

POINTS FOR DISCUSSION

- Do you enjoy comedy sketches and stand-up comedians? What is it about their humour that you like?
- Do you think that bad experiences can make for good comedy? How?

A Read the text below. Choose from (A-H) the one which best fits each space (1-6). There are two choices you do not need to use.

Exam tip

- Read the instructions and the title of the text carefully. This will help you to predict the text's content.
- Read the text quickly, without paying attention to the gaps, so as to understand its meaning.
- Read the phrases A-H.
- Read the sentences in the text from which the phrases have been removed, and decide what the missing phrases could be about.
- Reread the phrases A-H and decide which of them fits into each gap.
- Note that two of the phrases A-H do not fit into any gap.
- After filling all the gaps, read the full text and decide whether it makes sense. Read the phrases that you haven't used and make sure that they do not fit anywhere.

Have a laugh!



It's no secret that laughing is good for us. It gives our immune system a boost, reducing stress hormones and

(1) _____.

It relaxes our muscles and strengthens our heart. Then, of course, laughter releases feel-

good hormones that make us feel happier. Humour helps us ride the waves of life's ups and downs; it turns us into more **easy-going** people and breaks the ice with others.

However, (2) _____ or you just don't get other people's jokes? What if you are an intensely serious person who finds life more tragic than comic or who is more likely to be **hot-tempered** and **moody** when things go wrong than to slap your forehead and laugh? Can you learn to take life less seriously and lighten up?

According to some comedians, people can actually learn to be funny – perhaps not fall-off-your-chair funny, but at least able to admit that things are ridiculous rather than absolutely terrible. For those with a natural talent for being funny there are even stand-up comedy clinics (3) _____. Stand-up teachers turn the art of comedy into a science and design games, such as ones

in which students have to improvise, to get students to be more creative. Students are given the tools to write great jokes even when they are struggling to come up with ideas of their own.

However, if you don't have your sights set on entertaining an audience but would simply like to laugh more, there are some easy ways (4) _____. If you are feeling **dull** or irritated, getting together with friends to watch a comedy could be just the thing to liven you up. Additionally, make sure that if you have a tendency to see the **depressing** side of life, you include funny people in your circle of friends. Funny people can influence you to find humour in the simplest of things. Welsh comedian Rhod Gilbert, for example, manages (5) _____ in a supermarket into a **hilarious** sketch.

Watching comedies and telling jokes is not the only way to cheer us up and make us laugh. There are countless ways to lighten up a day, like playing games with friends or doing fun activities like going swimming, playing board games or music with friends or (6) _____. For those that are serious about wanting to laugh, there are even laughing yoga classes, which are based on the idea that laughter is catching.

- A. where you can learn to be a comedian
- B. playing with pets
- C. where he performed his jokes for the first time
- D. what if humour doesn't come naturally to you

- E. to turn trying to buy a single baked potato
- F. increasing disease-fighting antibodies
- G. what if you can't stop laughing when you see them
- H. to make every day more amusing

B Read the text below. For questions (1-5) choose the correct answer (A, B, C or D).

AGAINST ALL ODDS

When she was nineteen months old, Helen Keller **suffered from** a severe illness that eventually left her without the sense of sight or hearing. It also left her mute. This, however, did not **rob her of** the ability to love or be loved.

When she was six years old, Helen Keller's parents sought Alexander Graham Bell's advice regarding their daughter's education. As a result, Anne Mansfield Sullivan, a twenty-year-old teacher, arrived at the Kellers' home in Alabama. Sullivan herself had been both treated and educated at the Perkins Institute in Boston, where she had partially recovered her sight.

Helen Keller herself said that the most important day of her entire life was the one on which her teacher arrived. On their first morning together, her teacher gave her a doll and slowly fingerspelt the word 'doll' into the palm of her hand using the manual alphabet. Helen found this finger play very interesting and immediately tried to imitate it. It did not take her long to form the letters correctly. However, she had no idea that she was spelling words or that these words existed as representations of the objects that surrounded her.

It took her several weeks, often filled with frustration, to understand that everything has a name. One day, her teacher **persisted in** trying to teach her the difference between 'mug' and 'water'. Helen, unable to tell them apart, threw her doll in a rage and broke it into many pieces. Her teacher then took her to the well house in the garden and placed her hand into a cool stream. At the same time she fingerspelt the word 'water' in Helen's other hand. At this moment, the mystery of language was revealed to her and it was the beginning of her familiarisation with the objects around her.

Another difficulty Helen had to overcome was the meaning of abstract words such as 'love'. Her teacher fingerspelt the word into her hand and Helen reacted by asking, 'What is love?' Anne replied by placing her hand over Helen's heart and said, 'It is here'. Helen became confused and started asking lots of questions in order to discover what 'love' actually was. Unfortunately, despite her teacher's responses, she could not understand and became very impatient.

