SKILLS PRACTICE B2 CLASS – MODULE 2 – TENSES FULLNAME:_____

LISTENING PRACTICE

I. LISTEN AND FILL IN THE BLANKS

Hi! I'm Anna, and I'm a fashion blogger. I've always loved fashion and **(1)** _____, so a fashion blog combines both interests!

My blog's about clothes for teenagers, which my brother and I model. When I first started, I didn't get many hits, but I did get mentioned in a **(2)** _____, so I was pleased. Then one newspaper wrote something about me, and loads more people started to look at the blog. After that, a **(3)** _____ came and interviewed me for a programme - that was great!

Since then, the blog has really started to develop, so I'm no longer working alone. I recently met a **(4)** _____ at my college - who agreed to take some shots for the site, in return for publicity. And I considered asking a hairdresser to help but I can't afford to pay anyone yet. I'd like to hire a **(5)** _____ too, one day, but we'll see.

There are some beautiful clothes available for teenagers now, so I feature those in my blog, while bearing in mind what my readers' lifestyles may be like. They're probably all students, so that's really the **(6)** _____ when thinking about what to include. But they all have different tastes, so I make sure I feature clothes to suit a **(7)** _____. I try and think about their budgets, too, of course - so choosing clothes is quite a task!

Having said that, I've discovered teenagers are prepared to **(8)** _____ for certain things if they're good quality. I asked readers about their most expensive purchases, expecting they'd say trainers, which can cost a fortune. However, **(9)** _____ seemed to be their biggest purchase in terms of how much cash they'd part with. That didn't surprise me, 'cos well-fitting ones aren't cheap. As for other essential items like jackets, their parents seemed to be the ones to buy those.

Most of the clothes I talk about are readily available, so you can go into department stores and find them there, and local clothes shops will stock them too. To mix things up though, I also feature clothes I've found in **(10)** _____. They're my personal favourites - I shop in them a lot, you can find really **(11)** _____. Markets are quite good for that too.

As well as showing the latest styles, I also include **(12)** _____ from other periods. Believe it or not, the **(13)** _____ is the richest source of ideas for my most recent blogposts, although other periods I've featured have been interesting too. People enjoyed the clothes from the 1970s that I showed last year. I got lots of positive comments about stuff from the 1980s too!

Because I'm trying to show clothes for both sexes on my blog, I include a range of colours and patterns in the items I choose. Clothes that have no pattern on them are always popular, but people also like checks, especially in bright colours. A little while ago there were suddenly far more hits on anything that had **(14)** _____. Anyway, clothes with **(15)** _____ on them are my personal choice, so they'll always appear somewhere!

I try to avoid materials that are **(16)** _____ if I can. I focus largely on items made from **(17)** _____, say, which I like better than anything made from plastic! And you don't have to spend a lot on them. Wool sometimes features too, especially in winter.

I've also begun experimenting with putting things on the blog that I've made myself. I attempted a few hats, although people didn't seem to like them that much. But the bags I made got a better response. Then I started putting together **(18)** _____, and when those appeared people asked to buy them! So that's something for the future.

I'm proud of how the blog's grown. I think even at the beginning it was fairly sophisticated, and recently some readers commented that it looked **(19)** _____, which I took as a compliment. I didn't start out feeling skilled at it, so it shows what you can achieve once you become more **(20)** _____!

