

## Week -01

### **Instructions to the Students:**

**Class IX & X** - **Exercise 01 and 02,**

**Classes IX-XII** - **All Exercises.**

Dear Students,

You can read the following passages at your leisure time so that it helps you improve your vocabulary, sentence structure and imagination as well!

### **Method to comprehend: (For Classes IX-XII)**

- Please make sure you read the passage thoroughly, find the key words in the questions, and then answer the questions that are followed.
- For some questions, you may have to answer in a word or phrase, according to the question given.
- Be sure to underline, circle or make general notes in the margins. Create your own guide to distinguish between important terms or information you need to need to further clarify.
- Try **skimming** the chapter first: Take a look at the title page, preface, subtitles, the introduction and the chapter summary before reading the entire chapter.
- **Scanning:** Read the whole passage carefully (sentence by sentence / paragraph by paragraph) to understand the content which helps you answer the questions!
- Try to identify the facts, examples, unnecessary information, important numbers, reasons and valid points based on the passage.

### **Reading is to the mind what exercise is to the body!**

### **Note-making (For classes XI-XII)**

- People make brief notes in order to lecture or speak in a public gathering.
- This practice question paper will give you an idea to make notes in an easy manner.
- Read the passage carefully and identify the main points from the passage.
- Underline the main points from the passage.
- Try to identify examples and unnecessary information.
- Do not copy the sentence as it is from the passage while you are making notes.
- Make sure that you make you notes in a phrase or word, as per the instructions given.
- Check your answers after you finished the task.

### **Summary writing: (For classes XI-XII)**

Summarizing is an attempt to reproduce in one's own words the substance of a given passage. It aims at finding out the leading ideas and expressing them in your own words as clearly as possible. It should be about one-third of the original passage.

Summary writing tests the following skills:

- a) Ability to concentrate
- b) Ability to condense
- c) Command of structure and vocabulary
- d) Ability to select, arrange and present relevant information
- e) Skill in keeping to a word limit

- Read the article to be summarized and be sure you understand it.
- Mark the sections which are relevant to your answer.
- You should re-express the author's ideas in your own words.
- Do not add any information which is not given in the extract.
- Do not alter the meaning or emphasis of what the author says.
- Do not give your own opinion.
- Do not simply list a number of points.

**Once you have drafted your summary, you must check:**

- Does it answer the question?
- Is the information presented in logical order?
- Is there a clear development of the theme?
- Is the style suitable?
- Are you within the stipulated number of words?
- Is your language clear, straightforward and easily understandable?
- Is all grammar punctuation and spelling correct?

**NOTE: MARKING SCHEME WILL BE UPLOADED AFTER A FEW DAYS.**

“Take up one idea. Make that one idea your life - think of it, dream of it, live on that idea. Let the brain, muscles, nerves, every part of your body, be full of that idea, and just leave every other idea alone. This is the way to success.”--[Swami Vivekananda](#)

**Reading is to the mind what exercise is to the body!**

## EXERCISE: 1

Read the following article about banana leaves, and then answer the questions on the opposite page.

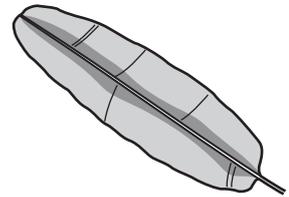
## Fantastic Leaves

We all know about bananas. They are rich in vitamin A, B6, C and potassium, and humans eat large numbers of them. Only rice, wheat and maize are consumed in greater quantities. Bananas are grown in about 130 countries, which is more than any other fruit crop.

But what about the banana leaf itself? It is valued in many parts of the world for its beauty and fragrance and it has many additional uses.

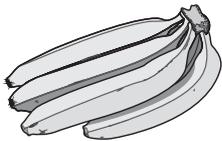
### Eating Naturally

The banana leaf may have been the original equivalent of the modern paper plate. Eating food served on a banana leaf is more hygienic than eating food off plastic, steel or ceramic plates. Also, when the meal is finished, the leaf can be disposed of in an environmentally-friendly way.



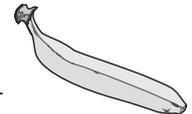
### Non-stick

A banana leaf can also serve as a non-stick frying pan. This means that you don't have to use oil and it is a healthy way of cooking food. The many uses of banana leaves make them a vital part of traditional life in countries such as Sri Lanka and they are a perfect example of the human ability to find a purpose for even the most ordinary items. When banana leaves are used to wrap packets of rice and curry, they add a distinct flavour to the food.



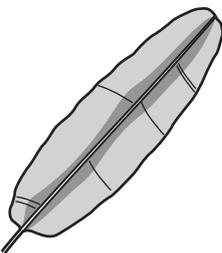
### And When It Rains...

On rainy days, villagers in many parts of the world hold banana leaves over their heads to keep them from getting wet! In addition, not only people but also plants such as cocoa, coffee and black pepper benefit from the leaf as a means of shade.



### Get Packing

In Sri Lanka, when delicate fruits are being transported by lorry, banana leaves serve as packing materials to prevent them from getting squashed. In this way they are far more eco-friendly than plastic wrapping material. Another benefit is that when banana leaves are used, they help to retain the freshness of the fruits.



### Decorative Uses

Banana leaves are sometimes used as wedding decorations, where they are thought to bring good luck and prosperity to the couple getting married. In places such as Haiti, when the leaves are dried, they are woven to make attractive hampers and salad bowls.



The banana and its leaf together form one of nature's truly versatile creations.



(a) Which three foods do people eat most in the world?  
..... [1]

(b) What advantages are there in using banana leaves instead of plates?  
(i)..... [1]

(ii)..... [1]

(c) Which ingredient is not required if you use banana leaves when frying food?  
..... [1]

(d) What is one benefit of wrapping rice and curry in banana leaves?  
..... [1]

(e) How do the leaves help other crops when they are growing?  
..... [1]

(f) What are the advantages of using banana leaves as packaging? Give **two** details.  
.....  
..... [1]

(g) Why are banana leaves popular as wedding decorations?  
..... [1]

[Total: 8]

## Exercise 2

Read the following article about research into people living longer, and then answer the questions on the opposite page.

# SOON WE MAY LIVE FOR 200 YEARS

The day may come when people will celebrate the start of middle age on their 100th birthday. Some of the world's most eminent experts on ageing have made predictions about average life expectancy – that is the age that you can hope to live to. Those experts say that by the end of this century in some parts of the world people may live to 200 years of age.

From the late 1800s to the present day, the average life span has almost doubled. Some scientists predict a jump of even greater proportions over the next 100 years, thanks to advances in medical science.

Scientists are researching many interesting possibilities at the present time. For example, within the next ten years, they may be able to grow new teeth from stem cells in the laboratory. They are also hoping to develop drugs which can imitate the effects of eating less so that people reduce their calorie intake. This means that people should stay healthier because fewer will be overweight. These scientists are attempting to increase life span by up to 50 per cent. If such changes happen, the world will be dominated by people over 100 years old.



At the present time, the longest recorded human lifespan is of a Frenchwoman, Jeanne-Louise Calment, who was born in 1875 and died in 1997 at the age of 122 years and 164 days. This is, of course, a real exception, but who knows whether it will be so rare in the future?

In the last century, cleaner living conditions and the discovery of life-saving medicines led to longer life expectancy. A Professor of Medicine at an American University stated: "People haven't realised it but with the developments in medical science, we are in a similar position now to increase life expectancy dramatically. At present, as you get older, your cells slowly stop repairing themselves, but with new medical discoveries I think we are going to be able to reverse that process."

However, other scientists are less convinced. They believe that the human body has a fixed limit on life span that it will not be possible to exceed. One of this group said: "Living for 200 years is unrealistic. To do that we would have to wipe out things like cancer, heart disease and other major health problems. Despite the huge amount of money being spent on research into these diseases, their complete removal is frustratingly slow."

Many scientists, however, are excited by the possibilities of a longer life. One expert said: "How many of us have wanted to do something else with our lives, such as be a novelist, but have not had the time? So much human potential is undiscovered. Perhaps with longer lives, we could start to achieve more of our dreams."

