

READING AND USE OF ENGLISH

You are going to read a newspaper article about someone arriving home after a long trip. For questions 1–6, choose the answer (A, B, C or D) which you think fits best according to the text.

In from the cold

Jim Whyte flew out of Japan after spending four months crossing Siberia.

I got my usual seat on the plane, between the man with a large laptop and the woman with a screaming baby and directly in front of the kicking toddler. On this flight I had the added bonus of being at the front up against the wall which meant no legroom and no view of the movies. I'd read the in-flight magazine for the fifth time and discovered that the only film I hadn't seen was being shown on every flight operated by the airline except **this one**, all before the plane had finished taxiing down the runway.

The flight home followed almost exactly the route I'd taken since November, flying via Seoul, Beijing and Mongolia to Irkutsk and then across the frozen wastes to Moscow. I looked out of the window for any signs of something familiar but I could see nothing but a sea of frozen trees stretching north to the Arctic Sea. A journey that had taken four months, several visas and huge quantities of thermal underwear to complete now took little more than 12 hours, three lousy films and two airline meals to undo.

As the plane came in to land over London in the late afternoon sunshine, the Japanese and Korean tourists peered out of the windows for their first view through the London clouds of the suburbs round Heathrow Airport with the same enthusiasm I'd had for my first view of Kyoto or Ulan Bator. After such a long time away, even I found the regimented streets a strange sight.

By the time I'd collected my luggage from the carousel, it was beginning to sink in that I was home. I was no longer some strange exotic creature attracting the stares and attention of the local people and I realised I resented this. At least with my long hair and shaggy beard it was a certainty that I would be stopped at customs. 'What was the purpose of your visit?' I was asked. I was really beginning to enjoy the reaction to my answers, but the customs officer had already had enough of me and let me go. The doors to the arrivals hall sprung open and I was greeted by a sea of smiling, welcoming faces which quickly turned blank again when they realised I wasn't their relative. By the time I'd reached the other side of the hall, I'd lost the 'I'm back! Guess where I've been!' look on my face.

Little had changed in the past four months. If you had arrived back from such a journey some years ago, the UK could have been struck by a hurricane and you wouldn't have known about it until the pilot started circling above looking for a place to land. These days email, the Internet and 24-hour news mean that, despite your best efforts, it's impossible to completely lose touch with home; well, except when you stay in a tent in the desert for a week or so.



It was with a sense of sadness that I unpacked my dirty clothes and put my trusty rucksack in the cupboard.

Somehow it just didn't seem right to see a piece of luggage that had spent its whole life travelling through the wilds of the Arctic, Europe and the wide open spaces of Asia, now folded up and confined to a shelf above the towels and bed linen until I set off again.

I loved every minute of the trip especially seeing the northern lights in Abisko, the Trans-Siberian Railway, camping in Mongolia and New Year in China. I'm already planning my next journey and reckon that the perfect antidote to crossing Siberia in January is to cross the Sahara in August. What do you think?

1 What does Jim mean by 'I got my usual seat on the plane' in the first paragraph?

- A He preferred to sit at the front of the plane.
- B He always seemed to get the worst place to sit.
- C He had got the seat he had asked for.
- D He liked to sit in the same place on each flight.

2 What does 'this one' refer to in lines 7-8?

- A the airline
- B the film
- C the flight
- D the magazine

3 What did Jim have in common with the tourists?

- A He was not pleased at the clouds blocking his view.
- B He was not sure whether he had made a wrong decision.
- C He did not know this part of London very well either.
- D He had experienced the same feelings on arriving in a new place.

4 How did Jim feel after he left the arrivals hall?

- A irritated that nobody was interested in his homecoming
- B disappointed that there was nobody to meet him
- C upset that people weren't friendly towards him
- D annoyed that the customs official hadn't trusted him

5 What does Jim say about keeping in touch while he was away?

- A He would have preferred to be out of contact for longer.
- B He was grateful that he was able to use email and the Internet.
- C He would have liked to have received more up-to date news from home.
- D He was relieved to get emails in some remote places.

6 What is Jim's main purpose in writing the article?

- A to explain why he wanted to make the trip
- B to point out the things that can go wrong on a trip
- C to suggest a route across Asia for other people to follow
- D to describe his reactions to the trip coming to an end