

 **CAMBRIDGE**



PREPARE

WORKBOOK WITH DIGITAL PACK

C1

LEVEL 9

**David McKeegan
Helen Tiliouine**

**Second
Edition**

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CONTENTS

| | | |
|-----------|---------------------------|----|
| 1 | Family ties | 4 |
| 2 | Making a point | 10 |
| 3 | When tomorrow comes | 16 |
| 4 | Food for thought | 22 |
| 5 | On trend | 28 |
| 6 | The great escape | 34 |
| 7 | Digital planet | 40 |
| 8 | Fame at last! | 46 |
| 9 | Fit as a fiddle | 52 |
| 10 | Make or break | 58 |
| 11 | Jog your memory | 64 |
| 12 | Changing times | 70 |
| 13 | Economical with the truth | 76 |
| 14 | I'm working on it | 82 |
| 15 | Born to lead | 88 |
| 16 | A new chapter | 94 |

1 FAMILY TIES

VOCABULARY AND READING

RELATIONSHIPS



1 Choose the correct options.

- 1 Do you usually see eye to ear / eye with your cousins?
- 2 Did your grandparents *spoil / satisfy* you when you were little?
- 3 Is your family *close-knit / near-knit*?
- 4 I'm on *good / right* terms with most of my family.
- 5 I hope that nothing will *come / go* between me and my best friend.
- 6 My brother seems to rub everyone *out / up* the wrong way at the moment.
- 7 I think that family *ties / links* are very important. Do you?
- 8 Maria's very attached *to / on* her sister.
- 9 My parents both worked full-time, but I never felt like I missed *out / up* on anything.
- 10 There are four *brothers / siblings* in that family: two boys and two girls.
- 11 A typical family *unit / group* in my country is quite large.
- 12 Are you *on / in* speaking terms with your aunt and uncle now?

2 Complete the sentences with one word.

- 1 I love my brother so much! Nothing will ever **come** _____ us.
- 2 In lots of families, _____ are often very competitive with each other.
- 3 I rarely _____ **eye to eye with** my older sister.
- 4 Our family is _____ **-knit** – we all get on very well.
- 5 People with big families may sometimes _____ **out on** individual attention from their parents.
- 6 I don't know why, but my cousin often seems to **rub people up the** _____ way.
- 7 Is it important for you to **be on good** _____ with your parents?
- 8 **Family** _____ can often be stronger than any other kind of connection we make in life.
- 9 I don't get on very well with my sister, but at least we **are on** _____ terms.
- 10 It isn't necessary for parents to _____ their children in order to show their love for them.
- 11 I'm very _____ to my grandparents because I spent a lot of time with them when I was younger.
- 12 Our family _____ is quite small: just my mother, my father, me and my brother.

3 Match the definitions to the words or expressions in bold in Exercise 2.

- A annoy someone _____
- B allow someone, often a child, to do or have everything they want _____
- C united _____
- D emotionally close to _____
- E get on well with someone _____
- F a group of related individuals _____
- G when people agree with each other _____
- H brothers and sisters _____
- I friendly enough to talk _____
- J not have an opportunity to experience _____
- K the friendly feelings between people who are related _____
- L harm a relationship _____

4 Read the first paragraph of the article on the opposite page, ignoring the gaps. Which of the following could be an alternative title?

- A Why our relationships with our parents will always be problematic
- B How our relationships with our parents are constantly developing
- C The influence of modern life on our relationships with our parents



PREPARE FOR THE EXAM

Reading and Use of English Part 1

5 Read the first paragraph again and decide which answer (A, B, C or D) best fits each gap.

- | | | | |
|-------------------|-----------------|-----------------------|---------------|
| 0 A opposing | B confronting | C withstanding | D challenging |
| 1 A perceive | B distinguish | C observe | D contemplate |
| 2 A lone | B rare | C scarce | D sole |
| 3 A conclusions | B evaluations | C deductions | D assumptions |
| 4 A theory | B notion | C thought | D belief |
| 5 A outstandingly | B distinctively | C significantly | D vividly |
| 6 A degree | B grade | C extent | D rank |
| 7 A draws on | B comes under | C refers to | D stems from |
| 8 A transfer | B shift | C amendment | D swing |



EXAM TIP

Sometimes phrasal verbs are tested, as in item 7 in this task, and sometimes just the verb is tested, without the particle.

