

Task 2

Read the article about discrimination in the workplace, and choose the best option: (A, B, C or D) to complete the statements (1-5) about the text.

Overweight, underpaid

SONYA is heavily overweight and used to what she describes as “fat ism” from the general public. But she hadn’t expected her obesity- to affect her career prospects. ‘I knew the moment I turned up to my last job interview that my chances were low,’ she says. ‘When I met my two interviewers, I knew I’d lost immediately because of the way they looked at me. The thing that was most upsetting was that the telephone conversation I’d had with one of them beforehand suggested I had all the skills and experience necessary and the interview was just a formality.’

‘Lookism’ is the latest discrimination to hit the workplace, according to the law firm, Eversheds. Victims of the trend are judged by employers on aspects of their appearance ranging from weight to clothing and from hairstyle to body piercing. Some are turned down for jobs, others miss out on promotion. The latest research has revealed a culture of appearance discrimination sweeping businesses across the world. A staggering 16% of Americans believe they have been discriminated against because of the way they look and 33% believe that those who are more physically attractive are more likely to get promoted.

Discrimination claims involving alleged lookism are surging in the US. In fact, there are only two states of America that have specific laws against appearance discrimination. In other states, lawyers are turning to discrimination laws relating to issues like gender, race and disability. So if someone is overweight because of a clinical problem, they can claim disability discrimination.

There are examples of lookism issues already arising in the UK as well. A couple of years ago, Fitness First received widespread criticism after a leaked email claimed that larger employees did not fit the firm’s image. In the UK. We don’t have any laws against appearance discrimination, but Ms Emma Harris, an associate at Eversheds, believes it won’t be long before we do. “I think it’s only a matter of time before some kind of beauty bias legislation comes into play,” she says. In the meantime, victims of lookism are, like most Americans, relying on sex, race and disability discrimination. Among the British who have been successful in an indirect discrimination claim are Matthew Thompson, who last year argued that he had suffered sexual discrimination because he was forced to wear a tie while his female colleagues weren’t, and a man who was made to cut his long hair by his employers.

1 Before her last job interview, Sonya....

- A had expected problems getting the job
- B had never felt discriminated against.
- C had not realised how overweight she was.
- D had thought the interview would be a formality

2 During the interview ...

- A Sonya was surprised there were two interviews.
- B she didn't like the way interviews looked at her.
- C the interviewers were surprised at her qualifications.
- D She had a feeling she wouldn't be accepted.

3 Lookism ...

- A is not limited to job applicants.
- B is opposed to one third of Americans.
- C only affects unattractive and overweight people.
- D has been researched for many years.

4 In the USA ...

- A lookism is forbidden by federal law.
- B race discrimination is more widespread than lookism.
- C the number of cases related to lookism is growing.
- D lawyers turn down people who claim appearance discrimination.

5 In the UK

- A there is public acceptance of lookism.
- B legal regulations against lookism are expected soon.
- C victims of lookism have no chance to claim their rights.
- D there have no cases related to lookism so far.

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Changing Roles in Modern Families

For centuries, traditional family roles were clear: men were the breadwinners and women took care of the home and children. However, this image has changed significantly in recent decades. Today, in many countries, dual-income households have become the norm, and fathers are far more involved in parenting than ever before.

Sociologists say this shift began in the late 20th century, when women entered the workforce in large numbers. As a result, families had to adjust their daily routines. Fathers began sharing domestic responsibilities such as cooking, cleaning, and helping children with homework. Many men say they enjoy the closer emotional connection with their children that this involvement brings.

Still, despite progress, there are challenges. Surveys show that women continue to spend more hours doing housework and childcare, even if they also work full-time. Some women say they feel under pressure to “do it all” — to be both successful professionals and perfect mothers. Meanwhile, some men face social criticism if they choose to stay at home with their children.

Experts believe that the idea of a “modern family” will keep changing. Single-parent families, blended families, and same-sex parents are becoming increasingly common. What matters most, they say, is not the family structure but the quality of relationships within it. Mutual respect, shared responsibilities, and emotional support remain the key ingredients of a happy home — regardless of who earns the money or who stays at home.

1. In the past, family roles were...

- A the same for both men and women.
- B divided clearly between men and women.
- C often shared equally between parents.
- D decided mainly by children's needs.

2. According to the article, more fathers now...

- A avoid taking part in family life.
- B prefer to work fewer hours.
- C help more with home and childcare.
- D leave all domestic duties to women.

3. One continuing problem mentioned in the text is that...

- A women still carry more household responsibilities.
- B men are becoming less interested in their families.
- C children spend too much time at home.
- D both men and women work shorter hours.

4. Some men who stay at home with their children...

- A receive support from society.
- B are proud of their traditional role.
- C find it easy to be accepted by others.
- D may face negative social attitudes.

5. The writer suggests that happiness in a family depends mostly on...

- A how the roles are divided.
- B money and social status.
- C mutual care and understanding.
- D the number of children.

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Friends in Rome

When Emma Taylor accepted a new job in Rome, she imagined warm evenings in small cafés, lively conversations, and new adventures every day. She had always dreamed of living in Italy — but when she finally arrived, the reality felt more complicated. Her Italian was limited to a few phrases, and although her colleagues were polite, they already had their own social circles. “I realised how hard it can be to start again in a new place,” she says. “During the day I was busy, but at night the city felt huge and silent.”

