

Reading 1

A2 The Convenience Society, or con for short

Bill Bryson, adapted by :“Ready for FCE”, by Roy Norris, 2008, MacMillan

The other day I took my younger children to a Burger King for lunch and there was a line of about a dozen cars at the drive-through window. Now, a drive-through window is not a window that you drive through, but a window you drive up to and collect your food from, having placed your order over a speakerphone along the way; the idea is to provide quick takeaway food for those in a hurry. We parked, went in, ordered and ate and came out again, all in about ten minutes. As we departed, I noticed that a white pickup truck that had been last in the queue when we arrived was still four or five cars back from collecting its food. It would have been much quicker if the driver had parked like us and gone in and got his food himself, but he would never have thought that way because the drive-through window is supposed to be speedier and more convenient.



Americans have become so attached to the idea of convenience that they will put up with almost any inconvenience to achieve it. The things that are supposed to speed up and simplify our lives more often than not have the opposite effect and I started wondering why this should be. Americans have always looked for ways to increase comfort. It is an interesting fact that nearly all the everyday inventions that make the difficulties out of life – escalators, automatic doors, passenger lifts, refrigerators, washing machines, frozen food, fast food – were invented in America, or at least first widely used here. Americans grew so used to seeing a constant stream of labor-saving devices, in fact, that by the sixties they had come to expect machines to do almost everything for them.

The moment I first realized that this was not necessarily a good idea was at Christmas of 1961 or 1962 when my father was given an electric carving knife. It was an early model and not as light as the ones you can buy today. Perhaps my memory is playing tricks on me, but I have a clear impression of him putting on goggles and heavy rubber gloves before plugging it in. What is certainly true is that when he sank it into the turkey it sent pieces flying everywhere and then the blade hit the plate with a shower of blue sparks and the whole thing flew out of his hands and shot across the table and out of the room, like a creature from a *Gremlins* movie. My father was always buying gadgets that proved to be disastrous – clothes steamers that failed to take the wrinkles out of suits but caused wallpaper to fall off the walls in whole sheets, or an electric pencil sharpener that could consume an entire pencil (including the tips of your fingers if you weren't quick) in less than a second.

But all of this was nothing compared with the situation today. Americans are now surrounded with items that do things for them to an almost absurd degree – automatic cat-food dispensers, refrigerators that make their own ice cubes, automatic car windows, disposable toothbrushes that come with their own ration of toothpaste. People are so addicted to convenience that they have become trapped in a vicious circle: the more labour-saving devices they buy, the harder they need to work; the harder they work, the more labour-saving appliances they feel they need.

When we moved into our house in New Hampshire it was full of gadgets installed by earlier owners, all of them designed to make life a little easier. Most, however, were completely useless. One of our rooms, for instance, came equipped with automatic curtains. You flicked a switch on the wall and four pairs of curtains effortlessly opened or closed. That, at least, was the idea. In practice what happened was that one opened, one closed, one opened and closed repeatedly and one did nothing at all for five minutes and then started to produce smoke. We didn't go anywhere near them after the first week.

Automatic curtains, electric cat-dispensers and clothes steamers only *seem* to make life easier. In fact, all they do is add expense and complication to your existence.

Task B1: Multiple Choice

6 points

Read the text written by Bill Bryson, an American who writes about his fellow Americans, mainly for a British audience. Choose and tick (☒) the correct answer **A**, **B**, **C** or **D**. For each question there is only **ONE** possible answer. There is an example at the beginning (0).

0. What is the author's opinion of everyday inventions?

A On the whole they make life easier.	<input type="checkbox"/>
B Some people do not know how to use them very well.	<input type="checkbox"/>
C They cause more problems than they solve.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
D He likes them now more than he used to.	<input type="checkbox"/>

1. What point is the author making with the story of his experience at Burger King?

A Fast food restaurants are not very fast.	<input type="checkbox"/>
B Some aspects of modern life are not always as convenient as they are intended to be.	<input type="checkbox"/>
C The driver of the pickup truck had parked in the wrong place.	<input type="checkbox"/>
D The queues at the drive-through windows are usually very long.	<input type="checkbox"/>