OUR CHANGING RELATIONSHIPS WITH OUR PARENTS



According to a recent study, among all the different relationships that people have, the parent-child relationship tends to have the best chance of successfully **(0) *withstanding*** the multiple pressures we experience over the course of a lifetime. The older people get, the more likely they are to **(1)** their parents as individuals, rather than simply people whose **(2)** function is to care for them. The study found that although negative **(3)** of parents are the norm during adolescence, most children's **(4)** of their parents as real people strengthens **(5)** during their 20s. During this period, parents are also beginning to give up some **(6)** of control over their offspring. Because a great deal of the tension between teenagers and their parents **(7)** teenagers feeling that they lack independence, this **(8)** in parental attitude undoubtedly contributes to their children viewing them in a new light. We interviewed two young people, and asked them to reflect on their relationship with their parents.

IRINA, 19, MOSCOW

I live with my parents and grandmother in a small flat in the outskirts of the city. Although my parents worked very hard when I was smaller, and certainly didn't spoil me, they always played games with me in the evenings, and helped me with my schoolwork when I needed it. Because we live in a small flat, and I share a room with my grandmother, as I got older I did sometimes get frustrated when the adults couldn't seem to grasp my growing need for privacy.



Family ties are very important in my country, and my father is really pleased I make the time to listen to my grandmother – his mother. She's very chatty, and talks to me a lot about her own parents and what life was like when she was growing up. I'm more tolerant now than I was a few years ago, and I realise how much pleasure it gives her to tell these stories, even though she does have a tendency to repeat the same ones over and over again! I'm more interested in them now, in fact, because some of the things she remembers relate to significant events in our national history.

I'm much closer to my mother these days than I was when I was aged fourteen or fifteen, and she seems to regard me as more of an equal rather than just a moody teenager, which is nice. We don't always see eye to eye, of course, but I'm better at keeping my temper when things don't go my way. That makes for greater family harmony. My boyfriend often comes round to our flat, and my parents have always made him feel welcome – they treat him like part of the family.

FEDERICO, 18, ROME

I live with my parents in a flat in the city centre. It's quite small, and I'd love to be able to move out and maybe share a flat with other people my age, but life is expensive here, so I think I'll have to wait until after I've finished university to move away from home. And even then, it may be a long time before I'm truly financially independent. That's a common issue in Italy these days, and plenty of people are not affluent enough to move out of their parents' home until at least their mid-thirties.



I went through a phase when I seemed to constantly rub my parents up the wrong way, and they just seemed to tell me off all the time about things like video games – both their content, which they often disapprove of, and their worries about how addictive they are. Now, we're on slightly better terms, but they're still quite concerned about my lifestyle, especially my father, who in particular thinks I should knuckle down and focus entirely on my studies so I can go to university next year. I argue that I need a good work-life balance!

It's important for my parents that we all sit down for a meal together every day. That's typical of Italian families, but it feels quite old-fashioned to me, and I often end up grabbing some fast food with my friends instead. Not having any siblings sometimes makes me feel like I'm missing out a bit – I think it would be more fun if there was someone else my age in the house. But I'm very attached to my parents, and now I'm older, I understand how much hard work they've done to give me a good life.

6 Read the rest of the article and answer the questions. Write *Federico*, *Irina* or *both*.

Which person

- 1 values a tradition less than their parents do?
- 2 appreciates the way a parent's attitude has changed?
- 3 mentions how something in particular matters to one parent?
- 4 expresses regret at not being part of a larger family unit?
- 5 details some of their parents' anxieties?
- 6 admits to sometimes having been a little impatient?
- 7 mentions having had disagreements with their parents?
- 8 remembers their parents regularly spending time with them?

