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GOLD

B1+ Pre-First

NEW EDITION



Pearson

Exam Maximiser with Key

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Introduction to the Gold B1+ Pre-First Exam Maximiser

The **Gold B1+ Pre-First Exam Maximiser** is specially designed to help you improve your language skills and maximise your chances of success in the Cambridge English Qualifications: B2 First examination.

The **Exam Maximiser** will help you prepare for the exam by offering you:

- **further practice and revision** of all the important vocabulary, grammar and skills (reading, writing, listening and speaking) that you study in the **Gold B1+ Pre-First Coursebook**.
- guidance with the **strategies and techniques** you should use to tackle exam tasks.
- **exam-style exercises** so that you can practise using the strategies and techniques.
- a section on **useful language**.
- a complete **Practice test** which you can use for preparation. This means that you will know exactly what to expect in each paper and that there are no unpleasant surprises.

What is in each unit?

The **Exam Maximiser** follows the structure of the **Gold B1+ Pre-First Coursebook**. Each unit provides further work on the language, skills and exam strategies you looked at in the Coursebook unit.

There are **Vocabulary** sections which practise the words and expressions you studied in the Coursebook. You'll also learn some new words and expressions. Activities include exam-style tasks as well as more fun activities like crosswords and wordsearch grids.

Each unit has two **Grammar** sections which practise the same points you studied in the Coursebook. There are activities to practise and revise the grammar and to help you identify where you might see it in the exam.

The **Speaking** sections include activities to help you build your skills for the Speaking paper. There are activities on useful language and on strategies for making yourself understood, agreeing and disagreeing and so on. In these sections, you often listen to or read examples of candidates performing the speaking tasks and then complete the activities to develop your own speaking skills.

Every unit has a **Listening** section with an exam-style recording, so there is plenty of opportunity for you to practise your listening skills. As in the Coursebook, these tasks are based on the tasks you will see in the exam and are designed to help you begin your preparation. Often, there is a section helping you with vocabulary from the text that you might not have seen before.

Similarly, the **Reading** section in each unit gives you more practice in dealing with the kinds of tasks you have covered in the Coursebook. You will get some information about the exam and help with exam strategies and techniques. Like the Listening sections, many of the Reading sections have activities for you to practise unfamiliar words and phrases.

There is a **Writing** section in every unit, which will help you build skills you will need for the exam, as well as for everyday writing tasks. You will look at examples of other people's writing and learn how to improve your own. In some tasks you work on useful language or on planning and organising your writing, while in other tasks you write your own answers. You can check your written work against sample answers.

At the back of the book, there is a **Useful language** section, which includes language for important functions such as giving opinions, agreeing and disagreeing and making suggestions. There are also useful phrases for the Speaking and Writing papers.

Once you have worked through all the units, you will be ready to try the **Practice test** at the back of the book. If you do this under timed exam conditions, it will give you a good idea of what to expect in the exam itself and your results will help you understand what to focus on as you prepare for it.

How can I use the Gold B1+ Pre-First Exam Maximiser?

You can use it with your teacher or on your own. Most of the time, you will write your answers to the activities in the **Exam Maximiser** itself. Most of the questions have only one answer, so they are very easy to correct. If you have an **Exam Maximiser** with a key, you can do the activities at home and correct them yourself. If you have an **Exam Maximiser** without a key, you will probably do the activities in class or for homework and then your teacher will correct them or go through them with you in class.

You can use the **Exam Maximiser** to check that you have learnt the grammar and vocabulary in each unit of the Coursebook or to revise for tests and exams. The skills you will work on in the Reading, Writing, Listening and Speaking sections will help you improve your language skills in general, and prepare for the exam.

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Making contact

About the exam:

In the exam, you listen to eight unconnected short recordings and answer a question about each one.

Strategy:

- Read the context sentence carefully to get an idea of the topic.
- Read the question and all the options. Remember that you may not hear the exact words that are in the question. For example, *it's difficult for me* means the same as *I don't find it easy*.
- You will hear each recording twice, so don't worry if you're not sure of the answer at first.

Listening

Multiple choice: short extracts

► CB page 7

1  **01** You will hear people talking in four different situations. For questions 1–4, choose the best answer, A, B or C.