2. What does the author tell us about everyday inventions in America?

A They were all invented there.	<input type="checkbox"/>
B They make life less exciting.	<input type="checkbox"/>
C People assumed they would make life more comfortable.	<input type="checkbox"/>
D There aren't as many now as there used to be.	<input type="checkbox"/>

3. What does "***the whole thing*** (underlined + bold in text) refer to?

A the turkey	<input type="checkbox"/>
B the plate	<input type="checkbox"/>
C the rubber gloves	<input type="checkbox"/>
D the carving knife	<input type="checkbox"/>

4. What does the author say about labour-saving devices today?

A People cannot stop buying them.	<input type="checkbox"/>
B People try to do ridiculous things with them.	<input type="checkbox"/>
C They are better than the ones in the sixties.	<input type="checkbox"/>
D They help people to do more work.	<input type="checkbox"/>

5. What does "***them*** (underlined + bold in text) refer to?

A earlier owners	<input type="checkbox"/>
B the gadgets	<input type="checkbox"/>
C houses in New Hampshire	<input type="checkbox"/>
D the writer's family	<input type="checkbox"/>

6. What are we told about the automatic curtains?

A They had been bought from a previous house.	<input type="checkbox"/>
B Some of them worked as they were supposed to.	<input type="checkbox"/>
C The room where they were fitted was never used.	<input type="checkbox"/>
D The author and his family decided not to use them.	<input type="checkbox"/>

Task B2 : Language Work based on Reading**10 points**

What do the following pronouns refer to in the text? (1 point, $\frac{1}{2}$ a point each).

	Pronoun	Position in text	Refers to
1.	Tho whole thing	3rd paragraph	
2.	Them	5th Paragraph	

For each given word, complete the grey part of the chart below. (2points, $\frac{1}{2}$ point each).

	Noun	Verb	adjective	adverb
1.	Speed	Speed		Speedily
2.	Power		Powerful	
3.	Indication		Indicative	Indicatively

Complete the second sentence so it has similar meaning to the first sentence, using the word given. Do not change the word given. You must use between two and five words, including the word given. (3points, $\frac{1}{2}$ point each).

1.	Thieves stole the painting during the night.	
	The painting _____ during the night.	BY
2.	I'm sure Anna saw these photos.	
	Anna _____ these photos.	MUST
3.	The children found it very difficult to understand the film.	
	The children had _____ the film.	IN
4.	The crime rate is lower than people think.	
	The crime rate _____ people think.	AS
5.	It isn't necessary to get a visa for Malta.	
	You _____ a visa for Malta.	HAVE

6.	We didn't go on holidays because of the lockdown.	
	The lockdown _____ on holidays	PRE-VENTED

Change the voice of these sentences, active to passive or passive to active. (2points, 1 point each).

1.	I am doing my homework.
2.	John has opened a new shop in Geneva.

Ask for the underlined part in the sentence. (2 Points, $\frac{1}{2}$ point each).

0.	Example The other day I took my young children to <u>Burger King</u> . Where did you take your young children to the other day?
1.	<u>Americans</u> have been so attached to idea of convenience.
2.	We parked, went in, ordered, and ate and came out again, all that in <u>about ten minutes</u> .
3.	When we moved into our house in New Hampshire it was <u>full of gadgets</u> .
4.	One of our rooms, for instance, came equipped with <u>automatic curtains</u> .

Me and my Passion

A Katie Holleran: accountant

When you mention windsurfing to people they generally imagine suntanned 20-year-olds. But the sport has matured since it started in the 1960s, and so have its participants. Any reasonably fit person can do it, and age isn't a barrier. Beginners need enough strength in their arms to pull themselves back up onto the board after falling off. At first, you do spend a lot of time in the water, but it's worth it for the feeling of excitement you get when you're moving along successfully – that's fantastic.

In the early days, sails and boards were made of heavy materials like polyethylene, and the sport was very physical. But improved technology has changed all that. And you don't have to live by the sea – 50 per cent of windsurfing takes place on inland lakes and reservoirs. I used to have a boat, but with that you always need other people to help you. And you're not allowed to take a boat on some lakes, whereas you can windsurf anywhere.