- (a) How has the average life span changed from the late 1800s to the present day?  
..... [1]
- (b) What areas of research are scientists undertaking at the moment? Give **two** examples.  
(i) ..... [1]  
(ii) ..... [1]
- (c) What was unusual about Jeanne-Louise Calment?  
..... [1]
- (d) What contributed to longer life expectancy in the last century? Give **two** details.  
(i) ..... [1]  
(ii) ..... [1]
- (e) What is the effect of ageing on our body cells?  
..... [1]
- (f) According to the graph, what was the difference in life expectancy between men and women in 1930?  
..... [1]
- (g) Why do some scientists believe that the human body has a fixed age limit?  
..... [1]
- (h) What benefit could we receive from living longer?  
..... [1]
- (j) What exactly are some experts predicting about living longer AND how is a change of eating habits important in achieving this? Give **two** details for each.
- Predictions:
- (i) .....  
(ii) .....
- Effects of changes in eating habits:
- (i) .....  
(ii) ..... [4]

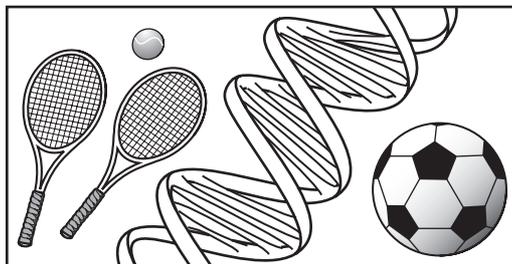
[Total: 14]

### Exercise 3

Read the article below about research into the performance of sportsmen and sportswomen, and then complete the notes on the opposite page.

## ***SPORTS STARS HAVE A NATURAL ADVANTAGE***

Scientists have identified the clear biological advantages that give the world's sporting champions a head start in life before they have even begun their rigorous training programmes.



Scientists working with official sports organisations have begun to examine hundreds of teenagers to see if they have any genetic advantages that could be vital in a range of sporting events. Those young people who match up will be fast-tracked into training programmes designed to make them future champions.

The coach for the French Olympic team says: "We measure special attributes between the ages of 16 and 18. But only one in 10,000 people has the physical aspects needed to compete at the very top level in sporting events. The biological make-up of an individual is now a huge factor in determining our choice of an athlete. We take into account the height, strength and endurance of a person. We also regard mental application as important, how an individual reacts when the competition gets really tough."

Scientists say that medical evidence is playing an increasingly important role in the selection of athletes. A study of the 40-year dominance of Kenyan runners in long distance athletic events has revealed that 45 per cent of them come from the Nandi tribe. What is remarkable is that this tribe makes up only 3 per cent of the Kenyan population. There must be something in their genes which gives them such endurance. Athletic organisations consider these genetic factors a good indicator when selecting athletes to produce superior running performances.

Scientists say that in order to be dominant in a sport, an athlete now needs to possess at least one unusual physical quality. For example, David Beckham's bandy legs have been partly credited with helping to put a spin on the football when he takes a free kick for England. Other biological characteristics are more measurable. The American tennis player, Andy Roddick, has the fastest serve in the game. He is able to arch his back so much that it increases the rotation of his arm to 130 degrees. This is 44 per cent better than the average professional player and this allows him to drive the ball over the net at 240 kilometres per hour. Michael Phelps, the fourteen-times Olympic swimming champion, has over-size feet which act like flippers to propel him through the water.

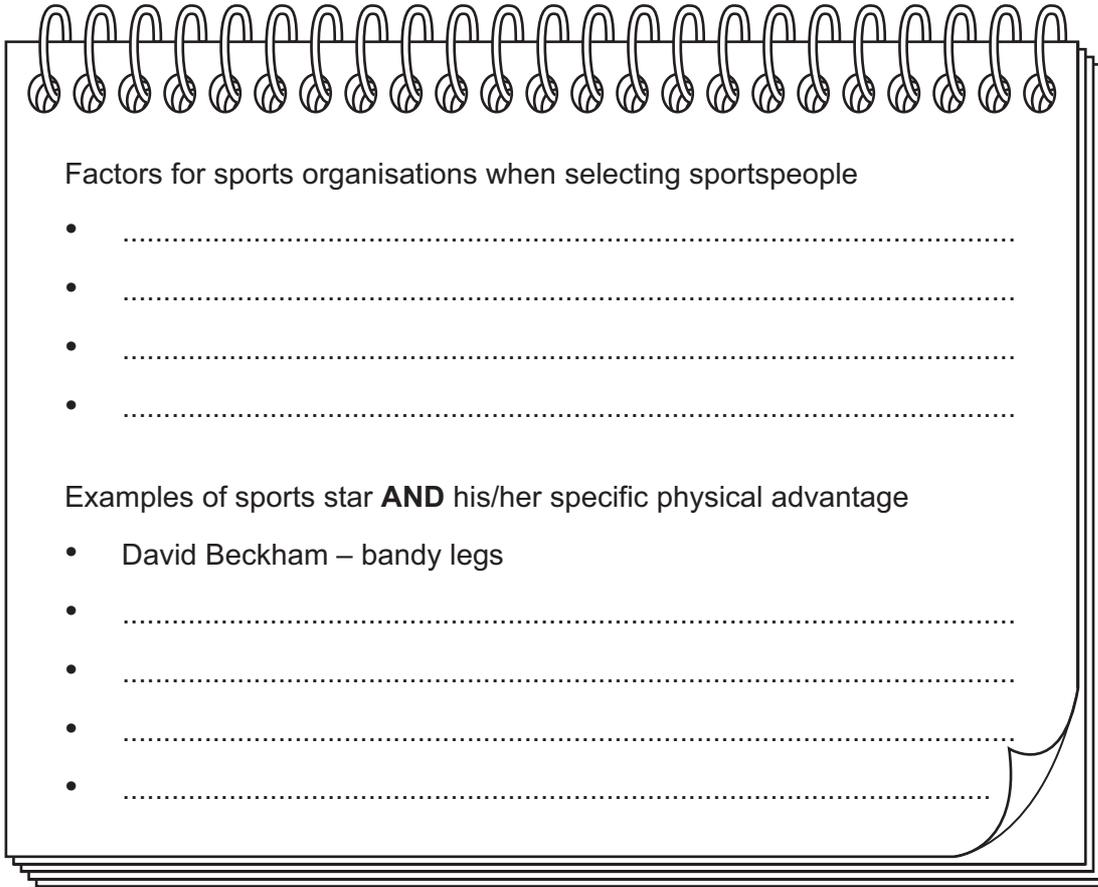
These special biological features are not restricted to men. Mia Hamm, probably the best all-round woman footballer in the world, produces less than one litre of sweat an hour when doing vigorous exercise, which is half the human average. When it comes to speed, take the example of woman racing driver, Liz Halliday. A normal person would take 300 milliseconds to make a reactive decision. She can do it in 260 milliseconds. It may not sound much quicker but at top race speeds this makes a difference of three car lengths.

The difference between success and failure is very small and all these biological factors are crucial in finding future champions.

You are preparing to give a presentation to your year group about the recent research into sporting performance. Prepare some notes to use as the basis of your talk.

*For  
Examiner's  
Use*

Make **four** points under each heading.



Factors for sports organisations when selecting sportspeople

- .....
- .....
- .....
- .....

Examples of sports star **AND** his/her specific physical advantage

- David Beckham – bandy legs
- .....
- .....
- .....
- .....

[Total: 8]

EXERCISE: 4

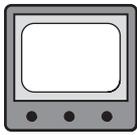
Read the following article about young people and television. **Write a summary on the opposite page of the negative effects on children who watch too much television.**

**Your summary should be about 100 words and no more than 120 words.**

**You should use your own words as far as possible.**

Up to 6 marks are available for the content of your summary, and up to 4 marks for the style and accuracy of your language.

## TELEVISION - A BIG TURN-OFF?



We have been told that too much television is bad for young people and now it looks as if it might be true. A recent survey has suggested that the amount of television children watch should be considered a major health issue because it has a really bad effect on the development of the brain.

In addition, television is thought to be a cause of depression. Children spend so long sitting and watching TV, it has also been blamed for other health issues such as being overweight.

If very young children watch an excess of television, this appears to set a pattern for life. There is a feeling amongst certain researchers that children should not watch any television until they are at least three years of age. If they watch too much, they may well grow up finding it difficult to concentrate on things that require sustained attention - such as books.



Television provides unnatural levels of excitement and sensory stimulation. Nothing in real life is comparable. One result of this is that children expect their teachers, for example, to be singing and dancing in the classroom to constantly entertain them.

Many researchers say that some children have lost the ability to entertain themselves. But as one expert said: "The advice is quite simple.

There is no need for teachers or parents to turn themselves into clowns. They do not always have to become actors to keep the young ones amused. It is fine for children to experience some boredom from time to time." Without experiencing boredom, it is believed that children lose the ability to use their imagination and find things to do.



So what is the best way to approach the difficult problem of television watching? It might be too extreme to ban TV programmes completely since this may cause real problems in families that have become dependent on television. A better approach would be the gradual reduction of viewing time and a pattern of no more than one hour of television a day.

