NGOC BACH. A COLLECTION OF 100 IELTS SPEAKING TOPICS

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INTRODUCTION

Hi guys,

My name is Ngọc Bách.

There are 100 cue cards including samples of 8.0 ~ 9.0 band samples written by me (reviewed by native examiners) for 100 different topics of IELTS Speaking covering almost all contexts. You can use this document to prepare answers to current questions. All of these examples come with explanations and detailed examples of good vocabulary in the script

This document is also part of the free set of 'FULL IELTS GUIDE 2017 BY NGOCBACH" .You can see the original link on the IELTS Ngoc Bach group here:
https://www.facebook.com/groups/ieltsngocbach/permalink/1951695464901106/ Or on ngocbach.com website here http://ngocbach.com/chuyen_muc/view/70000306/Ngoc-Bach039s-IELTS-Ebook.html

New documents, if any, will be updated on these two links. Please follow or share on facebook to follow along
Wish you all good study !
-Ngọc Bách-

1. **Describe a foreign country you would like to go to. (A country you have not been to yet)**

You should say:
what country it is (including where it is in the world)
what this country is like
what people can do in this country
and explain why you would like to go to this country.

There are so many countries that I have not had a chance to go to, but one of those that I would like to visit in my upcoming trip is Myanmar.

It is located in South East Asia. The country is like Thailand 25 years ago, before shopping malls, and **fastfood chains** expanded in the country. Thus it remains **rustic** and traditional compared to the modern world.

The people here are said to be friendly; they are willing to **go out of their way** to **show you around** and they are very keen on practicing their English skills. Myanmar is famous for its ancient city named Bagan, with more than 3,000 temples which date back to the 11th century. I would particulary love to see the Shwedagon Pagoda. It is considered to be the greatest and most **sacred** Buddhist temple in the country. The entire structure, which dates back 2,500 years, is covered with hundreds of gold plates.

Since the country has just been **opened up** to the outside world, it still keeps the originality of its culture. That's why I want to go there, to experience the country and the people before **globalization** changes everything.

VOCABULARY

✓ **fastfood chain**: [noun] a network of restaurants like McDonald's, which you can find in many different places, serving food such as burgers and fries.

✓ **rustic:** [adjective] simple and typical of the countryside.

Example: The old church in the small village had a **rustic** appearance.

✓ **go out of their way to:** [verb phrase] to make a special effort to do something.

Example: The teacher went **out of her way** to help the students, giving free classes before the exams.

✓ **show someone around:** [verb phrase] to be a **guide** for somebody when they visit a new place and to show them what is interesting.

Example: We were **shown around** the school by one of the students.

✓ **sacred**: [adjective] connected with a god**,** and considered to be holy.

Example: In Islam, Mecca is a **sacred** city.

✓ **opened up:** [phrasal verb] possible to be visited.

Example: The railways **opened up** many remote parts of the country.

✓ **globalization:** [noun] the process by which places become similar to each other all over the world.

Example: You can now buy burgers in fastfood restaurants like McDonald's all over the world, as a result of **globalization**.

1. Describe a gift that you recently gave to others

You should say:
When it happened
Who you gave it to
What gift you gave to the person
And explain why you gave this gift to others

ANSWER (Trích từ đề "Describe a gift you gave that took a long time to choose.")

Choosing a **gift** for someone is usually a very difficult task, because you want to make sure that the **person who receives** it will like it. **For that reason**, I always spend a lot of time picking gifts for my relatives and friends. Today, I am going to share with you the time when I had to choose a gift for **my little sister's birthday**.

It was her **5th birthday** and I wanted to give her something **memorable** and special. I decided to go to a "Build-a-bear workshop" to buy her a **stuffed bear**. At **this shop**, you actually spend time **picking materials** to build your furry friend, from the **cotton inside** to the **clothes outside**. You also got to give this teddy bear **a heart** and **a voice recorder**, so that when you **squeezed** it, it would say whatever you recorded before. After finishing

building the stuffed toy, the store would give him or her **a birth certificate** with a name and birthday.

My little sister was **so happy** when she received the bear. Well, kids always love a furry friend anyway. However, what was special was that **as she grew up**, she understood how much love I had put in the bear when building it for her at the store, so she came to appreciate the gift **even more**.

VOCABULARY

✓ **pick**: [verb] to choose something from a group of things.

Example: The man picked a blue tie from the collection in the shop.

✓ **memorable:** [adjective] something special, good or unusual and therefore easy to remember.

Example: I will never forget the memorable holiday that I had in Japan.

✓ **workshop:** [noun] a place where you can do a practical activity to create something.

Example: As a student, I attended drama workshops, because I had always loved acting.

✓ **stuffed bear:** [noun] a toy in the shape of a bear, filled with cloth and made of some soft material.

Example: When I was a child, I had a stuffed bear, which I used to keep in my bedroom.

✓ **furry:** [adjective] covered with fur – a soft thick mass of hair that grows on the body of some animals.

Example: People love pandas because they are so furry, with thick black and white fur all over their

body.

✓ **get to (+ infinitive):** [phrasal verb] to be allowed to do something.

Example: When we visited the football stadium, we got to meet some of the famous players.

✓ **teddy bear:** [noun] this is just another name for a stuffed toy bear.

✓ **squeeze:** [verb] to press something firmly, especially with your fingers.

Example: Every time you clean your teeth, you squeeze the tube of toothpaste.

✓ **appreciate:** [verb] to recognise the good qualities in something or somebody.

Example: At school, I appreciated the help that I received from my teachers.

2. Describe an interesting song

You should say:

What kind of song it is

How you found it

What it is about

And explain why it is interesting to you

ANSWER (Trích từ đề "Describe a song that has special meaning for you")

I love listening to music, so I like many songs. However, one of my favorite songs that I want to talk about today is "Hall of Fame" by The Script and Will.i.am. This song was written for the 2012 Olympic Games.

When it came out, it quickly **became a hit** on every single music chart throughout the world, not just because of its **catchy melody**, but also for its **meaningful lyrics**. The song talks about how each of us can be a **champion** or anything we want to be as long as we **dedicate** our time and **efforts** to doing what we are **passionate** about. The song is **played at** big athletic events

to pump up the **crowd**, but you can easily **relate to** the song at other times as well, especially when you are about to **give up.**

I think this song has such a powerful message that whenever I was tired or had decided to **quit**, it would **lift me up** right away. It made me think about why I had started in the first place and that I needed to finish the job that I was currently doing.

VOCABULARY

✓ **became a hit:** when a song becomes a hit, it means that it is super popular and that people are listening to it on the radio and buying it on iTunes or elsewhere.

Example: Taylor Swift's song "Bad Blood" became a hit instantly.

✓ **catchy melody:** the melody is the part that you sing along with and if it is catchy, it means that it is easy to sing along with and people like it, you easily remember it and it sticks in your mind.

Example: The song "Uptown Funk" has a catchy melody that people love to sing.

✓ **meaningful lyrics:** lyrics are the words in a song and if they are meaningful, it means that they actually mean something or have some sort of importance or significance; they aren't just silly, meaningless words.

Example: His sister writes meaningful lyrics for her songs.

✓ **champion:** someone who wins, a winner.

Example: He didn‟t see himself as a champion until he had reached his goals.

✓ **dedicate:** to commit your time to doing something; to make a promise to yourself to do something.

Example: You were able to get a high score on the test because you dedicated 2 hours every day to studying and preparing yourself.

✓ **effort:** the work that you put into doing something.

Example: The time and effort he spent improving his English paid off when he got a $10,000 raise.

✓ **passionate:** if you are passionate about something it means you have a strong desire to do something or a strong interest in something.

Example: Elite athletes are passionate about their sport and want to become the best.

✓ **played at:** to play a song at an event means to broadcast it over loudspeakers so everyone can hear it.

Example: They always play the song "We Are the Champions" at basketball games.

✓ **to pump up** the **crowd:** to get the people excited about the game or event. Example: The cheerleaders tried to pump up the crowd during the football game.

✓ **relate to:** to see yourself in something or to understand it in a personal way. Example: She can relate to the lyrics of that song about love and loss.

✓ **give up:** to quit; to stop doing something.

Example: He decided to give up smoking after 10 years.

✓ **quit:** to stop doing something; to give up.

Example: She convinced her son not to quit the soccer team.

✓ **lift me up or lift someone up:** to make someone feel better.

Example: His brother is good at lifting others up when they are feeling down.

3. Describe a creative inventor or musician

You should say:

Who this person is

What this person does

how you knew this person

and explain why you think this person is creative

ANSWER

I am going to talk about a creative person who I really admire. That person is Albert Einstein - one of the most well-known physics scientists in the world. He was born in 1879 in a Jewish family in Germany.

He was a theorical physicist and is now recognized as the father of modern physics. Above all, he was the founder of the "Theory of Relativity", which became an important contribution to the science of mankind. It was to be the biggest achievement of his life. In 1921, he was awarded the "Nobel Physics Prize". He was a prolific writer and published about 300 scientific articles covering150 topics as well during his career.

I came across a new biography about him on the internet and there was a lot of interesting information which really inspired me a lot. His childhood was not carefree as I had thought. He had a problem learning how to talk until he was about 8 years old. Besides, because of his unconventional character, he tended to be bullied and teased a lot, however, he ignored all these taunts and concentrated on doing experiments in the laboratory.

What I really admire him is how passionately he worked and what he contributed to physics and our understanding of the world. He lived and worked with passion and the enthusiasm all his life, and he is a shining example for me to follow.

VOCABULARY

✓ theoretical physicist: [noun] a person who studies some branch of physics, using mathematical models to understand, explain and predict nature. This is in contrast to a physicist who uses experiments to test ideas.

Example: People who study the world through building mathematical models are called **theoretical physicists**.

✓ founder: [noun] a person who creates an organization, company or idea.

Example: Bill Gates is the **founder** of Microsoft.

✓ relativity: [noun] the word for how things only have importance in relation to other things.

Example: Einstein's Theory of **Relativity** says that the way that anything [except light] moves through time and space depends on the position and movement of someone who is watching.

✓ prolific: [adjective] producing many written works.

Example: Picasso was a **prolific** artist who produced many paintings.

✓ came across: [phrasal verb] met or found something/someone by chance.

Example: While I was looking for my passport, I **came across** some old photos from my schooldays.

✓ biography: [noun] the story of a person's life written by another person.

Example: I have just read a new **biography** about the life of Shakespeare.

✓ inspired: [verb] gave me the confidence and enthusiasm to do something well.

Example: My father **inspired** me to follow his example and to study hard at school.

✓ carefree: [adjective] having no worries or problems.

Example: After she retired from work, she had a **carefree** life with no reponsibilies.

✓ unconventional: not following what is done or considered normal or acceptable by most people.

Example: The normal solutions to traffic congestion have not been effective, so a more **unconventional** approach is necessary.

✓ bullied: [verb] frightened or hurt a weaker person.

Example: My son was **bullied** by the older boys at school.

✓ teased: [verb] laughed at somebody and made jokes about them – sometimes in an unfriendly way.

Example: The boy was **teased** at school because he was fat.

✓ taunts: [noun] insulting remarks intended to make someone angry or upset.

Example: Racist **taunts** were often shouted at black football players in the past.

✓ shining example: [noun] excellent and inspiring example.

Example: President Obama is a **shining example** for young, black people in America who want to have a successful career.

4. An Interesting Animal

Describe a time when you saw an interesting animal.

You should say:

what animal it was

where you saw it

what happened when you saw it

and explain why you thought it was interesting.

ANSWER:

I am raising an **Alaska dog**, which is a large breed of domestic dog. My dog has a **double coat:** the undercoat is **soft** while the outer one is **coarse** and **water-proof**. Also, his coat has **two colors**, black and white. In my opinion, his **most attractive** feature is the **small upright** ears which are out of proportion to the head.

Having had this dog for almost **a year**, I find him intriguing. He is **very smart**, so he learns everything quickly. I once taught him how **to fetch**. **Surprisingly enough**, he successfully chased and retrieved the object after I tossed it for the second time. **He acted** as if he had intrinsically understood the game. He is also **friendly** to everyone, **especially children**. Whenever someone visits my house, instead of **barking**, he welcomes them by licking their feet.

For me, my dog is a friend I can **play with** after school. I often walk him around the park at the weekends and he seems to **like this**, as there are different dogs there. I also **talk with him** regularly and **I feel** that he can understand what I say.

As **a final point**, I hope that my dog can live with me for **a long time**.