7 Match the highlighted words or phrases in the text to the definitions.

- 1 often bad-tempered
- 2 not getting angry
- 3 do something often
- 4 start working hard
- 5 annoyed, disappointed or discouraged

GRAMMAR

HABITUAL ACTIONS (PAST AND PRESENT)

1 Choose the correct options.

- 1 My best friend and I *usually* / *will* have similar opinions on most topics.
- 2 Didn't you *use to* / *used to* say you'd never move out of your home town?
- 3 The next-door neighbours are *keeping* / *forever* throwing parties that keep us awake at night.
- 4 Sara *is working* / *will work* in her uncle's manufacturing business these days.
- 5 During term time, my mother was *usually* / *constantly* asking me if I had any homework to do, and it really annoyed me.
- 6 Mark applied for lots of jobs, but he *used to* / *kept* getting rejected.
- 7 They *used to* / *would* be on good terms, but they can't stand each other now.
- 8 Why do you *keep* / *always* looking at your phone?
- 9 When we were kids, my brother was *always* / *would* looking for ways to get on my nerves.
- 10 I *used to* / *'ll* go to the gym at least three times a week if I can.

2 Put the sentences 1–10 from Exercise 1 into the correct categories.

- A Talking about present habits 1
- B Talking about new habits _____
- C Talking about annoying habits in the present _____
- D Talking about past states _____
- E Talking about past habits _____
- F Talking about annoying past habits _____

3 Choose the correct words to complete the sentences.

- 1 When I was little, I was _____ falling over and hurting my knees.
A forever B usually C kept
- 2 Our cousins _____ to come and stay with us at least twice a year.
A used B would C were
- 3 Dan and Martha didn't _____ to be on speaking terms, but they are fine now.
A used B would C use
- 4 I'm completely exhausted because I _____ waking up last night for no apparent reason.
A always B would C kept
- 5 My parents are _____ spoiling my little sister, but they never buy me anything!
A keep B constantly C usually
- 6 She _____ gets on well with her twin brother, but sometimes he really annoys her.
A usually B forever C always

4 Rearrange the words in bold to form correct sentences.

- 1 speaking we on to used terms be, but we're not now.
.....
- 2 When I was in primary school, would I answer never questions teacher's the.
.....
- 3 I don't like it when my uncle visits because up always winding is he me.
.....
- 4 father his constantly him telling was to get a job.
.....
- 5 usually every accept I invitation party because I don't want to miss out on any fun.
.....
- 6 If you want to get along with your sister, you way keep her up do rubbing wrong the why?
.....

5 Complete the blog post with one word in each gap.

Me and my brother

It is interesting to see how my relationship with my younger brother has changed over the years. Like all first-borns, I ¹ _____ to be an only child, the centre of my parents' attention. When Leo was born, all that changed – and I didn't like it one bit! The new baby was ² _____ demanding to be fed, day and night. Of course, my mother ³ _____ immediately stop what she was doing and feed him, as a mother should. But it annoyed me. What's more, Leo ⁴ _____ waking everyone up in the middle of the night with his crying. Eventually, things calmed down, and I grew to love him. Now that we're both in our teens, we get on really well. We ⁵ _____ see eye to eye on things, and he's ⁶ _____ making me laugh. However, I do get on his nerves when I ⁷ _____ reminding him that I am older, and therefore wiser, than him.



6 Correct the mistakes in the sentences or put a tick by any you think are correct.

- 1 My grandmother used not to be able to send a text message until I showed her.
- 2 Amanda use to tease her younger sister about her curly hair.
.....
- 3 I'm studying about 3 hours a night these days.
- 4 The neighbour's dog forever is waking me up in the morning with its barking.
- 5 When Sam was just a little boy, he would be afraid of nothing.
.....
- 6 It winds me up that you keep always turn up 5 minutes later than our agreed time.
- 7 It was used to be much harder to get a bank loan than it is now.
.....
- 8 Her parents didn't use to let her go out with her friends during the week.

