## EXAM SKILLS

# HOME FROM HOME

**I remember feeling the first time I left home that I would never be able to feel at home anywhere but in my home. No other place would have my mum and dad, my annoying little brother and my cat, Tilly. Nowhere would smell like my home – my mum's roast chicken in the oven and the salty, seaweed smell that drifted in from the nearby beach. The sound of seagulls squawking was the sound of home. Nowhere else would I feel comfortable enough to put my feet up under me and gaze into the log fire dreaming of the future.**

I was 15 when I first went away from home on a school trip to Germany. My friends were going too, but we would all stay with different families. I was nervous about this. I knew the home I was going to would not be as comfortable as mine, the family would not be as kind, and who knew what the German food would be like? I knew I would spend three weeks, homesick and sad, missing my family back home.

We arrived in Germany late at night after a long journey by coach and boat. I was tired and hungry. We went into the school hall, where the host families were waiting to meet us. I wondered which one would be mine. Would they give me dinner at this time and would I be able to eat the unfamiliar food? Suddenly I heard my name called and the name of my exchange partner, Brigitte Schmitt. A pretty, blonde girl stepped forward, smiling widely. Behind her stood her parents, a pleasant-looking couple who were also smiling. They held out their hands and said, 'Wilkommen in Deutschland. Welcome to Germany.'

I spent three happy weeks with the Schmitt family. Brigitte had an elder brother, Hendrik, and a younger sister, Lisa. They had two cats, Ping and Pong, who sat on my lap as I looked into the fire in the evenings. The whole family were kind and welcoming. My room was cosy and warm and looked out onto a forest. The fresh clean smell of the trees and of apples baking in the oven became familiar and comforting, like the smells of home. I learnt in those three weeks that you can feel at home anywhere that people are kind to you.

Later that year, Brigitte came to stay with me in the UK. I gave her my room and moved in with my brother. I cleared space for her clothes and put fresh flowers in a vase by the bed. I asked my mum to make her famous roast chicken and an apple pie to make our guest feel at home. We made a welcome banner and put it up on the front door. I did everything I could to help Brigitte feel at home with us. I now understood the importance of a warm welcome.



**13** **Read the passage and complete the sentences below. Choose NO MORE THAN THREE WORDS from the passage for each answer.**

1 The writer's mother often cooks _____.
2 She thought the visit to Germany would make her feel _____.
3 Brigitte came to pick up the girl with _____.
4 The Schmitt family's pets' names are _____.
5 From her bedroom the girl could see a _____.
6 The girl and her family tried hard to make Brigitte _____.

LIVEWORKSHEETS