There is an argument that many programmes are educational and therefore helpful to children's understanding of the world. This is possibly true, but even the best wildlife documentary is a poor substitute for real-life experience and talking to other children and adults.



In the end, it is a matter of compromise. The worst situation is when parents sit their children down in front of the television for hours at a time or fail to restrict their children's viewing because they don't want to upset them.

## WEEK: I - MARKING SCHEME

### Exercise 1

#### Fantastic Leaves

- (a) rice, wheat and maize [1]
- (b) (i) (more) hygienic [1]
- (ii) (can be disposed of in a more) environmentally-friendly (way)/environmental [1]
- (c) oil [1]
- (d) (adds a distinct) flavour (to the food) [1]
- (e) they provide shade [1]
- (f) retain the freshness of the fruit/eco-friendly/stop them from being squashed [TWO details for ONE mark] [1]
- (g) they bring (good) luck/prosperity (to the couple getting married) [1]

[Total: 8]

### Exercise 2 Soon we may live for 200 years

- (a) it has almost doubled [1]
- (b) (i) growing new teeth from stem cells [1]
- (ii) developing drugs to imitate the effects of eating less [1]
- (c) longest recorded life span/lived to be (more than) 122 years old/lived from 1875 to 1997 [1]
- (d) (i) cleaner living conditions [1]
- (ii) discovery of life-saving medicines [1]
- (e) they (slowly) stop repairing (themselves) [1]
- (f) five years [1]
- (g) cancer, heart disease, major health problems/complete removal of major diseases is slow [1]
- (h) do something more with our lives/achieve more of our dreams/achieve more of our potential [1]
- (j) Tick and number the points: Predictions: 1 average life expectancy to 200 years/living to 200 years (of age) 2 start middle age on 100th birthday 3 double life span [ANY TWO FROM THREE]
- Effects of changes in eating habits: 4 reduce calorie intake 5 people stay healthier 6 fewer overweight [ANY TWO FROM THREE] [4]

[Total: 14]

**Exercise: 3**

**Sports stars have a natural advantage**

Factors for sports organisations when selecting sportspeople (MAX 4 MARKS FOR THIS SECTION)

**(any four of the following)**

- 1 aged between 16 and 18
- 2 biological make-up/genetic factors
- 3 height
- 4 strength
- 5 endurance
- 6 mental application/how individual reacts under pressure
- 7 medical evidence

Examples of sports star and his/her specific physical advantage (MAX 4 MARKS FOR THIS SECTION)

- 8 Andy Roddick arched back/increased arm rotation
- 9 Michael Phelps over-size feet
- 10 Mia Hamm sweats half human average/sweats less than one litre an hour
- 11 Liz Halliday quicker reactions when making decisions

[Total: 8]

**Exercise 4 Television – a big turn off?**

**Six suitable points out of the following:**

- 1 stunts the development of the brain
- 2 cause of depression
- 3 become overweight (due to inactivity)
- 4 sets a pattern for life
- 5 makes it difficult to concentrate (with sustained attention)
- 6 provides unnatural levels of excitement/(sensory) stimulation
- 7 lose ability to entertain themselves
- 8 lose ability to use imagination
- 9 don't talk to other children and adults

**Exercise 1 (Follow the same instructions while completing the exercises that were given earlier)**

Read the following information about a Space Camp Competition, and then answer the questions on the opposite page.

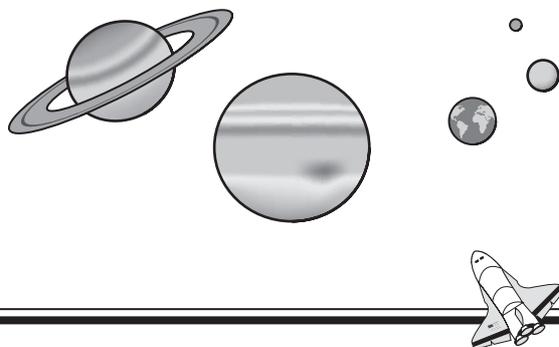
# Space Camp Competition

This is a chance for you and your friends to win a place at next year's Space Camp where you will spend time learning more about outer space and having wonderful space-like experiences. It also includes a visit to the National Space Centre. The camp will run from 5<sup>th</sup> to 10<sup>th</sup> May 2010 and will include accommodation, food and a host of fun and educational activities. All this is free to the winning teams but would normally cost you \$450 per team.

## The competition task

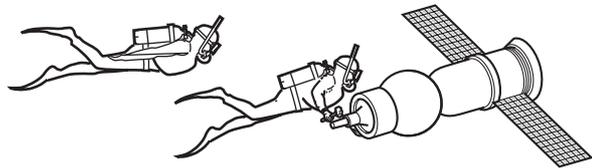
Imagine that man has returned to the moon and set up a base there. The 'lunonauts' live on the moon for months at a time, conducting experiments in what is a very hard and inhospitable environment. Life on the moon is much more difficult than anyone thinks. Your job is to help the scientists on the moon with a new and useful device which will make their everyday lives easier or safer. You and your team must invent something which will do this.

You have to be between 14 and 17 years old to enter and there must be no more than 4 people in each team. The ten best teams that come up with the most original and practical design will win five whole days of fun at the Space Camp, learning about astronomy and space science.



## At the camp

When you reach the camp there will be experts showing you how it all works. You will also get the opportunity to experience what weightlessness in space can be like by scuba diving. Once you can do this well you will have to try to build a satellite under water!



At the end of the week you will build a rocket ready for its launch. The most successful launch team that sends the rocket highest will get a certificate. But that's not all...

## And more...

The rocket-launch winning team gets the chance to visit the National Space Centre where the simulators will take you on a ride you have never experienced before. There will be real astronaut training in the gym. On the second day you will be able to learn about satellites and have a chance to design your own. The last visit is to the Planetarium where you can photograph the stars and planets and use the telescopes to see into the further reaches of space.

## How to enter

You have until December 10<sup>th</sup> to enter your team which must have a team name and contact number. Enter by logging onto our website [www.metro.co/spacecamp.ac](http://www.metro.co/spacecamp.ac) by 8 pm at the latest.

(a) When will the Space Camp take place?

.....

(b) How much is the Space Camp prize worth?

.....

(c) What does each team have to produce for the 'lunonauts'?

.....

(d) What is the age requirement for team members?

.....

(e) Which **two** water-based activities will you be able to do at Space Camp?

.....

.....

(f) What creative activity can you enjoy at the National Space Centre?

.....

(g) Give **one** activity you can take part in at the Planetarium.

.....

(h) When is the latest time and date to apply for the competition?

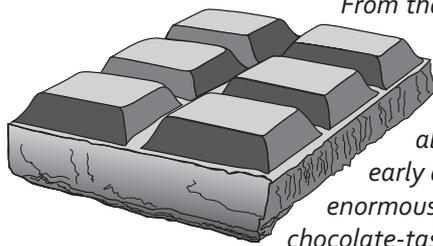
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## Exercise 2

Read the following article about a chocolate-taster, and then answer the questions on the opposite page.

# Chocolate-Tasting

Chloe Dupont has a job which many people would envy. She is a chocolate-taster. Surprisingly, she is small and slim in spite of eating chocolate every day of her life. She was born in Argentina, where, at that time, chocolate was scarce and expensive. At the age of 13 she moved to France with her family.



From that moment, she was able to indulge her passion. As she purchased her longed-for chocolate bars she also began cataloguing every piece of chocolate she bought with her small amount of pocket money. She had a modest amount of money to spend so she was always looking for the best taste. Chloe often ate the chocolate as early as 5 o'clock in the morning when she was alone because it gave her enormous pleasure. It was probably at this time that she considered chocolate-tasting as her future profession.

Her school friends tested her on her ability to identify the maker of the chocolate she was tasting. She was never wrong about the brand or the type of chocolate she had been given and her friends were amazed.

Chloe is now one of the few women at the top of her profession as a chocolate-taster. She eats at least 300 grams of chocolate a day but never puts on weight because she swims for an hour a day and eats light meals. This is because she needs to feel hungry to do her job properly.

She believes that most people mistake real chocolate for the type which is made from sugar, artificial vanilla flavourings and milk powder. She admits that this can taste nice for a while, but it isn't real chocolate. This is why she is quite critical of the famous chocolate from some countries.