A day or so later, when Helen was trying to string some beads of various sizes together, her teacher touched her forehead and fingerspelt the word 'think'. Helen instantly realised that this was the name of the abstract process that was going on in her head. In the same way, she tried to find the meaning of the word 'love'. When the sun came out from behind a cloud, Helen insisted, 'Is this not love?' Anne turned to her and replied that love is something like the clouds that were in the sky before the sun came out. 'You cannot touch the clouds, but you can feel the rain,' she told her. 'In the same way, you cannot touch love, but you can feel the sweetness that it pours into everything.' Helen immediately understood this beautiful truth and felt that her spirit was somehow connected to the spirit of her teacher and everyone around her.

Exam tip

- Read the whole text quite quickly for general understanding.
- Then read the questions and try to find the parts in the text that answer the questions or complete the sentences. You may underline these parts.
- Now read the options and choose the one that best matches the idea in the text.
- Look for the words and phrases with similar meanings in the options and the text.

1. Why did Anne Mansfield Sullivan join the Keller household?
 - A. She was half-blind and could help Helen.
 - B. She was recommended by Alexander Graham Bell.
 - C. She was a graduate of the Perkins Institute.
 - D. She was to be employed as Helen's companion.
2. What was it that impressed Helen most on the day her teacher arrived?
 - A. the doll she received
 - B. the manual alphabet
 - C. the finger play
 - D. the words she spelt
3. When did Helen realise that everything around her had names?
 - A. when her teacher took her to the well house
 - B. when she broke her doll into many pieces
 - C. when her teacher taught her the meaning of 'mug'
 - D. when she learnt to fingerspell
4. Why was the word 'love' difficult for Helen to understand?
 - A. She had never experienced it before.
 - B. She didn't know what a heart was.
 - C. She couldn't touch 'love'.
 - D. She couldn't fingerspell the word.
5. When did Helen's teacher finally make her understand the meaning of the word 'love'?
 - A. when she made Helen feel the warmth of the sun
 - B. when she expressed her love to Helen
 - C. when she compared love to the clouds
 - D. when she explained the connection between her and Helen

POINTS FOR DISCUSSION

- What traits do you think made Miss Sullivan a good teacher for Helen Keller?
- What types of personalities are you attracted to the most? Why?

Read the texts below. For questions (1-10) choose the correct answer (A, B, C or D).

MAKING NEW FRIENDS?

Search

With the extensive use of social media, searching profiles of people we share (1) _____ characteristics with has become a popular way of making new acquaintances. The first thing we notice is the user's profile picture. Just as in a face-to-face encounter, looks are what lead us to (2) _____ an interest in someone and proceed with a virtual friendship. Once a person accepts our request for online friendship, we can begin sharing feelings, likes and dislikes and opinions. Emoticons are regularly used to show our virtual friends whether we are jumping for (3) _____ or feeling blue and whether we're fond (4) _____ something or we can't stand it, but we can never be sure those are actually the feelings the other person is (5) _____ at that moment, since we cannot see their body language. So, one has to wonder: how real can a friendship based on looks and emoticons be?

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|--------------------|--------------|------------|-------------|
| 1. A. same | B. usual | C. common | D. ordinary |
| 2. A. get | B. take | C. look | D. drive |
| 3. A. temper | B. love | C. mood | D. joy |
| 4. A. in | B. for | C. of | D. on |
| 5. A. experiencing | B. expecting | C. showing | D. sharing |

Exam tip

- Skim-read the text to get an idea of what it is about.
- Read the text again, one sentence at a time. Read the whole sentence, not just the words before and after the gap, as there may be clues that could help you.
- Try to guess what part of speech is missing and what the meaning of the missing word is.
- Do not look at the four choices or guess the answer until you've tried to understand what the sentence means.
- Do not always think of words as single isolated items, but as parts of a context.
- Read the options carefully and decide which one best fits the context, considering syntax and structure.
- If you aren't sure about the right answer, try to eliminate three of the four alternatives starting with the words that don't make sense.
- Check if the word you have selected forms an acceptable expression with the words before and/or after it.
- Read the text again including the words you used to fill in the gaps to see if it makes sense.

Say 'cheese'!

Did the need for seeing our own image in a public space start with reality TV and then move on to selfies on social media sites? Children are turned into selfie stars from an early age by parents posting their photos on social media sites and the trend (6) _____ into old age. After all, what's the harm in posting a picture of yourself drinking coffee, with the caption, 'It's 5 a.m. and I (7) _____ coffee while watching the sun come up'? Isn't it just a way to let your friends know what's going on in your life and to entertain them? And how about photobombing? Doesn't jumping into other people's photos show that you're media aware and (8) _____ a sense of humour?

Then there are the five-year-old selfie stars, living jet-set lives with their families just because they look cute. Adults who are fans of such young stars comment that their day is not complete without seeing their picture, and some say that they love them more than their own children. (9) _____ these young children growing up taking pride in their fame and appearance and ignoring what talents and skills they may have? Are the parents doing harm to them or (10) _____ them a way out of poverty and anonymity?

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| 6. A. continue | B. continues | C. is continuing | D. has continued |
| 7. A. drink | B. am drinking | C. have drunk | D. have been drinking |
| 8. A. have | B. are having | C. having | D. have had |
| 9. A. Have | B. Do | C. Are | D. Don't |
| 10. A. it gives | B. it is giving | C. has it given | D. does it give |