You are going to read an article about noise. For questions **31–36,** choose the answer (**A**, **B**, **C** or **D**) which you think fits best according to the text.

Mark your answers **on the separate answer sheet**.

Noise: traveller's enemy or traveller's friend?

'Passport, boarding pass, phone...' As my taxi zips towards the airport, suddenly a cord of panic pulls tight around my chest. I thrust my hand into one compartment of my handbag, then another. It's not anywhere. My mouth opens, and the words, 'Driver, turn around! Now!' almost spring out. But I swallow them. We're halfway to the airport, and I'm already running late. Surely I can survive one trip without my supply of foam earplugs?

I'm a generally good traveller except for one thing that undoes me every time: noise. Ask me about my absolute worst travel experiences, and I'll tell you the story about that night I spent in a cheap hotel that also happens to be the venue for the most popular Saturday night disco in the area. Elsewhere, there were the chickens that always began crowing at 2 a.m. at a rural retreat (no one, I guess, informed them that they shouldn't get going until dawn). And there was also the deeply discounted hotel room with 'swimming pool view' that I was so pleased with myself for finding. The swimming pool, it turned out, was under renovation. Actively. With power drills. Directly below my window.

In my ideal traveller's world I'd control the volume of everything, like a music producer at a giant mixing board. There would be no blasting television sets hanging above public squares or embedded in taxi seats, no cheesy songs playing in the shops. Loud noise would be completely absent. Everywhere. But no traveller can remain in a perfectly controlled sonic bubble. Not when we're moving through a world in which what constitutes noise has so many different interpretations, including whether noise is ever a bad thing. For sound is relative: one person's noise is another person's music, or expression of happiness.

On one of the first extended trips I ever took, I travelled to an island for Carnival, which is basically like deciding to pitch your tent inside a dance hall for three weeks. At any hour, different kinds of music would float through the air and, without warning, straight into my ear. Neighbours shouted to each other over the din, then turned up the volume on their radios. It was a non-stop celebration, during which I got very little sleep. It was fabulous. The thing is, the noise that wraps a city in Carnival happiness is more than just noise: it's the sound of a human community. To block it out is to risk missing something really fundamental about a place – and the reassuring feeling of being part of something larger than yourself. Noise brings people together. I've learnt this over and over in my travels, but it hasn't been an easy lesson to accept.

line 24

I struggle against my instinct to isolate myself in a cocoon of silence. I really don't want to cut myself off from the thrill of human noise. But I don't want to go crazy, either. Nowadays, unwanted – and largely non-human – sounds push and shove travellers from all directions. Cars, subways, construction, jet engines: their clamour seems omnipresent. Yet instead of lowering the volume of everyday living, we seem to layer noise upon noise. The hotel bar jacks up its techno music to counteract the babble in the lobby. The traveller walking along traffic-choked streets retreats into her iPod.

On the plane, I press my foam earplug deep into my ear. As it slowly expands to fill my ear canal, I savour the journey into the bliss of noiselessness. Thank goodness the convenience store at the airport stocks one of travel's most essential items. The headache-inducing whine of the jet engines magically fades away, and I'm once again the master of my private sonic world. To appreciate the comfort of noise, you also need the comfort of silence. I'll unplug when I get to where I'm going.

LIVEWORKSHEETS

31 What is the writer doing in the first paragraph?

- **A** demonstrating how well organised she is
- **B** explaining why she is in a particular situation
- **C** describing something that often happens to her
- **D** showing how important something is to her

32 What do the writer's worst travel experiences tell us about her?

- **A** She is annoyed when the facilities advertised are not available.
- **B** She is willing to stay in places that are not particularly luxurious.
- **C** She tries to plan ahead in order to avoid certain situations.
- **D** She finds unusual locations especially attractive.

33 What does the writer say about her 'ideal traveller's world'?

- **A** She realises it isn't actually the best way to travel.
- **B** She wishes she didn't have to share it with others.
- **C** She travels in the hope of finding it one day.
- **D** She knows other people wouldn't like it.

34 What does 'It' refer to in line 24?

- **A** getting very little sleep
- **B** the volume on people's radios
- **C** the non-stop celebration
- **D** the neighbours shouting

35 What does the writer say about noise in the fifth paragraph?

- **A** People are born with a need to hear it.
- **B** People deal with it by creating more of it.
- **C** It affects people in a number of different ways.
- **D** Modern life offers effective protection from it.

36 How does the writer feel in the final paragraph?

- **A** relieved she will not have to hear any noise at her destination
- **B** grateful to know she can find earplugs wherever she goes
- **C** pleased she can decide for herself whether to hear things or not
- **D** glad to be able to choose what music she'll listen to on the flight

LIVEWORKSHEETS

You are going to read an article about an expedition to look at a mountain under the sea. Six sentences have been removed from the article. Choose from the sentences **A–G** the one which fits each gap (**37–42**). There is one extra sentence, which you do not need to use.

Mark your answers **on the separate answer sheet.**

Mountains in the sea

An ocean scientist visits a mountain, or 'seamount', deep under the ocean.

Sealed in our special deep-sea sphere, we wait until we are untied, drifting, a tiny dot on the immense Pacific Ocean. Then we sink into the water, surrounded by bubbles. A diver pokes through the bubbles to make a final adjustment to the camera mounted on the outside of the submersible sphere (known as a 'sub'). Out there with the camera are hydraulics, thrusters, and hundreds of other essential parts that will keep us safe.

Three of us are crammed inside a sphere 1.5 metres in diameter, surrounded by communication equipment, controls, snacks, cameras. 37 Its peaks, rarely seen up close before, rise from the bottom of the Pacific near Cocos Island. The highest peak here is more than 2,200 metres tall.