- 1 You hear a man talking about a friend who lost her job. Why did his friend lose her job?
 - A She spent too much time online.
 - B She was not honest.
 - C She was unwell.
- 2 You hear a girl talking about a time she used her mobile phone on public transport. Why was she upset?
 - A She had lost her mobile phone.
 - B Her mother phoned her unexpectedly.
 - C Strangers listened to a private call.
- 3 You hear a boy talking about a postcard he sent to a friend. How did the boy feel about sending this postcard?
 - A annoyed about the time it took to arrive
 - B amused by his friend's reaction
 - C embarrassed because it never reached his friend
- 4 You hear a woman talking about sending an email. What mistake did she make?
 - A She accidentally deleted the email.
 - B She sent the email to some people unintentionally.
 - C She wrote some untrue things in the email.

Vocabulary

collocations: communication, family relationships

► CB page 7

1 Choose the correct option in italics to complete the sentences.

- 1 Let's *meet/get* together when you come to my city.
- 2 I've communicated with her by email a lot but we've never met *face by/to* face.
- 3 My friend and I often go online to *chat/discuss* about nothing in particular.
- 4 Only *near/close* relatives and very good friends were invited to the wedding.
- 5 I've *made/done* some good friends at uni – I hope we don't *miss/lose* touch.
- 6 My friend has just got *engaged/divorced* to her boyfriend.
- 7 I like to keep *in/on* touch with old school friends – especially those who have moved abroad.
- 8 I love having a big *extended/open* family – we're all very close and meet up quite often.

Grammar

present simple and present continuous

► CB page 8

1 Choose the correct option in *italics* to complete the sentences.

- 1 I *don't go*/'m *not going* to the school reunion next month.
- 2 Shh! I *try*/'m *trying* to work!
- 3 Tara *has/is having* a hard time trying to get the phone company to replace her mobile.
- 4 I *often misunderstand*/'m *often misunderstanding* what people mean in text messages.
- 5 Miguel *is/is being* a real whizz on the computer – he can do anything!
- 6 Jenny's flight *leaves/is leaving* at three o'clock. She's going to visit her cousin in Australia.
- 7 It *becomes/'s becoming* harder and harder to keep in touch with old friends.
- 8 I *visit*/'m *visiting* my cousin in hospital tonight.

2 Complete the email with the present simple or present continuous form of the verbs in brackets.

Hi Suzana,

I (1) (*really/look forward to*) the school reunion next week! (2) (*you/come*)? I hope so! I'm so happy that our old school (3) (*organise*) such an exciting event. I (4) (*remember*) so much about our school days. I can't wait to talk to everyone about what they (5) (*do*) these days. I (6) (*want*) to tell them about what I (7) (*study*) at college, too – it's so interesting!

The party (8) (*start*) at seven o'clock. Hope to see you there!

Love,
Zena

3 Look at the verbs in brackets in Activity 2. Do they describe states (S) or actions (A)?

4 Circle the state verbs in the box.

chat communicate depend do hear
like lose own phone smell

Use of English

Multiple-choice cloze

► CB page 9

About the exam:

In the exam, you read a text with eight gaps and choose from four possible answers for each gap.

Strategy:

- Read the whole text quickly so that you understand what it's about.
- Read each sentence containing a gap and think about what kind of word might fit in each gap (e.g. a noun, a verb, an adjective, a conjunction).
- Look at the words immediately before and after each gap to help you.
- Think about words that often go together (collocations), e.g. *catch a bus, keep in touch*.

1 Read the blog post and decide which answer (A, B, C or D) best fits each gap.

I love my new mobile phone

I just love my new mobile phone and I (0) *A. spend* hours every day texting and chatting to friends online. I'm sure some people think I waste too much time playing around on it when I should be doing more useful things – (1) college work! Obviously, it's really helpful to talk to my friends about what we're doing on the course, but it's also so easy to go online to (2) things up.

My favourite app is a music one called My Tune. I've got all my music (3) on my phone, which means I can listen to my favourite (4) in bed – that often helps me to (5) asleep if I have things on my mind. I also love taking photos on my phone, which I then (6) with my friends on social media. I've become (7) as 'the Expert Photographer' in my group, though I don't really think I'm that good!

All in all, I really don't think that I could (8) without my phone!