After a few weeks, Emma decided to take action. She joined a local book club and signed up for an Italian cooking class. The first few meetings were not easy. “People in the book club were friendly, but I often didn’t understand their jokes,” she recalls. However, her persistence paid off. One evening, a woman named Giulia invited her for coffee after the club. They talked about their favourite writers and travel plans — and from that moment, things began to change.

Through Giulia, Emma met more locals and started receiving invitations to weekend trips and family dinners. The small gestures — an unexpected message, a shared meal, or an invitation to celebrate someone’s birthday — slowly made her feel part of the group. “It wasn’t about speaking perfect Italian,” Emma explains. “It was about showing real interest in people’s lives.”

She also learned that friendship in Rome often develops around food and shared experiences. Her new friends loved long lunches that lasted for hours, and they talked about everything — from childhood memories to dreams for the future. “Back home in England, my friendships were often based on hobbies or work,” she says. “In Rome, it was more emotional and spontaneous.”

After two years, Emma says she no longer feels like a foreigner. Her friends have become like family — always ready to help, listen, and laugh together. She often hosts dinners in her small apartment, cooking her favourite Italian dishes. “Moving abroad taught me that friendship isn’t about nationality,” she reflects. “It’s about kindness, curiosity, and the willingness to give your time.”

Questions

1. When Emma first moved to Rome, she found it difficult because...
 - A she didn't like the city atmosphere.
 - B her Italian colleagues were unfriendly.
 - C she didn't know anyone and felt lonely.
 - D she wasn't happy with her new job.
2. What helped Emma begin making friends?
 - A Her fluency in Italian.
 - B Joining local activities and meeting Giulia.
 - C Taking long walks in the city.
 - D Spending more time at work.
3. According to Emma, real friendship in Rome...
 - A depends on language and good manners.
 - B develops mainly through work relationships.
 - C grows naturally through shared time and emotions.
 - D takes many years to build trust.
4. Emma noticed that Italian friendships are often based on...
 - A similar professional goals.
 - B food, openness, and emotional connection.
 - C competition and ambition.
 - D social status and education.
5. At the end of the article, Emma believes that friendship...
 - A depends mostly on your nationality.
 - B is easier to find in your home country.
 - C requires time, patience, and a positive attitude.
 - D only happens when people share the same culture.

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Family Ties That Last a Lifetime

When we are young, our childhood friends often seem like the centre of our universe. We share secrets, spend every free moment together, and promise that nothing will ever change. During adolescence, these friendships may grow even stronger — or sometimes start to fade as we form new interests and priorities. By the time we reach adulthood, we often realise that people move in different directions. Some start families of their own, others focus on their careers, and it becomes harder to keep in contact as life gets busier.

Yet, despite these changes, family usually remains our most constant source of support. Whether you belong to a large extended family or a small immediate family, the people you grow up with often shape your character and values. You might have a row with your siblings or disagree with your in-laws, but at the end of the day, these are the people who know you best. There's truth in the saying "*It runs in the family*" — not just about physical resemblance, but also about habits, talents, and even a sense of humour.

Modern families come in many forms. Some people live in single-parent or blended families, others decide to adopt a child or take in a foster child. Couples may choose to cohabit rather than marry, while others prefer a civil wedding instead of a church ceremony. There are also stepbrothers, stepsisters, half-siblings, and even distant relatives who stay surprisingly close. Family is no longer defined by blood alone — it's about belonging, care, and emotional connection.

As people grow older, they often start to value these connections more deeply. In old age, when many retire and finally have time for reflection, they may try to patch things up with relatives they once fell out with. Grandparents often play a key role, passing on stories and traditions to younger generations. Even those who live far away try to stay in touch through phone calls or video chats.

In the end, life moves through many stages — from infancy and childhood to the teenage years, adulthood, and retirement — but our need for meaningful relationships never disappears. Friends may come and go, yet family, in whatever shape or size it takes, remains the foundation of who we are.

Questions

1. What is the main message of the article?
 - A) Friendships are more important than family.
 - B) Family connections remain essential throughout life.
 - C) Only traditional families can provide emotional support.
 - D) Modern society no longer values family ties.
2. Why do people often lose contact with childhood friends?
 - A) They become unfriendly as they grow older.
 - B) They have fewer interests in common.
 - C) Their lives take different directions in adulthood.
 - D) They move to the same area.
3. What does the writer suggest about modern families?
 - A) Families today are less united than before.
 - B) The definition of family has become more flexible.
 - C) Adoption and fostering should be avoided.
 - D) Cohabiting couples have weaker bonds.
4. What do many people try to do in old age?
 - A) Start a new career.
 - B) Reconnect with relatives and strengthen relationships.
 - C) Become independent from their families.
 - D) Spend less time with grandchildren.
5. What does the expression “*It runs in the family*” refer to?
 - A) The shared experiences of friends.
 - B) The habits and traits common among family members.
 - C) The distance between relatives.
 - D) The rules that all families must follow.