VOCABULARY:

✓ **breed:** [noun] an animal such as a dog, horse or cat that has been developed by people in a controlled way.

Example: The airport police use a **breed** of dog which can smell hidden drugs in bags and suitcases.

✓ **coat:** [noun] the fur or hair which covers the body of an animal.

Example: Some breeds of cows have a thick winter **coat** to protect against cold weather.

✓ **coarse:** [adjective] rough

Example: As a result of working on a construction site all his life, his hands were **coarse**.

✓ **upright:** [adjective] straight, not lying down or bent.

Example: My dog's ears appear to be large, because they are **upright** and this helps him to hear everything very well.

✓ **intriguing:** [adjective] interesting and unusual

Example: It is **intriguing** to see how my teacher explains things so clearly to the class.

✓ **fetch:** [verb] go to where something is and bring it back.

Example: It started to rain, so I went back to the house to **fetch** the umbrella for me and my wife.

✓ **retrieved:** [verb] to bring something back, especially from a place where it should not be.

Example: The wind blew my hat into the road, so I quickly **retrieved** it before any cars came.

✓ **tossed it**: threw it, but in no special direction.

Example: After he had read the newspaper, he **tossed it** on to the ground.

✓ **intrinsically**: [adverb] in a way that was part of his real nature or character.

Example: I believed his story, because he is an **intrinsically** honest man.

✓ **barking:** [verb] the sound made by a dog.

Example: When the postman arrived, the dog started **barking**.

✓ **licking:** [verb] moving its tongue over someone or something.

Example: I saw the cat **licking** its whiskers after it had finished eating.

5. A Meal You Had With Your Friends

Describe a meal you had your friends (in someone's home or in a restaurant).
You should say:
who organized this meal
where you had it
what you talked about during the meal
what you ate and drank
and explain why you had this meal with your friends.

ANSWER:

Last month, I had a **get-together** with some of my high school **friends** whom I had not met since we graduated. Then, we decided to **have lunch** at a well-known **pizza** restaurant in the city centre.

Arriving at the restaurant, we were quickly given the menu. What **surprised me** the most was that there were **various types** of pizza and drinks; hence, it took me quite a long time to **choose** the food. After that, we **talked with each other** while waiting for the dishes. **Some of my friends** were studying at the same university, some had decided to **get a job**. And I was **especially impressed** by the decision of one friend to take a **gap year**. She said that as she had a **strong passion for** traveling, she would spend one year visiting **lots of places**.

Then, the dishes were served. **The pizza** was out-of-this-world and **the drinks** were tasty although they were **a bit pricey**. We kept talking and enjoyed the meal and drinks for about two hours. **Actually**, meeting them reminded me of the time when **we studied at high school** and I realized that now we were all **grown-up**, we had **our own plans** to pursue. But we all promised to **meet up** regularly.

VOCABULARY:

✓ **get-together:** [noun] an informal meeting or gathering of friends.

Example: We usually have a family **get-together** during the New Year celebrations.

✓ **gap year:** [noun] the year that a young person spends working and/or travelling after leaving school and starting university.

Example: I'm planning to take a **gap year** before I start my university course, and I have decided to go to see India and China.

✓ **have a passion for**: [expression] have a hobby or activity that you like very much.

Example: He **has a passion for** traditional music, and he is learning to play some traditional musical instruments.

✓ **out-of-this-world:** [adjective] used to emphasize how good or beautiful something is.

Example: The variety of Vietnamese food available during the Tet holiday is **out-of-this-world.**

✓ t**asty:** [adjective] having a very delicious flavour.

Example: When I want something **tasty** to eat, I often buy some chocolates or ice-cream.

✓ **a bit pricey:** [adjective] a little expensive.

Example: Although my favourite restaurant serves food that is out-of-this-world, it is unfortunately **a bit pricey**, so I can't afford to eat there often.

✓ **grown-up**: [adjective] mentally and physically an adult.

Example: She has a **grown-up** daughter who works in our local hospital.

✓ meet up: [phrasal verb] to meet someone, usually by arranging a time and place with them first.

Example: After work, we all **met up** at the cinema to watch the new James Bond movie.

6. Describe a small business that you would like to open, (or, start or run or own or have) if you had the chance.

You should say:

What this business would be

Where it would be located

What people you would hire as employees

And explain why you'd like to have this small business.

ANSWER:

Well, if I were to talk about my dream business, a small book **café** would definitely be the first thing that **springs to my mind** right now. Actually, I've been thinking about it for a long time as I always enjoy reading books and drinking coffee in a **tranquil** space. When I **get** enough **money together**, I will start my own business for sure.

My desire is to create a place for people who are seeking **serenity** and trying to escape from the **hustle and bustle** of city life, so I would look for a location in a quiet street, maybe around the Old Quarter. My café would be decorated **elaborately** with lights and houseplants, creating a calm, **homely** atmosphere for the customers. Bookshelves filled with books of every kind would **run along** the walls and in the corners and everyone would be welcome to choose a book from the shelves to enjoy while drinking their coffee.

Like many other coffee shops, I would hire students to work as part-time employees at my book café, especially ones who share the same **passion** for books as I do. They could **earn their living** in a comfortable and friendly working environment, and I would aim to **nurture** their love of books, so that their work would become a pleasure.

Owning my own book café has been my lifelong dream. To read books is to broaden one's **horizons**, and to drink coffee is to enjoy life. When I reach a certain point in my life where I feel satisfied enough with my career, I will **resign** and run my small café. I believe that one day I will make my dream come true.

VOCABULARY

✓ cafe [n] a place where you can buy drinks and simple meals

Example: Every Saturday, we drink coffee and eat cakes in our local cafe.

✓ spring to mind [expression] to appear suddenly or immediately in your thoughts

Example: The Harry Potter novels immediately **spring to mind** as an example of recent best-selling books.

✓ tranquil [adj] quiet and peaceful

Example: She led a **tranquil** life in the countryside.

✓ get money together [expression] save money to buy something

Example: I want to buy a new car, as soon as I can **get enough money together.**

✓ serenity [n] the quality of being calm and peaceful

Example: The hotel offers a haven of peace and **serenity** away from the hustle and bustle of the city.

✓ hustle and bustle [expression] busy and noisy activity

Example: He wanted a little cottage far away from the **hustle and bustle** of city life.

✓ elaborately [adverb] in a carefully prepared, detailed and organised way

Example: The hotel lobby was **elaborately** decorated in preparation for the President's visit.

✓ homely [adj] making you feel comfortable, as if you were in your own home

Example: The restaurant was **homely**, with just a few tables and a relaxed atmosphere.

✓ run along [phrasal verb] be in line with

Example: An electric fence **ran along** the top of the wall to protect the building.

✓ passion [n] a very strong feeling of some emotion – love, hatred, anger, enthusiasm

Example: She spoke with great **passion** about the natural beauty of her homeland.

✓ earn a living [expression] to make money in order to support yourself financially

Example: The wages are so low in this city that I have to do three jobs just in order to **earn a living**.

✓ nurture [v] to help somebody/something to develop and be successful

Example: My father **nurtured** a love of art in me and nothing gives me more pleasure than visiting an art gallery.

✓ horizon [n] the limit of your desires, knowledge or interests

Example: She wanted to travel and experience other cultures in order to broaden her **horizons.**

✓ resign [v] to officially tell somebody that you are leaving your job, leaving an organisation

Example: He **resigned** as manager after 8 years, in order to spend more time with his family.

7. Describe a time you needed to use imagination

You should say :

what the situation was

why you needed to use imagination

What the difficulties were

and explain how you felt about it

ANSWER

Today I'm going to tell you about a time when I had to **make use of** my imagination. When I was a **sophomore** in high school, one of my literature **assignments** was to recreate a short play that is based on a real book. The class was divided into small teams, each had to choose a book of different **genres**, ranging from comedy to romance to even horror. Since it was going **to be assessed**, everyone was required to take an active part in the project.

This task was particularly **demanding** in using imagination as we had to set up as lively a stage as possible to **draw the attention** of the audience. Enjoying a book can be easy but it's tough to actually **act out** a written scene, even for professional actors. Therefore, as the stage director and one of cast members, I really needed to **make the best of** my creativity to produce a perfect play.

Besides having to be **inventive**, we were also **working against the clock** since only 2 weeks were given to prepare. It was tricky to come up with a complete plot and **make time for** group rehearsals in such a short period - not to mention having to find the appropriate costumes and stage **props**.

Despite the pressure I had to deal with, I felt **a great sense of achievement** because our play was **well-received** by the teacher and other classmates. I guess I can regard this as a challenge for not only my imagination but also for my team-working skills. In the future, I hope I will get the chance to be involved in other exciting projects like this one.

VOCABULARY

1. To make use of sth [expression]: to use something

Eg: The students should make use of the books they are given.

2. Sophomore [n]: a student in the second year of high school or college

Eg: She's a sophomore in high school.

3. Assignment [n]: a specified task or amount of work given

Eg: The students were given a homework assignment.

4. Genre [n]: a particular type or category of literature or art

Eg: This book is a classic of the mystery genre.

5. To be assessed [expression]: to be judged, rated or scored

Eg: Students will be assessed based on their attendance and scores.

6. Demanding [adj]: requiring much time, attention, or effort

Eg: I have heard it is one of the most demanding courses at the university.

7. To draw attention [expression]: to make people notice

Eg: A good presenter must be able to draw listeners' attention.

8. To act out sth [expression]: to present something in action

Eg: Children act out what they read, which makes the lesson more fun.

9. To make the best of sth [expression]: to try to think and act in a positive way when you have to accept a bad situation

Eg: The room they've given us is too small really, but we'll just have to make the best of it.

10. Inventive [adj]: creative or imaginative

Eg: They have given their new company an inventive name, which customers are sure to remember.

11. To work against the clock [expression]: to work very fast because you know you only have a limited period of time to do something

Eg: Scientists were workingagainst the clock to collect specimens before the volcano erupted again.

12. To make time for sth [expression]: to allow time for something

Eg: I try to make time for my family at weekends.

13. Prop [n]: something used in creating or enhancing a desired effect, especially in the theatre or in films

Eg: There was a team responsible for building stage props to make the background more real.

14. A sense of achievement [expression]: a proud feeling of having done something difficult and worthwhile

Eg: He felt a sense of achievement having won the competition.

15. Well-received [adj]: getting a good reaction from people

Eg: 'Gone with the Wind' was one of the most well-received movies of all time.

8. Describe what you think would be the perfect job for you.

You should say:
what job it would be
what you would do in this job
and explain why you think this would be the perfect job for you.

Answer

For me, the **ideal job** that I would like to have is to be **an air hostess**.

This job involves **taking care of customers** on planes, serving food and drinks, and **making sure** that they have a safe flight. **In Vietnam**, to apply for this position, **an applicant** has to meet various requirements, including being at least **20 years old**, having good **communication** and **problem-solving skills**, having a good command of **language,** and so on. One **special thing** is this career is open to both **men and women**, although women are preferred.

There are **many reasons** why I think this job would suit me. **Firstly**, I have a passion for traveling. **Taking this job**, I could travel to many countries on a regular basis. Occasionally, when I have **free time** between flights, I would be able to **go sightseeing** and enjoy a variety of local food. **Secondly**, I have quite a **good command** of English and French, which are spoken by the majority of people around the world. Therefore, this would **help me a lot** if I could get this job. **Lastly**, I am really interested in talking with others. So, I believe that this job is **perfect** for me since I would meet **hundreds of people** every day. As a **final point**, I hope that I can follow my dream career in the future.

VOCABULARY

✓ **taking care of:** [phrasal verb] providing customers with everything that they need for their comfort and protection.

Example: My mother is **taking care of** my children while I am away on business.

✓ **applicant:** [noun] a person who makes a formal request for something, such as a job or a place at university.

Example: I don't think that I will get the job, because there were hundreds of **applicants.**

✓ **having a good command of:** [expression] having a good knowledge, especially of a language, and the ability to speak it well.

Example: **Having a good command of** at least one foreign language is necessary for most people working in the tourist industry.

✓ **open to:** [adjective] available to, because both men and women can enter this profession.

Example: This job is **open to** people of all ages, but applicants must have a university qualification.

✓ **on a regular basis: [**expression] regularly.

Example: The fire equipment is checked **on a regular basis**, usually at the end of each month.

✓ **go sightseeing:** [verb] visit interesting places as a tourist.