VOCABULARY

PHRASAL VERBS WITH LITERAL AND IDIOMATIC MEANINGS

1 Match the phrasal verbs to the definitions.

- | | |
|-------------|------------|
| 1 break off | 6 rip off |
| 2 come over | 7 get over |
| 3 let off | 8 run down |
| 4 count on | 9 run by |
| 5 get on | 10 get at |

- a cheat someone by charging them too much money
 b end something suddenly, often a relationship
 c criticise someone unfairly
 d not be punished
 e seem to be a particular type of person
 f have a good relationship with someone
 g tell someone about something to make sure they approve or understand
 h have confidence that you can rely on someone
 i criticise someone repeatedly
 j recover from a bad experience

- 1 ____ 3 ____ 5 ____ 7 ____ 9 ____
 2 ____ 4 ____ 6 ____ 8 ____ 10 ____

2 Complete the sentences with the phrasal verbs from Exercise 1 in the correct form.

- The president wasn't re-elected because people didn't like the way he _____ his political opponents.
- It took six months for me to _____ my ankle injury.
- She _____ the relationship because she realised she didn't actually like him.
- I've got an idea I'd like to _____ you when you have some time.
- Marco was stopped by the police for speeding, but they _____ him _____ without a fine.
- I had to find another place to live because I didn't _____ with my housemates.
- Saira was annoyed because she had been _____ when she bought a used car.
- He sometimes _____ as arrogant, but he's actually quite shy.
- You can always _____ Simon to cook a delicious meal. He's such a good cook.
- I don't know why you're _____ me - I'm not doing anything wrong!

THREE-PART PHRASAL VERBS

3 Complete the sentences with the verbs in the box in the correct form.

catch get keep look (x2) make put stand

- So many things are happening in the world, I just can't _____ up with all of it.
- She was a spoilt child, whose parents let her _____ away with some terrible behaviour.
- You need to _____ up to bullies, or they will never stop.
- Although he's rich and famous, he never _____ down on people less fortunate than himself.



- I don't know how they _____ up with all the noise coming from their next-door neighbour's house.
- It was great to see you again and _____ up with all of your news.
- You got a good grade in your latest English test, which _____ up for the bad grade you got last time.
- My grandmother was a kind and wise woman who the whole family _____ up to.



PREPARE FOR THE EXAM

Reading and Use of English Part 4

4 Complete the second sentence so that it has a similar meaning to the first sentence. Do not change the word given. You must use between three and six words, including the word given.

- I promise I will follow your instructions exactly.
COUNT
 You _____ follow your instructions exactly.
- She was given an official warning by the traffic police, instead of a fine.
OFF
 Instead of a fine, the traffic police _____ an official warning.
- I'd like to show you the new timetable and get your opinion on it.
RUN
 Can I _____ and get your opinion on it?
- Rudeness is something which will not be tolerated by me in this classroom.
UP
 I refuse _____ behaviour in this classroom.
- There is no way that the person who committed this crime will escape punishment.
AWAY
 The person who committed this crime definitely _____ it.
- Hardly anybody could follow the news because things were happening so quickly.
KEEP
 Almost _____ the news because things were happening so quickly.



EXAM TIP

Part 4 of the *Reading and Use of English* section tests your ability to correctly use grammatical structures, as well as idioms, phrasal verbs and other vocabulary items.

LISTENING

- 1 Look at questions 1 and 2 in Exercise 5 and underline the key words.
- 2 You will hear people talking in three different situations. Listen to the first extract and answer questions 1 and 2 in Exercise 5.
- 3 Now look at the extract and underline the parts that give you the correct answers.

M: What did you think of it?

F: They're incredible birds, aren't they? Marching 100 kilometres from the sea to pair up and start their families.

M: They're funny creatures. Much more graceful swimming in the sea than when they're waddling around on the ice. They looked hilarious.

F: They're definitely cute. The mating pairs were like married couples – so devoted to each other and their children. I was in awe. They put up with so much hardship; I felt quite emotional watching them struggle.

M: Yeah, I thought the film-makers focused too much on that. Trying to tug at your heartstrings. More propaganda than hard facts, actually. They were trying to draw parallels with human behaviour, as if they wanted to present them as role models of traditional hard-working families.

