

A Challenging Outdoor Camp

During the school holidays in December, Ryan joined a camp organised by his school Outdoor Adventure Club. (1) As the place was surrounded by jungle, there was no means of communication with the outside world. Ryan started to regret his decision once he arrived there.

(2) Having had previous experience, he found it difficult as the ropes needed to be tight enough to prevent the tent from collapsing. Nevertheless, the campers were friendly and it was easy to break the ice once he talked to them.

Next, the campers were divided into four groups. (3) They had to crawl through a dug-out mud hole covered with a half-collapsed tent. There was total darkness and they had to search their way out while their eyes got adjusted.

(4) The slope was slippery and some of his team members accidentally slid into the stream without any warning. Soon after, they had to challenge themselves in a tight-rope walking activity. (5) Everyone had experienced being suspended mid-air. (6) Although Ryan had a challenging time, he definitely enjoyed himself and made many friends in return.

- A** Next, they had to walk along a slope and then get into the stream.
- B** Next activity was kayaking.
- C** They had to compete in terms of co-operation, team spirit and speed.
- D** One false move would mean losing their footing and they would tumble down.

- E** He was rather worried as the bus drew nearer to the campsite.
- F** He attended the camp with his friends.
- G** He had to pitch his own tent.
- H** They had to hold on to a parallel rope and do the balancing act.

Useful English Expressions

Giving advice

- My advice would be to ...
- It's generally a good idea to ...
- It would probably be better/safer/wiser to ...
- If I were you, I would/wouldn't ...

Asking for advice

- I need some advice. I've no idea what to do.
- What do you think I should do?
- What should I do?
- What do you suggest?

Smart Homes

In the not-so-distant future, homes will be smarter aside from making our lives easier and more exciting. (35) That's the magic of smart homes!

In a smart home, technology is like a friendly wizard, making everything work together seamlessly. For example, lights that turn on when you enter a room and adjust to your preferred brightness, thermostats that keep your home just the right temperature, or even music that plays in the background as you move from one space to another.

(36) Furthermore, one of the coolest things about smart homes is how you can control them with just your voice or a tap on your device. (37) Then, instead of getting up to turn off the lights, you could simply say, "Lights off," and like magic, the space will be dark in a blink of an eye. It's like living in a futuristic world where your home listens and responds to you!

However, smart homes are not just about convenience. (38) Imagine having a doorbell that shows you who's at the door on a screen, even if you're not home. Smart locks will keep your house secure and cameras let you keep an eye on things when you're away. (39) They can help save energy by turning off the lights and adjusting the water usage when you're not around. Not only will you be saving energy, you will be saving money too! Of course, with all this amazing technology, we also need to be smart about how we use it. (40) One way is by ensuring all account and device passwords are strong and unique.

In conclusion, smart homes will make everything easier, safer and more fun.

- A** Imagine that you're snuggled up on the couch.
- B** Smart homes too will help to protect the environment.
- C** Imagine a home that knows what you need before you even ask.
- D** It's important to learn how to keep our devices and information safe.
- E** Imagine that you are watching television.
- F** For instance, our homes will be safer with advanced technology.
- G** Smart homes will also help you with your homework.
- H** It's like having your own personal assistant!