B Kevin Shaw: builder

It's become a tradition in our household that I make an Indian curry every Monday evening. I wanted to learn how to make my dishes more authentic, so I signed up for a cookery course at a top Indian restaurant in London. Every time I go, I learn something new and I'm now building up quite a repertoire of curry recipes. Andy, the head chef, is also a qualified teacher, which is a big advantage of the course. He explains how the herbs, spices, oils and rice used in Indian cooking are combined by experts to get subtle variations in flavour. It's perfectly possible to have dishes which contain exactly the same ingredients, but you end up with something totally different depending on the methods used in the part of the country where it's prepared. After the theory, we go down to the kitchen to observe Andy and his team of highly-qualified chefs in action and then, of course, we get to sample the dishes we've learned to cook.

C Karen Hallstrom: salesperson

When I tell people I race vintage cars from the 1920s and 1930s, one question they're sure to ask is: "Do you wear 1920s outfits too?" "No," is the polite version of my answer. I have to wear fireproof overalls and a helmet in order to meet modern safety laws, I'm afraid. Things have changed in other ways since the old days, too. To be allowed to race my cars, I had to pass both written and practical tests. That wasn't difficult, but then vintage cars aren't a novelty to me: they were part of my upbringing. I used to spend hours, bored stiff, with my fingers stuck in my ears while my father watched races at the local motor-racing track. I said it was the last thing I'd ever do. But when I was a bit older, I too fell in love with cars, first driving a vintage model at age 17. Then, later, a boyfriend with a boat got me interested in sailing, much to the horror of my family! But it didn't last, and somehow I've always come back to cars.

D Joe Campilos: office worker

I'm lucky because, within reason, I can choose what hours I do at the office and this means I have time to combine it with my real passion, which is jazz music. Every weekend, and sometimes on Fridays as well, we play on the street. Not in the main square, as you need to buy a licence for that and it's a bit pricey, but in various places around the city where there are no regulations.

People sometimes complain because they think we're beggars, but that's not fair. Although we do accept money, because it's the accepted custom, that's not why we're there. It's really a kind of advertisement – if somebody likes what they hear, then they can hire us. We get to do weddings, parties, that sort of thing, which gives us a bit of extra pocket money. Sometimes jazz clubs approach us, too. But it's never fame and fortune – and to tell you the truth, I like my life just the way it is.

Reading 2

Me and my Passion

From "First Certificate Expert", by Richard Mann, Nick Kenny, Jan Bell + Roger Gower, 2008, Pearson

Task B2: Multiple Matching

10 points

You are going to read a magazine article in which four young people talk about how their parents' careers have influenced them.

Read the questions 1-10 below and choose from the people A – D. The people may be chosen more than once. The first (0) has been done for you.

A Katie Holleran : an accountant
B Kevin Shaw : builder
C Karen Hallstrom : salesperson
D Joe Campilos : office worker

Which person says that their hobby ...

0. ...is too expensive to do in some places?	0. <u>D</u>
1. has to conform to certain fixed regulations?	1. _____
2. fits in well with other commitments?	2. _____
3. has become easier thanks to recent improvements in the equipment?	3. _____
4. involves him / her in learning by watching experts in the activity?	4. _____
5. is associated with a certain type of clothing?	5. _____
6. has not always interested him / her so much?	6. _____
7. has advantages over another similar hobby?	7. _____
8. requires the clever combination of certain materials?	8. _____
9. also provides some of his / her income?	9. _____
10. grew out of a regular family custom?	10. _____

Part D: Writing Task

20 points

Write (150-180 words) about **ONE** of the following tasks. Circle the number of the task you have chosen. Write on this and, if necessary, on the next page.

1. Write a review. You have recently used a new office gadget. Include information about what the product is, how much it costs, how convenient and useful it is and whether you can recommend it for other offices.

Examiner's comments	(leave blank)	Points: _____ / 20
Task, quality (5)	Vocabulary: range & accuracy (4)	_____
Structure & coherence (3)	Grammar: range & accuracy (4)	_____
Sentence Patterns (2)	Orthography (2)	_____

NOTE: Length – min. 150 words, max. 180 words / -5 points for over 10 words more or less.