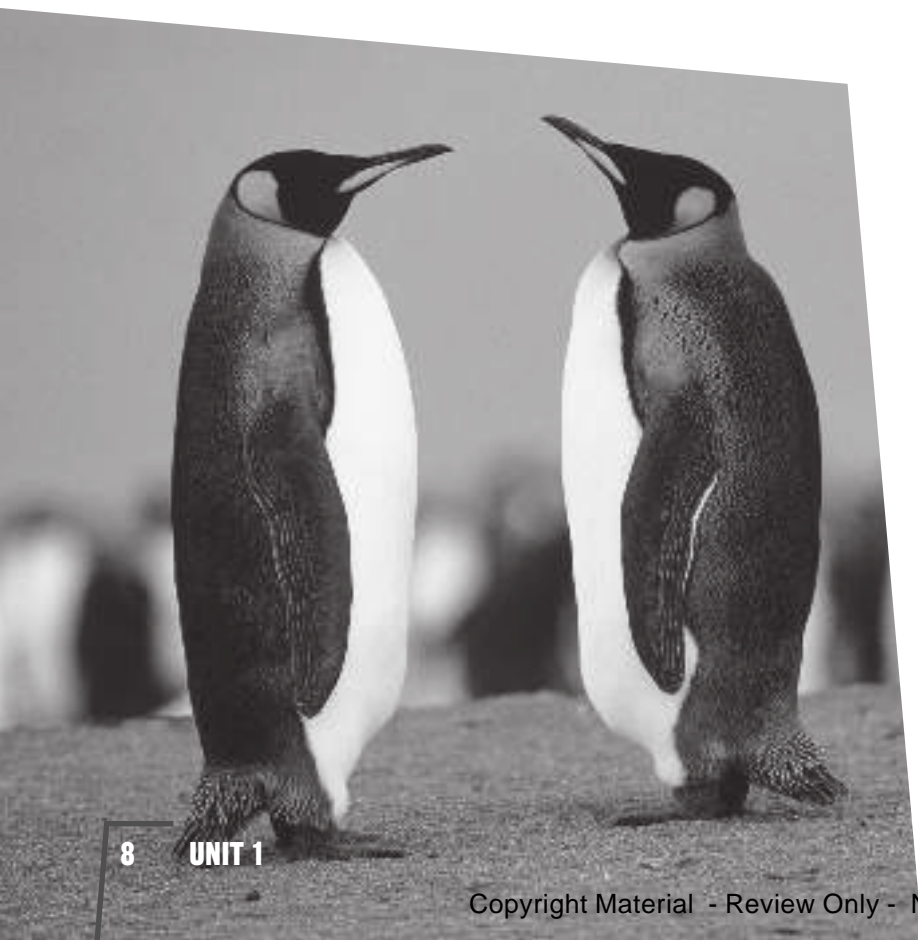
F: Mmm ... like they had a moral message to get across to the audience, rather than just present the information? Yes – it made me wonder if it was meant as a children's film.

M: I don't know. A lot of adults were very enthusiastic about it when it was first released. It won a few awards.

F: It was beautifully filmed, that's for sure.

M: Some of the underwater shots were a bit hard to make out, though.

- 4 Highlight the parts of the extract that might lead you to give wrong answers.



PREPARE FOR THE EXAM

Listening Part 1



- 5 Listen to the complete task. You will hear three different extracts. For questions 1–6, choose the answer (A, B or C) which fits best according to what you hear. There are two questions for each extract.

Extract One

You hear a conversation between two friends who have just seen a documentary film about penguins.

- 1 How does the girl feel about the penguins in the documentary?
A amazed by their similarity to humans
B amused by their comical appearance
C touched by their determination
- 2 They agree that that documentary was
A very well made.
B rather unscientific.
C aimed at a young audience.

Extract Two

You hear the beginning of a radio interview with a child psychologist called Professor Donna Bailey.

