Part 6

You are going to read a magazine article about someone who goes on a trip to explore the bottom of 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.

Ocean explorer

I'm on a speedboat with some research scientists off the southern coast of Bermuda in the North Atlantic Ocean. A crew member points to a spot on our speedboat's GPS screen. The location is surrounded by red flags and carries a warning in bold text: 'This area is to be avoided'. 'And that's exactly where we're heading,' he announces cheerfully. We're going there to meet the Baseline Explorer research ship. For the last month, it has circled Bermuda, sending people down in small underwater craft called 'submersibles', to depths of up to 200 metres.

Today, I'm going down in one of these submersibles to investigate an area that, like 95% of the seabed, is totally unexplored. The research is part of an ongoing global campaign to examine what life is like in the ocean's depths. **37** The survey techniques used in the study can be shared with researchers making their own measurements. This is part of the development of a standard method that any oceanographer and marine biologist can apply.

After a quick safety briefing, I take off my shoes and slide into the submersible to sit beside the pilot. We are going to explore a particular area of the seabed in detail. **38** It is uncomfortably hot. I can see in all directions through the transparent sides and floor.

A crane lifts our submersible into the air and deposits us in the sea. The pilot runs through a series of checks over the radio: the batteries aren't leaking, the engines are working, and the life systems are good. I give the 'OK' sign to a man on the deck of the ship, confirming that I don't mind spending time in this tiny space. **39**

Our vessel slips under the surface, tipping forward and then becoming upright again. For the next half hour, we drift downward. **40** What I'm even less prepared for is the sheer vastness of the ocean and I'm excited at the thought of how mysterious it still is.

At 200 metres deep, the pilot suddenly points. **41** As we move along at a leisurely one metre per second towards it, we spot a variety of colourful fish all around us, including some butterfly fish darting between the rocks. A pair of lionfish also pop up, then disappear into the darkness.

Ahead of us, another craft is filming part of the ocean floor. A team of scientists will examine the videos, counting the different species they see. **42** Other submersibles return with actual samples of the local wildlife: sea stars, crabs, urchins and coral. After a couple of hours, we finally hit the surface again, a little bit wiser about the alien world below.

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A Once that reassurance is communicated, we are given official permission to begin our dive.

B To my surprise, the water fades rapidly from clear green to a rather murky blue-black, reducing the visibility considerably.

C At the centre of the gleaming yellow craft is a glass dome, just big enough for two passengers to squeeze into.

D Such a breakthrough would clearly depend on similar technological advances.

E So far, five or six new ones have been discovered, as well as a handful of fish that couldn't immediately be identified.

F The goal is to carry out an 'ocean health check', helping us to understand not only what this ecosystem looks like now, but how it is changing over time.

G At first I'm not sure why but then, just ahead of us, an enormous submerged mountain gradually appears.

→ p. 121

LIVEWORKSHEETS