II. ANSWER THE QUESTIONS

LIVEWORKSHEETS

1. What helped Anna's blog attract a much larger audience?
A. Being featured in a fashion magazine
B. Having an article published about her in a newspaper
C. Appearing in a local television programme
D. Working with a professional photographer
2. Who has recently agreed to help Anna develop her blog?
A. A hairdresser who works at her college
B. A make-up artist interested in fashion
C. A photographer who wants publicity
D. A fashion designer who creates teenage clothes
3. What is Anna's main consideration when choosing clothes for her blog?
A. Whether the clothes are currently fashionable
B. Whether they suit her readers' lifestyles
C. Whether they are available at affordable prices
D. Whether they appeal to different fashion tastes
4. According to Anna, which item do teenagers spend the most money on?
A. Trainers
B. Jackets
C. Jeans
D. Accessories
5. Why does Anna particularly enjoy shopping in second-hand shops?
A. They sell clothes at much lower prices.
B. They offer items that are unusual and original.
C. They have a wider range of fashionable brands.
D. They provide clothes from the latest collections.
6. Which period has inspired most of Anna's recent blogposts?
A. The 1920s
B. The 1970s
C. The 1980s
D. The present day
7. Which statement best describes Anna's personal fashion preferences?
A. She prefers striped designs and woollen clothes.
B. She likes checked patterns and artificial materials.
C. She favours floral patterns and natural fabrics.
D. She chooses plain clothes made from synthetic materials.
8. What does Anna suggest about the development of her blog?
A. Its success mainly depends on professional assistance.
B. It has become more professional as she has gained experience.
C. Its popularity comes from selling her handmade accessories.
D. It has always been successful because of her fashion expertise.

READING COMPREHENSION

Can we control our dreams?

Strange as it seems, the answer is yes – and it could help us solve our problems.

LIVEWORKSHEETS

Do we have any influence over the often strange, wandering, night-time journeys in our mind? Could we learn to dream differently, getting rid of repeated nightmares or finding answers to the problems that we cannot solve in daylight hours? Strange though it may seem, the answer is yes. Research suggests that, using practical and psychological techniques, we can influence our dreams and use them to draw on the vast, largely unused resource of our unconscious mind.

Deirdre Barrett, an assistant clinical professor of psychology at Harvard Medical School, is convinced we all have the power to manage our dreams. 'If you want to dream about a particular subject,' she says, 'focus on it once you are in bed. **(1)**..... You can also place an object or photo that represents the desired dream on your bedside table,' Barrett says.

Another key factor in using one's dreams creatively is to avoid jumping out of bed the moment you wake up. **(2)**..... 'If you don't recall a dream immediately, lie still and see if a thought or image comes to mind,' Barrett says. 'Sometimes a whole dream will come flooding back.'

The point of this second strategy is to make use of the information presented by our unconscious as we sleep. It's hard to put an exact figure on the ratio of our unconscious to conscious mind, but psychologists estimate it to be nine to one. We may believe that thinking is our best problem-solving strategy, but the power of our conscious mind is relatively tiny. **(3)**..... So letting the unconscious mind work on it may be healthier and more productive.

Barrett put this to the test in a week-long study with college students; she asked them to use dreaming as a way of finding ways of dealing with a particular problem. **(4)**..... 'If we're stuck on a problem, it's our waking, logical way of thinking that's stuck,' Barrett says. 'The dream's power lies in the fact that it's a different manner of thought – it adds to and develops what we've already done while awake.'

Most of us enjoy the rich, pleasantly strange experience of dreaming (and we all dream – some people just don't remember it). But no one enjoys nightmares that keep coming back, or the kind of unpleasant dreams from which you wake sweating. **(5)**..... 'It's very common for them to have nightmares about being chased by a monster,' says Delphi Ellis, a counsellor and dream expert. 'This often happens as they get older and become aware of their place in the huge world.'

'As an adult, troubling or frightening dreams are often an indication of diff cult issues from the past,' Ellis says. **(6)**..... They and all other kinds of dream are an incredibly valuable resource, which most of us simply ignore. So learn to listen to them, even the horrible ones – they're always trying to tell you something.'

A It's one in which you know you're dreaming as the dream is occurring – the kind of 'dream within a dream' that film characters sometimes have.

B Even more anxiety-causing, if you're a parent, are the scary ones that have such an effect on your kids.

C Doing so means you'll lose half of what your dream contained as the day's distractions take over your thoughts.

D About half of them dreamt about it and one-quarter of them solved it.

E Since dreaming is so visual, form a picture in your mind of something related to that topic as you fall asleep.

F The more you ignore dreams like those, the more your unconscious turns up the volume – so a nightmare is that message on full volume.

G Also, when this consists of going over and over negative or worrying issues in our minds, it is strongly linked with stress, depression and anxiety.

LIVEWORKSHEETS