Read the letter to a newspaper.

Letters to the Editor Page

Dear Editor,

I am writing about the plan to change to a four-day school week in our town's secondary schools. As a teacher with more than thirty years' experience, I would like to explain why I do not agree with this plan.

The idea of a four-day school week is becoming more popular around the world, including in Australia, Iceland and France. In America, the number of districts experimenting with a four-day week rose from 662 to 876 between 2019 and 2023.

One reason for the plan's popularity is obvious: few people in any business or organisation would complain about having a three-day weekend. Staff and students would spend less time travelling to school, and have more time to relax or prepare work for school. Parents would also prefer their children to be able to attend medical appointments without missing lessons.

Supporters of the idea also believe that shorter school weeks lead to better performance from both teachers and students. However, research in America shows that grades never go up. At best, grades stay the same, but mainly they go down, especially in schools in cities and towns.

In my opinion, if local schools change to four longer days, not only will students be more tired, but it will be difficult to timetable long lessons with special facilities and classrooms. Although subjects like English and maths do not need much equipment, others like computing, science, sports and music do.

Similarly, since most school clubs take place straight after school, many students and teachers may decide not to go because they would not return home until the early evening. While some clubs could take place at lunchtime, they would all have to be in classrooms since the halls and playgrounds would be in use, and they could never last longer than forty minutes.

For all these reasons, I hope that our schools will think more carefully about this plan. I support the wish to make schools more successful and enjoyable, but I do not believe a four-day school week is the right way to do it.

Yours sincerely,

Mr Lee

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LIVEWORKSHEETS

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9 Answer the following questions.

You do not need to write in full sentences.

(a) What are the town's secondary schools planning to do?

(1)

(b) In 2023, how many areas in America were trying the new idea?

(1)

(c) What is the clearest benefit of the town's plan for secondary schools?

(1)

(d) How can a shorter week help students who have to visit a doctor?

(1)

(e) What does the research from America suggest usually happens when schools have a shorter week?

(1)

(f) What does 'others' (paragraph 5, line 4) refer to?

(1)

(Total for Question 9 = 6 marks)

LIVEWORKSHEETS

10 Answer the questions below.

Put a cross ☒ in the correct box for each question.

(a) What does the writer suggest about school clubs now?

(1)

☐	**A** They last too long.
☐	**B** They take place in big spaces.
☐	**C** They happen in the evening.

(b) What is the purpose of this letter?

(1)

☐	**A** to protest against a plan
☐	**B** to suggest a new idea
☐	**C** to ask for information

(Total for Question 10 = 2 marks)

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LIVEWORKSHEETS

Read the blog about a holiday at home.

www.samirasblog.com

Have you seen the terrific video of the mother creating a theme park ride at home for her daughter? I discovered it a couple of months ago, as I was doing my daily look at social media. The video shows the daughter sitting in the middle of a small upside-down table on her mum's knees. She's watching a video of a theme park ride while her resourceful mum moves the table up and down and from side to side. The young girl is evidently delighted by her 'real' theme park experience. If you ever need cheering up, then watch it. I just know it'll put you in a good mood!

Although the video was clearly not intended for someone like me, since I neither am nor have a child, it did get me thinking. I had been looking forward to some sunshine, but couldn't afford to go abroad to find it. I had considered going on a short break to a luxury hotel, but that was even more expensive. So, inspired by the video, I started to plan how to give myself a holiday experience at home.

Soon after, I took a week's leave and checked into the luxury hotel that is my one-bedroom flat! I had decided to only use cash during my holiday. Not being able to pay by card would stop me from going over budget. If I was really going to imitate the hotel experience, I couldn't do anything more than make a tea or coffee in my bedroom, so most of my money would be spent on having food delivered or going to restaurants. Although, to follow one of my personal holiday traditions, I wanted to buy at least one inexpensive painting from a local artist.

The first morning, before I laid out my rug on my 'private beach', I put on some relaxing music containing the soft sounds of the sea and chose an enjoyable beach read. Then, after getting comfortable, I turned my desk lamp towards my face as if I were sunbathing, and finally, placed my feet into a tray of sand that I had prepared the previous night.

By the end of the week, I felt thoroughly rested and really appreciated not having had any of my usual holiday anxieties. I was so used to constantly worrying about flight delays or whether my baggage would arrive or not. My joy was reduced only slightly when I remembered that clearing up the sand, which was all over the floor of my luxury hotel, was my responsibility. Although overall I did miss having some company… if only I had thought of that earlier!

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LIVEWORKSHEETS

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11 Answer the questions below.

Put a cross ☒ in the correct box for each question.

(a) What made the 'theme park ride' feel so real for the young girl?

(1)

☒	**A**	Her mum turned her upside down at the end.
☒	**B**	She felt ill during the theme park ride.
☒	**C**	Her mum copied the movements of the ride.

(b) Why does Samira feel that the video was not made for her?

(1)

☒	**A**	She does not like going to theme parks.
☒	**B**	She rarely reads posts on social media.
☒	**C**	She thinks it is for parents or children.

(c) Why did the writer choose to have a holiday at home?

(1)

☒	**A**	She did not have a lot of money to spend on going away.
☒	**B**	She does not enjoy going on holiday in foreign countries.
☒	**C**	She wanted to do exactly the same as the mum in the video.

(Total for Question 11 = 3 marks)

LIVEWORKSHEETS

12 Answer the questions below.

Put a cross ☒ in the correct box for each question.

(a) Why does the writer think that only having cash was a good idea?

(1)

☐	**A** It would be easier to pay for food and drinks.
☐	**B** It would stop her buying cheap souvenirs.
☐	**C** It would stop her spending too much money.

(b) What was the first thing the writer did to create her beach scene?

(1)

☐	**A** put a rug on the floor
☐	**B** put sand into a tray
☐	**C** put on relaxing music

(Total for Question 12 = 2 marks)

13 Answer the following questions about Samira.

You do not need to write in full sentences.

(a) How does Samira usually feel about travelling by plane?

(1)

(b) What was Samira's only complaint about her 'luxury hotel'?

(1)

(c) What does Samira mean by 'having some company'?

(1)

(Total for Question 13 = 3 marks)

TOTAL FOR PAPER = 50 MARKS

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