

Exam task

You are going to read an article about the rise in sales of fashionable second-hand clothes. Six sentences have been removed from the article. Choose from the sentences A–G the one which fits each gap (1–6). There is one extra sentence which you do not need to use.

IS BUYING VINTAGE CLOTHING THE MOST ECOLOGICAL WAY TO SHOP?

by Elle Violet Bramley

A study shows that last year 64% of British women were willing to buy pre-owned pieces compared with 45% three years ago – and it is thought that by 2028, 13% of the clothes in women's wardrobes are likely to be second-hand. Yet until fairly recently, according to one online shop owner, people were still dismissive of used clothing. **1**

And that, crucially, includes the massive shift to online buying that has rapidly brought it to a much wider audience.

Apart from an increased awareness of sustainability, vintage fashion neatly fits into the wider mood of today's Instagram age. **2** So what better way to stand out from them than to wear clothes few others are likely to own? Vintage sceptics who may have been put off in the past by thoughts of searching through piles of old clothes in bargain basements may be persuaded by the ability to buy online. 'The popularity of online vintage shops is great for those who don't have access to everything a city such as New

York has to offer,' says Gabriel Held, described by Vogue as 'Instagram's most celebrated vintage dealer'.

Perhaps unsurprisingly, however, opening up the market with numerous online shops has meant less quality control. Held sees 'a lot of very ordinary used clothing being marketed as vintage. Something doesn't have to be 20 years old to be considered vintage, but, for me, if it's not true vintage, then it should be something extraordinary.'

3 For some, the latter means any era up to the early 80s, while others consider it to be clothing that is more than 20 years old.

Virginia Bates, whose Notting Hill vintage store attracted the likes of Naomi Campbell and Donatella Versace, used to stock items from the end of the 19th century. Her definition of vintage runs 'up to the 1920s, 30s, a bit of 40s, occasionally 50s. **4** I would never have sold anything made then because I was there, I was wearing it.' But, as she

As consumers become increasingly aware of the environmental impact of fast fashion, they are looking for a more sustainable way to shop. Could buying second-hand be the answer?

says: 'With another generation coming up, the 60s is the equivalent of what I thought of as antique when I opened my shop.'

Not content to sit back and watch others profit from their vintage items, some luxury labels are relaunching decades-old designs from their own past. **5** This was entirely due to the attention it was getting in the vintage fashion market. In February, Italian fashion house Fendi brought back its most famous one from the same era – luxury resale website Vestiaire Collective had seen a 558% increase in its sales since January last year.

Of course, for some, buying vintage will never feel quite right. 'It's really not my thing,' says Bates. There are obvious risks. **6** Also, sizing can vary from country to country. 'But at the end of the day it doesn't really matter: the most important thing is that it's recycled – it encourages people not to go out and buy more.'

- A** This point about quality shows just how difficult it is to distinguish between second-hand and vintage.
- B** For example, shoppers have to be careful to look out for holes, moths and rips before buying an item.
- C** I don't consider the decade which followed that to be vintage.
- D** Now, by contrast, it is not just acceptable – it's cool and completely in line with current fashion trends here.
- E** Last year, for instance, Dior brought back its 1999 Saddle handbag.
- F** Other such stores then announced that they, too, would soon be stocking vintage items.
- G** This is one where authenticity and originality – not being seen in the same outfit as anyone else – are highly prized.