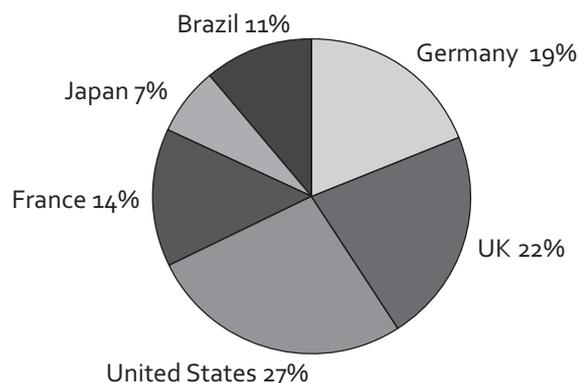
She says that most people all over the world enjoy eating chocolate but they usually only buy one or two types. "Many of them don't realise that chocolate is like music. There is an enormous range of pleasure to be had and if you really 'listen' to what your senses tell you when you explore the vast world of chocolate then you will appreciate it even more." She adds, "Tasting and eating chocolate should be a joyous experience and I hope that you'll experiment by buying new bars."

Chloe advises buying plain dark or milk chocolate, because anything with a filling or decoration tastes like whatever flavour or filling has been used and it won't teach you anything new about tasting chocolate. She thinks it is a good idea to try to spend a little more money than you usually would, but that expensive chocolate doesn't necessarily mean it's excellent quality. On the other hand, she says, good flavour is seldom very cheap.

Chocolate is a healthy food if eaten in moderation as it contains cocoa beans, cocoa butter, lecithin and natural vanilla. "Make sure you don't buy anything which has suffered variations in temperature as it will be stale and at more than 23°C it will no longer be of good quality," Chloe says.

Chloe believes, "Chocolate is a little treasure we can all carry in this long and hard journey which is life."

Chocolate consumption in six high cocoa consuming countries.



(a) Why didn't many people eat chocolate in the place where Chloe was born?

.....

(b) When did Chloe start to take a serious interest in chocolate?

.....

(c) What were the probable foundations for her future career? Give **two** details.

.....

.....

(d) How did Chloe impress her school friends?

.....

(e) What is unusual about Chloe in this profession?

.....

(f) How does Chloe keep herself fit for her job? Give **two** details.

.....

.....

(g) What does Chloe think about famous chocolate from some countries?

.....

(h) According to the diagram, in which of the six countries do people eat

the least chocolate? .....

the most chocolate? .....

(i) What advice does Chloe give for people wanting to buy chocolate? Give **four** details.

.....

.....

.....

.....

Read the following article about free diving, and then complete the notes on the opposite page.



## Free Diving

Free diving, that is diving in very deep water without any breathing equipment, has become a very popular sport over the last 60 years. Frederick Gardner became interested in this sport when he was scuba diving 30 metres down in waters off the Cayman Islands. Frederick was wearing breathing equipment when he saw another diver smiling and giving him the diver's salute. What was remarkable about this encounter was that the other diver had no air tank or breathing apparatus and acted as if he was just swimming below the surface. Frederick couldn't believe his eyes. "I thought the other diver would drown but he just smiled, swam about for another 10 or 15 seconds, then set off up to the surface. I was amazed and very impressed," said Frederick. "What was really noticeable was that this diver did not create any air bubbles nor did he frighten the fish: they thought he was one of them, and he looked so free." Since that time Frederick has given up scuba diving and become a 'free diver'.

Diving to great depths without any breathing equipment at all is thought to have begun with the ancient Phoenicians who were the first recorded divers. They were probably looking for pearls or enemy ships which had sunk with all their treasures.

Some people do free diving for a living and not just for fun. It is well known that Japanese women divers can dive down to a depth of 44 metres for up to three hours a day in their search for pearls.

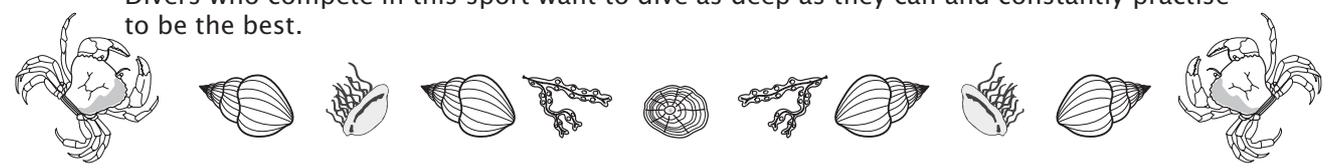
Most free divers set out to reach their own personal goals and work towards this whilst remaining safe and healthy. The variety of ages, body shapes and previous sporting experience of those at the top level of this sport is remarkable. Their ages vary from mid thirties to early seventies and both men and women participate. Some are lean and fit whilst others are not.

Divers can hold their breath from between four and a half minutes to an amazing seven and a half minutes. Recently divers have reached a depth of 162 metres, which is the equivalent of three Olympic swimming pools placed end to end. With only one intake of breath, free divers attempt to reach their own personal record depth. However, they must wear the right weights strapped to their bodies which allow them to descend easily but also to swim back up to the surface safely.

Frederick, the national free diving champion, thinks that this sport is almost more of a mental activity than a physical one because it is extremely relaxing. In deep waters where you can't see the bottom it is almost as if you are in outer space, not the ocean. Many divers practise deep breathing and meditation before a dive.

Staying calm and relaxed can mean the difference between life and death in the deep ocean. If you feel stressed or have worrying thoughts then your pulse rate increases and you use more oxygen. This can mean trouble and you may not reach the surface safely. In the worst case you simply 'black out', becoming unconscious because the brain does not have enough oxygen. Fortunately almost all the free divers have a 'spotter' diving with them who can help immediately if there appear to be any problems. Also, teams of experts and doctors stand by on the surface to give emergency help if needed.

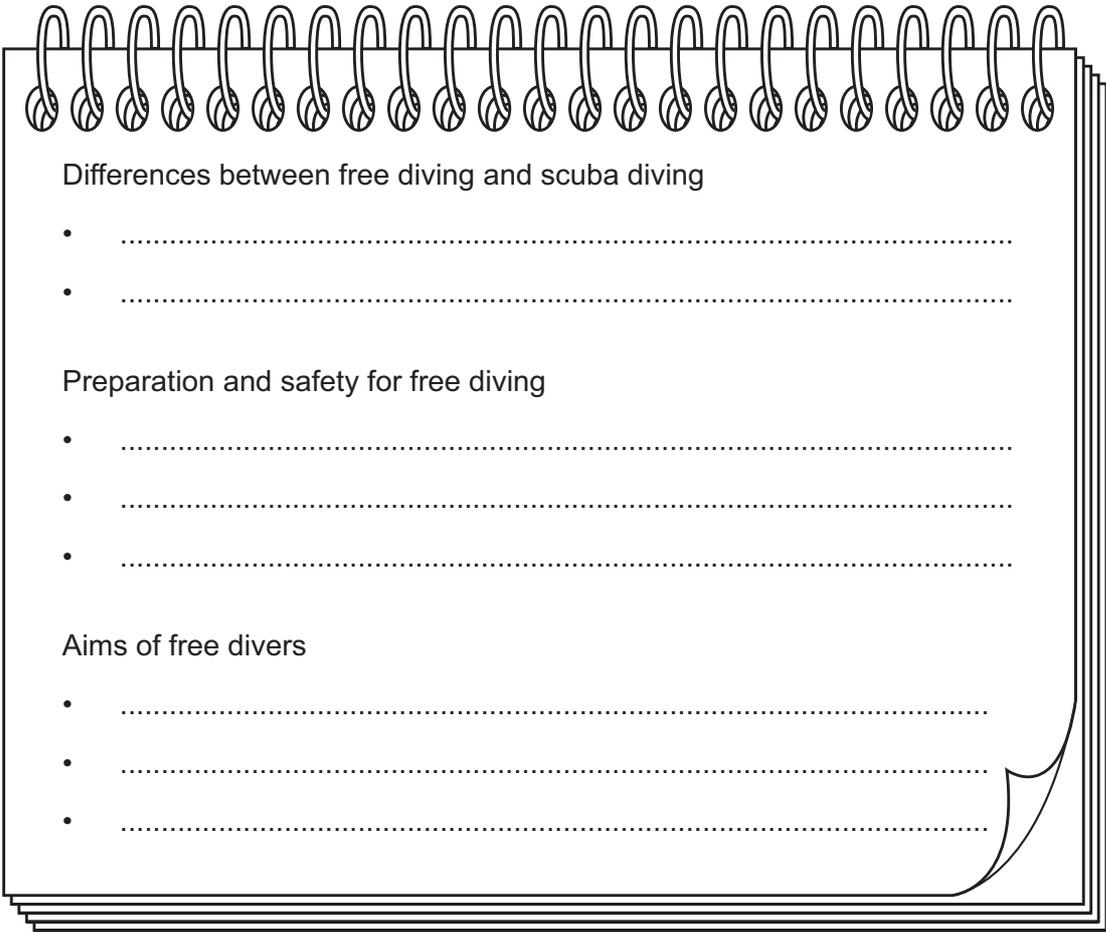
Divers who compete in this sport want to dive as deep as they can and constantly practise to be the best.



