Reading test Focus 4 (units 1-3)

I. Complete gaps 1–5 with sentences A–F. There is one extra sentence.

LEARNING FROM HOW OTHERS LEARN

If we want to give our children the best education possible, it is sensible to look at the most successful education systems in the world for ideas. Different countries have different ideas about how to ensure that their children maximise their potential. It's clear that no education system is perfect. **(1)**_____ So, what, if anything, can we learn from them and are there any similarities between them at all? The two countries are South Korea and Finland. Korea has a one hundred percent literacy rate. Its students achieve outstanding grades in all kinds of tests compared to those in other countries. How do they do it? **(2)**_____Many are taught by private tutors after their normal lessons. Despite large class sizes, there are no problems with discipline. Teachers are respected and teach in a traditional manner with the children paying attention and obeying instructions unquestioningly.

Finnish children also do very well in comparison with school students in other countries. However, in Finland, schools combine a short school day and extra after-school activities to develop individual interests and motivate the children. **(3)**_____There is much less stress in Finnish schools than in Korean schools but that doesn't mean that the teaching is unprofessional. Finnish teachers spend less time teaching but more time in professional development. They are highly educated and teaching is a well-respected and well-paid profession.

So, what can we learn from this brief look at two countries who are able to educate their children more effectively than we can? Firstly, children need a reason to learn. That may be pressure from parents, peers and society as a whole to succeed. **(4)**_____Too often in our schools, we find children who are uninterested in the lessons and parents who are uninterested in their progress. Politicians and journalists would rather criticise teachers than praise them and, as a result, members of the teaching profession lack the respect they receive in other countries. **(5)**_____ The opposite should be true.

As we can see, Finland and South Korea do share one great similarity. In both societies, people look up to teachers and recognise the importance of the job they are doing. So, let's have more respect for teachers, students and education in general and, maybe, our children can be challenging those from South Korea and Finland in the future.

A The answer appears to be by sheer hard work. Students are under immense pressure to achieve their goals.
B These comparisons can hide faults and ignore positive aspects of poorly performing students but, generally, they give us a good idea of which education systems work best.
C Alternatively, it could be an interest in what they are learning and a thirst for even more knowledge.
D However, in most studies, two countries have a higher standard of education than others, even though the way they educate their children seems to be completely different.
E The idea is that they will work hard because they want to rather than because they are forced to.
F The public are more aware of the length of teachers' holidays than the enormous pressure they are under in the classroom.

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II. Read two texts about weddings. For questions 1-5, choose the correct answer, A, B, C or D.

ALL SAINTS' AND ALL SOULS'

ON a week-day morning a small congregation, consisting mainly of women and girls, rose from its knees in the church called All Saints'. They were about to disperse, when a smart footstep, entering the porch and coming up the central passage, arrested their attention. Everybody looked. A young cavalry soldier in a red uniform strode up the aisle, with an embarrassment which was only the more marked by the determination upon his face to show none. A slight flush mounted

LIVEWORKSHEETS

his cheek but he never paused till he came close to the altar railing. Here for a moment he stood alone.

'Tis a wedding!' murmured some of the women, brightening. 'Let's wait!' The majority again sat down. There was a creaking of machinery with a quarter-jack and small bell beneath it, the automaton being driven by the same clock machinery that struck the large bell in the tower. The jack had struck half-past eleven. 'Where's the woman?' whispered some of the spectators. The young sergeant was as silent as he was still. The silence grew to be a noticeable thing as the minutes went on, and nobody else appeared, and not a soul moved.

The rattle of the quarter-jack again, its blows for three quarters, caused many of the congregation to start that artificial coughing which betrays a nervous suspense. But the soldier never moved. There he stood, upright as a column, his cap in his hand. The clock ticked on. The women threw off their nervousness, and giggling became more frequent. Then came a dead silence. Everyone was waiting for the end. The sergeant had not yet turned; every woman in the church was waiting to see his face, and he appeared to know it. At last he did turn, and stalked resolutely down the nave, braving them all.

Opposite the church was a paved square. The young man on leaving the door went to cross the square, when, in the middle, he met a woman. The expression of her face, which had been one of intense anxiety, sank at the sight of his nearly to terror. 'Well?' he said. 'O, Frank – I made a mistake! – I thought that church with the spire was All Saints', and I was at the door at half-past eleven to a minute as you said. I waited till a quarter to twelve, and found then that I was in All Souls'. But I wasn't much frightened, for I thought it could be tomorrow as well.'

'Shall it be tomorrow, Frank?' she asked. 'Tomorrow! I don't go through that experience again for some time'.

'But after all,' she expostulated in a trembling voice, 'the mistake was not such a terrible thing! Now, dear Frank, when shall it be?' 'Ah, when? God knows!' he said, and turning from her walked rapidly away.

adapted by Pearson

1 When the soldier entered the church,
A he tried unsuccessfully to hide his emotions.
B the women and girls were waiting for him.
C the first thing everyone noticed was his uniform.
D he soon stopped feeling embarrassed.