Seamounts generally form when volcanic mountains rise up from the sea floor but fail to reach the surface (those that break the surface become islands). Scientists estimate that there are some 100,000 seamounts at least one kilometre high. But if you include others that range from small hills to rolling mountains, there may be as many as a million of them. We've seen little of these oases of life in the deep. Of all earth's seamounts, marine biologists have studied only a few hundred. 38

Scientists don't often explore their slopes first hand – or even their shallower summits: living mazes of hard coral, sponges and sea fans circled by schools of fish. 39 Among this abundance of sea creatures, might there be new species that could produce new chemical compounds that can cure diseases?

Unfortunately, more and more frequently deep-sea fishing trawlers drag nets weighted with heavy chains across seamounts to catch schools of fish that congregate around them. 40 Once these underwater communities are disrupted, it can take hundreds, even thousands, of years for them to re-establish themselves.

We turn a ghostly greenish blue in the light, kept dim so we can see outside. Clear, pulsing jellies glide gently in the dark, bouncing off the sub in every direction. A black-and-white manta ray flexes its wings and soars past for a look. We are still in what is called the photic zone, where sunlight penetrates and provides energy for countless microscopic, photosynthetic ocean plants that create much of the earth's oxygen. 41

At about 200 metres the sub's dazzling lights bring the bottom into view. 42 We joke that maybe we've found a new wreck, but instead it is the remains of a volcano, perhaps millions of years old. Within minutes the sub is hovering a few centimetres from the bottom, inside an ancient, circular vent of the now extinct volcano that forms Las Gemelas. Its sculptured walls look like the facade of a deep-sea cathedral.

Our sub surfaces after five hours – all too soon. We begin the long journey back to our land-based lives, where we will analyse our data and add one more piece to the puzzle of our global ocean.

LIVEWORKSHEETS

A This process also destroys long-lived and slow-growing corals, sponges, and other invertebrates.	**E** Suddenly something just beyond them rises from the otherwise featureless sea floor.
B These under-sea mountains have therefore been well known for a number of years.	**F** We have everything we need for our journey to reach a seamount named Las Gemelas.
C Then we descend further, and the ocean around us is completely black.	**G** Some of these animals have even lived to be more than a hundred years old.
D More finely detailed maps of the surface of Mars may exist than of the remotest parts of the ocean floor.	

LIVEWORKSHEETS

You are going to read an article in which four young people talk about the experience of taking their driving test. For questions **43–52**, choose from the people (**A–D**). The people may be chosen more than once.

Mark your answers **on the separate answer sheet.**

Which person

failed the driving test three times?	43
thought learning to drive would be easier than it was?	44
was discouraged from driving by a relative?	45
was very nervous at first?	46
is going to drive a vehicle at work?	47
practised driving on private land?	48
nearly missed the test?	49
hasn't driven since taking the test?	50
will soon own a car?	51
could previously use another type of vehicle?	52

LIVEWORKSHEETS

First steps at driving

How do young people feel about learning to drive?
We asked four youngsters who have recently passed the test.

A Joe Smedley

I used to make models of cars, and I knew a lot about different makes long before I was old enough to drive one. I'd been riding a motorbike for six months before I started taking lessons for my driving test, and I'm sure that experience helped me. On the other hand, learning to drive proved to be quite hard. I thought because I knew how a car works it would make a difference. That was a big mistake! I remember how embarrassed I was when I couldn't even get the car into second gear. By the time I took my test, I felt fairly confident, so I wasn't surprised when I passed first time. The funny thing about it is that I haven't had the chance to drive a car ever since I got my licence because my parents don't have one!

B Hanna Watson

I'm really glad that I have a driving licence because it's so useful, but I wasn't really sure I wanted to take the test at first. I was shaking and my knees were trembling before the first lesson, though I felt better because the instructor was so friendly. Although he assured me I was ready to take the test after 25 lessons, I decided to wait until I had had a few more. I felt very tense about driving, and the test was a disaster. First, I forgot my glasses when I went for the written test, and then, on the practical test, I got there five minutes' late because the bus I was on broke down! It wasn't my fault, and luckily they let me go ahead with it anyway, but I was quite upset. Anyway, for the last few months I've been practising in my father's car, although he only lets me go on quiet country roads.

C Clarissa Holmes

I wanted to get my driving licence as soon as I could. My childhood ambition was to be the first woman Formula One world champion! Actually, the reality of taking my test was completely different from what I'd expected. I didn't pass the test until my fourth attempt, but that was because of the practical test. I kept on making silly mistakes, you see. In fact, the other part of the test wasn't nearly as hard; all you had to do was learn the regulations about driving.

I was getting pretty upset after failing three times, so my aunt, who owns a farm, let me go into a field and drive around, just to get used to the feeling. I think that helped a lot. I've been saving up like mad, and in a couple of weeks I'm confident I'll have enough to buy a decent second-hand car.

D Eddy Fredricks

I didn't really think about taking my driving test right up until I was 18. I had the idea that driving was basically dangerous, and I think that came from my grandmother. She had never got used to driving in busy traffic, and she used to tell me how awful it was, which put me off a lot. But when a couple of my friends passed their tests, I suddenly realised I really wanted to get my driving licence.

Being optimistic, I just booked ten lessons at first, but in the end I needed over three times that many! Having a driving licence is going to be very useful. When the school term finishes in August, I've got a part-time job delivering books for a big bookshop, and I have to use their delivery van, so I couldn't do it if I hadn't passed my test.

LIVEWORKSHEETS