Reading Comprehension Practice

POINTS FOR DISCUSSION

- Which Ukrainian festival or celebration would you suggest foreigners take part in? Why?
- What other festivals or celebrations around the world do you know about?

A Read the texts below. Match choices (A-H) to (1-6). There are two choices you do not need to use.

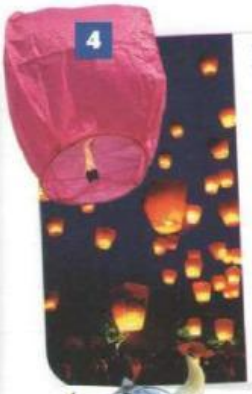
1

Indian Holi Festival

The Indian Holi Festival celebrates the victory of good over evil and also marks the arrival of spring. It's an extremely lively two-day event and is also called the Festival of Colour. The evening before Holi, there are bonfires around which people sing and dance. The next day, people gather outdoors in the streets and throw coloured powder and water over each other. At home, families decorate their houses, exchange gifts and eat special food.



4



Pingxi Sky Lantern Festival

Accounts differ as to how Taiwan's breathtaking Sky Lantern Festival began. Some say villagers who worked in the mountains used the lanterns to inform their families they were safe and others say that they were used to transmit military information. Whatever the case, today thousands of people buy a lantern, write their wishes on the paper, light the candle and watch as the lantern flows into the night sky, carrying their expectations for a bright future.

5





Viking Fire Festival



On the last Tuesday of January, the Viking Fire Festival takes place in Lerwick, Shetland – this is the island in the northernmost corner of Scotland. Scots and visitors celebrate the winter's end and the sun's return with blazing fire. Shetlanders also commemorate the Vikings who ruled there for 500 years, more than a thousand years ago. Having spent months building a dragon ship, the Shetlanders then set it on fire, while crowds sing and dance.

2



Ivan Kupala Festival

Like other European nations, Ukraine celebrates the summer solstice, which is the longest day of the year. Since the 4th century CE, this day has been connected with the Christian religion and the birth of John the Baptist. Today, the Ivan Kupala festival is a popular event for people of all ages. Fire, water and greenery play an important role in the day's various customs, one of which is jumping over a bonfire for good fortune.

6



Palio di Siena Festival

Siena's famous horse event is of medieval origin. It has been held twice a year since 1701, except during times of war. The festival lasts for four days, and its main event is the historical horse race. Crowds of tourists and locals gather in the city's main square, Piazza del Campo, to see ten jockeys ride their horses without a saddle in a one-minute race. There are parades, open-air dinners and other events that local people prepare all year round.

3





Day of the Dead Festival

This festival, which originated in Mexico but is popular throughout Latin America, celebrates death as well as life. It is held on 1 and 2 November, when the dead are believed to travel back to earth and the living should welcome them by offering food and drinks. Photos and candles feature significantly to show respect for family members who are no longer alive. People wear impressive costumes and make-up, and have colourful parades in the streets.

Which of the festivals _____?

A. celebrates the people who conquered the land in the past ☐
B. features plants among other elements of nature ☐
C. is organised by people who wish to protest against war ☐
D. includes both outdoor and indoor celebrations ☐
E. has more than one tale of origin ☐
F. is a chance to lovingly remember relatives who passed away ☐
G. includes offering a paper gift to a stranger ☐
H. has a competitive nature ☐

LIVEWORKSHEETS

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

Below is an adapted extract from chapter seven of Jane Austen's novel *Persuasion*. The main character, Anne, has come to visit her sister Mary, brother-in-law Charles and two nephews. At the beginning of the chapter, the whole family is invited to dinner at Charles' parents' house to meet with an old friend who is visiting. The day before though, Anne's oldest nephew falls from a tree and is hurt.

An adapted extract from the novel *Persuasion*



It was an afternoon of distress, and Anne had everything to do at once; the doctor to send for, the father to inform, the mother to support and keep from hysterics, the servants to control, the youngest child to send away, and the poor suffering one to attend and soothe.

The child had a good night and was going on well the next day. The doctor found nothing to increase alarm, and Charles began to feel no necessity for longer confinement. And since his father very much wished him to meet Captain Wentworth, he felt he ought to go; so he made a bold, public declaration of his intention to dine at his parents' house.

'Nothing can be going on better than the child,' said he; 'so I told my father that I would come. Your sister being with you, my love, I have no worries at all. You would not like to leave him yourself, but you see I can be of no use. Anne will send for me if anything is the matter.'

Mary knew, from Charles's manner of speaking, that he was absolutely determined to go, and that it would be of no use to tease him. She said nothing, therefore, till he was out of the room, but then she told Anne:

'So, you and I are to be left to shift by ourselves, with this poor sick child; and not a creature coming near us all the evening! This is always my luck. If there is anything disagreeable going on, men are always sure to get out of it, and Charles is as bad as any of them. So, here he is to go away and enjoy himself, and because I am the poor mother, I am not to be allowed to move; and yet, I am sure, I am more unfit than anybody else to be around the child. My being the mother is the very reason why my feelings should not be tested. You saw how hysterical I was yesterday.'

