

C1 Reading ENVIRONMENT

TEST 8, part 2 You are going to read a magazine article. Six paragraphs have been removed from the article. Choose from the paragraphs A-G the one which fits each gap (7-12). There is one extra paragraph which you do not need to use. Mark your answers on the separate answer sheet.

CLOSE ENCOUNTERS OF THE WILD KIND *The rise of the wildlife-watching experience*

Wildlife observation has always proved inspirational for humans. It led Charles Darwin to provide us with a better understanding of how we evolved and inspired such everyday innovations as Velcro. US author Peter Matthiessen wrote: 'The variety of life in nature can be compared to a vast library of unread books, and the plundering of nature is comparable to the random discarding of whole volumes without having opened them and learned from them.' While there is indeed much to learn from many species not yet known to science, it's the already opened 'books' that attract the majority of us - in ever increasing numbers.

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Awareness and understanding of the state of the planet and its wildlife has been spurred on by the efforts of conservation groups and natural history television. This, in turn, has led to an increased demand for wildlife tours or the addition of a wildlife-watching component to traditional holidays. It seems people want to discover nature for themselves.

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Although the term is overused, 'ecotourism' allows tourists both to see and help wildlife. This encouraging development within the wildlife-tourism industry offers an added hope for the future of many endangered species, as money from clients is often given directly to conservation organisations. Tour operators who are listed with independent bodies such as Responsibletravel.com have ethical policies in place to ensure that proper procedures are followed. They use the services of local communities, train local guides and have close ties to conservation projects.

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Conservation organisations have also realised that tourism can help educate people and provide a valuable source of revenue and even manpower. The World Wildlife Fund, for example, runs trips that give donors the chance to see for themselves how their financial aid is assisting conservation projects in the field. But not all wildlife watching trips are so hands-off. Some offer the opportunity to participate in research and conservation.

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Similarly, Biosphere Expeditions takes about 200 people every year on what its field operations director, Dr Matthias Hammer, calls an 'adventure with a conscience'. Volunteers can visit six destinations around the world and take part in various activities including snow leopard, wolf and bear surveys and whale and dolphin research.

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Of course, to go in search of wildlife doesn't always mean you will find it. That sightings of animals in large wild areas don't come on tap is simply a fact of life. Although potentially frustrating, it makes sightings all the more rewarding when they are made.

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Indeed, some of the best wildlife-watching opportunities on offer are on our doorstep, according to author and ornithologist Malcolm Tait. 'People assume you have to go a long way to do it, which is simply not the case - your garden or even a railway cutting can bring constant surprises.'

- A 'If done properly, wildlife-watching tourism can be a win-win situation,' says Hammer. 'People have a unique experience while contributing to conservation directly. Local people and habitats benefit through job creation, research and an alternative income. Local wildlife benefits from our conservation and research work.'
- B 'What is interesting is how much people are willing to pay to be in a wilderness environment,' says Julian Matthews, director of Discovery Initiatives, which takes people on small group trips to more than thirty-five countries and works directly with conservation organisations such as the Orang-utan Foundation. 'It's still a small part of the tourism industry - maybe four or five percent of the whole - but it's undoubtedly expanding. There are definitely more and more people seeking wildlife experiences now.'
- C A comparable problem is found in various parts of East Africa, though government intervention has, in these cases, done little to alleviate the hardships. Would it be possible for ethical tourism to play a role in the future of this region? Ken Logan, Director of the African Wildlife Association, is not optimistic about the chances.
- D 'There's no way to compare seeing an animal in the wild with watching one on TV,' says Matthews. 'While a filmmaker may spend six months shooting an animal and will get closer to it than you will when watching it in the wild, there's no greater pleasure than seeing an animal in its own environment. On film, you're only getting the visuals and the sound. As impressive as they may be, it's not the real McCoy and misses other aspects that you can appreciate only by being there.'
- E Earthwatch is a nonprofit international environmental group that does just that. 'Participation in an Earthwatch project is a positive alternative to wildlife-watching expeditions, as we offer members of the public the opportunity to be on the front line, not the sidelines, of conservation,' says Claudia Eckardt Earthwatch volunteer programme manager.
- F Wildlife covers all wild creatures, not just those that are big, dangerous or exotic. As people are able to travel to more extreme places in search of the ultimate wildlife experience, it's worth remembering that you don't have to go to the ends of the Earth to catch rewarding glimpses of animals.
- G Thus tour operator Rekero has established its own school - the Koyiaki Guide School and Wilderness Camp - for young Maasai in Kenya. Maasai have largely been excluded from the benefits brought to the region by tourism; they make up just fifteen percent of employees in tourist camps, it is a concerted effort to put the running of the reserve into the hands of indigenous people,' says Ron Beaton, founder of the school.

