

Task 1

You are going to read an extract from a writer's journal. For Questions 1-6, choose the correct answer A, B, C or D

Extract

Six months ago I made a rash promise. The leader of the youth club in our village had rung me in March saying, "We're thinking of running a children's playscheme for a day in October half-term. Would you be prepared to help?" My response was "Sure, why not?" In truth I was a little flattered to be asked, even though working as a care assistant with old people hardly qualified me for the role. Still, I duly put the date in my diary and of course I forgot all about it. I don't know if you've noticed this but time has a habit of speeding along faster than a police car chasing a robber and, before I knew it, the dreaded day was dawning.

I arrived at the youth centre that morning feeling full of trepidation. There was a gang of 12 helpers including me, split into pairs, and each pair had been allocated a particular age group. Mine was the 10 to 11 year olds. Even with the planning meeting I had attended the week before, I worried about whether I was up to the task. Why hadn't I read through the copious lesson plans we were given beforehand? And wasn't the average 10-year-old more interested in the latest electronic game than making things with paper and glue?

All too quickly the children began arriving. The look of relief on parents' faces as they handed their offspring over to us was almost comical. A handful of the children were already members of the club but the other forty five or so were from the local primary schools. One or two looked tearful but the rest were in high spirits. Again I asked myself why I had elected to spend a day with all these 'little monsters' especially when I have two all of my own to contend with! I needn't have worried of course as it turned out to be a marvellous day. We watched entertaining dvd clips, learned 'action' songs, made clay pyramids, kneaded bread, decorated biscuits, played memory games and spent some time in quiet reflection. I say 'we' because I rediscovered my inner child and joined in all the activities with glee.

The particular highlight for me was a rousing rendition of "He's got the whole world in his hands" in the closing part of the day. The children already knew the words and actions off by heart and sang so loudly it was almost enough to bring the roof down. It's difficult to explain those moments; only that the body tingles with the pleasure of having witnessed something so magical.

Of course there were also moments of great poignancy. I found it difficult to stop thinking of one little girl, who mentioned oh-so-casually that her mum was in hospital and would be there for a long time. It's easy for us adults to idealise childhood and forget that some children have their own burden of anxieties and concerns. When I got home utterly exhausted, still with modelling clay under my fingernails, I reflected on what a privilege it had been.

There was one disappointment for the children and that was that the playscheme was only running for a day, and not the whole week. As I said farewell to my group, one of the children turned and said, "Can we do it again in the next holiday, Miss?" My response was, "Sure, why not?"

1. When the first day of the job arrived the writer was surprised
 - A. that the day had come round so quickly.
 - B. because she'd forgotten to write down the date.
 - C. because she witnessed a car chase on the way.
 - D. that she woke up at dawn.

2. When the writer arrived to start her job she
 - A. put the children into pairs.
 - B. realised she should have done more preparation.
 - C. felt confident she could deal with 10 and 11 year olds.
 - D. saw the children had brought their own electronic games to play with.

3. According to the writer, the parents were
 - A. happy to stay with their children all day.
 - B. worried about children from the other schools.
 - C. nervous that their children might not behave themselves.
 - D. glad to leave their children.

4. The writer's best moment
 - A. occurred in the middle of the day.
 - B. took her by surprise.
 - C. was hard to put into words.
 - D. was when the day was over.

5. According to the writer, adults
 - A. think that being a child is a privilege.
 - B. sometimes forget that children have worries too.
 - C. are usually exhausted by bringing up their children.
 - D. don't have a stressful life.

6. What is the writer's attitude by the end of the day?
 - A. She could imagine doing the job again next time.
 - B. She was sad to say good bye to the children.
 - C. She was disappointed with the experience.
 - D. She hopes the playscheme will be longer in future.

Task 2

Career success in the arts

John Prince, famous dancer and choreographer, gives advice on how to succeed in a career in the arts.

I asked John how he got started and what requirements there are. "Well, to be a professional dancer it's useful to have had acting lessons or some background in drama. If you want to succeed in musical theatre you have to have a good singing voice as well. When you approach an agent you should take a portfolio with your CV, your statistics sheet and some good photos and reviews of past performances. You'll need dance clothes, ballet shoes, tap shoes, and even roller skates depending on what kind of show you are going to go for."

1

"Of course, you need to be extremely fit if you want to be a professional dancer. I dance or move about for about six hours a day. There are great health benefits to being a dancer. I can eat a lot of pasta without gaining weight because dancing increases your metabolism so much."

2

John has a very busy schedule in the next few months. He took time out to speak to me today from the making of a pop video to promote N-ergy's latest record. "I choreographed the dance routine for the boys and they only had 2 days in which to learn it! I am going to be working on a video for another well known band - but that's top secret. Next month I'll be touring Spain in a production of a musical that was written by a friend of mine, Michaela Evans.