- | | | | | |
|---|-------------|------------|------------|----------|
| 0 | A spend | B pass | C give | D have |
| 1 | A as though | B such as | C just as | D as if |
| 2 | A look | B read | C find | D check |
| 3 | A collected | B carried | C supplied | D stored |
| 4 | A streams | B chapters | C tracks | D units |
| 5 | A go | B get | C drop | D fall |
| 6 | A share | B divide | C split | D part |
| 7 | A known | B referred | C named | D called |
| 8 | A face | B manage | C remain | D stay |

Reading

Multiple choice

► CB pages 10–11

About the exam:

In the exam, you read a text and answer six multiple-choice questions. Each question has four options to choose from. Only one option is correct.

Strategy:

- Read the whole text quickly so that you understand what it's about.
- Read each question and the four options very carefully.
- Scan the text quickly to find the information you need, and underline the part of the text where you think the answer is.
- Read the section more carefully in order to find which option is correct.
- Remember that the words in the question and the words in the text may be different. Make sure you identify words in the text which have a similar meaning to those in the question.
- Make sure you know why the other options are not correct (e.g. it may be true but the text doesn't say it; the text says the opposite; the text says it but it does not answer the question).

1 Look at the photo in the article. What is a holiday rep?

2 Read the title of the article. What kind of information do you think it will include?

3 Read the article quickly and answer the questions.

1 What sort of people is the job of holiday rep not suitable for?

.....

2 How old do you need to be to have a job like this?

.....

3 Which languages can be particularly useful for a holiday rep?

.....

4 Where can you find advertisements for jobs as a holiday rep?

.....

5 What do holiday companies give their reps free?

.....

6 What hotel facilities are mentioned in the article?

.....

4 Read the article again. For questions 1–4, choose the answer (A, B, C or D) which you think fits best according to the text.

1 According to Angela, which of the following qualities is the most important for a holiday rep?

- A the ability to be flexible
- B a confident personality
- C a sense of responsibility
- D the willingness to work long hours

2 In the second paragraph, Angela says that before she got the job, she

- A had travelled a lot in her free time.
- B knew quite a lot about geography.
- C spoke more than one language.
- D had taken an advanced qualification.

3 Angela says that in an interview you should

- A make yourself sound better than you are.
- B find out about the travel company online.
- C talk about the attraction of free travel.
- D be honest about what you know.

4 What does Angela like most about being a holiday rep?

- A earning a lot of money
- B going out with her colleagues
- C the smart clothes she gets to wear
- D getting free access to facilities

5 Choose the correct meaning (A or B) for the underlined phrasal verbs in the article.

1 believe in

- A be certain that something exists
- B be certain about an ability

2 deal with

- A take appropriate action in a situation
- B be concerned about a situation

3 send out

- A put in the post
- B advertise

4 stand out

- A be easy to see
- B be better than others

5 find out

- A discover
- B recover

6 get on (with)

- A continue doing
- B have a good relationship with

**So you want to be a
Holiday rep?
Read on!**



My name's Angela and I'm a holiday rep. I love my job and it's the best way to make friends with people from all over the world. Holiday reps are responsible for making sure that the customer has a fantastic holiday. As a rep, you represent the holiday company you're working for, so above everything else, you have to be friendly, sociable and believe in yourself. You also have to be able to deal with all kinds of situations and if you're impatient or like regular working hours, then this isn't the job for you. In addition, you have to be ready to go anywhere in the world – you don't get to choose where you work. For example, one month you might be in the south of France and the next in South America!

You need to be at least eighteen to become a rep and although formal qualifications aren't necessary, getting a basic certificate in travel and tourism, like I did, will always be useful because there's a lot of competition for jobs. It's not as easy as you might think to get a job in the travel industry. It's helpful if you can speak other languages, especially French or Spanish. I only speak English, so I didn't really expect to get a job – but I did! It helps if you travel a lot yourself too. I didn't have much chance to do that before I became a rep, though I did have a good knowledge of where places are in the world.

There are a few ways you can find work as a holiday rep. Newspapers and travel magazines often advertise

positions. And don't forget the internet, which is probably the most useful source of information! Travel companies send out application forms to people who are interested in working for them – read the form carefully and make sure your application stands out. If you do get an interview, remember you must answer questions truthfully – you'll quickly get found out if you pretend you can speak Greek or are familiar with a country you've never even heard of! One thing you should avoid is saying you want the job to get free holidays! It sounds silly, but you'd be surprised by how many people actually say that.