- 3 How does interviewer feel about people's attitude to him being an only child?
A surprised at their ignorance
B irritated by their prejudice
C reassured that they mean well
- 4 The professor says that her research into only children shows that
A they develop in much the same way as other children.
B the stereotypes about them are justified.
C they are more likely to be spoilt.

Extract Three

You hear two friends talking about family holidays.

- 5 The girl loves going on holiday with her family because of
A the positive change of environment.
B the feeling of closeness it provides.
C the opportunity to have new experiences.
- 6 When talking about family holidays, the boy reveals his
A desire for independence.
B regret about his past behaviour.
C dislike of planned entertainment.



EXAM TIP

Do not choose an answer just because it has the same words you hear in the recording. It could be a distractor!

READING AND USE OF ENGLISH

1 Read the text in Exercise 5 quickly. How does the writer get on with her grandparents?

- A They get on perfectly well.
- B They get on her nerves a bit.
- C She can't stand them.

2 Complete the phrasal verbs with the words in the box.

down forward out up

- 1 look _____ for – try to notice somebody or something
- 2 look _____ on – think that someone is less important than you
- 3 look _____ to – respect or admire someone
- 4 look _____ to – be happy and excited about something that is going to happen

3 Look again at Exercise 5. Which gaps require you to complete a phrasal verb? _____

4 Which gaps require you to complete an idiomatic phrase? _____

PREPARE FOR THE EXAM

Reading and Use of English Part 2

5 Read the text below and think of the word which best fits each gap. Use only one word in each gap. There is an example at the beginning (0).

My grandparents

Don't get me wrong, I love my grandparents. They're wonderful, and we're on really good (0) terms with each other. In fact, it would be true to say that I look (1) _____ to them in many respects. Plus, we can count (2) _____ Grandma to cook a great dinner every time we're there. But there's one thing that really rubs me up the wrong (3) _____ about them. Whenever my brother and I visit them, they're (4) _____ making us put our phones away!

'When we were your age, we used (5) _____ make our own entertainment,' Grandma says. Then Grandpa (6) _____ tell us how many books they read as children, and how much they loved going to the cinema. 'We didn't need phones to have fun,' they say. 'We did other things!'

Yes, Grandma and Grandpa, we know that. But we do those other things as well! We're not missing (7) _____ on anything! Unfortunately, this topic is something we will never (8) _____ eye to eye on. Are your grandparents the same?

EXAM TIP

This part of the exam tests your knowledge of grammar and some aspects of vocabulary, such as phrasal verbs, fixed phrases and idioms, and strong collocations.

6 What common meaning do these words have?

centre core eye heart

7 Complete the sentences with the words from Exercise 6.

- 1 Everywhere she goes, she likes to be the _____ of attention.
- 2 The Earth's _____ is about 6,000 degrees Celsius.
- 3 A disagreement about money was at the _____ of their dispute.
- 4 It is very calm in the _____ of a storm.

8 Now look at gap 3 in Exercise 9. What do you think the answer is and why?

PREPARE FOR THE EXAM

Reading and Use of English Part 1

9 For questions 1–8, read the text below and decide which answer (A, B, C or D) best fits each gap. There is an example at the beginning (0).

MOBILE PHONES AND GRANDKIDS



When our grandchildren were little, they were (0) relatively easy to look after when they came to visit. (1) _____ we did together – be it reading, playing, doing some creative activity – it is safe to (2) _____ that we had their full attention. However, when they became old enough to own mobile phones, everything changed.

Suddenly, those little hand-held screens were the (3) _____ of attention. We would be chatting away quite nicely when a little *ping* would go off, and out came the phone! This rudeness was not something we were going to (4) _____ up with for long. So we established a (5) _____: as soon as you walk through our door, your phones get locked in the drawer.

They accepted it, somewhat grumpily, and now we get (6) _____ just fine again. I suspect our grandchildren (7) _____ down on us, thinking we're rather ignorant when it comes to technology. But we know more than they think. Neither of them is (8) _____ that I have this blog, for example!