Example: I would like to **go sightseeing** in Hanoi and visit the Old City and the Temple of Literature.

✓ **dream career:** [noun] the profession that I would really love to have.

Example: For a lot of boys, their **dream career** is to be a football player.

9. Describe a magazine or newspaper that you like to (or, often) read.

You should say:
what magazine or newspaper it is
what the magazine or newspaper is about
how often you read it
what kinds of people generally read this magazine or newspaper
and explain why you like to read it.

ANSWER:

To be honest, I don't read magazines much these days, but I **still read** the one called **Vietraveler**, which is a **tourism** magazine.

The magazine contains **all that we need to know** in terms of traveling, such as **reviews** of numerous famous destinations, **tips** to save money when traveling or what we need to **prepare** for a trip. Besides, at **the back** of the magazine, there are a few **discount coupons** for some particular **domestic tours** which are run by tourist companies.

Always, when **a new issue is published**, I get it delivered to my house by post. **Actually**, I have been a subscriber to this magazine for **almost 5 years** and I **fully intend** to carry on reading it. As all the information in it is **arranged logically**, therefore, I find it quite **easy** to locate every article that interests me. **In addition**, I highly appreciate the **quality** of the magazine's contents. The attractiveness of the **glossy photos** and the **high standard of journalism** are just two of its outstanding features.

As a **final point**, I would emphasize that I usually depend on this magazine to **plan a good trip** or **suggest one** to my friends.

VOCABULARY

✓ **discount coupons: [**noun] small pieces of printed paper that gives you the right to buy something at a cheaper price than normal.

Example: I cut the **discount coupons** out of the newspaper and used them to buy an Iphone at a reduced price.

✓ **run:** [verb] provided and made available to people.

Example: The school **runs** special courses for teenagers during the summer.

✓ **issue:** [noun] one of a regular series of a magazine.

Example: In the last **issue** of the magazine, there is an article about restaurants in Hanoi.

✓ **subscriber**: [noun] a person who pays money – usually once a year – to receive regular copies of a magazine or newspaper.

Example: The number of **subscribers** to the magazine has now reached 10,000.

✓ **fully intend to**: [adverb+verb] to have a definite plan about something which you will do.

Example: If I don't go on holiday this month, then I **fully intend to** take a holiday next month.

✓ **carry on:** [phrasal verb] continue.

Example: Even if I pass the exam, I fully intend to **carry on** studying English to an advanced level.

✓ **glossy:** [adjective] smooth and shiny, so as to look real and attractive.

Example: The shiny paper used in **glossy** magazines is very expensive, so the magazines too are always expensive.

✓ **outstanding**: [adjective] extremely good and very important.

Example: The **outstanding** tourist attraction in New York is the Statue of Liberty.

10. Describe a sport stadium that's important in your city.

You should say:
where it is
how often you go there
what people do there
and explain why you think it is important

ANSWER

I would like to talk about My Dinh National Stadium which hosts various important national and international level events. This multi – purpose stadium is located in My Dinh suburban commune, Tu Liem district, Hanoi capital. This stadium has a seating **capacity** of 50,000. Also it was officially opened in 2003.

This stadium is not far from my house, actually just about 300m to the north. I often go there whenever there are activities which **interest** me. People usually visit / attend there to encourage and support sporting events, especially Vietnam teams as well as enjoy entertaining activities.

My Dinh stadium is very important to not only Hanoi but also the whole country due to its **irreplaceable** functions. It is one of the biggest and most well-equipped stadiums in Vietnam **utilized** as a showcase to stage a large number of important events namely the 2003 Southeast Asia Games, and the 2008 AFC Champions League.

Moreover, this stadium plays a critical role since many foreigners might get to know/come to know about Vietnam through the activities held there. Therefore, it is essential to promote a good image of it in order to impress foreigners positively.

VOCABULARY

✓ **Multi-purpose (adjective):** having many different uses

Example: This room is **multi-purpose** – we use it for meetings, interviews, and taking breaks.

✓ **Capacity (noun): (sức chứa)** the total amount that can be contained or produced, or (especially of a person or organization) the ability to do a particular thing

Example: The stadium has a seating **capacity** of 50,000.

✓ **Interest (verb): (làm ai hứng thú)** to attract your attention and make you feel interested; to make yourself give your attention to something.

Example: She has always **interested** herself in charity work.

✓ **Irreplaceable: (adjective) (không thể thay thế được)** too valuable or special to be replaced.

Example: Most of the porcelain you see in the display cabinets is **irreplaceable**.

✓ **Utilize: (verb) (sử dụng)** to use something, especially for a practical purpose

Example: The Romans were the first to **utilize** concrete as a building material

11. Describe an important holiday (or festival) that is celebrated in your country.

You should say:

when this celebration takes place
what people do during this celebration
what you especially like and dislike about this celebration
and explain why it is important.

ANSWER:

Today, I am going to talk about an important holiday (or festival) that is celebrated in my country called Lunar New Year. Besides the Western calendar's New Year , the Vietnamese people also celebrate Lunar New Year according to the lunar calendar.

The Lunar New Year, or Tet usually takes place around the end of January or the beginning of February, depending on when the lunar calendar ends. Tet provides the opportunity for reunions for Vietnamese families, as people tend to return to their hometowns at this time of the year.

Like the Christmas tree in Western countries, in Vietnam, we buy a kumquat tree, an apricot blossom tree or some branches to decorate our houses. People also buy new clothes and clean their houses to welcome in the New Year. Some families make "Chung cake", a traditional cake for this special occasion. Chung cake is made of rice, mung beans and fat pork, wrapped in a banana leaf in the shape of a square. It is then boiled overnight until it is cooked.

During the Tet holiday, Vietnamese visit their relatives to wish them all a happy new year. They also go to the pagodas frequently to wish for a better year to come for their families. Adults give lucky money to children. I think this is the only time of year when people can forget about all the worries of their daily lives, when they can relax, enjoy, indulge themselves, and get ready for another new year.

VOCABULARY:

✓ **Western calendar:** also known as the Gregorian calendar, this calendar is used in Western countries and the New Year begins with the first day of January.

Example: International companies usually follow the Western calendar, though their country may also follow a different calendar.

✓ **according to:** as stated or indicated by; following; based on.

Example: According to the Center for Disease Control, all travelers should be up-to-date with their vaccines.

✓ **takes place around:** to occur during a certain time period, around is used in this instance to give you a general idea of when something happens, rather than a very specific date.

Example: The festival takes place around the beginning of May each year, though we won't know the exact start date until March 15th.

✓ **depending on:** to be contingent on, something will not happen unless something else happens first.

Example: Depending on the score you get on your exam, you may qualify for a scholarship.

✓ **reunion:** a time when people gather together again after not having seen each other for a while; you can have family reunions, class reunions, work reunions, etc.

Example: The graduating class of 1985 had a class reunion this past summer and it was fantastic to see all my old classmates again.

12. Describe a difficult decision that you made.

You should say:

what decision it was

what difficulties you faced

how you made the decision

and explain why it was a difficult decision.

ANSWER:

It was when I prepared the **application form** for the university entrance exam that I had to make an **important** but **difficult** decision. At **that** time, I was at a crossroads, where I had to decide **which university** to apply for. Actually, my interest was in **economics**, which was taught in two separate universities, one of which specialized in **international trade** while the other focused more on the **national** economy.

Fortunately, my **sister**, who graduated from an **economics college**, gave me some sound advice. Having weighed up the pros and cons of **each school**, she encouraged me to choose the university specializing in **international trade**. Finally, **I applied for this school** after thinking carefully about all the options.

At present, I feel so **satisfied** with the **learning environment** of this university that I am always thankful for my decision as well as my sister's advice. **Without her guidance**, I probably wouldn't be as content with my university life as I am.

VOCABULARY

✓ **at a crossroads**: [expression] at an important point in someone's life or development.

Example: His life was **at a crossroads** – whether to join the army or to continue studying at university.

✓ **sound advice:** [adjective and noun combination] sensible and reliable advice.

Example: My parents gave me **sound advice** about my choice of career.

✓ **weighed up the pros and cons:** [expression] considered carefully the advantages and disadvantages of something.

Example: Having **weighed up the pros and cons,** I decided that it would be more useful for me to learn English rather than French.

✓ **learning environment:** [noun phrase] the conditions that affect the behaviour and development of people who are learning a subject.

Example: The school had the latest technology, the buildings were modern and the teachers were very helpful – it was the perfect **learning environment.**

13. Describe a place you have visited that has been affected by pollution.

You should say:

what place it was

why you went there

how it was affected by pollution

and explain how you felt about this situation.

ANSWER:

It is regrettable that **Hanoi**, where I'm living, is negatively affected by **pollution** and the major environmental problems it is facing are water pollution, air pollution and noise pollution.

There are **various reasons** why this city is badly polluted. **Firstly**, due to **modernization**, more and more vehicles such as cars and motorbikes are used. This leads to **an increase** in exhaust emissions which contaminate the atmosphere, not to mention the rising level of **noise** pollution. **Secondly**, factories and industrial zones in the city have discharged **a huge amount of untreated waste** into rivers, causing death to many fish and other aquatic animals.

In fact, pollution makes people here less healthy, and **some** even suffer from **life-threatening** diseases such as lung cancer, skin cancer, and so on. Therefore, the government

must deal with this problem **right away**. Cutting down on vehicle use is the best way **to reduce** air pollution and noise pollution. We can **do this** by encouraging people to use public transportation. Besides, those who **litter** should pay a heavy fine. Finally, I think **the best solution** is to raise awareness and educate people to protect the environment.

VOCABULARY

✓ **regrettable:** [adjective] something that you are sorry about and wish that it had not happened.

Example: It is **regrettable** that only a minority of people are concerned about the environment.

✓ **exhaust emissions:** [noun phrase] waste gases that come out of a car or other vehicle.

Example: The **exhaust emissions** from big trucks cause serious air pollution in my city.

✓ **contaminate:** [verb] make a place or thing dirty, by adding a substance that is dangerous or polluting.

Example: Every day, more and more vehicles enter the city centre and **contaminate** the atmosphere with their exhaust emissions.

✓ **discharge:** [verb] when somebody discharges a gas or liquid, they release it and it goes into the water or the air.

Example: The factory was fined for **discharging** chemicals into the river.

✓ **aquatic:** [adjective] living in water

Example: Rivers which are clean have a lot of **aquatic** life, such as fish and frogs.

✓ **life-threatening:** [adjective] likely to kill someone.

Example: Aid workers in poor countries often have to deal with difficult, **life-threatening** situations.

✓ **cutting down on:** [phrasal verb] reducing the size, amount or number of something.

Example: You will improve your health by **cutting down on** cigarettes.

✓ **awareness:** [noun] knowing that something exists and is important.

Example: In schools, campaigns about **awareness** of road safety are essential for young children.

14. Describe a product you bought that you were (or, are) happy with.

You should say:

what you bought

how you bought it

why you bought it

and explain why you were (or are) happy with it.

ANSWER

Last summer, I bought a Nokia **smart phone** that I was really satisfied with.

My **cell phone** was the latest product from Nokia, so there were various useful applications such as **video calling, emails, games, music players**, and so on. I intended **to use** this smart phone to listen to music, make phone calls, send messages and check emails. I **must say** that this portable device **helps me a lot** no matter where I am.

There were **numerous reasons** why I took an interest in this product. **Firstly,** I wanted to use it for entertainment purposes. I could **refresh myself** after a hard day's work by **enjoying music** or **watching reality shows** on the Internet. Moreover, **thanks to this smart phone**, I was able to keep in touch with my **old friends** whom I could not meet **in person** regularly. Besides, **this mobile phone** helped me to handle my workload effectively. **For example**, I could check emails when **waiting** for the bus, which saved a lot of time.

As a final point, I would emphasize that I **chose** the mobile phone **myself**. That was **the main reason** why I felt so happy with this product.

VOCABULARY

✓ **portable device**: [noun] an object that is easy to carry or to move.

Example: A lot of people on my flight were using **portable devices,** such as their laptops, during the journey.

✓ **took an interest in:** [expression] wanted to know more about the product.

Example: My parents **took an interest in** my grades at school, because they wanted me to go to university.

✓ **entertainment:** [noun] for interest and amusement.

Example: The local newspaper gives news about **entertainment**, with information on all the latest films, music, shows and events in our city.

✓ **refresh myself: [**verb] make myself feel less tired and stressed.

Example: After work, I usually **refresh myself** with a shower and a hot drink.