There are lots of cool things about being a holiday rep. The pay isn't the best in the world but in my opinion, the benefits of the job are worth far more than the pay packet. You get to see some amazing places and the people are fantastic – I keep in touch with a lot of the customers I look after. The nightlife with the other reps and customers can be fun too, if you get on with them! You get free accommodation as a rep. Don't be too excited about this – I'm staying in a tent in my current job, which isn't the most comfortable place to stay! You also get a uniform but the greatest thing of all for me is that you get to use everything at the resort you're working at – brilliant if there's a swimming pool or tennis courts because you don't have to pay to use them.

Grammar

verb patterns: *-ing* and infinitive
▶ CB page 12

- 1** Complete the email with the correct form of the verbs in the box.

do eat fish go see (x2)
spend swim

Hi Elisa,

I'm here on holiday in Hungary with my family. My grandparents are Hungarian, so it's great to be with people who know the country really well. We're staying in a cottage in the countryside and there's a lake nearby where we enjoy **(1)** every morning. I'd love **(2)** this at home too, but there's nowhere fun to go.

I'm also learning **(3)**! I'm not usually keen on fishing but my granddad makes it great fun. **(4)** all day in the sun is pretty tiring, so before we have dinner we take a short nap. I love **(5)** outdoors – the food definitely tastes better!

I'm looking forward to **(6)** you. Let's **(7)** that new action film when I get back. I'd better **(8)** now – my dinner's getting cold!

See you soon,
Pete

- 2** Find and correct the mistakes with infinitives in the sentences.

- 1 We'd better not to be late home – I have a lot of homework to do tonight.
- 2 I'd love go to Kenya on holiday. I've never been to Africa.
- 3 I can't wait get my new phone – it's got some fantastic apps!
- 4 Let's to buy a present for Mike's birthday. What do you think he would like?
- 5 Stephanie's hoping pass her travel and tourism exam. She worked really hard.
- 6 Joe's learning be a tour guide. He wants to work in Spain.
- 7 I've arranged have a new website built for my work.
- 8 You should to check your passport is valid before you travel.

Speaking

Interview: giving personal information
▶ CB page 13

About the exam:

In the exam, the examiner asks you some general questions about yourself, such as where you live, your hobbies, plans or experiences.

Strategy:

- Try to give an answer that is not too short but is also not long and complicated.
- Do not memorise answers because you will sound unnatural. Learn key words and give natural answers.
- Try to make a good impression by smiling and appearing confident.

- 1** Match the questions (1–10) to the answers (A–H). There are two extra questions.

- 1 Where are you from?
 - 2 What do you like about living there?
 - 3 Do you watch much television? Why/Why not?
 - 4 How do you like to keep fit?
 - 5 What did you do on your last birthday?
 - 6 What is your main ambition? Why?
 - 7 Are you very interested in fashion?
 - 8 Tell us something about your best friend.
 - 9 Where do you like to spend your holidays? Why?
 - 10 Do you have a favourite hobby? What is it?
-
- A It's very peaceful and the people are very friendly. Everyone knows each other. It's really pretty too.
 - B France. My home is in Beaulieu, a small village just outside Bordeaux. It's close to a lovely forest.
 - C I think I'd like to be a teacher of primary school children. I'd like to teach them English.
 - D Not a lot. I prefer to spend my time with my friends, playing games and chatting.
 - E I prefer to go somewhere nice and hot where I can relax – like Spain or Italy.
 - F I do a lot of painting and drawing – especially cartoons. I draw cartoons of famous people and give them to my friends. It's fun!
 - G I'm not very worried about what I wear. I like trendy things but I don't spend a lot of time thinking about clothes.
 - H I went to a big hotel with my family and we had a lovely meal there. It was good.

Writing

Essay ▶ CB page 14

About the exam:

In Part 1, you have to write an essay. There will be a question for you to answer and two notes giving ideas that you must include in your essay. You will also need to add one more idea of your own.

Strategy:

Make sure you write about both of the points in the notes and think of a third one of your own. You must give reasons and/or examples to support your opinions.

1 Read the exam task and complete the essay below with the words in the box.

because for however matter mean
reason so think

In your English class you have been talking about what makes a good friend. Now your teacher has asked you to write an essay.

Are old friends always the best friends?

Notes

Write about

1 shared experiences

2 different personalities

3 (your own idea)

Write an essay using **all** the notes and giving reasons for your point of view. Write **140–190** words.

As we get older, our lives change. We meet different people and make new friends all the time, (1) our social network includes people who have been important at different times in our lives. But are the oldest friends really the best?

