GIA SƯ CHUNG CƯ

From the moment we returned from the violent heat of East Africa we were soaked by the continuous drizzle of a fine English summer. It was not a particularly promising introduction to life back in England after three years of being baked under the Kenyan sun. Nevertheless, the leaden skies of August could not make me any less enthusiastic about my fast approaching return to British education. I was about to enter a South London comprehensive.

At the time I was totally unaware of the shock that was awaiting me, one much worse than adapting to the dismal climate. I was just looking forward to making lots of new friends and getting stuck into school life. I was under the impression that the other pupils would be interested in my stories about Africa and would instantly warm to my sparkling personality. Unfortunately, however, I had really been **looking at things through rose-tinted glasses** and it wasn't long before I experienced a much darker, unappealing side of things.

On the first day of term I bounded into the noisy assembly hall eager to size up my new classmates. As I scanned the room, which was packed with huddled clusters of teenagers, I got my first suspicions that becoming part of their cosy groupings might not be as easy as I had imagined. They all seemed to have an air of belonging as they laughed and chatted together. I tried to look relaxed and carefree but no one so much as glanced in my direction, let alone tried to introduce themselves. It turned out to be an uncomfortable morning in my new class, but as the hours dragged by, I tried to work out what would be a good plan of attack for getting in on the action.

It began to dawn on me that what was needed was a little effort on my part. So at break, I swallowed my pride and strolled over to a group of boys standing by the gates to say hello. The tallest was a dark-haired lad with a permanent sneer on his face. "Where did you get your shiny shoes, mate?" was all he said. I looked down at my new leather shoes and noticed that everyone else was wearing the latest trainers. Before I could think of something amusing to say, they had begun to wander back to class leaving me red-faced and dumbfounded by the gate.

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At the end of my first day, **I stormed out of the classroom** as soon as the final bell rang, almost knocking over a girl who was passing along the corridor. I was fuming. I had arrived that morning full of hopes for a bright new future, only to have them dashed on the hard rocks of teenage indifference. The dark clouds above my head seemed to settle around me as I trudged back home, reminding me of how grim the day had been, I was so enraged that I almost didn't hear someone calling my name and I turned round to see a boy from my class, Brian, running to catch up with me.

"You haven't exactly been made to feel welcome today, have you?" he said beaming at me. "You could say that," I replied sarcastically. He laughed and suggested I give him my mobile number and he would text me later. "But I haven't got a mobile!" I told him, my heart sinking once again. A look of utter amazement spread across his face and he suddenly went very quiet while I waited for him to reply. Finally, he took a deep breath. "Look, if I were you, I'd get a mobile. Everyone has one! And while you're at it, sort yourself out with a decent pair of trainers." Then he was gone.

I walked into the house and flung my blazer and bag down in the hall. My mum popped her head round the living room door and asked how my first day had gone. "Can you please tell me why I need a mobile phone and trainers if I want to make any friends?" I replied. I was so stony-faced that I think she knew better than to reply, so she just stood there looking confused as I stomped up the stairs and slammed my bedroom door shut.

1. How did the writer feel about being back in England?
   A. He was pleased to be back in a cooler climate.
   B. He was unsure of his feelings.
   C. He was optimistic, despite the bad weather.
   D. He was nervous about starting school.
2. The phrase "looking at things through rose-tinted glasses" (paragraph 2) means _____
   A. only seeing a situation from your own point of view.
   B. seeing things in a very simple way.
   C. only seeing the pleasant aspects of something.
   D. having too much confidence in yourself.
3. When the writer first met his classmates, he _____
   A. felt a little afraid of them.
   B. suspected he had little in common with them.
   C. realised it might take some time before they accepted him.
   D. found he lacked the confidence to introduce himself.

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4. When the writer approached the group of boys, they responded by _____

A. making fun of him.
B. making a joke.
C. ignoring him.
D. complimenting him.

5. The writer uses the phrase "I stormed out of the classroom" (paragraph 5) to show that he left a room _____

A. quickly and noisily because he was angry.
B. as soon as he could.
C. without anyone seeing him leave.
D. without looking where he was going.

6. On the way home, a boy from the writer's class _____

A. offered him an apology.
B. gave him some advice.
C. lost his temper with him.
D. criticised his attitude.

7. When the writer spoke to his mother, he _____

A. quickly regretted it.
B. wished he had said it in a different way.
C. felt annoyed by her response.
D. understood why she didn't reply.

8. How did the writer's attitude change during the passage?

A. He began to lose confidence in himself.
B. He began to see things as they really were.
C. He began to realise the need to change.
D. He began to understand himself better.

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95 NATURE'S FURY

Mount St. Helens, the volcano in Clark County, Washington State, erupted on Monday morning. The disaster has caused at least ten deaths as well as massive destruction in that region of the state.

The mountain was hit by two earthquakes just before half past eight. Then, at eight thirty-two, the top of the mountain was blown off by an explosion that was heard two hundred miles away. Huge blocks of ice and rock fell onto the surrounding area and the mountain was left 1,300 feet shorter. Then the tremendous heat inside was released. Hot ash and gas came out of the mountain, causing a lightning storm as it rose into the air. White ash, along with steam and thick mud, continue to pour from the giant crater left by the explosion.

At each stage of this dramatic eruption people have been killed. The explosion caused the first casualties; several people were injured or died due to the force and heat of it. Then the hot ash started fires which have burned vast areas of forest, causing more deaths. Fortunately, fire-fighters have managed to put most of them out. The volcanic cloud was so large and dark that it was said to have turned day into night, forcing airports to close temporarily. One more life was lost as a pilot flew his aeroplane into the cloud and hit electricity cables. Mud from the volcano is running down the mountainside and filling rivers, causing flooding. People living nearby have been forced to leave their homes as the water continues to rise.