✓ **reality shows:** [noun] shows that use real people [not actors] in real situations, in order to provide entertainment.

Example: **Reality shows** like 'Big Brother' are very cheap to make, because there are no actors to pay.

✓ **handle my workload:** [expression] manage the amount of work that I have to do.

Example: The company has paid me for some extra hours to **handle my** increased **workload**.

15. Describe a person (you know), much older than you, who you admire.

You should say:

who this person is

how you know this person

how this person has influenced you

and explain why you admire this person.

ANSWER:

I would like to describe one of my **teachers** who taught me at **high school**. She had a great **influence** on me and was a **role model** whom I look up to.

Her name is **Yen** and she taught me **Math** for 3 years of high school. She was **in her 50s**, and so she had a lot of teaching experience. **Actually**, we met each other almost everyday as she was **also** my form teacher. She **cared about** us as if we had been her sons and daughters. For example, she always brought some kinds of **medicines** so that whenever her students **got a cold**, **coughed** or something like **that**, she would give them the medicines immediately.

Above all, I was most influenced by the way she **taught us** in class. Her **thoroughness** in teaching inspired me to study Math, even though I had not been interested in the subject **before**. Thanks to her effective **teaching method**, I was able to pass the university entrance exam with a **high Math grade**. Besides, I was **also influenced** by her lifestyle, which was so **simple** and worthy of respect that I really wanted to copy her. As she is a **warm-hearted** person, she always gave us advice about any **problems** we faced. **At times**, I felt that she was like my friend who I could share everything with.

Although we have now all graduated from **high school**, my friends and I often **visit her** at the weekends to tell her about our daily life at university.

VOCABULARY

✓ **role model**: [noun phrase] a person that you admire and try to copy.

Example: Parents are usually the most important **role models** for a child.\

✓ **in her 50s:** [expression] between the ages of 50 and 59.

Example: My mother retired from her job as a teacher when she was **in her 50s.**

✓ **cared about:** [phrasal verb] felt that we were important and worth worrying about.

Example: Everybody had a good opinion of the hospital – the doctors and nurses really **cared about** the health of the patients.

✓ **thoroughness:** [noun] the quality of doing things very carefully and with great attention to detail.

Example: The report was perfectly organised and included every important detail, and I had to admire his **thoroughness.**

✓ **lifestyle:** [noun] the way in which a person or group of people live and work.

Example: When I moved to the countryside from Hanoi, I had to change my **lifestyle** completely.

✓ **warm-hearted:** [adjective] kind and generous

Example: He often gave money and chatted in the street to poor people that he knew – he was a very warm-hearted person.

16. Describe a television program that you like to watch.

You should say:

what program it is

what the program is about

how often you watch it

and explain why you like watching this program.

Describe a television program that <u>makes</u> you laugh.

You should say:

what program it is

how often you watch it

what it is about

and explain why you laugh at this program (= explain what is funny in this program).

ANSWER:

A TV program that I found really **funny** was an American show called **"How I met your mother"** which was broadcast every Sunday last summer.

It was a <u>sitcom</u> with **9 series**, each of which included about **24 <u>episodes</u>**. I watched all of the episodes and found them **<u>absolutely hilarious</u>**. The series followed **the main character**, Ted, who <u>recounted</u> to his son and daughter the time when **he met** and **got married to** their mother. The special thing was **this** - all the events Ted had experienced with his best friends **before** meeting his wife were illustrated in a highly amusing way. **For example**, in one

episode, Ted described his dates with a **girlfriend** whose name he **had forgotten**, so Ted and the other characters had to refer to her as **"Blah-blah"** all the time.

Because of the characters' **eccentric humor** and natural acting, this show made me laugh a lot. So, at present, whenever I feel stressed, **I replay** this series so that I can just put my feet up and have a good laugh.

VOCABULARY

✓ **sitcom:** [noun] a regular TV program that shows the same characters in different funny situations.

Example: In a good **sitcom**, all the characters who appear regularly make us laugh.

✓ **episodes:** [noun] parts of a story on TV or the radio which is broadcast in several parts.

Example: The sitcom finally ended after 200 **episodes**.

✓ **absolutely hilarious:** [adverb+adjective] extremely funny.

Example: At the party, he told me an **absolutely hilarious** story, and I couldn't stop laughing.

✓ **recounted:** [verb] told someone about something that you experienced.

Example: My father sometimes **recounted** to me stories of his time as a student.

✓ **dates:** [noun] aromantic meetings with a boy or girl.

Example: Although they had several **dates**, they decided to remain just good friends.

✓ **eccentric**: [adjective] considered by other people to be strange or unusual.

Example: A person who wears a suit to go to the beach would certainly be considered as **eccentric.**

✓ put my feet up: [expression] relax and do nothing

Example: After a hard day at work, I like to come home and **put my feet up** for an hour or two.

17. A Good Friend

Describe a good friend.

You should say:

- When and how you met
- What kind of personality he/she has
- What makes you like him/her

ANSWER:

I would like to describe my **best friend**, Huong, whom I have known for roughly **10 years**. I first met her at **primary school** when she was my classmate. **At first**, she was **quite shy** and did not want to talk with anyone, which made me feel that she was **a bit proud**. **However**, when we became **close friends**, she was more sociable and amiable.

We have done **a lot of things** together. Studying at **the same schools**, we have various **mutual friends**. So, we usually **throw parties** at the weekends or **have a picnic** together. **Besides**, whenever I get into trouble, I turn to her for help. For example, I **remember** when I got bad marks in the mock university entrance exam, she **consoled** me and then we **studied together** until the official exam took place. **Finally**, we had the opportunity to study at our favorite college.

At present, despite the fact that we have different **plans** and **goals** to pursue, I believe that we will be **best friends** for good and we will **try our best** to maintain this relationship.

VOCABULARY

✓ **roughly:** [adverb] approximately, but not exactly.

Example: In the exam, I wrote **roughly** 300 words for my essay.

✓ **close friends:** [expression] friends who know each other very well and like each other a lot.

Example: **Close friends** usually share the same interests and have no secrets from each other.

✓ **amiable:** [adjective] pleasant and easy to like

Example: Our form teacher is very **amiable** and we all enjoy the relaxed atmosphere in her classes.

✓ **mutual friends:** [expression] friends which are shared by two or more people.

Example: Although we had not met before, when we started chatting, we discovered that we had some **mutual friends.**

✓ **throw parties:** [expression] give parties.

Example: Some Hollywood film stars **throw parties** which hundreds of people attend.

✓ **consoled:** [verb] gave sympathy to someone who is unhappy.

Example: After the team lost the match, the coach **consoled** the players and told them that they had played well.

✓ **for good:** [expression] permanently

Example: I decided to leave New York **for good** and move to Europe.

✓ **try our best**: do as much as possible to achieve something

Example: Although we **tried our best**, we failed the exam.

18. Describe a good part of your personality or character.

You should say:
what it is
what this part of your personality or character is like
how it affects your life or work
and explain why you think it is good.

ANSWER

Well, I'm going to talk about a good aspect of my character. I'm kind of an ambitious person, even though I'm not sure if this personal trait is really beneficial for me in every situation. I think it helps me pretty well, not only in my studies but also in my own life, though.

Personally, I suppose it is quite good for young people to have this kind of personal trait, because it allows them to live and work more positively. I normally tend to set high goals and show strong determination to achieve them by all means, no matter what difficult situations I'm in. I mean, I do not like playing it safe. Instead, I like being challenged in general.

However, when you have too high expectations of something and you are not able to live up to them, you may feel under pressure and lose confidence in yourself. So you should be careful and be sure that your goals are realistic for you to pursue.

Up to now, I have found that my ambition has had more of a positive influence on me than a negative one. Because of my ambitious nature, I force myself to set clear targets, to be committed and to try my best to attain my goals, and all these things motivate me a lot to follow my plans with drive and energy. It's an amazing feeling of achievement on those occasions when my efforts are successful.

VOCABULARY

✓ aspect: [noun] a particular part or feature of something.

Example: Her impatience is one **aspect** of her character that I don't like.

✓ trait: [noun] a particular quality in your personality.

Example: The most notable **trait** of British people is their politeness.

✓ beneficial: [adjective] having a helpful or useful effect or result.

Example: A good diet and regular exercise are **beneficial** for your health.

✓ playing it safe: [expression] being careful and avoiding risks.

Example: When meeting strangers, I advise **playing it safe** – do not tell them too many details about your life.

✓ challenge: [verb] test someone's ability or skill, especially in an interesting way.

Example: In the IELTS exam, students are being **challenged** to show their English language skills.

✓ expectations: [noun] hopes that something good will happen.

Example: She went to college with great **expectations**.

✓ live up to: [phrasal verb] to do as well as you expect or hope.

Example: I did not enjoy the film – it did not **live up to** all the great reviews that I had read.

✓ under pressure: [expression] anxious about something which you have to do.

Example: The team is **under pressure** to win an important match tomorrow.

✓ pursue: [verb] do something or try to achieve something over a period of time.

Example: My brother wants to **pursue** his ambition to become an actor.

✓ attain: [verb] succeed in getting something, usually after a lot of effort.

Example: After many hours of climbing, they **attained** their goal of reaching the top of the mountain.

✓ motivate: [verb] make somebody want to do something, usually something which requires a lot of hard work or effort.

Example: The teacher **motivates** all her students to work hard and pass their exams.

✓ drive: [noun] energy and determination to achieve things.

Example: No sportsperson will succeed without a strong **drive** to be the best.

19. Describe a happy family event from your childhood.

You should say:

what the event was

where it happened

A happy family event that I still **remember clearly** from my childhood was making chung cake for Tet holiday at my grandparents' house.

what you saw and did: When I was small, our family would get together to make chung cake for Tet holiday. My grandparents had six children; therefore, I had many cousins. And the great thing was that my cousins and I **were around the same age**. At that time, we were too small to do anything, so **basically,** we played with each other while we watched the adults prepare the ingredients for the cake. Sometimes, we got to eat the **leftover food** after all the cakes were finished. Tet holiday was the only time of the year that we were allowed **to stay up late**, one reason why it is so **memorable**. Although the winter was cold, we all **felt cozy** inside; we had so much fun together.

and explain why you remember this event so well: Since my grandfather **passed away** a couple of years ago, we stopped our family tradition. In addition, some of my cousins had already gotten married and had their own families, and some had gone **to study abroad**. **Consequently**, it was very difficult for us to get together **like old times. Missing** this special family tradition makes it so **unforgettable** for me and I hope we can start doing it again in the future.

VOCABULARY

✓ **remember clearly** - to see something in your mind with detail from before, to remember something very well. "I remember very clearly where I was when J.F.K. was shot."

✓ **to be around the same age** - to describe when a group of people have similar ages - they are around the same age. In this context, the person and his cousins were young, so maybe they were between 4 and 7 years old. "All my classmates who went to the concert were around the same age."

✓ **basically** - used to indicate that a statement summarizes the most important aspects, or gives a roughly accurate account, of a more complex situation. "So basically, I am one of the best students in the class."

✓ **leftover food** - the food that remains after you have created something with certain ingredients and don't need any more of those ingredients or it is the food that is left over after everybody has already eaten what they wanted. "They said they'd eat the leftover food for lunch tomorrow."

✓ **to stay up late** - to stay awake past your normal bed time. In this context, the child was young and so staying up until later in the evening was special. "My son wants to stay up late every night during the summer."

✓ **memorable** - when something is easy to remember or when you actually remember it well. "Her wedding was a memorable event for all."

✓ **felt cozy** - to feel nice and warm and good inside. "It felt cozy to snuggle up to my lover in bed."

✓ **passed away** - to die. "My friend's husband passed away this evening. He had cancer."

✓ **to study abroad** - to go to a foreign country to study. "Many Chinese students are studying abroad these days."

✓ **Consequently** - as a consequence of, as a result of something. "My airplane arrived late last night. Consequently, I didn't make it to the meeting on time."

✓ **like old times** - used to describe when something happens like it used to, in the past. "They danced and danced, just like old times."

✓ **missing** (this event)- to miss something means that you wish it were happening still, but it isn't. In this context, he misses getting together with his family to make the special cakes. "I was missing our family dinners, now that all the kids were away at college."

✓ **unforgettable** - something that you can't forget. "The Taylor Swift concert was unforgettable."

20. Describe a time when someone apologized to you.

You should say:

who apologised to you

why they apologised

where it happened

and explain how you felt (or what you said) after this person apologised.