I (2) this is true for some people. The (3) I say this is because these friends know you better than anyone else. They have shared important experiences with you and sometimes they know you better than you know yourself. (4) of that, they can give you really good advice even if you and your friends are very different kinds of people, with different personalities.

(5), this is not always the case. Someone may have known you very well in the past but that does not (6) they still know you well now. Perhaps you have both changed. This is especially true if you have been out of touch for a while.

(7) me, the best friends are the ones you can rely on to give you support and to tell you the truth. It doesn't (8) whether you've known them for ten months or ten years.

2 Underline the parts of the essay where the writer covers the two points given in the notes. What is the third point – the writer's own idea?

3 Match the phrases (1–6) to their functions (A–F).

- 1 Many people feel that ...
- 2 That is why ...
- 3 I strongly believe that ...
- 4 Alternatively, ...
- 5 In addition to this, ...
- 6 For instance, ...

- A introducing a different point
- B giving an example
- C adding to something you've said
- D giving a general point of view
- E giving a reason
- F giving your opinion

4 Read the exam task and think of a point of your own to include. Make notes to plan your answer. Then write your answer.

In your English class you have been talking about the best people to ask for advice. Now your teacher has asked you to write an essay.

Is it better to ask family or friends for advice?

Notes

Write about

1 type of problem

2 relationships

3 (your own idea)

Write an essay using **all** the notes and giving reasons for your point of view. Write **140–190** words.



2 Changes

Vocabulary

describing feelings

► CB pages 16–17

1 Choose the correct option in *italics* to complete the sentences.

- 1 I was *surprised/surprising* when Eddy gave me a present because he never usually remembers my birthday.
- 2 The instructions were really *confused/confusing* – we didn't know what to do.
- 3 I lent my umbrella to Eva and she lost it. I was *very annoyed/annoying*.
- 4 We worked until midnight on the project. It was *exhausted/exhausting*.
- 5 Fred wore a tiger suit to the fancy dress party. It was *very amused/amusing*.
- 6 I spilt coffee all over Greta's new dress. She was *very upset/upsetting*.

2 Complete the sentences with the correct form of the words in brackets.

- 1 I love the history of fashion! I think it's (fascinate) to see how clothes have changed over the years.
- 2 Jenny always gets (worry) before acting in a play. She thinks she'll forget her lines.
- 3 If someone says I look good, I get (embarrass) and go red!
- 4 I can't watch horror films – I get (scare) when I go to bed!
- 5 Pete was (thrill) when he won £1,000 in the competition.
- 6 It was a rather (depress) book, but it was a good read.

3 Which two adjectives from Activity 2 are positive?

Speaking

Long turn

► CB page 17

About the exam:

In Part 2, you talk on your own for about a minute. You have to compare two photographs and then answer a question about them.

Strategy:

- Don't describe each photograph in detail. Compare them and then answer the question.
- The question will be printed above your photographs, so you can look at it to help you remember what to talk about.

1 02 Listen and complete the examiner's instructions.

Your photos show people who are (1) in different situations. I'd like you to compare the photos and (2) the people have decided to wear special clothes in these situations.

2 **03** Look at the photos and choose the correct option in *italics* to complete a student's answer. Then listen and check.



(1) *Both/Either* pictures show people who are wearing special clothes, but they're in different situations. **(2)** *On/in* the first picture the skier is spending her free time enjoying herself, **(3)** *whereas/although* in the second one the people are obviously working in a kitchen. This means they have different reasons for the clothes they've decided to wear. I think the skier is a girl. She **(4)** *needs/must* to have clothes that will protect her against the cold weather on the mountain, **(5)** *so/because* she is wearing thick clothes. She **(6)** *probably/likely* chose them herself because she wants to look good when she's skiing. She's also wearing a helmet, **(7)** *in case/so that* she falls and hurts herself.

The people in the second picture, **(8)** *however/whereas*, probably didn't choose their clothes themselves – they have to wear them because their clothes are important **(9)** *as/for* the job they're doing. I think they're baking a cake and they have to cover their hair and their ordinary clothes **(10)** *so that/because* the food they're cooking stays safe and clean. The clothes are **(11)** *too/also* special for chefs so that other people can identify them. They all look very **(12)** *interested/interesting* in their work.

Listening

Sentence completion

▶ CB page 18

About the exam:

In the exam, you listen to a monologue and fill in the missing words in ten sentences. The sentences will be in the same order as the information in the recording.

Strategy:

- Read the title. This gives you information about what you will hear.
- Read the sentences first and think about the type of information that might go in each gap.