2 While the soldier was waiting in the church,
A the church was completely silent except for the bell.
B the noise level in the church steadily increased.
C the women were watching his face all the time.
D the soldier stood completely still.

3 The woman felt most frightened when she
A realised she was in the wrong church.
B saw the expression on Frank's face.
C was waiting in the middle of the square.
D arrived at All Souls' church.

DON'T SPOIL YOUR BIG DAY

Your wedding day should be the happiest day of your life but it can also be one of the most stressful and expensive days too. How can you make sure your wedding day is unforgettable for the right reasons?

Firstly, consider your budget carefully. Yes, a wedding is a once-in-a-lifetime experience but you don't want to be paying for it for the rest of your life. The most important thing is that it is the day when two people who love each other are joined together as one. That will happen whether you have a small party in your home town for your immediate family and close friends or if you get married on a Caribbean beach.

Secondly, the more special and unique your wedding day is, the more can go wrong. In your local town, you will probably know caterers, photographers and DJs who you can trust. All the people on your guest list will be able to afford to come. Things may go wrong but they won't be major disasters

LIVEWORKSHEETS

and will be the sort of things you can laugh at in the future. If you travel somewhere exotic, you may have delayed or cancelled flights, upset stomachs or extreme weather conditions that could completely ruin your big day. Special friends may not be there because of the cost or lack of time.

Whatever you decide, make sure it is a joint decision. Both sets of parents can be consulted for advice, especially if they are paying for it. However, it isn't their day and they shouldn't dictate to the bride and groom who is going to be invited or any other details.

Finally, your wedding is the first day of your married life. Whatever happens, try to enjoy it.

4 According to the writer, getting married abroad
A makes the day more special.
B is too expensive for most people.
C can cause more problems than a local wedding.
D gives the day more meaning than a local wedding.

5 Overall, the writer's opinion could be summed up by saying:
A The day is special because you are getting married.
B People worry too much about their wedding day.
C The more the wedding costs, the more special the day is.
D You can reduce the stress by letting others make decisions for you.

_____/5

III. Read the text. Complete the gaps 1-5 with sentences A-F. There is one extra sentence.

THE BEST PLACE TO LIVE IN EUROPE

What do you look for when deciding where to live? Many people never move from their home town, of course. Others move because of a job. Some, though, think carefully about the lifestyle they are looking for. It may be somewhere affordable or a place with a vibrant arts and music scene. They may want an iconic skyline or narrow cobbled streets and small local shops. Would you prefer clean air or a bustling cosmopolitan city?

Amazingly, whatever your tastes or desires, you may be surprised to learn that Zurich, in Switzerland, has all these things and more. **(1)** _____ Better even than traditionally popular cities such as Vancouver, Singapore and Montevideo.

Zurich is Switzerland's largest city with a population of about 400,000. **(2)** _____ People from abroad are attracted by the job opportunities, high salaries and low rates of taxation, the world class schools and universities and the overall high standard of living.

Of course, this is Switzerland so prices are high and finding affordable accommodation in the city centre may be difficult. **(3)** _____ Therefore, residents can take advantage of lower accommodation costs further from the centre.

Zurich is also a very green city with many parks and breathtaking views of the Alps in the distance. Between the city and the mountains there are lakes where you can swim, sail or go kayaking in safety.

It should be no surprise that Zurich has some excellent shops, which are modern and clean. There are also restaurants to suit all tastes and budgets. Culture lovers will be impressed by the huge variety of cultural institutions in the city including opera, ballet, theatre, museums, art galleries and concert halls. **(4)** _____ Not many people realise that Europe's biggest techno event is held in Zurich as is the Caliente Festival, the largest Latin cultural event on the continent.

So, are there any drawbacks to living in the city at all? **(5)** _____ It is still much safer than other big cities in Europe. Drivers also complain that the roads are very congested but public transport is so efficient that there is really no need to drive in the city at all. In fact, traffic is slow because, unlike in other cities, trams, cyclists and pedestrians are given priority over cars – making life even easier for non-car drivers. That's probably why the percentage of the population who don't have a car has risen from 40 percent to 45 percent in the last decade.

All in all, you can find a great standard of life in Zurich.

LIVEWORKSHEETS

A There are also attractions for young people with many clubs and a thriving alternative music scene.

B However, 30 percent of the population were born overseas so it is a very multicultural city.

C The city has a reliable network of buses and trams, although you have to be aware of pickpockets on public transport as this type of crime is high.

D However, the city has excellent public transport and it is easy to get from one part of the city to another quickly and comfortably.

E Some parts of the city have a reputation for crime although the levels are only high in comparison with the rest of the city.

F That's why, in many surveys, it comes first in the list of best cities in Europe in which to live and is only just behind Melbourne, Australia, as the best city in the whole world.

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LIVEWORKSHEETS