ANSWER:

On **Tuesday** last week, I was riding my motorbike to school. **Actually**, I was in a hurry; **otherwise**, I would have been late for the class. **Unfortunately**, there was heavy traffic congestion. In front of me there was just **a long stream** of cars and bikes. Therefore, I had no choice but to **slow down** and join the queue of vehicles.

Suddenly, a scooter hit me from behind, which made me **panic** and fall off my bike. I suffered **a few bruises** and a minor elbow injury. **A few seconds later**, the rider on the scooter **got off**, came up to me and **apologized** for his carelessness. He **also offered** to take me to **hospita**l for a checkup, but it was unnecessary as I was okay.

To be honest, at first, I was **very angry** with him for crashing into my motorbike, but his sincere concern calmed me down and **I decided** to accept his apology. Then, I continued on my way to school.

I realize that we can all make mistakes sometimes, but if we **make an apology**, almost everyone will forgive us. So, it is best to **own up** and **accept responsibility** for your mistakes.

VOCABULARY

✓ **heavy traffic congestion:** [expression] the state of being crowded and full of traffic.

Example: In an attempt to reduce **heavy traffic congestion** in the centre of London, motorists now have to pay to enter the city centre.

✓ **a long stream of:** [expression] a continuous flow of cars and bikes.

Example: **A long stream of** vehicles was waiting to cross the bridge, but they were moving slowly because of the traffic congestion.

✓ **slow down:** [phrasal verb] go at a slower speed.

Example: Near schools and hospitals, motorists should **slow down** in order to reduce the chances of an accident.

✓ **suffer:** [verb] experience something unpleasant, like an injury.

Example: During the meal, he **suffered** a heart attack and an ambulance took him to hospital.

✓ **bruises:** [noun] blue or brown marks that appear on your body after you have fallen or been hit.

Example: After the accident, he suffered some cuts and **bruises** as a result of falling on to the ground.

✓ **came up to me:** [phrasal verb] approached me.

Example: After the match, a journalist **came up to me** and asked my opinion about the result.

✓ **calmed me down**: [phrasal verb] made me less angry.

Example: I was angry with the boy and I wanted to hit him, but the teacher **calmed me down** by telling the boy to apologise for what he had done.

✓ on my way: [expression] going.

Example: I am **on my way** to the park – do you want to come?

✓ **own up:** [phrasal verb] admit that you are responsible for something bad or wrong.

Example: When the teacher collected our homework, I had to **own up** and explain that I had not finished it.

21. Describe a story or novel you have (recently) read that you found to be particularly interesting.

You should say:

what the plot of the story or novel was

who wrote it

why you read it

how much time it took to read it

and explain why you thought it was interesting.

ANSWER:

I would like to talk about my favorite classic novel called **The Godfather**, which is written by a well-known Italian author, **Mario Puzo**. I **came across** this novel when I was trying to find a dictionary at a bookstore. It was published in **hard-cover** version and there was a **colourful illustration** on the front which caught my eye.

At first, although I was not much impressed by the novel's **preview**, I **still bought it** and started to read the story right after getting home. Surprisingly, **the more I read** "The Godfather", **the more it appealed** to me. This novel told the story of an Italian **imaginary**

character named **Vito Corleone**, who was a **mafia boss** in **America** after World War I. What **attracted** me in this story was the way the author described Vito's **tricks** to **survive** in a chaotic society. Thanks to this novel, I **learned a lot** about the course of American history in that lawless period.

After **finishing** this book, I read some **more novels** by Mario Puzo and they were all **fascinating**. I realize that **reading books** is a good way to gain **knowledge**; therefore, **everyone** should get into the **habit** of reading.

VOCABULARY

✓ **classic:** [adjective] accepted as being one of the best or most important of its type.

Example: The story of Romeo and Juliet is a **classic** tale of love and revenge.

✓ **come across:** [phrasal verb] to meet or find somebody or something by chance.

Example: Yesterday, I **came across** some old photographs in a drawer.

✓ **hard-cover:** [adjective] with a stiff cover which does not bend.

Example: The **hard-cover** version of the book is expensive, so I am waiting for the paperback version to be published.

✓ **caught my eye:** [expression] attracted my attention.

Example: As I looked at the shop window, a dark blue jacket **caught my eye**.

✓ **right after:** [adverb] immediately after.

Example: Yesterday, I spoke to the teacher **right after** the class.

✓ **appeal to:** [phrasal verb] attract or interest someone.

Example: The company's new website is designed to **appeal to** people of all ages.

✓ **chaotic:** [adjective] confused and without any order.

Example: At busy times, the traffic situation is **chaotic** in New York.

✓ **lawless:** [adjective] where laws do not exist or are not obeyed.

Example: Chicago was known as a **lawless** city, controlled by gangsters and the mafia.

✓ **fascinating:** [adjective] very interesting.

Example: She has written a **fascinating** book about the history of crime in America.

✓ **get into the habit of**: [expression] do something regularly, so that you do it almost without thinking.

Example: My sister has **got into the habit of** turning on the TV when she arrives home.

22. Describe some local news that people in your locality interested in.

You should say:

what the news

how you know about this news

who involved in this news

and explain why it interesting to people.

ANSWER:

I came across this intriguing article in a **newspaper** I read at my **school's library**. It involved how **positive attitudes** have greatly affected people's success, based on the story of how a **local woman** had never given up her dream and had now become a **world-famous novelis**t.

According to the news story, **optimistic people** are more likely to be successful. Since they look at the **bright side**, their lives are always full of **enjoyment**. Therefore, when running into **problems,** optimists try their best to work out **solutions**. This leads them to great achievements. **In contrast**, pessimistic people tend to act **negatively**, which not only puts them under a lot of **strain**, but also has a bad impact on their **performance** and people around them.

Since I read this news, I have tried to maintain positive attitudes about everything. Whenever I fail **to do something**, I will not blame myself but work **harder** to overcome such failure. **I hope that**, like this woman, **everybody** can learn to be optimistic about **whatever situation** they face.

VOCABULARY

✓ **intriguing:** [adjective] very interesting, because the news was unusual.

Example: He told me an **intriguing** story about how a shark had once attacked him while he was swimming in the sea.

✓ **had never given up**: [phrasal verb] had never abandoned: she had always continued to believe in her dream.

Example: The police announced that – after 10 days – they **had** finally **given up** looking for survivors of the air crash.

✓ **world-famous**: [adjective] known all over the world

Example: McDonald's is a **world-famous** chain of fast-food restaurants.

✓ **novelist:** [noun] a person who writes novels – fictional stories.

Example: The author of the 'Harry Potter' books used to teach English, but now she is a world-famous **novelist.**

✓ **optimistic:** [adjective] expecting good things to happen or to be successful.

Example: He was **optimistic** about his chances of passing the exam, because he had studied hard.

✓ **look at/on the bright side:** [expression] to be cheerful about a bad situation, by thinking of the advantages – not the disadvantages.

Example: Although you have lost your keys, **look on the bright side** – your brother has a copy of all of them.

✓ **work out (solutions):** [phrasal verb] think of (solutions).

Example: Engineers **work out** solutions to many technical problems when they design new buildings.

✓ **pessimistic:** [adjective] expecting bad things to happen or expecting things to fail.

Example: The patient was very ill, and the doctors were **pessimistic** about his chances of recovering.

✓ **puts them under a lot of strain:** [expression] puts a lot of pressure on them, because they are worried about being able to solve a difficulty.

Example: The team have lost every match, so this **puts them under a lot of strain** when they have to face new opponents.

✓ **whatever:** any or every (situation)

Example: **Whatever** the situation about your travel visa, we will work out a solution together.

23. Describe the first time you used a foreign language to communicate.

You should say:

who you communicated with

what the situation was *

what you said (or wrote)

and explain how you felt during this experience.

ANSWER:

I have been learning English for **a long time**, but I haven't had many chances to practice speaking English **with native speakers**. To the best of my recollection, **the first time** I used it was on **Christmas Eve** three years ago.

At that time, I was hanging out with my friends. Suddenly, **a foreigner** came up to me and asked for directions to a supermarket. Honestly, he spoke **too quickly** for me to catch everything. But after **he repeated** his words, I finally understood and showed him the way to the nearest supermarket. I used **body language** a lot to explain the directions to him, since I

didn't speak English well then. **After that**, he said "**Thank you"** to me and headed for the supermarket.

I realize that **English** plays an important role in our life, **despite the fact** that we don't live in English-speaking countries. It is spoken **globally** and it's **becoming** the dominant language. Therefore, I have been trying to practice speaking English **daily** so that I can have a **good command** of this language, and I can talk **confidently** with foreigners, whatever the topic of conversation.

VOCABULARY

✓ **to the best of my recollection:** [expression] if I remember correctly.

Example: I was not present at that meeting, **to the best of my recollection**.

✓ **hanging out: [**phrasal verb] spending a lot of time in a particular place, but doing no special activity.

Example: My friends and I enjoy **hanging out** at our local coffee shop, just chatting and enjoying a coffee.

✓ **came up to:** [phrasal verb] approached.

Example: The manager **came up to me** and shook my hand.

✓ **catch everything:** [expression] hear or understand everything that he said.

Example: At the train station it was too noisy to hear all the information clearly, and I was unable to **catch everything.**

✓ **body language:** [noun] the way that you show what you feel or think by moving your body.

Example: Sometimes, our teacher uses **body language**, not words, to help to communicate an idea.

✓ **headed for:** [phrasal verb] moved in a particular direction.

Example: After the show finished, everyone **headed for** the exits.

✓ **have a good command of:** [expression] have a good knowledge of something.

Example: People who apply for this job must **have a good command of** English, in order to communicate with our American customers.

24. Describe an occasion when you helped someone.

You should say:

who you helped

how you helped them

where it happened

why you helped them

and explain how this person reacted to your help

or

and explain how you felt after helping this person.

ANSWER:

Yesterday, when walking to school, I came across a **pregnant woman**. She was holding **a baby** and carrying a lot of **plastic bags** containing fruit and vegetables. Those bags seemed to be **heavy**, which made it **difficult** for her to hold her child. **So**, I quickly **walked up to her** and offered to help her by carrying all of the bags.

At first, she was quite **suspicious** about my sudden appearance. Well, it is **understandable** to be **cautious** with strangers. **If I were her**, I would do the same. But **then,** she recognized the **school uniform** I was wearing. Therefore, she thanked me in advance and gave me **all of her plastic bags**, and I carried them to her house. **When we arrived**, she offered me a cup of tea and **even invited me** to stay for lunch, but I **politely declined** as I had to go back to school. **Otherwise**, I would have been late for classes.

To my mind, **doing a good deed** makes me feel more **comfortable** and **optimistic** about everything, so I hope that **everyone** will help each other regularly for the sake of our **mutual** well-being.

VOCABULARY

✓ **came across**: [phrasal verb] met her by accident.

Example: Last week, I **came across** an old school friend in the supermarket.

✓ **walked up to:** [phrasal verb] walked towards her, in a confident way.

Example: In the shop, I **walked up to** the manager and demanded my money back.

✓ **suspicious:** [adjective] she was unwilling to trust me, because I had appeared suddenly and she did not know me.

Example: Parents teach children to be **suspicious** of strangers who approach them in the street.

✓ **understandable:** [adjective] seeming normal and reasonable in a particular situation.

Example: Being nervous before an exam is perfectly **understandable.**

✓ **politely declined:** [adverb+verb] I refused in a polite way to accept her offer.

Example: I offered to give them a lift in my car, but they **politely declined.**

✓ **doing a good deed:** [expression] doing an action that is good.

Example: I enjoy **doing a good deed**, such as going to the shops, for my elderly neighbour.

✓ **our mutual well-being**: [expression] actions that benefit two or more people equally.

Example: We should always try to be honest and generous with others, for the sake of **our mutual well-being.**

25. Describe a useful app or computer program for a smart phone, computer or tablet that you have used.

You should say:

what the app is

how long/how often you have used it (or, been using it)

what you use it for

and explain why you think it is useful.

ANSWER

Well, developments in technology have been providing a lot of **smart applications** for users, which allows them to **access entertainment** and also to **work more effectively**. **One** of those apps that youngsters have been using more and more in their tablets and mobile phones is **definitely Camera 360**. And **I** am no exception. This application is all about **taking pictures** and **editing photos**.

I have been a big **fan** of this application since I started using my Iphone **5 years ago**. Like many **other** apps, the designer has kept **working on** it to incorporate more impressive effects so that it can compete with **any other** photo application.