- | | | | |
|---------------|--------------|--------------|-----------------|
| 0 A roughly | B adequately | C relatively | D approximately |
| 1 A Whatever | B Wherever | C Whichever | D Whoever |
| 2 A tell | B state | C mention | D say |
| 3 A core | B centre | C eye | D heart |
| 4 A stay | B give | C bear | D put |
| 5 A command | B guide | C rule | D habit |
| 6 A on | B through | C around | D across |
| 7 A fall | B look | C cut | D step |
| 8 A conscious | B sensible | C aware | D alert |

EXAM TIP

This part of the exam tests your understanding of the meaning of words, their collocations and how they fit grammatically into a sentence.

2 MAKING A POINT

VOCABULARY AND READING

COMMUNICATION

1 Match the words and expressions to the definitions.

One of the definitions can be used twice.

- | | |
|----------------------------|---------------------------|
| 1 launch into | 6 wink |
| 2 give away | 7 put (something) down to |
| 3 assert | 8 flick through |
| 4 attribute (something) to | 9 raise eyebrows |
| 5 denote | 10 reputedly |

- a close one eye for a short time as a way of showing friendliness
- b surprise people
- c say or think that something is the result of a particular thing
- d tell a secret or reveal something
- e said to be true, although it isn't certain
- f represent or mean
- g quickly start doing or saying something
- h look quickly at the pages of a book or a magazine
- i say that something is definitely true

- | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|----|
| 1 | 3 | 5 | 7 | 9 |
| 2 | 4 | 6 | 8 | 10 |

2 Complete the sentences with the words and expressions from Exercise 1.

- 1 I hope the expression on my face didn't what I was thinking. I didn't want anyone to know.
- 2 Jana decided to some magazines while she was waiting for her appointment.
- 3 According to David's friends, his success can be hard work and an ability to communicate ideas effectively.
- 4 That tree is the oldest in the country.
- 5 If you something as surprising as that, you need to be able to prove it.
- 6 What did this symbol in ancient Egypt?
- 7 If you say strange things like that, you'll definitely, and maybe even upset people.
- 8 It's a bad idea to into an answer before the other speaker has even finished their question.
- 9 I thought he was being serious for a second, but then he at me!
- 10 The doctor my illness to too much stress and not taking enough care of myself.

3 Complete the sentences so that they are true for you.

- 1 I wink when I
- 2 I can assert with confidence that
- 3 I attribute my good level of English to
- 4 Something I once heard that raised eyebrows was
- 5 The place where I live is reputedly

4 Read the article on the opposite page, quickly. Which of the following topics are covered?

- A how to listen effectively
- B how to ask good questions
- C why people don't want to listen to each other
- D what makes it hard to hear people nowadays

PREPARE FOR THE EXAM

Reading and Use of English Part 5

5 You are going to read an article about listening. For questions 1–6, choose the answer (A, B, C or D) which you think fits best according to the text.

- 1 Why does the writer describe people's response to discovering she is a journalist?
 - A to illustrate a point she wants to make
 - B to explain the reasons for a decision
 - C to justify her attitude towards others
 - D to highlight an aspect of her professional life
- 2 The writer uses the phrase 'some taller than others' in line 22 to show that
 - A she thought that some people were particularly entertaining.
 - B she found the appearance of some adults slightly frightening.
 - C she doubted whether she would remember some of the tales.
 - D she questioned the accuracy of some of the stories she heard.
- 3 What does the writer say about listening in the third paragraph?
 - A It is helpful to remain quiet when someone is speaking.
 - B It is particularly demanding to listen to intelligent people.
 - C It is important to focus on what the speaker wishes to convey.
 - D It is worth asking a speaker to slow down if they talk too quickly.
- 4 What does the writer say about questions in the fourth paragraph?
 - A People are more willing to answer good ones.
 - B Only good ones will lead to meaningful answers.
 - C Most people are unaware of how to ask good ones.
 - D Good ones may change the speaker's mind on an issue.
- 5 The writer suggests that she asks people about their interests in order to
 - A avoid the risk of giving offence.
 - B encourage them to give away secrets.
 - C enable a constructive exchange of opinions.
 - D have an opportunity to tell them about herself.
- 6 What does the writer tell the reader in the final paragraph?
 - A Learning to listen will make life more rewarding.
 - B Be prepared to explain to others how to listen well.
 - C Listening to other people can improve memory skills.
 - D Accept that there are people who may never learn to listen.



