaged foods. However, they don't do any of these things. Why not? Could it be because the food producers and supermarkets are too powerful? The biggest supermarkets sell most of our food and also control many of the supplies from farms and other food producers. If the government did threaten to change the law, these huge companies could bring the country to its knees very quickly.

Text 1.

1 What reasons are given in the article to explain why Britain has the highest percentage of obese people in Europe?

2 What kinds of food should we avoid according to the article?

Text 2.

3 Why are pre-prepared meals so popular?

4 How do Mini-Mise pills work?

Text 3.

5 Why has smoking become less popular than it was?

6 Why aren't governments changing food laws to make people more healthy?

Reading

2 Read the text. For questions 1-5, choose the correct answer, A, B, C or D.

MISSING SUN

Pollution in many of the world's cities is becoming a major health problem. One of the worst affected is Beijing, the capital of China. Air quality was dangerously low on fifty-eight days last year. The winter months are especially bad. This is the time of year when more coal is burned to heat people's homes. There is also less wind to blow the smog away. At this time of year, pollution levels are sometimes twenty times higher than the WHO (World Health Organization) considers safe. This causes illnesses and on the worst days old people and children are advised to stay indoors. Visibility is sometimes so bad that motorways have to close because of the danger of accidents.

In early 2014, some newspapers and websites showed a frightening vision of the future. On a smoggy morning, residents of Beijing watched the sunrise. However, as the real one was hidden, they had to do this on giant TV screens. The smog was so thick that the real sunrise was completely invisible. While this might seem shocking, the film of the sunrise was nothing unusual. The screens show adverts all the time. The one that the people were watching that morning was for a holiday company. The same advert is shown quite often, whatever the weather. Either the photographer was lucky or he knew exactly how the image would look and waited until he got the photo he wanted. Although the news reporting was inaccurate, it might have done something to raise awareness of how bad the problem has become. Politicians, too, have finally decided that something must be done to reduce pollution levels.

The first idea is to reduce the amount of coal that people use. Factories will also be moved to areas further away from cities. Another target is older, more polluting cars. The worst offenders will be banned. In their place, greener and cleaner forms of transport will be encouraged.

Will these changes help? The Chinese know from experience that it is possible to improve air quality very quickly if necessary. Before the 2008 Olympic Games, pollution in Beijing was reduced greatly. As well as reducing traffic levels and closing factories, other methods to reduce pollution were used. These included pouring water onto roads to reduce the amount of dust flying in the air. To help with this, scientists were even able to make clouds drop more rain. Since then, things have got worse rather than better but, at last, the government seems to be determined to do something about the problem. For the people of Beijing and other large cities this will make a huge difference to their lives.

1 Winter in Beijing

- A is very windy.
- B can affect driving and road safety.
- C has on average 58 days of dangerous levels of air pollution.
- D has pollution levels twenty times worse than the rest of China.

2 In Beijing, people were photographed watching the sunrise on TV screens because

- A it's better than the real sunrise.
- B they were posing for a photographer.
- C it's popular to watch the sunrise in Beijing.
- D it's in an advert that is shown regularly around the city.

3 The photograph

- A shows how people plan holidays in Beijing.
- B wasn't carefully planned by the photographer.
- C has had a positive impact on politicians.
- D has been sold for a lot of money.

4 What does the government plan to do to reduce pollution levels?

- A Build new factories to replace the old ones
- B Remove the most polluting cars from the roads
- C Ban people from burning coal during winter
- D Make the city safer for cyclists

5 Since the 2008 Beijing Olympic Games

- A people realise there are ways to reduce air pollution.
- B air quality has got a lot better.
- C scientists have been controlling the amount of rain falling.
- D the biggest problem has been dust on the roads.

3 Read and match texts A-C with sentences 1-4. One text has two matching sentences.

Animals save lives too!

A Therapy animals

Animal assisted therapy is a type of treatment offered to certain patients to help them feel better. Therapy animals are particularly useful for people who have been involved in accidents or had illnesses and need extra support as they recover at home. They are also used to treat people suffering from conditions such as autism. The main thing these animals provide is comfort and friendship, to help people feel relaxed and calm. Dogs, cats, horses, pigs and even reptiles are all trained as therapy animals, sometimes visiting people in hospitals and others going to live with people at home. Therapy animals do not need a lot of training. They need to know basic commands and must interact well with humans. In fact, anyone with a pet can volunteer to offer animal assisted therapy. So if you are kind and caring and your pet is too, this could be an opportunity to do something good.

B Hearing dogs

When we think of dogs helping people with disabilities, we usually think of guide dogs for the blind, but just as important are hearing dogs for deaf people. There are obvious dangers for people who can't hear such as not noticing alarms, but there are many other ways that hearing dogs help their human companions. Alarm clocks, door bells and mobile phone notifications can all easily be missed by deaf people living or spending time alone. Hearing dogs are very highly trained. It takes up to two years to prepare a puppy for work, and many of the dogs chosen for the job do not go on to become hearing dogs. They just don't have the right skills and personality. When the right dog is matched to the right person though, the relationship between the dog and owner can be very strong.

C Rats discovering landmines

Where dogs used to be the animal of choice for clearing dangerous war zones from explosives, a new and unlikely animal is now being used in Cambodia. Almost completely blind, the African giant pouched rat has such a good sense of smell that it is perfect for detecting hidden dangers. They are easier to transport than dogs and a lot cheaper. They also work much faster and are smaller so don't need much space to live. However, dogs are a lot easier to train. The rats don't understand spoken commands so are trained to understand different clicking sounds. They are also more afraid of humans and it takes a long time for them to learn how to wear a harness. In fact, it takes almost a year to train them and they only live to an average age of eight. It's all worth it though. The rats have made a huge difference to people's lives. People are now able to move around without fear which has greatly improved their general health and well-being.

Which text mentions an animal that...

- 1 is difficult to train? _____
- 2 may not be suitable for the job it is trained to do? _____
- 3 can do its job without much training? _____
- 4 takes a long time to trust humans? _____