My hobby is **taking photos** with my friends no matter what mood I′ m in, so I tend to use this particular app as my **favourite tool** to make changes to the pictures to make them look more **lively and interesting**. This is where **Camera 360** comes in handy.

What I **really** appreciate is that Camera 360 is full of **fun features** bringing many options with special filters, effects, themes and frames. I love how **easily** it can help my photos appear more **professional** than my original ones, although I′ m not really a photoshop **expert**. **Thanks** to this app, I am likely to be taking pictures more frequently now that I feel **extremely confident** about posting them on social networking sites.

VOCABULARY

✓ edit: [verb] make changes to text, data or images on a screen.

Example: **Editing** photos can make them appear much more professional by removing unwanted parts of the image.

✓ fan: [noun] a person who admires or enjoys watching or listening to someone/something.

Example: My son is a big football **fan** of Barcelona, and he watches all their games on TV.

✓ work on: [phrasal verb] try hard to improve something, or how something functions.

Example: She **works on** her yoga skills by practising the exercises every day.

✓ incorporate: [verb] include something, so that it then forms part of something.

Example: Many of your ideas have been **incorporated** into the project.

✓ impressive: [adjective] people or things that make you feel admiration, for some good quality that they have.

Example: The examiners agreed that she was very **impressive** during the speaking test.

✓ compete with: [phrasal verb] try to be better or more successful than someone who is trying to do the same thing as you.

Example: In the race, I had to **compete with** 5 other athletes to win the gold medal.

✓ mood: [noun] the way that you are feeling at a particular time.

Example: I'm not really in the **mood** to go to the party tonight.

✓ come in handy: [expression] be useful.

Example: Don't throw your revision notes away – they may **come in handy** for next year's course.

✓ fun features: [noun] entertaining characteristics or things about a particular object.

Example: My latest iphone comes with lots of fun **features** which keep me amused for hours.

✓ post: [verb] put information or pictures on a website.

Example: Her brother has just **posted** some photos on their holiday on Facebook.

26. Describe a garden you visited and like.

You should say:

Where the garden is.

How you felt about it.

Explain why you like it

ANSWER

I would like to share with you my **impressions** of a garden that I visited last summer, which was full of colour and interest: Claude Monet's house and garden in Giverny, France.

As a big **fan** of Monet's paintings, especially the famous „Water Lilies", I had always dreamed of seeing the scene in real life. So, when some friends suggested a visit last year, I **jumped at the chance.** After a journey of about an hour by train from our hotel, we arrived at Giverny. The garden was exactly as he had painted it – it was **a riot of colour**, from the peaceful white of the water lilies to the **striking** reds and oranges which filled some of the **flowerbeds**.

The two parts of the garden **complemented each other** perfectly. We first admired **the array of bright flowers** and fruit trees in the Clos Normand, but my favourite part was the water garden, and we enjoyed **a leisurely stroll**, **taking in all the colours**, perfumes and bird songs. Monet **avidly** collected prints of Japanese gardens, and these inspired the Japanese bridges covered with **wisterias**, the water lilies in the **pond**, and the **bamboo** and **weeping willows** which he planted.

For me, it was like a **wonderland** of colours and a dream come true after so many years.

VOCABULARY

✓ **impression:** feeling or feelings (in the plural) about the garden (impressions) "His impression of the meeting was that it didn"t go very well."

✓ **fan:** although the word is often used in the context of football nowadays, here it means a person who admires [Monet"s paintings].

"She is a huge fan of Maroon 5."

✓ **jumped at the chance**: I enthusiastically accepted the opportunity to visit the garden.

"He jumped at the chance to go to Las Vegas with his boss."

✓ **a riot of colour:** a collection of many different colours.

"Sandra"s rose garden is a riot of colour."

✓ **striking:** very attractive and unusual.

"The woman he was with was wearing a striking outfit last night."

✓ **flowerbeds:** a piece of a garden or park in which flowers are grown.

"He loves digging in his flowerbeds."

✓ **complemented each other:** each part of the garden added something different to the other part, so that the garden as a whole became more attractive.

"The wine and the fish complemented each other to form a perfect meal."

✓ **the array of bright flowers**: the large and impressive collection of flowers. "The array of

bright flowers in her garden surprised everybody. They didn‟t realize she had planted so many varieties.”

✓ **a leisurely stroll:** a slow, relaxing walk.

“We went for a leisurely stroll along the beach this morning.”

✓ **taking in all the colours:** our eyes noticed all the colours and features of the garden.

“We were taking in all the colours of his garden, when all of a sudden we heard a large crash outside the garden gate. Two cars had just bumped into each other.”

✓ **avidly:** Monet collected prints of Japanese gardens enthusiastically.

“He studied English avidly, from morning until late in the evening.”

✓ prints: copies of original drawings or paintings.

“The artist offered her prints for $100 each.”

✓ **wisterias:** white or purple flowers which cover walls, bridges or trees.

“The wisterias in the garden were in full bloom.”

✓ **pond:** a small area of still water, usually in a garden.

“There are many beautiful fish in the pond.”

✓ **bamboo:** tall tropical plants which have hollow stems‟ [the long, thin part of the plant] used for building or furniture.

“Pandas love to eat bamboo.”

✓ **weeping willows:** trees which grow near water and have „branches‟ which hang downwards.

“There are two weeping willows on the property, but we should cut one down.”

✓ **wonderland:** an imaginary place in children’s stories.

“The amusement park was a wonderland for both children and adults.

27. Describe an area of subject that you are interested in (such as physics, mathematics)

You should say:

What it is

When you started to become interested in it

What you have learned from it

And explain why you have interest in it

ANSWER

I'd like to describe a subject that I was particularly keen on when I was at school. It was History.

I have to admit that I didn't like History at first, as there were so many numbers, events and dates to remember that it used to take me hours to **learn** all of them **by heart** to be **well-prepared** for the exam. However, Mrs. Huong, my history teacher when i was at grade 10, **breathed new life into** this subject and it started to **grow on** me.

I've learned a lot from the subject. Apart from historical events which help me know what the world was like and how it worked, learning history has also brought me closer to the culture of my country. Above all, I think, History has taught me to appreciate the present while **drawing lessons** from the past.

Nevertheless, I wouldn't have been so much in love with this subject without my teacher, Mrs Huong. The way she **delivered** the lessons was so enthusiastic and **passionate** that it inspired me to catch her every word / absorb all information given by her, and somehow, I fell in love with History. Now, even though History is neither my **majo**r nor even taught at University, I still **have the habit of** reading historical books whenever having free time.

VOBULARY

✓ learn by heart (học thuộc lòng) [idiom]
to learn something so well that it can be written or recited without thinking
Example: There were well known definitions which we had to **learn by heart** and two of them have remained in my memory for nearly 60 years

✓ well-prepared (chuẩn bị tốt) [adj] suitably prepared in advance
Example: 17-18 year old school leavers should be **well-prepared** for work.

✓ breathe new life into (mang lại nguồn năng lượng mới, cuộc sống mới) [idiom]
bring ideas and energy (to something)
Example: Changes in the performance have **breathed new life into** a show that seemed ready to close.

✓ grow on sb (dần được ai đó yêu thích, chấp nhận) [v] become increasingly liked or appreciated
Example: At first the show seemed kind of weird, but it **grew on** us

✓ draw the lesson (from something) (rút ra bài học từ cái gì)[idiom] learn something from past mistakes

Example: After the loss in the previous game, the team **draw the lesson**.

✓ deliver(truyền đạt, truyền tải) [v] to express in word

Example: Whether students are captivated from the beginning or not depends much on the the way the lecture is **delivered**.

✓ passionate (đam mê, say mê) [adj] arising from passion

Example: She is a teacher who is **passionate** about her subject

✓ have the habit of (có thói quen làm gì) [idiom] do something usually or often

Example: I don't **have the habit of** getting involved in other people's arguments

28. A Sport You Have Learned

Describe a sport that you have learned.
You should say:
what sport it is
when you learned it
what you learned to do
and explain how you feel about this sport.

ANSWER:

Basketball is the sport which I have been interested in for a long time. Therefore, I have taken up this sport recently.

Basketball is played by **two** teams of **five** members on a rectangular court, where the players of each team try to **shoot the ball** through the rival's hoop. As far as **I know**, basketball is one of the **most popular** sports in the world. This is because of basketball's great benefits to our **health**, such as muscular development, height growth, and so on. Of course, it's also **fast-moving** and **exciting**.

Considering its **huge advantages**, I decided to take up this sport. **Actually**, I have been learning it for **three months** at a sport center. Here, I am taking the **beginner course** which provides me with **basic skills** to play basketball such as dribbling, jumping and shooting. Also, I have many opportunities to **practise** these skills with experienced basketball players, which helps to **improve** my game a lot.

As a **final point,** I would emphasize that in the near future, I **hope** that I will be able to play basketball **skillfully** to improve my **physical condition** and really enjoy the sport to the full.

VOCABULARY

✓ **take up:** [phrasal verb] learn or start to do something.

Example: I decided to **take up** a new hobby – jogging.

✓ **rival:** [noun] a person, team or company which competes with another in sport or business.

Example: Nike and Adidas are **rivals** in the sportswear business.

✓ **hoop:** [noun] the ring through which players throw the ball in basketball to score points.

Example: The best basketball players consistently shoot the ball through the **hoop**.

✓ **muscular development:** [expression] the process by which your muscles become stronger.

Example: He uses the equipment at the gym every day in order to increase his **muscular development.**

✓ **dribbling:** [gerund] a way of moving the ball with several short bounces on the basketball court.

Example: I practice running and bouncing the ball in order to improve my **dribbling** for basketball.

✓ **to the full:** [adverb] to the greatest possible degree.

Example: Staying fit and healthy helps us to enjoy life **to the full.**

29. Describe a wild animal

You should say:

What it looks like

Where you can see it

What it likes to eat or do

Why you like it

ANSWER

I would like to tell you about an opportunity that I met a white tiger which is one of the **star attractions** in Singapore Zoo during my last summer vacation.

I was recommended to see white tiger first due to its rarity and uncommon beauty. Its habitat is **landscaped** to **resemble** a dense jungle. I was truly attracted and felt excited at the first sight by its **gorgeous appearance.** This giant cat has blue eyes, pink nose, and creamy white fur covered with brown stripes.

In the wild, this animal's diet consists of monkeys, birds and other animals as it is a **carnivore**. It also prefers killing young, weak or old animals because they cannot run as fast and are often left alone by their herd. In the zoo, it is fed by animal's meat even including imported meat namely Kangaroo's meat.

At the beginning I felt scared a little bit because tigers are **well - known** for a dangerous species as well as the King of animals. However after encountering this white tiger, I changed my mind since it was very cute and friendly to human.

As tigers in general and white tigers in particular are **endangered species**, I suggest that people should **make a great effort** to preserve them.

VOCABULARY

✓ **Star attraction**: famous attraction

Ex: white tiger is one of the star attractions in Singapore Zoo

✓ **Landscape**: to change the appearance of an area of land, especially next to a building or road so that it looks more like natural countryside

Ex: Its habitat is landscaped to resemble a dense jungle

✓ **Resemble**: to look like or be like someone or something

Ex**:** After the earthquake, the city resembled a battlefield

✓ **Gorgeous:** very beautiful and attractive; giving pleasure and enjoyment

Ex: you look gorgeous!

✓ **Carnivore**: any animal that eats meat

Ex: lions and tigers are carnivores

✓ **Endangered species**: a type of animal or plant that might stop existing because there are only a few of that type alive

Ex: white tiger is an endangered species

✓ **Make a great effort**: the physical or mental energy that you need to do something; something that takes a lot of energy

Ex: You should **make a great effort to complete this assignment.**

30. Describe a time when you were very busy.

You should say:

When it was

What you had to do during that time

How you managed it

And explain how you felt about being busy.

ANSWER

Today I'm going to talk about a time when I was **extremely** busy. Well, that was when my husband went on a business trip to India, so he was **absent** from home for about **a fortnight**. I found myself totally **overloaded** with work then because I had to do a lot of things **on my own** during that time. For instance, I had to take the kids to school and **pick them up** to take them home in the evening, prepare the meals and **do the washing-up**. What's more, I still had to work for 8 hours as an accountant and could not leave the office until 5p.m. These things seemed to be impossible tasks for me.