You are preparing to give a short talk to your School Sports Club about free diving. Prepare some notes to use as the basis of your talk.

*For  
Examiner's  
Use*

Make your notes under each heading.



Differences between free diving and scuba diving

- .....
- .....

Preparation and safety for free diving

- .....
- .....
- .....

Aims of free divers

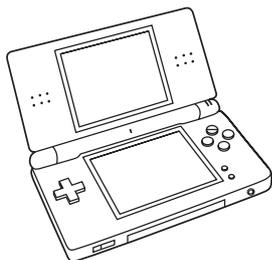
- .....
- .....
- .....

## Exercise 4

Read the following article about school children learning from games. **Write a summary of how Rodriguez Desai thought pupils would gain from games-based learning and how the pupils actually benefited.**

Your summary should be about 100 words (and no more than 120 words). You should use your own words as far as possible.

You will receive up to 6 marks for the content of your summary, and up to 4 marks for the style and accuracy of your language.



### *Games-based learning*

Games-based learning is one of the latest ideas to improve the schooling experience for a large number of 8 to 10 year olds. The children who first participated in games-based learning attend a small primary school on an island in the middle of the Atlantic.

The idea was the brain-child of teacher Rodriguez Desai who wanted the children he was teaching to improve their ability to learn in a more relaxed way. He also wanted them to have the opportunity to socialise with pupils from other schools.

He noticed that, in the early 1990s, boys in particular brought hand-held games consoles into school as part of the end of term activities. These boys were not very highly motivated in class and were thought to be of lower than average ability. When Rodriguez began to watch these 'failing' boys he was amazed. He realised that the skills needed to play these hand-held games included high-level, intelligent reasoning. The boys had to analyse situations, develop strategies for dealing with the problems, solve the problems and work with one another to gain the best outcome. Rodriguez began to understand that learning to play computer games could actually benefit all kinds of learners. He started to think about the best ways he could use them to teach pupils who were not normally keen on traditional school work.

Many teachers believed that playing this type of game in school was just a waste of time. It only encouraged pupils to play about in the class and could never be a reasonable and valid learning tool.

Rodriguez aimed to prove this notion wrong. Using a small group of children, both boys and girls, Rodriguez has shown how the right type of game can be both engaging and educational. For example, he gave one group of ten-year-old maths pupils a hand-held games console and a brain-training programme. These pupils played the game every morning for about 15 to 20 minutes. By the end of the month's trial there had been a big leap in their mathematical test scores compared to the non-gaming group of children who had only used work cards and text books to practise their maths.

Other teachers have been inspired by Rodriguez and use a variety of 'games' to help their pupils to learn in class. Some now use 'dance mats' which have letters on them. These mats and letters help younger children to create words, enhancing their reading and their spelling abilities as they 'dance'.

Another experiment involved a programme called 'You Can Be Anyone', which lets pupils create an Internet representation of a person who could be themselves or anyone they choose. The pupils involved were encouraged to write scripts for these characters to help with their creative writing. Many boys found this so motivating that they wrote interesting and continuous dialogue for the first time in their school lives. Their teachers were delighted with the outcome and so were the boys. They entered into the make-believe world with an enthusiasm they had never brought to the traditional English lesson.

**Week: 2 - Answers: Exercise 1: Space Camp Competition**

- (a) 5 (th) to 10 (th) May 2010 / next year / 2010
- (b) \$450 (per team)
- (c) a (new) (useful) (practical) device to make their lives easier / safer
- (d) (between) 14 – 17 (years old)
- (e) scuba diving / build a satellite under water
- (f) design your own satellite
- (g) photograph stars (planets) / use telescopes
- (h) 8 pm on 10<sup>th</sup> December

**Exercise 2 Chocolate-Tasting**

- (a) It was scarce / expensive
- (b) When she moved to France / when she was 13
- (c) Her cataloguing of the chocolate / she bought chocolate with pocket money / finding the best tastes / eating chocolate in the early morning [ANY TWO]
- (d) Identified the brands of chocolate
- (e) She never puts on weight / she is one of the few women at the top (of her profession) / she is slim
- (f) She swims everyday / she eats light meals [IN EITHER ORDER]
- (g) It isn't real chocolate / she is critical
- (h) Least = Japan Most = United States
- (i) Tick and number the points:
  - ✓1 buy plain or milk chocolate
  - ✓2 try to spend a little more
  - ✓3 experiment
  - ✓4 don't buy anything with a filling or flavour
  - ✓5 don't buy anything which has been kept at more than 23 degrees C / which has suffered variations in temperature [ANY FOUR FROM FIVE]

Exercise: 3

## **Free diving**

### **Differences between free diving and scuba diving**

- 1 no air tank / breathing equipment / scuba diving needs air tanks
- 2 doesn't create air bubbles
- 3 doesn't frighten fish

### **Preparation and safety for free diving**

- 4 wear correct weights
- 5 stay relaxed / meditate / don't get stressed / deep breathing
- 6 always dive with a 'spotter' / don't dive alone
- 7 have doctors / experts standing by

### **Aims of free divers**

- 8 reach own personal goals / depth
- 9 hold your breath for longer periods of time
- 10 (constantly practise) to be the best

## **Exercise 4 Games-based learning**

### **How Rodriguez thought pupils would gain from games-based learning**

- 1 improve ability to learn
- 2 learn in a more relaxed way
- 3 help them to socialise
- 4 improve motivation / motivate pupils (not normally keen on traditional school work)
- 5 benefit all kinds of learners

### **How the pupils actually benefited**

- 6 improvement in maths / mathematical test scores
- 7 helped (younger) children to create words
- 8 enhanced (younger) children's reading / spelling (while dancing)
- 9 helped creative writing
- 10 students / boys wrote interesting and continuous dialogue

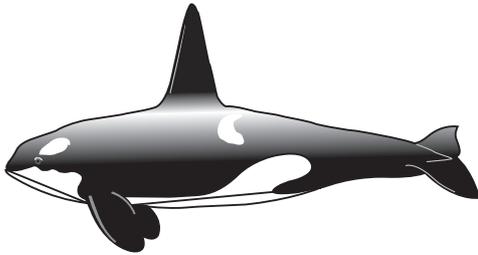
**Exercise 1**

Read the following information about whale safaris, and then answer the questions on the opposite page.

## Whale Wildlife Safari

### Where?

Our destination is the coastal inlets in the far north of Norway. There is one special deep water area where every year, around October time, large numbers of orca whales can be found. They are visible from the main ship but if you want to see the whales at close quarters, you can either get into a small inflatable raft or even swim with the creatures.



### The Experience

In one of the most fantastic experiences you will ever have, you become part of the arctic wildlife. Once inside the Arctic circle you see the whales, up to 700 of them, following the vast quantities of herring fish shoals which they love to feed on. You can see the White-Tailed Sea Eagles which also feed on fish shoals with the whales.

In addition, the scientists and students working on different aspects of the orca whale's behaviour give workshops and lectures on board ship.

### The Environment

In October the days are short and the nights long, dark and cold, but these can be spectacular since the Northern Lights, also known as the Aurora Borealis, literally light up the night sky with their fantastic colours. The whole area has wild and beautiful scenery including huge and

majestic mountains where eagles rest before swooping down to eat the fish below them in the lakes.

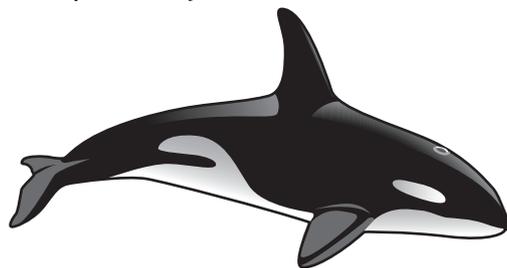
### Safari Options

#### *Basic Safari*

This includes your flight to Norway and a trip on a large whale-watching boat in a group of up to 90 people. Often the curiosity of the whales brings them to the surface and close to the boat where you may see whole families of whales. This is a five to six hour safari. A light lunch is served on board.

#### *Zodiac Safari*

Here you get a closer view of the whales on a smaller boat. The boats are among the safest in the world so there is no need to worry even though you get very close to the water. You have three wonderful hours of whale watching, almost at the same level as the whales themselves. Children must be at least ten years old and accompanied by an adult.