'Well, if you do not think it is too late to give notice for yourself, you should go, as well as your husband. Leave little Charles to my care.'

Mary's eyes brightened. She found it a very good thought and decided that Anne who does not have a mother's feelings is a great deal more suitable to stay with the child than herself. She told her husband, who, at first, was doubtful about leaving Anne at home by herself to nurse their sick child, but as Anne's sincerity of manner soon convinced him, he had no further worries; and this being the case, Anne had before long the pleasure of seeing them set off together in high spirits.

1. Why was Anne so worried that afternoon?
   A. because she didn't know what to do
   B. because she had to call a doctor
   C. because she had to make all sorts of arrangements
   D. because she wanted to speak to her father
2. Why did Charles decide it was all right for him to finally dine at his parents' house?
   A. because he felt frustrated at having to stay inside the house
   B. because his son felt better
   C. because his father insisted that he did
   D. because he trusted his wife's sister
3. Why didn't Mary try to persuade Charles to stay?
   A. because she wanted to ask her sister to stay with the child
   B. because she would make fun of him
   C. because she knew that it wouldn't make a difference
   D. because she wasn't interested in going with him
4. What did Mary say to Anne when Charles left the room?
   A. Mary said the two women were lucky to enjoy each other's company all afternoon.
   B. Mary said that Charles was not like other men.
   C. Mary said she did not have much money.
   D. Mary said she wasn't the suitable person to look after her child.
5. What is **TRUE** of Mary?
   A. She believes that only a mother can nurse her sick child.
   B. She is not able to deal calmly with problems.
   C. She does not enjoy going out of the house.
   D. She does not trust Anne.

POINTS FOR DISCUSSION

- What kind of sacrifices does the text deal with?
- What problems do you think the familiy faces in the text and how could they be solved?



LIVEWORKSHEETS

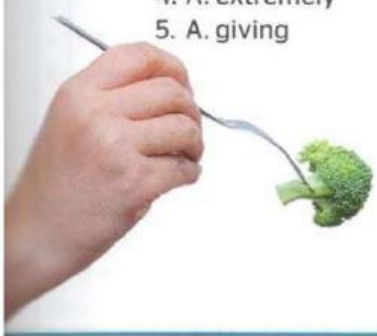
Read the texts below. For questions (1-10) choose the correct answer (A, B, C or D).

The dinner table: a family battleground

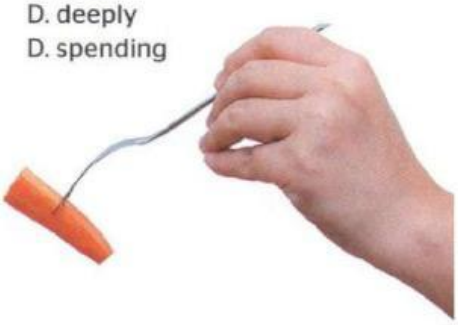
In a family there are various battles one has to fight. But there is one constant battle from infancy to (1) ____ – the fight for nutrition. This involves trying to get your children to eat their greens (2) ____ what they want to eat.

Typically, most parents make their children stay at the table until they finish what is on their plate. But children's determination to limit their diet to whatever they like can be very strong. Very often, the end result is a very irritated parent that has gone to the trouble of making a proper (3) _____ – meaning something that does not focus (4) ____ on potatoes or pasta – and a child that responds with a disgusted 'Yuck!' However, one has to remember that dinner with the family is not primarily about serving up portions of food. On the contrary, it is about enjoyment, and (5) _____ quality time together.

1. A. youth	B. childhood	C. babyhood	D. adulthood
2. A. except for	B. instead of	C. as well	D. in addition
3. A. meal	B. cooking	C. table	D. food
4. A. extremely	B. absolutely	C. entirely	D. deeply
5. A. giving	B. taking	C. making	D. spending

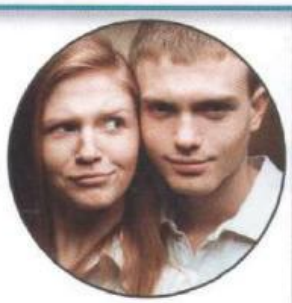








FRIENDS OR COMPETITORS?



Sibling rivalry (6) _____ around long before parents ever turned to psychologists to understand the problem. In the fairy tale of Cinderella, for example, her sisters treat her badly out of jealousy. But in (7) _____ what can parents do to prevent a similar occurrence in their home? Firstly, they should avoid making comparisons between their children. A parent shouldn't say things like, '(8) _____ the age of four, your brother had learnt to tie his laces' or 'By the time your sister went to school, she (9) _____ for years'. Also, constantly praising one child for some accomplishment will inevitably create feelings of envy in the other. Often the effect of this praise only becomes evident later in life, and, almost always, parents will say they had no idea they (10) _____ any harm. So, the next time your children quarrel, think carefully how to handle the situation.

6. A. was being	B. used to be	C. had been	D. would be
7. A. real	B. really	C. realistic	D. reality
8. A. When	B. By	C. As soon as	D. By the time
9. A. had been reading	B. was reading	C. used to read	D. had read
10. A. didn't do	B. used to do	C. would do	D. were doing

LIVEWORKSHEETS