So, I decided to seek help from my family and friends. I asked my mother to pick up the kids and **look after** them until I came back. Luckily it didn't matter to my mother. She always gave me **unconditional** love and help, and the kids were also happy to be with their grandmother. My friends introduced me to a part-time **home help** who was really nice and **trustworthy** to do the housework in the evening.

Thanks to that, in spite of being busy when my husband was away, I was not **exhausted** and everything went well. As the **saying** goes: "A friend in need is a friend indeed", experiencing that **hectic** time made me realise that, besides my family, there are so many friends around who are **willing to** help me, so I am not alone.

VOCABULARY

✓ **Extremely**: (adv) an intensifier, like very, highly, to a high degree or extent

Example: She behaved **extremely** badly.

✓ **Absent from** (adj):not in the place, not present

Example: I was **absent** from work yesterday, because I had to see my doctor.

✓ **A fortnight** (noun) two weeks.

Example: We will spend **a fortnight** in Thailand next month.

✓ **Overloaded with work**: having an excessive amount of work, the amount of work to be done is too heavy

Example: He complained that he was **overloaded** with work because his boss had given him a lot of extra jobs to do.

✓ **On my own**: alone, by myself, without any help or support

Example: She lives alone, so she always has to do many things **on her own**.

✓ **Pick them up (home):** take somebody home after work or school

Example: Can you pick me up at 6? Because I leave work at 6 and have no motorbike.

✓ **Do the washing-up:** to wash, clean the dishes, saucepans, knives, or anything related to the meal preparation.

Example: After a very delicious dinner, she helped her mother to **do the washing-up**.

✓ **Look after:** to keep an eye on something/somebody, pay attention to somebody/something with care

Example: She asked her husband to **look after** the kids in the garden.

✓ **Unconditional** (adj)/: without condition, not limited by condition. Unconditional love means that you will love someone no matter what he does, or no matter what happens, your love will continue.

Example: The mother's love for her child is **unconditional**.

✓ **Home help** (noun) a person whose job it is to help with housework.

Example: When I started to work full-time, I employed a **home help** to keep the house clean and tidy.

✓ **Trustworthy** (adj): reliable, honest. A trustworthy person is someone you can trust , and who never tells lies.

Example: My assistant is a **trustworthy** person and so he looks after my business when I am away.

✓ **Exhausted** (adj) extremely tired, having no energy or strength to do something

Example: Because he had worked without a break for 12 hours, he was finally **exhausted**.

31. Describe a new skill you would like to learn.

You should say:

what skill (= what you would like to learn to do)

where you would learn it (or, where you think would be the best place to learn it)

how difficult you think it would be

and explain why you would like to learn this skill.

ANSWER:

I′ d like to talk about a new skill that I want to learn. I′ m the kind of adventurous person who enjoys the challenge of learning new things, whether it is a new sport or a skill that would be useful to me.

I would like to have the skills to set up my own website. Probably the best place to learn to do this would be online, using a distance-learning course run by a university, which I could take free of charge. I wouldn′ t need to travel and I could complete the course at my own pace in my spare time.

Although there would be a lot to learn, I already use computers all the time, so I think that I could pick up the basics quite quickly. With practice, I would become more creative and able to incorporate new features on my website.

Of course, I imagine that I would find the course interesting, but I have a practical reason for wanting to master this skill. I have recently started my own company, selling sports goods, so it would be a really cost-effective and attractive way to advertise my products.

VOCABULARY

✓ adventurous: [adjective] willing to take risks and try new ideas.

Example: My friend is very **adventurous** and she loves to try the local cuisine when we travel to other countries.

✓ challenge: [noun] a new or difficult task that tests someone's ability or skill.

Example: It will be a big **challenge** to pass my final exams.

✓ set up: [phrasal verb] create or start something.

Example: The government has **set up** a new clinic in the city centre.

✓ distance learning: [noun] a system of education where people study at home with the help of special Internet sites, and e-mail work to their teachers.

Example: Although he lives in the countryside, he is able to take a **distance learning** course to qualify as an engineer.

✓ at my own pace: [expression] at the speed which is best for me.

Example: She prefers to study alone, so that she can work **at her own pace.**

✓ pick up: [phrasal verb] get information or a skill quite easily, without too much work.

Example: I **picked up** a lot of English during my visit to New York.

✓ creative: [adjective] able to use skill and imagination to produce something new.

Example: The advertising company employs a **creative** team to think of new ideas and designs.

✓ incorporate: [verb] to include something, so that it then forms part of something else.

Example: The teacher **incorporates** music into his English lessons, to make them more enjoyable.

✓ master: [verb] learn or understanding something completely.

Example: I was never able to **master** the French language when I was at school.

✓ cost-effective: [adjective] giving the best possible results for the money and time spent on something.

Example: Using more security cameras in public places is a **cost-effective** way to reduce crime.

✓ attractive: [adjective] having features or qualities that make something seem interesting or pleasant.

Example: My flat is opposite some **attractive** gardens, which are full of trees and flowers.

32. Describe a short holiday (vacation) that was special for you.

You should say:

where you went

who you spent time with

what you did

and explain why it was special for you.

ANSWER:

I would like to talk about my recent holiday in **Thailand** with my **best friend** last summer, which was **really memorable** for us. Although this trip only lasted for **4 days**, it involved a lot of planning ahead.

To be honest, travelling to Thailand can be quite **costly** and, due to financial constraints, we started **saving up** for our holiday. We booked **the plane tickets** a month ahead to get a

couple of **cheaper** ones. Because we definitely did **not want** to use a **travel agent** or book a **package tour**, we had to search for a lot of information **online** to organize our own journey. **Throughout the trip,** there were a lot of interesting things that we had a chance to experience together. We visited some well-known **tourist attractions** in Thailand, which allowed us to discover **a new culture** and **traditional customs** there. What we really enjoyed was **Thai cuisine**. Despite the fact that we did not like food that is **too spicy**, the variety of **Thai street dishes** tempted us to try them. We also stopped by open **markets at night** to buy clothing and souvenirs for our families back home.

I think travelling is really **the best way** to practice relaxation. It dawned on me that we had been very **caught up in study** during the year, and so this trip helped us to **get away from it all**, **leave our worries behind** and enjoy ourselves.

VOCABULARY

✓ memorable: [adjective] something special, good or unusual that we will remember for a long time.

Example: My first visit to New York was the most **memorable** trip of my life.

✓ costly: [adjective] expensive

Example: A new car would be too **costly** for me, so I decided to look for a used car.

✓ financial constraints: [noun] a lack of money that restricts your freedom to buy or do something.

Example: The economic crisis will impose serious **financial constraints** on the spending on schools this year.

✓ save up: [phrasal verb] to keep money, not spend it, to buy a particular thing.

Example: I'm **saving up** for a new TV.

✓ book: [verb] to buy or reserve something in advance.

Example: She has **booked** her IELTS exam in October.

✓ travel agent: [noun] a person or business that makes holiday or travel arrangements for people, like booking a flight or hotel room.

Example: A **travel agent** can often give good advice when you explain the type of holiday that you want.

✓ package tour: [noun] a holiday in which everything is organized by the travel company at a fixed price and includes flights, hotels and any extras, such as hiring a car.

Example: **Package tours** are popular with people who don't have much time to organize their holiday themselves.

✓ cuisine: [noun] a style of cooking.

Example: Tourists who visit Italy usually enjoy the Italian **cuisine.**

✓ spicy: [adjective] having a hot, strong taste because spices have been used to make it.

Example: I like Indian cuisine, but I prefer the dishes that are not too **spicy.**

✓ tempt: [verb] attract somebody to have or to do something.

Example: The delicious smell of Thai meals **tempted** him to try some dishes.

✓ back home: [expression] in the town or country that you came from.

Example: She often thinks of her friends **back home** in Vietnam.

✓ dawn on: [phrasal verb] if something dawns on you, you realize it for the first time.

Example: It **dawned on** me that I had not replied to his e-mail.

✓ caught up: [phrasal verb] to become involved in something.

Example: We were very **caught up** in our studies last year, often studying until late at night.

✓ get away from it all: [expression] to have a holiday in a place where you can relax.

Example: I like to go camping in the countryside, to **get away from it all** and enjoy being alone.

✓ worries: [noun] things that cause you to worry or to be stressed.

Example: After he had passed the exam, all his **worries** disappeared.

33. Describe an activity you do for your health or fitness.

You should say:

what you do

how often you do it

where you do it

and explain how you think this activity helps you stay healthy or fit.

ANSWER

Staying in good shape is everyone's concern and I am no exception. To be honest, I have been **so caught up** in my study since I entered **university** that I have a problem in **organizing my daily routine**. However, I have been participating in **a yoga class** for **about 2 years**, which takes me only 1 hour a day, to try to lead a **healthy lifestyle**.

Unlike dancing or running, yoga definitely involves **stretching actions**. You might look at **yoga** and think that it is light and easy but it is more **demanding** than it appears. Yoga allows me to work on **all the parts of my body**. It can burn a lot of calories in **just one hour** of training. Also, it enhances my **flexibility** and **suppleness** in every single movement.

What I **enjoy the most** about yoga is meditation. It is all about **regulating your breathing** and helping you take things off your mind easily. Another thing is that **doing yoga** is supposed to be good for curing headaches and digestion-related problems, so it benefits not only **physical well-being** but also **mental health**.

By maintaining a schedule of taking part in the yoga class on a daily basis, I feel **extremely relaxed** and **full of energy** after the class. It helps me to **keep fit** and **refresh my mind** after a long stressful day. And **of course**, I don't see myself stopping practicing this activity any time soon.

VOCABULARY

✓ in good shape: [expression] the good physical condition of someone.

Example: For a man of his age, he is **in good shape.**

✓ caught up: [phrasal verb] completely involved in something.

Example: He was so **caught up** in the TV program, that he forgot to do his homework.

✓ stretching actions: [noun] actions which make your muscles stronger by exercises in which you extend your arms and legs.

Example: When I get up in the morning, I do some **stretching actions** to exercise the muscles in my arms.

✓ demanding: [adjective] needing a lot of effort.

Example: The work of a farmer is physically very **demanding.**

✓ work on: [phrasal verb] try hard to improve something, or how something functions.

Example: She **works on** her yoga skills by practising the exercises every day.

✓ burn a lot of calories: [expression] use up a lot of energy [that comes from the food we eat].

Example: One reason why people do exercise is to **burn a lot of calories** and lose weight.

✓ flexibility: [noun] the ability to move and bend your body easily.

Example: Regular exercise helps older people to maintain their **flexibility**, especially by stretching their muscles.

✓ suppleness: [noun] the ability to move and bend your body into different positions – it is a synonym for flexibility.

Example: Different yoga movements develop **suppleness** in different muscles.

✓ meditation: [noun] thinking deeply in silence, to make you feel calm.

Example: To help you to relax, try **meditation** after a stressful day at work.

✓ regulating your breathing: [expression] controlling the way in which you breathe in and out.

Example: An important part of learning how to swim is **regulating your breathing.**

✓ take things off your mind: [expression] forget things which are causing you anxiety or stress.

Example: After an exam, I usually have a short holiday, to **take things off my mind** and enjoy myself.

✓ cure: [verb] make an illness go away.

Example: The website advertises a new drug for **curing** AIDS.

✓ digestion: [noun] the process of changing the food you eat into substances that the body can use.

Example: Unlike cows or horses, the **digestion** of grass is impossible for humans.

✓ well-being: [noun] general health and happiness.

Example: The company tries to ensure the **well-being** of its employees by providing good working conditions.

✓ schedule: [noun] a plan that lists all the things that you have to do and when you must do them.

Example: For the next few days, I have a busy **schedule**, which includes my yoga class each morning.

✓ I don't see myself stopping: [expression] I don't think that I will stop.

Example: **I don't see myself stopping** working in the next 10 years because I have to support my family.

✓ any time soon: [expression] in the near future, soon.

Example: I should receive the exam results **any time soon** – perhaps tomorrow.

34. Describe an antique or some other old thing that your family has kept for a long time.

You should say:

what it is

how (or when) your family first got this thing

how long your family has kept it

and explain why this thing is important to your family.

ANSWER:

Today, I am going to share with you an old possession that my family has kept for a long time. It is an antique terra-cotta dish, which is displayed in an honoured position in the living room.

This old dish originated from feudal times in Vietnam, although I am not sure of the year exactly. It might have belonged to the Nguyen Dynasty. It is made from pottery material with some small artificial fissures, and it was my grandfather's favourite thing when he was still alive. There is a village picture painted in blue in the centre of the dish.