#### *Snorkelling Safari*

This is only for the most adventurous and only available if weather conditions are suitable. You are equipped with a warm waterproof suit so that you can swim and meet the whales in their own environment, the sea! You have to be 16 years or older for this adventure.

(a) At what time of year can the whales be seen?

.....

(b) What other kinds of wildlife apart from whales will you be able to see? Give **two** details.

.....

.....

(c) How can you get more information about the whales?

.....

(d) What is sometimes special about nights in the Arctic?

.....

(e) On the Basic Safari:

(i) what brings whales to the surface?

.....

(ii) what might tourists see?

.....

(f) On the Zodiac Safari, what restrictions are there for children? Give **two** details.

.....

.....

(g) In what way is the Snorkelling Safari only for the adventurous?

.....

## Exercise 2

Read the article below about an amazing underground cave, and then answer the questions on the opposite page.

### A visit to the underworld

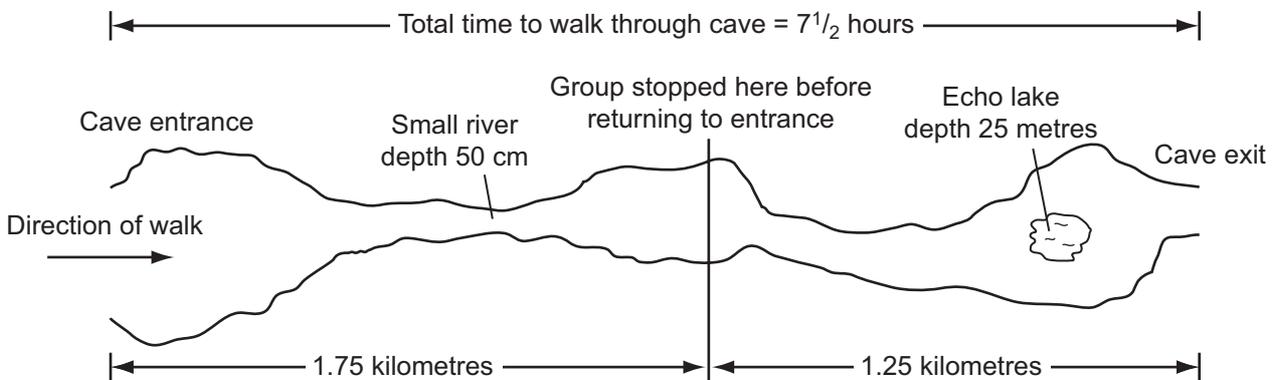
When professional photographer, Kusmatiya Sharakya, descended into the underground world of the Goa Cerme cave near Yogyakarta in Indonesia, he encountered a beautiful subterranean environment. Here he describes his visit:

“People often imagine that the world beneath the earth is scary and in total darkness, but this is not always true. The Goa Cerme cave has a spectacular beauty and many unusual features.

Our group entered the cave and our fears disappeared immediately when the lights from our lanterns revealed the interior filled with a huge variety of incredible forms and shapes. We listened to the soft sound of water slowly running at the bottom of the cave, the echo of water droplets and the gusts of wind rushing from the cave entrance. They all encouraged us to venture deeper and explore the secrets of this mysterious underworld.

We walked through the knee-deep water of a small river at the bottom of the cave, sometimes jumping from stone to stone, admiring a new and amazing sight at every corner. The tunnels were very narrow in places and we always had to keep a look-out for sharp stone formations hanging low from the ceiling which could have easily hurt our heads.

Under the guidance of the Department of Geology at the local university, we proceeded deep into the cave and took photographs of every attractive sight. The Department also provided us with caving equipment such as head lamps, rubber boots, safety helmets and ropes.



We could hardly believe that four-and-a-half hours had passed since we entered the cave. Unfortunately there was not enough time to explore the remainder of the cave up to the exit, which, according to our guides, would have taken another three hours of gentle walking.

This three-kilometre long Cerme cave is located to the south of Yogyakarta. The local people know it as a tranquil place to seek divine guidance. However, the area has lately become popular as a tourist destination and commercial buildings and food stalls have started to appear. The quiet atmosphere has gradually disappeared. The entrance to the cave now has concrete walkways which destroy the natural and unspoiled appearance of the place.

In addition, the great numbers of people going through the cave have caused some damage to the inside – like the black soot from the visitors' oil lamps that now covers much of the cave's walls and ceiling. Undisciplined tourists have left their rubbish behind and removed stones from the walls of the cave as souvenirs. Hopefully these bad habits will disappear soon so that we can all enjoy the rare beauty of this natural wonder for many years to come.”

(a) What negative ideas do people often have about the world underground? Give **two** details.

..... [1]

(b) What did the lanterns show the photographers?

..... [1]

(c) What were the obstacles that members of the group encountered:

(i) above them? ..... [1]

(ii) below them? ..... [1]

(d) In what ways did the local university help the photographers? Give **two** details.

(i) ..... [1]

(ii) ..... [1]

(e) According to the diagram, how far was the group from the exit when it stopped?

..... [1]

(f) How have visitors damaged the walls of the cave? Give **two** details.

(i) ..... [1]

(ii) ..... [1]

(g) What is the photographer's main hope for the future of the caves?

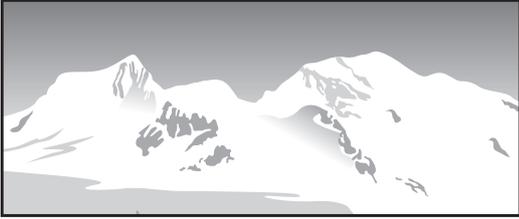
..... [1]

(h) Apart from damaging the interior of the cave, how has the area changed as a result of tourism? Give **four** details.

.....  
.....  
.....  
..... [4]

#### Exercise 4

Read the following passage about a young mountaineer, and then complete the notes on the opposite page.



*The past few days have seen another mountaineering record smashed by 22-year-old Jake Meyer. Last year, 2007, he became the youngest Briton to stand on Everest's summit. In the process he became the youngest man in the world to climb the Seven Summits, the highest mountains in each of the seven continents. He is one of the fastest in the world at reaching the top of every mountain he climbs.*

His training programme is rather unusual because he relies very heavily on his youth and 'feeling good' when out in the hills and mountains. He explained, "I know what it's like to walk until my legs feel like they are on fire, but I have to keep going so that the pain will subside. It isn't about the speed you go, but rather about minimising the number of stops you take," he said. "If you stop for only one minute it can easily turn into fifteen minutes which could lose you a kilometre." Jake added, "I constantly set myself targets of a little bit further each time I go out training. Also I've had to fit this in around my exams. I'm studying environmental geo-science at university and I need to make sure I pass!"

Jake Meyer attempted Everest after only ten years of climbing which included five years of what he describes as 'proper mountaineering'. He said, "When climbing Everest, it's possible to take your time moving up and down between camps, gradually building up to the summit. That way you acclimatise to the altitude. I took what is considered to be an easier route up the North Col and North East Ridge which is thought to be more of a slow 'plod' than a speedy race. Nevertheless you have to keep going as fast as you can."

In his latest challenge, he beat the existing speed record for climbing the highest peak in each of the 48 continental states of America. He drove to each peak by motorhome, travelling from the east coast to the west. He managed all these climbs, the preparation, the organisation, the drive and the climbs in only 23 days, 19 hours and 31 minutes. This is more than five days faster than the existing record holder.

This latest record-breaking challenge, however, was a lot tougher than he had imagined. He faced not only the dangers of altitude, but the very real threat of attack by bears or snakes and, of course, in driving from coast to coast, the worry of road accidents. For this challenge, speed was vital.

As he continued, his lead increased and his record-breaking attempt became a certainty. It is suggested that the time for a round trip up Mount Hood (4,000 metres) is about 12 hours. Jake Meyer did it in only 6 hours, in spite of going through snow fields without specialist footwear. He got stronger and stronger as he progressed, and sometimes managed to climb as many as four smaller peaks in a single day even though he occasionally got lost.

He feels he still has challenges to meet and would like to reach the summit of the highest peak in each country in Europe. He would enjoy going up K2, the second highest mountain in the world, as well as taking an alternative route up to the top of Everest.

You are preparing to give a short talk to your hill-walking group about Jake Meyer. Prepare some notes to use as the basis of your talk.

Make your notes under each heading.

Jake's achievements

- .....
- .....
- .....

Jake's training details

- .....
- .....
- .....

Dangers encountered on his latest challenge

- .....
- .....

