

Multiple-choice

- 1 Work in pairs. Look at the picture and the title of the article and answer the questions.

- 1 How difficult do you think it would be to run a zoo?
- 2 What problems do you think you would have?

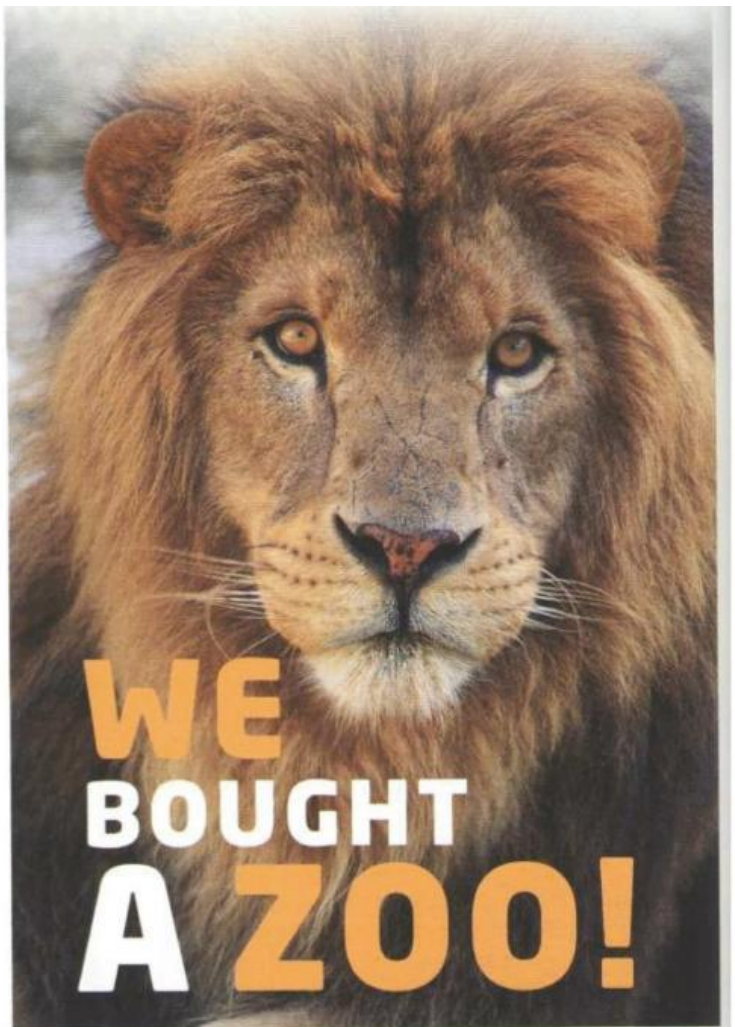
- 2 Read the article quickly and check your ideas in exercise 1.

EXAM STRATEGY

If you cannot decide which answer is the correct one, then make an educated guess. Do not leave any questions unanswered.

- 3 **EXAM TASK** Read the text again. For questions (1–5) choose the correct answer (A, B, C or D).

- 1 Why did Benjamin want to buy the zoo in the first place?
 - A He was tired of his current job.
 - B He had always loved animals.
 - C He liked big cats.
 - D He wanted to move house.
- 2 Why did Benjamin try to buy the zoo a second time?
 - A His family persuaded him.
 - B He was able to find more money.
 - C The owners lowered the price.
 - D He wanted to save the animals.
- 3 When the jaguar escaped, what did Benjamin think?
 - A He realized he needed new employees.
 - B He understood that the zoo was a big responsibility.
 - C He regretted spending all his money.
 - D He worried about the safety of the other animals.
- 4 Which of the statements is **NOT TRUE** about the opening day?
 - A Benjamin wouldn't leave his office.
 - B The press covered the story.
 - C The zoo's name was changed.
 - D Benjamin felt sad his wife wasn't there.
- 5 How did the zoo help Benjamin?
 - A It showed him how similar all animals are.
 - B His job was so busy that he stopped missing his wife.
 - C His children became easier to manage.
 - D It made being a single parent less difficult than it was before.



One afternoon, Benjamin Mee was sitting in the kitchen of his new family home after a tiring day, when his brother ran in shouting, 'A big cat has escaped.' The home, which Mee had moved into four days earlier, was a zoo, and a 150 lb jaguar was on the loose.

Mee has had a lifelong fascination with animals, but it was his sister who spotted that Dartmoor Wildlife Park was up for sale and posted him the brochure. But things didn't go smoothly.

First, Mee had to convince his mother that it was a good idea to sell her house and buy a zoo. He then had to persuade his wife Katherine, who was recovering from a brain tumour, that they should leave their home in France and move back to England to run the zoo. Even buying the zoo wasn't simple; his first offer was rejected in favour of a higher bid. However, that sale fell through and a year later, Mee saw a news story announcing there were eleven days to find a new buyer.

He knew he had to try again and this time he managed to buy it, but by then the council had taken away the zoo's licence. Rotten fence posts and faulty electric fences meant the zoo wasn't safe; then the jaguar escaped because an inexperienced keeper hadn't locked the enclosure correctly.

'There were lots of times when I thought, "What have I done?"' Mee said. 'But when the jaguar escaped it was the first time I realized there were lives at stake.'

In addition, the zoo was very expensive to run. Utility bills, animal feed and staff wages cost £3,000 per week and £500,000 was needed to make the repairs required to reopen the zoo to the public.

While Mee was struggling to find the money for the renovation, his wife's brain tumour returned. The next few months were very tough; Katherine started chemotherapy and Mee continued his attempts to secure the bank loan they needed. He finally achieved this in February 2007. Katherine died the following month. But Mee could not give in to his own grief - he had only two months until the zoo inspection.

Mee's extraordinary determination to succeed meant that the zoo passed its inspection, and on July 7 they opened to the public as the rebranded Dartmoor Zoological Park. 'Opening day was such a relief,' Mee says. 'But all day, strangers - who knew our story from the local paper - kept coming up to me saying, "Katherine would have been so proud of you." I wasn't expecting it. I had to go to the office to take a breath, but someone had put my favourite picture of her on the wall. When I saw her there looking at me, I cried for two hours.'

Mee's story was made into a Hollywood film starring Matt Damon. The idea at the heart of the film is that rebuilding the zoo helps the family **get over** the loss of a loved one. For Mee this was certainly true: 'The zoo itself is also a tremendous place for healing. It connects you to the circle of life. We have births, we have deaths and they remind you that we are just another family unit that has suffered a loss - like the tigers who lost their grandfather.'

Mee is now a single parent who has to **deal with** the usual difficulties of getting his children to school as well as the day-to-day running of the zoo. However, not many children can say that their after-school chores include helping the keepers feed the animals.

5 Match the highlighted words in the text with their definitions (1–5).

1 saw or noticed something or someone

2 take action in order to achieve something

3 recover from something _____

4 said no to something or someone _____

5 failed to happen _____