Rescue workers have picked up casualties and survivors by helicopter, and are moving them away from the dangerous areas. More victims are expected to be found during the next few days. One witness said that it had been like the end of the world. "I really thought we were all going to die," Jerry Irvine said. "I've never been so terrified in my life."

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Scientists say that the top of the mountain had been "growing" by five feet per day for several weeks before the explosion. They say that ash and mud could continue to pour out of St. Helens for up to fifteen years. Meanwhile, the people of Clark County are learning to cope with nature's fury.

1. When the volcano erupted, the top of the mountain _____
   A. grew taller.
   B. landed two hundred miles away.
   C. turned into mud.
   D. was broken into pieces.
2. The first people to die were killed by _____
   A. the forest fires.
   B. the explosion.
   C. the thick mud.
   D. the lightning storm.
3. The volcanic cloud _____
   A. made everything very dark.
   B. damaged many aeroplanes.
   C. wasn't very big.
   D. damaged the forest.
4. People had to leave their homes as _____
   A. their houses were burnt.
   B. the mountain fell on their homes.
   C. they had no electricity.
   D. there was flooding in the area.
5. Before the eruption _____
   A. scientists had been making the mountain bigger.
   B. the people of Clark County had learnt how to cope with a volcano.
   C. the mountain had been getting taller.
   D. ash and mud had been pouring out of St. Helens for fifteen years.

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Helen Keller, an inspiration to all, was an advocate for the blind, deaf and disabled. She was born on June 27 1880 to parents Captain Arthur Henley Keller and Kate Adams Keller, in Tuscumbia, Alabama. She was born healthy, with full sight and hearing until tragedy struck her at the young age of 19 months old. She contracted a life-altering disease, believed to be scarlet fever or meningitis, which left her blind, deaf and mute. Her family found no method to educate her until the age of six when they sought advice from Alexander Graham Bell, an activist in deaf education. Bell suggested they contact the Perkins Institution for the Blind in Boston and request that they try to find a teacher for Helen. Anne Sullivan was chosen and sent to Tuscumbia to begin tutoring Helen right away. Anne became a live-in teacher and immediately began to use finger spelling, the tracing of words on the palm, in Helen's hand to name objects. Although Helen learned the finger spell patterns, she did not yet relate them to names for objects. This changed one day with trip to the water pump. Anne placed one of Helen's hand under the water coming from the pump and spelled WATER repeatedly on Helen's free hand. Suddenly Helen had a realization; the letters were a way of referring to the liquid coming from the pump! She finally understood that words were related to things. Keller was so impressed that she wanted to learn the names of everything around her and on that same day she learned 30 new words.

There was no stopping Helen after that. Anne taught Helen to read with raised letters and with Braille, and later to write with both ordinary and Braille typewriters. She eventually learned to understand what people were saying by touching their lips and throat. She also wanted to learn to speak but unfortunately since her vocal chords were not properly trained, her speech did not develop far.

In 1900, Helen enrolled at Radcliffe College, Harvard's college for women. During her college years she wrote her first book, an autobiography titled "The Story of My Life" with the help of editor John Albert Macy. It was published in 1903. On June 28 1904, Helen Keller became the first deaf-blind individual to graduate from Radcliffe College, completing a Bachelor of Arts degree.

In 1921, The American Foundation for the Blind was organized and Helen was invited to be a spokesperson for the organization. She traveled extensively with Anne Sullivan and Polly Thomson, another one of her aids, giving speeches and raising funds for the blind and related causes. Along with her many books and other writings, this was to become her life's work. On October 20 1936, Helen Keller's beloved

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teacher died. Although greatly affected by this loss, it did not hinder Helen's volunteer work. She continued traveling the world with Polly, trying to raise money for the American Foundation for the Overseas Blind.

In 1953, the documentary film about Helen's life, "The Unconquered", won an Academy Award. On October 1961, Helen Keller's public life was drawn to a close when she suffered the first of a series of strokes. Helen Keller received many awards throughout her lifetime including the Presidential Medal of Freedom, which was given to her by President Lyndon B. Johnson.

Helen Keller died peacefully in her sleep at the age of 88 on June 1 1968. Her legacy lives on as Foundations are formed to continue the work of conquering blindness.

1. Helen Keller was born _____
   A. deaf and blind. B. with all senses.
   C. deaf and mute. D. blind and mute.

2. Until Helen was six, she _____
   A. was educated by her family.
   B. was taught by Alexander Graham Bell.
   C. went to the Perkins Institution for the blind.
   D. had no education.

3. Anne Sullivan taught Keller to _____
   A. read Braille.
   B. be totally independent.
   C. speak.
   D. pump water from a well

4. Helen Keller connected words to things _____
   A. at a young age.
   B. at Radcliffe College.
   C. by tracing words on people's palms.
   D. by touching people's lips and throats.

5. Helen learned to write _____
   A. using Braille.
   B. using two kinds of typewriters.
   C. using raised letters.
   D. before she learned to read.

6. Helen Keller's speech _____
   A. became worse during her teen years.
   B. did not progress much.

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C. developed during her college years.
D. improved thanks to Polly Thomson.

7. Helen Keller travelled the world to _____
A. raise money for the deaf and mute.
B. promote her book.
C. inform people about the problems of those without sight.
D. get inspiration for her books.

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