## Exercise 4

Read the following research into people's effect on dolphins. **On the opposite page, write a summary of what the 'swim-with-dolphins' tourist industry should be doing to minimise the effect on dolphins.**

**Your summary should be about 100 words (and no longer than 120 words). You should use your own words as far as possible.**

# Dolphins

**H**umans have always been fascinated by dolphins and there has been a long history of association between the two. Over time this has turned into a rapidly expanding world-wide tourist activity – swimming with dolphins. The chance to see dolphins in the wild is often a lifetime dream for many people, but few consider the implications of actually swimming with these animals.

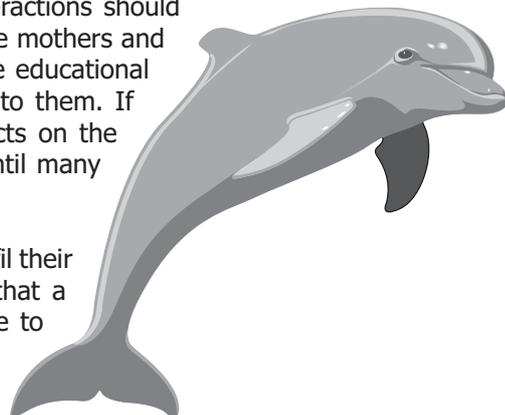
The 'swim-with-dolphins' tourist industry is becoming more popular every year and tour operators are always on the lookout to give their tourist swimmers the best experience they can. After all, it can cost a large amount of money to have this kind of holiday experience. So tour operators try to place eager swimmers as near as possible to the dolphins by trying to predict where the dolphins will be. The swimmers usually enter the water from the back of a stationary boat and swim freely in the water.

Research has shown that while dolphins can move away if they do not want to interact with human swimmers, they do not like it at all if the swimmers slip into the water directly on top of them or if humans are in their path of travel. However, if swimmers enter the water to one side of them, the dolphins do not avoid the swimmers to the same extent. This possibly seems like less threatening behaviour to them.

In all cases, the dolphins seem to have become more sensitised to the presence of the swimmers. For dolphins, swimming amongst or with humans is not necessarily a high priority. This research has shown that only 19% of any group of dolphins will participate in interaction. Young dolphins are the most likely to interact; they do seem curious about being with humans. It is believed that they see humans as 'entertainment' and that the interaction is a new and unusual experience for them.

It is frequently asked whether 'swim-with-dolphins' tourism should be discontinued. The advice is that dolphins should be given substantial periods of time throughout the day when they are not exposed to tourism. Permitted interactions should not be too intrusive to the dolphins since there could be mothers and calves present in dolphin groups. There should also be educational campaigns about the creatures and the likely threats to them. If not, in the long term there could be detrimental effects on the dolphins' well-being which may not become evident until many years later.

It is not easy to explain to someone that they cannot fulfil their lifelong dreams because the dolphins are resting, or that a mother dolphin and calf are in the area. But if we are to enjoy these remarkable animals and not just use them for our entertainment, then we must carefully monitor the 'swim-with-dolphins' industry worldwide.



**Exercise 1 Whale wildlife safari**

- (a) (around) October (time)
- (b) herring/fish AND (white tailed sea) eagles
- (c) workshops/lectures
- (d) Aurora Borealis/the Northern lights/lights in the sky
- (e) (i) curiosity/whale-watching boat  
(ii) whole families of whales
- (f) they must be at least 10 (years old) AND accompanied by an adult
- (g) you meet the whales in their own environment/you swim with them

**Exercise 2 A visit to the underworld**

- (a) scary AND (in total) dark(ness)
- (b) incredible forms and shapes
- (c) (i) sharp stone (formations)  
(ii) small river/knee-deep water
- (d) (i) they gave them caving equipment  
(ii) they guided them
- (e) 1.25 kilometres
- (f) (i) black soot from (oil) lamps  
(ii) removed stones (from walls)
- (g) beauty will be preserved/people's bad habits will disappear
- (h)
  - 1 commercial buildings
  - 2 food stalls
  - 3 concrete walkways
  - 4 rubbish left behind
  - 5 quiet atmosphere disappeared

Exercise: 3 **Jake Meyer mountaineer**

**Jake's achievements**

- 1 youngest Briton to stand on Everest's summit/to climb Everest
- 2 youngest man (in the world) to climb seven summits
- 3 speed record achieved/(one of) the fastest climber(s)

**Jake's training details**

- 4 relies on feeling good/his youth
- 5 keeps going/minimises (number of) stops
- 6 sets targets/goes a bit further each time
- 7 ignores pain (as it will go away)

**Dangers encountered on his latest challenge**

- 8 altitude
- 9 bears/snakes
- 10 road accidents

**Exercise 4 Summary: Dolphins**

- 1 don't let swimmers get into the water on top of dolphins
- 2 don't place swimmers in the path of dolphins
- 3 make sure swimmers enter at the side of the dolphins
- 4 limit interactions
- 5 take care when there are mothers and calves present
- 6 education/educational campaigns

Week: 4 - Reading Comprehension (Follow the instructions which were given earlier to do the exercises)

### Exercise 1

Read the following article about The Thousand Islands in Indonesia, and then answer the questions on the opposite page.



## INDONESIA – THE THOUSAND ISLANDS



They are called The Thousand Islands, but the actual number of islands is only around 110. They are all situated in the area of North Jakarta – the closest is just 25 minutes from the mainland. With a total area of 108,000 hectares, The Thousand Islands are a part of a national sea garden. In order to ensure preservation, only 45 islands can be used for recreation and tourism.

### Things to do

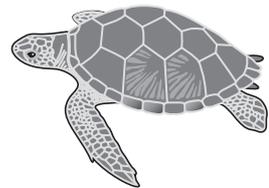
There are so many things to do – from diving and snorkelling to going on a banana boat and fishing. You can also learn about mangrove trees and sea turtle conservation, watch wildlife and visit archaeological sites.

### Islands to see

Rambut Island is a bird-watchers' paradise. It is best known as a shelter for migrating birds as they fly from north to south, from cold to warm, in September and October. During the opposite season, around April and May, they make the return journey.

Untung Jawa Island is the most visited by tourists. As you arrive, you are greeted by traditional music played by boys using tambourines, and during your stay you can enjoy the fantastic seafood. Don't forget to try the mouth-watering coconuts!

Pramuka Island is the best place for learning about the conservation of sea turtles. To help more of them survive, their eggs are buried 50 centimetres deep in the sand. Within 40-60 days, the eggs hatch and two days later baby turtles start showing up on the surface of the sand.



### Tourist Information

Boats to all these islands leave from Jakarta Marina every hour between 8.00am and 4.00pm. It is not necessary to book the boat trip but if you wish to spend the night on one of the resort islands, then reserving a room in advance is advisable. This can be done by visiting the website [www.javatourism.ac.id](http://www.javatourism.ac.id) or at the information office at Jakarta Marina.



(a) How long does it take to go from the mainland to the nearest island?

.....

(b) Why are many of the islands closed to tourists?

.....

(c) Which particular species of animal is being preserved on the islands?

.....

(d) In which months are you most likely to see birds as they fly from south to north?

.....

(e) How is the visitor welcomed to Untung Jawa Island?

.....

(f) What happens two days before the baby turtles appear on the surface of the sand?

.....

(g) At what time does the last boat leave the marina to visit the islands?

.....

(h) For what reason might you need to make a reservation in advance?

.....

## Exercise 2

Read the following article about bee-keeping, and then answer the questions on the opposite page.

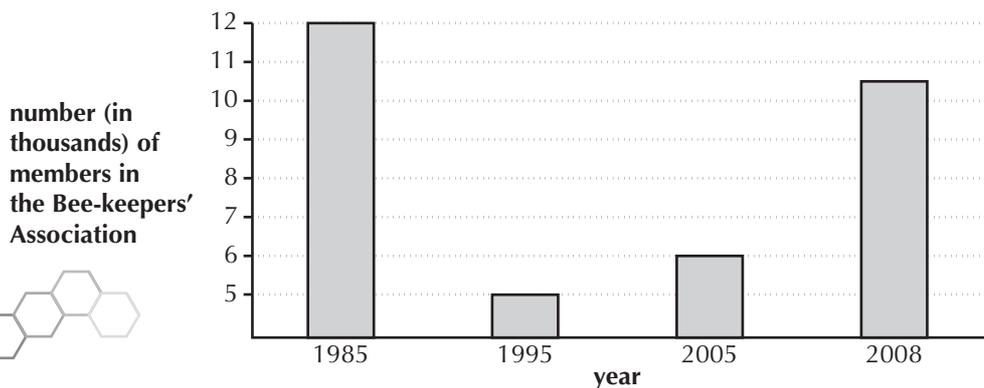
### BEE-KEEPING IN THE CITY

There is a new buzz in towns and cities in Great Britain. Bee-keeping, normally practised by people living in the country, has become the fashionable hobby for those who live and work in the cities. It is now estimated that there are more worker bees in London than there are working people.

