GOT RID OF NEARLY EVERYTHING I OWNED!

When the people first came round they were all sitting around drinking tea nervously and occasionally glancing at the cupboards. I didn't like the atmosphere and found the whole situation unsettling. I was beginning to wonder why I had asked these people round to go through my stuff and take what they wanted. Then my sister Louise arrived at the door. Without putting down her bag or saying hello, she headed for the bedroom, determination on her face. She couldn't get there quick enough. 'I knew she'd be the competition!' cried my friend Rosa, jumping off the sofa and heading in the same direction. This is what happens when you open your home to friends, family and neighbours, telling them they can help themselves to everything within it. Moments later, Rosa and Louise reappeared with armfuls of clothes and pot plants. I was surprised that they hadn't taken the whole lot.

Last month, I moved abroad for two years to study, taking just a single suitcase with me. I couldn't afford to keep my flat, so when it came to my possessions, extreme measures were called for. Some of my stuff, like old novels and pairs of jeans, I could cope with giving away. But there was a list of things like precious paintings and my childhood teddy bear that I couldn't bring myself to let go. I just wasn't up to that. So, I decided to offer these things up for long-term loan. It's not recycling, or even freecycling: I'm calling it 'sharecycling'. It was my beloved tent that formed the premise of it. I made the decision as I thought about the pointlessness of putting stuff into storage for two years. Instead, I imagined someone I loved putting my tent onto their back and setting off into the countryside in the summer sunshine. I was moving to the other side of the world, but this made it feel as though I would still, in some small way, be with my friends. And once I'd come up with the idea, it just grew and grew. I decided to give away everything – the plants on the balcony, the computer games, the chairs, even the towels in the bathroom.

To get rid of it all, I had an open house, inviting everyone I knew to take my belongings. 'This is just like supervised stealing!' said one friend, as she loaded books by the handful into a carrier bag. I became like a sales assistant. I recommended novels, waved toys at babies, and brought out coats and jeans for people to try on.

Now I am sitting in a flat on the other side of the world as the last of the monsoon rains pour down outside, turning the pavements into mud and sending the street sellers sheltering under doorways and umbrellas. I feel very far from my home, and from my stuff. That list I made of the things I want back? I'm not sure how much I'll need it. So far, I haven't missed any of my pictures, or that strange purse shaped like a mouse which I've had since I was seven years old. Instead, I've missed my family, my friends, and my city.

And my 'sharecycling' plan ties me back to them. A friend took my tent to a music festival. And my favourite picture ended up on the wall of my best friend's flat back home. This is what gives me a real buzz: the thought of all my bits and pieces in my friends' lives, a physical reminder of our ties. It's like I've pressed 'pause' on my city life rather than 'stop', making the move easier. It shows I'm not ready to travel around the world forever with just a laptop.

3 **Choose the answer (A, B, C or D) which you think fits best according to the text.**

1 What best describes Eva's feelings in the first paragraph?
- **A** She felt happy that her guests were enjoying themselves.
- **B** She felt uncomfortable at first.
- **C** She wanted her guests to leave as quickly as possible.
- **D** She felt she was expected to do too much for her guests.

2 What does 'unsettling' mean in line 5 in the first paragraph?
- **A** worrying
- **B** comforting
- **C** exciting
- **D** surprising

3 What do we learn about Eva's attitude to her possessions in the second paragraph?
- **A** She was sad that she couldn't afford to keep all of her things.
- **B** She felt a strong emotional attachment to all of them.
- **C** She was keen to share them with other people.
- **D** She wanted to put some of the items in storage.

4 What does 'this' refer to in line 35 in the second paragraph?
- **A** the idea of sharecycling
- **B** the world
- **C** the idea of camping
- **D** the summer sunshine

5 What is meant by 'a real buzz' in line 64 in the final paragraph?
- **A** an interesting topic of conversation
- **B** a low, continuous sound
- **C** a sudden memory from a long time ago
- **D** a strong feeling of excitement

6 What best describes Eva's experience of giving away her things?
- **A** It was enjoyable but she will be glad to get them back.
- **B** It was a lot harder to do than she expected.
- **C** It made her value people more than things.
- **D** She was surprised at how strange it felt.

4 **To understand a text, you often need to understand exactly what the writer is referring to at different points in the text. Which noun phrase (a or b) does each of these words/phrases refer to?**

1 'the whole lot' (line 18) paragraph 1
- **a** cupboards **b** everything

2 'these things' (line 27) paragraph 2
- **a** books and clothing **b** valued possessions

3 'it' (line 30) paragraph 2
- **a** offering things for loan **b** a special tent

4 'it' (line 42) paragraph 3
- **a** her house **b** her possessions

5 'it' (line 55) paragraph 4
- **a** the stuff **b** the list

6 'them' (line 60) paragraph 5
- **a** special places **b** important people

7 'This' (line' 63) paragraph 5
- **a** a thought **b** a picture

ANSWERS HERE

USE ONLY CAPITAL LETTERS

EXERCISE 3

1. _____ 4. _____

2. _____ 5. _____

3. _____ 6._____

EXERCISE 4

1. _____ 2 _____

3. _____ 4. _____

5. _____ 6. _____

7._____