ARE YOU A SLUMPER?

Ashley Seager was, but cured bad posture - and her chronic back pain - with the Alexander technique

Many people will have heard of the Alexander technique but have only a vague idea what it is about. Until earlier this year, I didn't have the faintest idea about it. But, hunched over a computer screen one day, I noticed that the neck and backache I regularly suffered were more painful than usual. I consulted an osteopath, who said: 'I can treat the symptoms by massaging your neck and upper back. But you actually have bad posture. That is what you need to get sorted out. Go off and learn the Alexander technique.'

I had regularly been told by friends and family that I tend to slouch in chairs but had thought bad posture was something one was born with and could do nothing about. That is not true. Dentists and car mechanics, among others, tend to develop bad posture from leaning over patients or engine bays. Mothers often stress and strain their necks and backs lifting and carrying children, and those of us who sit in front of computers all day are almost certainly not doing our bodies any favours.

A few clicks on the web and I found an Alexander technique teacher, Tanya Shoop, in my area of south London and booked a first appointment. Three months later I am walking straighter and sitting better, while my neck and back pain are things of the past. I feel taller, too, which I may be imagining, but the technique can increase your height by up to five centimetres if you were badly slumped beforehand.

The teaching centres on the neck, head and back. It trains you to use your body less harshly and to perform familiar movements and actions with less effort. There is very little effort in the lessons themselves, which sets apart the Alexander technique from pilates or yoga, which are exercise-based.

A typical lesson involves standing in front of a chair and learning to sit and stand with minimal effort. You spend some time lying on a bench with your knees bent to straighten the spine and relax your body while the teacher moves your arms and legs to train you to move them correctly.

The key is learning to break the bad habits accumulated over years. Try, for example, folding your arms the opposite way to normal. It feels odd, doesn't it? This is an example of a habit the body has formed which can be hard to break. Many of us carry our heads too far back and tilted skywards. The technique teaches you to let go of the muscles holding the head back, allowing it to resume its natural place on the summit of our spines. The head weighs four to six kilos, so any misalignment can cause problems for the neck and body.

The Alexander technique teaches you to think of the space above your head. This may sound daft, but it is an important element in the process of learning to hold yourself upright. You learn to observe how you use your body and how others use theirs - usually badly. Look how a colleague slumps back in a chair with his or her legs crossed. That puts all sorts of stresses and strains on the body. Even swimming can harm the neck. The Alexander technique can teach you to swim better, concentrating on technique rather than clocking up lengths. 'In too many of our activities we concentrate on how we get to a destination rather than the means or way of getting there,' says Shoop.

So who was Alexander and how did he come up with the technique? Frederick Matthias Alexander, an Australian theatrical orator born in 1869, found in his youth that his voice was failing during performances. He analysed himself and realised his posture was bad. He worked on improving it, with dramatic results. He brought his technique to London 100 years ago and quickly gathered a following that included some very famous people. He died in 1955, having established a teacher-training school in London, which is thriving today.

So if you are slouching along the road one day, feeling weighed down by your troubles, give a thought to the Alexander technique. It could help you walk tall again.

13 The writer learnt about the Alexander technique

- A after telling someone about her problems.
- B when she suddenly developed a bad back.
- C when massage failed to alleviate her back pain.
- D after a doctor told her she had bad posture.

14 The writer had been

- A concerned that her neck and back problems were caused by bad posture.
- B under the impression that poor posture was innate and could not be rectified.
- C aware that she had problems similar to those experienced by car mechanics.
- D uncertain about placing her trust in the Alexander technique.

15 The Alexander technique teaches that familiar movements

- A have been learnt by incorrect methods.
- B need more energy and effort than we think.
- C do not have to be performed so strenuously.
- D are the most common cause of backache.

16 It appears that the body forms habits that

- A inevitably cause physical pain.
- B can be difficult to change.
- C are a consequence of actions we perform.
- D develop in early childhood.

17 The Alexander technique

- A makes you aware of other people's faults.
- B has immediate and dramatic results.
- C helps athletes perform better.
- D brings about a change in body posture.

18 It is suggested that Frederick Alexander

- A believed in the benefits of exercise.
- B invented an alternative to yoga.
- C developed a form of exercise for actors.
- D recovered his vocal powers.

19 What is the writer's main purpose in the article?

- A to recommend regular physical exercise
- B to explain how debilitating backache can be
- C to suggest that back problems can be remedied
- D to explain the widespread occurrence of back pain