1 People

Appearance/Character/Clothes

1 Complete the descriptions. CHECK

optimistic | fair | trainers | shoulder-length



A ?
Becky is a pretty girl. She is slim with **1)** _____ dark hair. She has a **2)** _____ complexion, a small nose and blue eyes. She is wearing a pink T-shirt, jeans and **3)** _____. She is sporty and **4)** _____ and tends to expect good things to happen.

spiky | beard | polite | early | dark | overweight | casual

B ?
Steve is in his **1)** _____ thirties. He is tall and **2)** _____ with short **3)** _____ black hair. He has a **4)** _____ complexion, a big nose, a **5)** _____ and a moustache. He is wearing **6)** _____ clothes, a white T-shirt and jeans. He is a very **7)** _____ person and behaves towards people in a pleasant way.

wrinkles | jumper | caring | medium | bald | skinny

C ?
Larry is old and of **1)** _____ height. He is **2)** _____ and has a pale complexion with **3)** _____. He is going **4)** _____. His hair is grey and he has a big nose. He is wearing a **5)** _____ and trousers. He is a **6)** _____ person and always helps others.

The AKHA Way

High up in the mountains of southeast Asia, you can find the Akha hill tribes living in their traditional villages and farming the land much as they have done for generations.

A The history of the Akha people goes back hundreds, if not thousands, of years. They originally came from Tibet and have maintained the physical characteristics of that region, being fairly short and dark in complexion. Today, they live in small villages in the mountainous parts of China, Laos, Burma, Vietnam and northern Thailand. The Akha people are rich in culture, history and tradition. But they are also among the world's poorest people. Akha women remain remarkably tough, spirited and cheerful in the face of such a harsh life. Akha men are brave and strong.

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B The Akha have their own way of measuring time where one week lasts 12 days; as well as their own sets of rules. Each village has its own leader or headman, and under his guidance people follow a code of behaviour known as the Akha Way. Thanks to the Akha Way, each person in these small communities knows their role in society. The men provide for their families by farming crops like rice, corn and soya beans. They are also talented craftsmen and make crossbows, baskets and musical instruments from bamboo. The women do spinning and weaving and make their own clothes. They wear colourfully embroidered black shirts and skirts, and thick black leggings. Their headdresses are especially distinctive. As for the children, even though many of them don't attend school, they all know the names of every plant and animal in the forest. There is no written Akha language but the oral tradition is very rich. Children have to memorise the names of all their ancestors, sometimes as far back as 60 generations!

C Akha villages all look quite similar. The bamboo houses with their thatched roofs stand on stilts on the hillsides. Every village has two wooden frames that look like a doorway at its entrance and exit. These structures have spiritual significance and are called the 'spirit gates'. Artists cover the frames with carvings of both evil and smiling faces. This is to invite good spirits to enter the village and keep bad spirits out. Each summer, with great ceremony, the men build a swing in a public open space. Here the young children gather to play, but not just as a playground game – it is part of the yearly ceremony to honour dead ancestors.

D Sadly, the Akha Way is slowly disappearing from many villages. A growing number of tourists are visiting them and introducing a taste of Western culture. You can now see young Akha tribesmen sporting leather jackets and mobile phones. The women and girls only dress traditionally when there are tourists around in the hope they will buy souvenirs. Some Akha have even decided to take things a step further: they are leaving their villages to seek their fortunes in the big cities.

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3 **In your own words and based on the text, answer the questions.**

? **1** What is the Akha Way?

? **2** How do Akha men's roles differ from Akha women's roles?

? **3** What are the 'spirit gates'?

? **4** How has the Akha people's lifestyle changed?

4 **Choose the best answers according to the text. Give reasons for your answers.** CHECK

Multiple choice

Read the text quickly to get the gist. Read the questions and possible answers and find the key words. Read the text again and find the part that contains the answer to each question. Try to find words/phrases synonymous to the key words in the questions. This will help you do the task.

1 The Akha people ○
- **A** live mainly on Tibetan farms.
- **B** are not used to severe conditions.
- **C** have a short history as a tribe.
- **D** are some of the least wealthy in the world.

2 Akha women ○
- **A** are used to dealing with hardships.
- **B** do not mind being poor.
- **C** work harder than Akha men.
- **D** are more courageous than Akha men.

3 The most characteristic part of the Akha women's clothing is their ○

A shirts. **B** skirts. **C** leggings. **D** hats.

4 The Akha build spirit gates on the edges of their villages to ○
- **A** welcome visitors to the village.
- **B** give artists a place to work.
- **C** protect the village from danger.
- **D** provide a play area for their children.

5 The writer thinks that the Akha Way ○
- **A** is having an influence on Western culture.
- **B** may not be around for much longer.
- **C** is now only noticeable in the Akha people's clothes.
- **D** could take a long time to spread to cities.

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6 Fill in: CHECK

set	embroidered	attend	fairly	talented
memorise	physical	honour	keep	thatched

1 _____ characteristics

2 _____ short

3 _____ of rules

4 _____ craftsmen

5 _____ shirts

6 to _____ names

7 to _____ school

8 _____ roofs

9 to _____ spirits out

10 to _____ ancestors

Complete the text with the words below. CHECK

thatched	embroidered	physical	complexion	ceremony
craftsmen	region	attend	spirits	originally

The Akha people have maintained the **1)** _____ characteristics of the Tibetan people because they **2)** _____ come from that **3)** _____. They are fairly short with a dark **4)** _____. They live by a set of rules called the Akha Way. The men are talented **5)** _____ and the women make their own clothes. They wear **6)** _____ shirts. The children have to memorise names of plants and animals. They don't **7)** _____ school. The Akha people live in houses with **8)** _____ roofs and their villages have 'spirit gates' to keep bad **9)** _____ out. Every year they have a special **10)** _____ to honour their ancestors. Sadly, the Akha way of life is disappearing.

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