1 You will hear a woman called Suzy Bower talking about winning the lottery. Read the sentences and match the gaps (1–6) to the types of information in the box. You will need to use some words more than once.

a country a feeling an object a place

A lucky lottery winner

Suzy bought her first lottery ticket at the local **(1)** _____, and she won a lot of money.

Suzy felt **(2)** _____ when she won because she wasn't sure how to spend the money.

The first thing Suzy bought for herself after winning was a **(3)** _____.

Paying for a new school **(4)** _____ pleased Suzy the most.

Buying a **(5)** _____ helped a member of Suzy's family in their work.

Suzy's first trip to a foreign country was to **(6)** _____.

2 **04** Listen and complete the sentences in Activity 1 with a word or short phrase. Then check your answers to Activity 1.

Vocabulary

dependent prepositions

► CB pages 18–19

1 Choose the correct option (A, B or C) to complete the sentences.

- Which company do you work?
A of B by C for
- Don't make jokes Paul's new hairstyle!
A about B across C on
- I'm in trouble – I completely forgot
Ellie's birthday!
A to B with C about
- I'm often asked whether winning the lottery has
made a big difference my lifestyle.
A with B to C around
- The children laughed the dog wearing a
funny hat!
A over B at C up
- I'm really proud my younger sister.
A about B with C of
- This song always reminds me my dad – it's
his favourite.
A of B over C around
- I love spending money presents for my friends.
A for B by C on

Grammar

present perfect and past simple

► CB page 19

1 Choose the correct option in italics to complete the sentences.

- Have you ever bought/Did you ever buy* a lottery ticket?
- We've watched/watched* an interesting documentary
on dinosaurs last night.
- Have you thought/Did you think* about who you want
to invite to the party yet?
- I've never won/never won* a tennis match because I'm
so bad at it!
- My brother's *been/was* scared of cats since one
has scratched/scratched him last year.
- Kim's *been/went* to South America – she's *been/went*
to Bolivia in 2017.
- I've been/was* so tired yesterday that I've *turned down/*
turned down a trip to the theatre.
- Gareth's *just got/just got* a new job working for an
advertising company.

2 Find and correct the mistakes in the sentences.

- I've been to London on a business trip last week.
- Life changed over the last few years for animals that
live in the polar regions.
- I've worn cool clothes when I was a teenager.
- Megan has got up early this morning and did her
homework before lunch.
- The town I live in grew a lot since we moved here.
- Lately people became more conscious of the need for
responsible tourism.

Reading

Gapped text

► CB pages 20–21

About the exam:

In the exam, you read a text with six missing sentences and choose the correct sentences from a list to fill the gaps. There will be one extra sentence which you do not need to use.

Strategy:

Look carefully at the sentences before and after the gaps, and use reference words such as *it, he, this, there*, etc. to help you choose.

1 Look at the photo and read the title of the text. What do you think you are going to read?

- A an advertisement for a holiday
- B a magazine article
- C a review on a holiday website

2 Read the text again. Choose from the sentences (A–G) the one which fits each gap (1–6). There is one extra sentence which you do not need to use.

- A My friends used to laugh that I had never taken a risk in my whole life.
- B Hearing her talk about the place, the local people, the food and the weather persuaded me.
- C After only a few days I did just that and made a big discovery about myself.
- D This means that there's little opportunity to just sit back, chill out and 'smell the flowers' – as my grandmother used to say.
- E In spite of this, I enjoyed myself far more than I thought possible.
- F However, I certainly wasn't expecting the step back in time that I was about to take.
- G Then the sensible side of my brain started to work.

Can a **HOLIDAY** completely change your life?

Most of us today lead increasingly stressful lifestyles. The time that we aren't actually at work or college is often spent commuting or doing more work at home. We've adapted to lifestyles in which every moment is planned for. 1 So, holidays, however long or short, are precious. They give us time to decompress and recharge our batteries for the rest of the year. However, as well as this, they can sometimes have another, long-term effect. It's something I know from first-hand experience.

Last year I rented a house in Italy from a colleague. She'd bought the place very cheaply and had it renovated over a couple of years. It was in an old hilltop town in the south and the photos of the view from her kitchen window were quite amazing. 2 It would be a perfect holiday. What I wasn't prepared for was quite how drastically this break would affect my life.