Bee-keepers living in the towns have begun to outnumber those in the country because plants growing in towns can offer more exciting nectar (the bee's basic food) than fields in the countryside. These fields have often been treated with pesticides which are harmful to bees.

Membership of the British Bee-keepers' Association has almost doubled to 10,500 over the past three years in the biggest increase since the peak in the 1980s. This was just before a parasitic mite killed off millions of bees. One spokesman for the Association said, "Home-made honey from the towns is an entirely different product. Depending on the time of year, you get the different flavours of whatever the bees have been feeding on. You don't get such variety with honey from the country."

Young people are now queuing to join bee-keeping courses which are often over-subscribed. There are waiting lists to buy expensive beehives, costing around £100 each. Some people keep their beehives on terraces on their roofs, others in small gardens at the back of their houses.



Aysha Singh, who teaches classes on bee-keeping, said, "Most of those who join the bee-keeping course are young people. It's a rebellion against the lifestyle of the office worker. These young people want to get outside as well as do more physical and manual activities. One man says that he can't eat the honey as he is diabetic but he keeps bees because he needs some variety in his life."

Bee-keeping is not a strenuous activity. Most experts say that hives need to be checked only once every seven to ten days, when the bees are at their most active, between April and July.

There are disadvantages, however. Jane West, who has just started keeping 60,000 bees in a hive near to a city centre, has already been stung a few times. "It didn't hurt as much as I expected," she said. "Bees are not threatening in the same way as wasps are. They are nice little creatures with complex social-structures. They are also good for the garden when they take the nectar from the flowers." Jane restricts the number of bees she keeps because she thinks their humming sound "might frighten the neighbours".

Warmer temperatures in towns and cities mean that the bees keep active longer. In addition, a beehive in the town produces about 20 kilos of honey a year, twice as much as in country areas.

What do the urban bee-keepers do with all that honey? People say that they give much of it away, especially to the neighbours... probably to keep them sweet!

(a) How does the number of bee-keepers living in the country compare with the number in towns?

.....

(b) Why did the number of bees decrease dramatically at the end of the 1980s?

.....

(c) What can influence the taste of home-made honey?

.....

(d) What suggests that bee-keeping courses are very popular?

.....

(e) According to the graph, how many members were in the Bee-keepers' Association in 2005?

.....

(f) Why might bee-keeping be attractive to office workers? Give **two** details.

(i) .....

(ii) .....

(g) What are **two** possible disadvantages of keeping bees?

(i) .....

(ii) .....

(h) How much honey is produced per year from a hive in the country compared to a hive in the town?

.....

(i) Give **four** advantages of bee-keeping in towns and cities rather than in country areas.

.....

.....

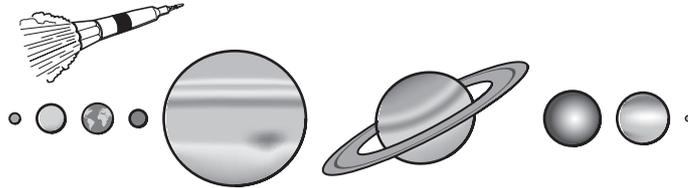
.....

.....

### Exercise 3

Read the following speech from a scientist who predicts what the world will be like in the year 2058, and then complete the notes on the opposite page.

## Will life really be like this in 2058?



Think of all the changes that have taken place over the past ten years. Some scientists like myself firmly believe that the next fifty years or so will be fascinating to people of all ages. We will all see and experience things we could never have dreamed about even ten years ago.

Firstly, one prediction is that we will have a limitless supply of spare body parts and organs. There will be farms to produce human organs and the medicine of today will seem primitive and crude. There will be no need to transplant organs because they will be 'available to order' from the farm as long as the patient's medical profile is on record. For example, if someone needs a new kidney, the surgeon will simply contact a commercial organ producer and ask for one. One organ that won't be available, however, is the brain! This is far too complex and we understand so little about it that we don't think it will be as easy to mass-produce as other organs.

Another way forward is to use drugs to re-grow lost limbs like fingers and toes or to regenerate failing organs. Already heart regeneration is a real probability: after all, it is only a muscle. Maybe a whole body replacement will become routine in fifty years' time. It is almost certain that we will all live much longer.

Secondly, although we have not yet found any life beyond Earth, the universe is certainly not lifeless. Some experts believe that we will find neighbours in other galaxies out in space. We may not see 'little green men' but once evidence of life in outer space is found, other discoveries will follow. Some scientists think that tiny extraterrestrial life is already here.

We should also be able to find out exactly how the Earth was formed. We can explain with confidence what happened in the universe after the 'big bang' 14 billion years ago, but what we don't know is whether the big bang which produced the Earth was one of many. Maybe, in the next fifty years, we will find out. As science reveals the mysteries of the universe humans will take their first steps to set up colonies away from Earth. It seems likely that there will be new colonies on other planets like Mars, just in case anything terrible happens to the Earth and the population has to relocate.

Finally, one famous fishery expert has made the wild prediction that a device will be developed which allows us to 'experience the momentary and inarticulate thoughts of animals'. Such a device might help to save the oceans from exploitation by humans. We might even see humans giving up eating meat to become vegetarians if we find out how animals think and feel.

So, as you can see, we have a fascinating period ahead of us. Only time will tell whether all these predictions about the future do come true.

You have been asked by your science teacher to listen to the scientist's speech and make brief notes about what life might be like in the year 2058.

Make your notes under each heading.

Medical benefits

- .....
- .....
- .....

Discoveries in space

- .....
- .....
- .....

Consequences of animal studies

- .....
- .....

#### Exercise 4

Read the following article about climbing Mount Everest. **Write a summary about the problems mountaineers face whilst climbing Mount Everest and reasons why so many people attempt to climb it.**

**Your summary should be about 100 words (and no more than 120 words). You should use your own words as far as possible.**



## REACHING FOR THE TOP



During his latest Everest climb, Rob Gauntlett had to cling to the side of a mountain above a drop of several thousand metres. He endured temperatures low enough to give him frostbite. In the end, however, he was a happy man because he and his friend, James Hooper, both 19, became the youngest pair to reach the summit of Everest.

It was that time of year when the extreme bad weather that usually rages over the world's highest mountain clears for just a few weeks. As a result, mountaineers flock from all over the world to climb Everest. The month of May is about the only safe time to climb the mountain. Many climbers consider it to be the greatest challenge to climb the mountain during other months of the year. There have been many abandoned attempts as a result of the unpredictable weather and, sadly, some deaths.

The two mountaineers were recuperating at base camp after their climb. Their voices were full of excitement when they spoke. "We have always had a passion for climbing. I suppose the thought of being able to set foot on the roof of the world where so many great climbers have stood is what inspires all mountaineers."

The expedition, however, did not go entirely to plan. For three years they plotted their route and dreamed of their ascent of Everest from the south side in Nepal. Their arrangements seemed to be going well, until the young men realised that they did not have enough money to attempt the climb from the south side. They would have to go round from the north, from Tibet. The two friends were disappointed that all their preparations had been for nothing but, nevertheless, they were determined to make the climb.

"We didn't get the last sponsor until the day before we set off on the trip," they said. "We didn't have very good knowledge of the north side. In addition, it was such a rush at the end. It's an expensive business to climb Everest and there is not even a guarantee that you'll reach the summit. The weather can be very unpredictable. We were constantly out of breath even when we were sitting still and we each lost almost 20 kilos in weight."

After the climb, they stayed for two weeks in the beautiful country of Nepal in order to recuperate and regain the strength and body weight they had lost. They celebrated their success with the many friends who had also gathered there to try to climb the highest mountain of them all.

So what is the attraction of Everest? The mountain has become so overcrowded with climbers that there must be compelling reasons for them to undertake such a venture. Those who succeed claim that they have the most incredible views, that they can actually see the curvature of the Earth. They love the challenges and the sheer exhilaration that this extreme activity brings.

Finally, there is the friendship that endures long after a successful climb has finished. In the mountaineers' restaurant, the climbers reflect on their experiences. They share details about the time that they almost lost several fingers to frostbite in the extreme cold. What they also share is the passion for adventure that pushes them to attempt the greatest climb of all.