EXAM TIP

The questions are always in the same order as the information in the text.



WHY LISTENING IS THE REAL KEY TO COMMUNICATION

When people find out I'm a journalist, they typically launch into a story about how they used to write for their school newspaper or that their cousin is a blogger. Or they might say they loved a film about a newsroom, but can't remember the name. It's rare that people don't interrupt and shift the conversation towards themselves. Bad listeners aren't necessarily bad or rude people. You're likely to have a dear friend who's a bad listener. Perhaps you yourself are not the best listener. And you could be forgiven. In many ways, we've been conditioned not to listen. This can in part be attributed to all the loud noises that accompany modern life. Noise levels in restaurants force diners to strain to hear one another. Traffic on city streets, music in shops and the coffee machines at your local café can reputedly exceed the volume of normal conversation by as much as 30 decibels. All this when listening is arguably more valuable than speaking.

I'm a listener by profession, but I'm also a listener by nature. Growing up, I was surrounded by colourful relatives and neighbours who knew how to tell a good tale, often with a cheerful wink (some taller than others, and raising eyebrows because they were so very unlikely). I learned early on that listening to the same story told by multiple sources got you closer to the truth. After a couple of years studying the neuroscience, psychology and sociology of listening, I learned that listening goes beyond just hearing what people say. It's also paying attention to how they say it, what they do while they are saying it, in what context it's being said, and how what they say resonates with you.

Listening isn't about simply keeping quiet while someone else talks. Quite the opposite. A lot of listening has to do with how you respond – the degree to which you help the person you're listening to express their thoughts clearly and, in the process, make your own thoughts clearer. It starts with an openness and willingness to truly follow another person's story without presumption or getting distracted by what's going on in your

own head. This can be a problem for smart people whose galloping thoughts may race ahead of the speaker's words, often in the wrong direction.

Good listeners ask good questions. One of the most valuable lessons I learned as a journalist is that everyone is interesting if you ask the right questions. If someone seems dull or uninteresting, it can be put down to you. Good questions don't have a hidden agenda of fixing, advising, convincing or correcting. They don't begin with 'Don't you think ...' or 'Wouldn't you agree ...', and they definitely don't end with 'Right?' The idea is to explore the speaker's point of view, not to sway it. Also, avoid asking questions like 'What do you do for a living?', 'What part of town do you live in?' and 'Are you married?' These don't denote an honest attempt to get to know people so much as rank them in the social hierarchy.

Instead, ask about people's interests. Try to find out what excites or annoys them – their simple pleasures and what keeps them up at night. Ask expansive questions such as, 'What's the best gift you ever received?' and 'If you could live anywhere in the world, where would you live?' Listening to people like this is also a way to bridge differences and find common ground. Once you find out someone can't resist chocolate, whistles when nervous or has a room in their house dedicated to their yo-yo collection, it's hard to reduce them to a particular ideological position. You might not agree with them, but you gain understanding about their background and influences, which is essential to reaching compromise. Moreover, listening to others makes it more likely that they will listen to you. This is in part because it's human nature to return courtesies, but also because you learn people's values and motivations. With this, you'll be better able to craft a message that resonates.

Listening is a skill and, like any skill, it degrades if you don't do it enough. It takes awareness, motivation and practice. While some may have more natural ability and others may have to try harder, everyone will benefit from the effort. The more people you listen to, the more aspects of humanity you'll recognise and the better your judgement, instincts and intuitions will become. We are, each of us, what we attend to in life. To listen poorly, selectively, or not at all, is to limit your understanding of the world and prevent yourself becoming the best you can be.

6 Match the highlighted words or phrases in the text to the definitions.

- 1 the belief that something is true without having any proof
- 2 persuade someone to believe or do something
- 3 make the difference between two ideas smaller
- 4 make a great effort
- 5 place in order of importance