I had been warned about the isolation of the town, two hours' drive in a rental car from the nearest airport. 3 Streets, too narrow for cars, circled round and round the hilltop. Steep steps linked each level and were really hard on the leg muscles! I fell in love with the place immediately. I loved that there were no hotels, no tourists and that in a fortnight I met only one person who spoke very little English. I loved the friendliness of the people who smiled and spoke to me in fast Italian, not caring that I could barely understand them. And what I really loved was the quietness, and sitting at the kitchen table gazing at a view that was to-die-for.

They say that holidays give you the chance to reassess your life and make decisions about your future.

4 I was happier than I'd ever been and it wasn't only the temperature or the view. It was the way of life. I'd had enough of deadlines and rushing through the day, barely stopping for breath. The noisy, polluted streets seemed as far from this place as the moon. I wanted to stay.



5 It came up with question after question. Where would I live? How would I earn any money? Could I bear losing all the facilities and services of a big town, and being so far away from family and friends? And the biggest one of all was, did I really have the courage it took to go from a comfortably secure life to something completely unknown? The questions chased each other round in my head all week.

6 This was true. But I surprised myself and everyone else: in the end, I listened to my heart and not my head and checked out houses for sale. I used my savings to buy a small house and now I live in my Italian town full time. I've started a small English school for local people and I also teach English online, so I'm not broke. Am I happy? Ecstatic. Do I ever regret the decision? Never! My advice? Choose your holidays carefully – you never know what they might lead to!

3 Match the underlined words in the article to their meanings (1–8).

- | | | | |
|---------------------------------------|-------|--|-------|
| 1 relax after a worrying or busy time | | 5 almost not; only with great difficulty | |
| 2 extremely and suddenly | | 6 extremely happy | |
| 3 think about again | | 7 travelling to work | |
| 4 very valuable | | 8 excellent | |

Grammar

past simple, *used to* and *would*
▶ CB page 22

- 1** Choose the correct option in italics to complete the sentences. Sometimes both options are possible.
- When I was a child, I *used to/would* have blond hair but now it's dark brown.
 - Tina *sent/would send* Angelo a text to arrange a time to meet last night.
 - Paolo *used to live/lived* in Rome when he was in college.
 - Every Sunday we *used to/would* sit by the fire and listen to my grandma telling stories.
 - Michaela *said/used to say* she enjoyed the party last Saturday.
 - On Saturday Grace and Joe *had/used to have* a meal in a restaurant and then saw a film.

- 2** Complete the blog post with the correct form of *used to* or *would*. Sometimes both are possible.

Life dreams

What did you want to be when you were a kid? I (1) dream of being a professional footballer. Even when I was really young, I (2) spend hours kicking a ball around in the street where I lived. I (3) have the best football or the smartest trainers but I had so much energy and passion for the sport. My mother (4) have to come and find me at mealtimes – I didn't hear her calling because I was so absorbed in my practice! I (5) watch every match on TV and I (6) know the names of all the footballers. Sometimes my uncle (7) take me to watch a live match and I loved it! I (8) have a really powerful kick but then I got injured and that was the end of my footballing dreams. I still watch my local team but I don't play anymore. I'm more into music these days and that's the focus of my ambitions now!

Use of English

Open cloze
▶ CB page 23

About the exam:

In the exam, you read a text and fill in eight missing words.

Strategy:

- Remember that the title gives you clues about the topic of the text.
- Before you start reading, think about what ideas might be mentioned in the text.
- Read the whole text first for meaning, and think about what type of word might go in each gap.

- 1** Look at the title of the article. What is the article about?

Does technology actually change our brains?

There (0) *are* many ways in which technology has changed our lives for the better. The internet means that we can communicate with anyone anywhere in (1) world, so people can keep up relationships more easily. Social media has changed the way we (2) friends. All the information we need can be found at the touch of (3) button.

All that seems great, (4) however positive the effects of technology are, there are also things we need to think (5) One question is whether playing computer games actually changes the way people concentrate: do we focus less effectively if we play them too much? And because (6) is so easy to find information through search engines, are we losing the ability to remember things (7) ourselves? Are our brains actually changing (8) of the way we use technology? And if so, are these changes good or bad?

- 2** Read the article in Activity 1 and think about what type of word goes in each gap. Match the gaps (1–8) to the words in the box.

article (x2) linking word (x2) preposition (x2)
pronoun verb

- 3** Complete the article in Activity 1 with the words in the box.

a about ~~are~~ because but for
it make the

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