3

As for the future, I've come to realise that I would never be content to be just a chorus dancer - I'm too much of an individual for that. Like all artists I'd love to become a household name by writing and choreographing my own musicals."

John was born in Jamaica to a Jamaican father and a Scottish mother but the family emigrated to England 20 years ago. "I have a little sister I adore, who is also training to be a dancer." How does it feel to have someone else following in your footsteps?

4

Has he much more to learn, I wondered. "I've spent an incredible amount of my life training to get where I am. I went to college for two years in England, I trained for six months in Paris and about eight months in America. But you never really stop training or learning your art."

5

So, would you say it's been plain sailing? "I feel I've been lucky to a degree; many people hit problems breaking into the arts. It can be a vicious circle really. You can't become a member of Equity, which is the actors' and dancers' union, without good contracts and you can't get good contracts without being a member of Equity. My advice to people who want to get into the arts would be to go out into the world, and try everything else first.

6

What has a dance career done for you as a person? "Thanks to dancing, I've visited and performed in 23 countries so far. This has opened my eyes to the world, and I've been able to understand issues like racism and inequality from a wider perspective. Hopefully this has enabled me to become a better and more tolerant person as a result. "So all in all I'm really happy to be a dancer!"

Task 3

You are going to read a selection of letters from a driving magazine. For questions 1-10, choose from the people (A-E). The people may be chosen more than once.

This month we feature your early driving experiences:

A

I'd been taking lessons for a year before I passed my driving test at the age of eighteen, but my dad never gave me any help. Even after I'd passed he never let me use the car. So I used to take my dad's keys before leaving the apartment block where we lived and would run round to the car park at the back where my father left the car at night. He hardly ever used the car after getting in from work. I used to go and see my girlfriend or just drive around and then come back and leave the car in exactly the same place. One night though, I got back at around ten thirty only to find there were no parking spaces left. I suppose because I went in and told my dad the truth straight away he was quite good about it. Although he did stop my allowance for four weeks.

Terry

B

My most unfortunate driving experience happened ages ago, before I'd actually passed my driving test. My girlfriend's father used to let her borrow his car whenever we were going to the cinema or something. Anyway, I'd been thinking about learning to drive and I persuaded her to let me have a go. We took the car down to the beach on the sand where no one could see us and she let me take the wheel. We were having such fun that we didn't notice the tide was coming in until the car was actually swimming in the water. We had to leave the car where it was and catch the bus back to tell her dad. By the time the three of us returned, the car was almost covered in water. Needless to say, her father wasn't too pleased. The funny thing is her dad ended up selling me the car after I passed my test.

Carl

C

I was teaching my mum to drive and we were coming down a rather narrow road which had cars parked on both sides. Suddenly, from nowhere there was a young man on a bike coming towards us. Mum slammed the brakes on but he crashed into us, landed on the car and then rolled off. My mother and I both jumped out of the car to see if he was all right. Fortunately, he stood up and said he was OK, just a little shaken. My mum offered to give him some money for the repair of the bike, and then an old lady came along. When she saw what had happened, she began shouting at my mother, saying she must have been driving too fast and that it was a bad example to set her young daughter. Poor old mum didn't say a word and I had to explain that she was still learning to drive.

Sarah

D

My advice about learning to drive would be to have proper lessons from a qualified instructor and never to let a friend or family member try to teach you. It's a guaranteed way to spoil a good relationship. Every Sunday, when the traffic was quieter, my father would pick me up and take me for a drive along the streets of our hometown and give me a lecture on how to drive, explaining everything he was doing and why. Eventually it was my turn to have a go. My dad was so nervous that he panicked before I'd even started up the engine. He used to shout at the slightest mistake, and when the lesson

was finally over he'd come home and have a large glass of whisky to calm down.
Karen

E

I didn't start learning to drive until I was twenty one. I'd spent lots of money on lessons but I was a terrible driver, I must admit. The first time I took my driving test nobody expected me to pass. But after failing another four times the pressure was really on. I took my test for a sixth time and failed yet again, but I was too embarrassed to admit it to my family, so I just pretended that I'd passed after all. My family were delighted and my father went out and bought me a car the next day. I didn't know what to do so I just got in and drove. I continued to drive - illegally - for three months. Fortunately I was never stopped by the police and the next time I took my driving test I passed.

Mike

Which person('s)

- 1) father was accused of driving dangerously?
- 2) bought a car?
- 3) drove his girlfriend's dad's car?
- 4) drove alone without a license?
- 5) had to defend one of their parents?
- 6) drove their father's car without permission?
- 7) used to make their father nervous?
- 8) paid for driving lessons?
- 9) had no driving instruction from their father?
- 10) was given driving lessons by their father?