When I was a child, my grandfather used to tell me the story of this dish. His close friend gave it to him to celebrate his house-warming in the past. They had been companions in arms for a long time, so that was the reason why he really treasured their ties and that gift as a reminder of their friendship.

There is a lot of other modern furniture arranged in my house nowadays, however, this antique object is still a treasured possession for each member of my family. We have kept this antique dish for over 30 years, even when my grandpa passed away and left it for my family. Whenever I look at this dish, it always reminds me of my grandfather as a fond memento.

Vocabulary:

possession: [noun] something that you own.

Example: When leaving the plane, please make sure that you have all your **possessions** with you.

antique: [adjective] old and often valuable

Example: I have an **antique** table in my living room which is about 200 years old.

terracotta: [noun] material of a red-brown colour, used to make pots.

Example: My mother still cooks using traditional **terracotta** pots.

honoured: [adjective] very respected, showing respect for something.

Example: The President was an **honoured** guest at the ceremony.

feudal: [adjective] describing a time in the past when given land and protection by a rich person, and had to work and fight for him in return.
Example: Life in **feudal** times in Vietnam was very hard for poor people who worked on the land.

dynasty: [noun] a series of rulers of a country who all belong to the same family.
Example: Pottery from the time of the Ming **Dynasty** in China is very valuable.

pottery: [noun] pots or dishes, usually made by hand from a type of earth called clay and made hard by baking in an oven.
Example: I learned to make traditional dishes by hand by going to a **pottery** class.

fissures: [noun] long cracks in something.
Example: The rocks had many **fissures**, some of which were very deep.

house-warming: [noun] a party given by someone who has moved into a new house.
Example: My new neighbours invited our family to their house-warming party.

companions-in-arms: [noun] people who have been soldiers, fighting together.
Example: My two uncles were **companions-in-arms** during World War 2.

treasure: [verb] to have or keep something that you love and is very valuable to you.
Example: Thank you for your gift. I will always **treasure** it.

ties: [noun] strong connections between people, especially friendships or family relationships.
Example: She continues to have close **ties** with her old school friends, and she often visits or calls them.

fond: [adjective] kind, happy and loving [when used before a noun].
Example: I have **fond** memories of my years in London.

memento: [noun] a thing that you have which reminds you of a person or place.
Example: We returned home with some **mementos** of our holiday in China.

35. Describe a time when you made a mistake.

You should say:
where you were
what you were doing
what mistake you made
and explain what was the result of your mistake.

ANSWER

Today, I am going to share with you a time when I made a mistake. This situation happened last year when I had to attend a final exam for my business management qualification.

The test required candidates to use a calculator because the exam involved doing a lot of calculations. I was sure that putting the calculator into my bag was the first thing I had done in the morning. As it turned out, I had not. I realized that I would definitely not pass if I was not be able to borrow a calculator immediately.

I really did not want to put myself at risk of delaying my graduation plan, because I had devoted a lot of valuable time to this subject, and had even paid money for the upcoming semester. In panic, I figured out that I had to ask for help. I decided to make a call to one of my classmates living in the dormitory to borrow her calculator.

Unfortunately, she was not in Hanoi at that time. As a result, I had to manage without a calculator to deal with this difficult situation. Although I scraped by in the exam, I failed to get a high mark. It was an extremely valuable lesson for me. I learnt the hard way that I need to be more careful and well-prepared for the important things in my life.

Vocabulary:
calculator: [noun] a small electronic device for dealing with numbers.
Example: As my course is based on mathematics, I always carry a pocket **calculator** with me.

turn out: [phrasal verb] to be discovered [for example, in a particular situation].
Example: The hotel room, as it **turned out**, was facing a busy road.

devote to: [phrasal verb] give an amount of time or attention to something.
Example: I **devote** two hours every evening **to** doing my homework.

upcoming: [adjective] going to happen soon.
Example: Who do you think will win the **upcoming** US Presidential election?

figure out: [phrasal verb] think about something until you understand it.
Example: I couldn't **figure out** how to install the software, so I asked my best friend for advice.

dormitory: [noun] a room for several people to sleep, especially in a school, college or other institution.
Example: He shares a **dormitory** with 4 other students, but he would prefer to have his own private room.

manage: [verb] succeed in doing something difficult.
Example: Despite all the traffic on the roads, we **managed** to arrive at the airport on time.

scrape by: [phrasal verb] to succeed in doing something, but with difficulty.
Example: He is happy that he **scraped by** in the exam, because he did not do any revision.

learn the hard way: [expression] learn something by experience – usually in an unpleasant way.
Example: Since I fell off my motorbike last year and hurt my head, I have **learnt the hard way** that I should always wear a helmet.

36. Describe a time when the weather caused you to change your plan.

You should say:
when it happened
what happened

how you changed your plan

ANSWER:

Last month, I was going to **have a picnic** with my friends at a **camping site** on the outskirts of the city. **Unfortunately**, due to bad weather, we had to **cancel our plan**.

In fact, we planned to have a picnic to **refresh ourselves** and to **relax** after the final term examination. Everything needed such as food, drinks and **even a change of clothes** was well-prepared. I was **so excited** about this trip that I couldn't sleep, and ended up **chatting with my friends** all night. **However**, on the next day, it was raining heavily, **despite the fact** that the weather was forecast to be nice and warm. As a result, we made a decision **to put off** our plans.

Instead, we threw a party at my friend's house. We made **some favorite dishes** together, and then **played cards**. **The ones who lost** had to buy snacks for all of us. **Surprisingly**, we soon forgot all about our misfortune over the picnic. **By the way,** we enjoyed this party **a lot,** it helped us to **chill out** and get ready for **the new term**.

VOCABULARY

✓ **a change of clothes:** [expression] an extra set of clothes.

Example: In case it rained, we took **a change of clothes** so that we would have some dry things to wear.

✓ **ended up:** [phrasal verb] found myself in a situation that I had not expected to be in.

Example: After I was hit by a car, I **ended up** in hospital for three months.

✓ **put off:** [phrasal verb] cancel a meeting or arrangement.

Example: Plans to open the new supermarket have been **put off** until next month.

✓ **threw a party**: [expression] organized a party.

Example: We **threw a party** when my sister came to visit us from Australia.

✓ **forgot all about:** [expression] forgot completely.

Example: He enjoyed the concert so much that he **forgot all about** his problems at work.

✓ **chill out:** [phrasal verb] spend time relaxing and forgetting your worries.

Example: On holiday, I like to **chill out** on the beach and enjoy the fresh air.

38, 39. Describe a situation (or time) when you received some useful advice./Describe an important conversation that you had with someone.

Describe a situation (or time) when you received some useful advice

You should say:
what the situation was
who gave you the advice
what the advice was
and explain how this advice was useful to you.

Describe an important conversation that you had with someone.

You should say:
when you had this conversation
who you had the conversation with
what the conversation was about
and explain how this conversation influenced you.

ANSWER:

- It was 5 years ago when I was in my junior year of college, I was struggling to find out what **career** would I follow in the future. As juniors, we had to choose courses **related to** our business concentration such as marketing, finance, human resources or management. At that moment, I was confused since I did not specifically like any of them.

- As the **deadline closely approached**, I had to quickly make my decision. I decided to talk with my father, a wise man, about my problem. Different from many other parents who always make decisions for their children; my father **guides me** to the answer and lets me choose what I want.

- He asked me what I would like my life to be like when I graduated, then **analyzed my personality**, discussed my strengths and weaknesses. He also showed me some career paths I could follow if I chose certain options.

- After an hour of talking to him, everything had become clearer and I finally made my decision to follow a career in finance. Thanks to the conversation that day, I understood more about myself. Five years have passed, I am now a financial analyst for an entertainment company and I have never **regretted** my decision.

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VOCABULARY:

✓ **career:** your profession, the type of employment you will likely have for a long period of your life or perhaps your entire life; "She was happy to have chosen a career that suited her personality perfectly."

✓ **related to:** having to do with, having an association with; in this context the student needs to take courses that are related to business; "She is tired of taking courses related to her major; now she just wants to take classes for fun."

✓ **deadline:** a time when something is due, when it has to be done; "I am hoping that we will finish this project by our deadline."

✓ **closely approach:** to get closer and closer to a certain point or destination in a short amount of time; when something is closely approaching it means you are very near to that time; "The baby's due date is closely approaching and we still aren't prepared."

✓ **guides me:** to guide is to help someone by showing them a way or by giving specific information or assistance without actually doing the task for them; "The teacher guides us in how to learn proper study techniques."

✓ **analyzed my personality**: to examine, assess or evaluate your personality from different points of view; you can take a personality test like the Meyers-Briggs to help see your patterns and propensities; "My mother is a psychologist and she loves to analyze people's personalities to see what makes them tick."

✓ **regret:** to feel sad, repentant, or disappointed over (something that has happened or been done, especially a loss or missed opportunity). "He regretted not having attended college sooner."

40, 41. Describe a street that you like to visit./Describe what you would do if you had a day off, free from work or study.

Describe a street that you like to visit

You should say:
where is it
how often you go there
what you usually do there
and explain why you like to go there

Describe what you would do if you had a day off, free from work or study.

You should say:
where you would go
what you would do there
who you would go with
and explain how you think you would feel at the end of this day.

As a full time employee/student, I don't have much free time. As a result, whenever I have a day off, I visit my favorite street in the city. The name of the street is Hoang Dieu. It is located near Ho Chi Minh Mausoleum and it is the place where I would always choose to go.

I usually go there in the morning, park my **moped** in the nearby parking lot and walk along the street by myself. Although I am quite a **sociable** person, I like **my own space** from time to time. Living in a **metropolitan** area with a **fast-paced** life doesn't allow me to have time for myself that often. This is probably the only time I can escape from my normal routine, completely free and just breathe, without worrying about my job/my studies.

This street is perfect for my purpose because there are only government offices around here, hence it is always quiet. Moreover, both side of the streets are planted with many big trees, their **shade**_covers the whole street. On a sunny day, you can see the sun's **rays** shining through the leaves.

Every time I come here I feel fresh and less stressed, especially after my busy days at work/ preparing for exams. At the end of the day, I can **refresh** my mind and be ready for a new day.

VOCABULARY

✓ **moped:** [noun] a motorcycle with a small engine and also pedals.

Example: I sometimes use the engine on my **moped**, but more often I use the pedals, like a bicycle.

✓ **sociable:** [adjective] a sociable person is someone who enjoys spending time with other people.

Example: she's a **sociable** child who will talk to anyone.

✓ **my own space**: my freedom and time to think and do what I want.

Example: he was tired of being with other people, so he went to his room to get some **space.**

✓ **metropolitan:** [adjective] connected with a large city.

Example: my brother lives in the New York **metropolitan** area.

✓ **fast-paced:** [adjective] very busy

Example: my university course is very **fast-paced**, so it is difficult to complete all my assignments on time.

✓ **shade:** [noun] an area that is **dark and cool** under or behind something [like a tree], where the light of the sun does not reach it.

Example: We sat down in the **shade** of the wall.

✓ **rays:** [noun] narrow lines of light.

Example: The **rays** of the sun entered my window when the sun rose early in the morning.

✓ **refresh:** [verb] to **refresh** somebody is to make them less tired or less hot.

Example: A cool shower **refreshed** me after running in the park.

42, 43. Describe a person you were friendly to, although you did not really like them (him or her)/Describe an experience you had as a member of a team.

Describe a person you were friendly to, although you did not really like them (him or her)

You should say:

who this person was -> I'm going to talk about .....

when and where it happened

what the situation was

why you didn't like this person -> there are some reasons why.... Firstly, ...secondly, ...

and explain why you were (or had to be) friendly to this person

and explain what the results were after you were friendly to this person

Describe an experience you had as a member of a team.

You should say:

where it was

who were the members of the team

what you did together in this team

and explain why you became a member of this team or explain what the purpose of the team was

ANSWER

I would like to describe a person who I had to be friendly to, although I did not really like her. I think this situation is quite common in our lives, especially when we have to act as part of a team.

A couple of months ago, I was assigned to a team at my workplace in order to tackle a big project. As part of the team, I had to cooperate closely with this person. However, we had never really liked each other for several reasons. Firstly, she is much older than I am, so she always thinks she is right and **disregards** the opinions of others. I would describe her as both **bossy** and **officious**, although she did not have a more senior position than I did in the company. Secondly, I considered her **irresponsible** because she did not appear to me to pay serious attention to the project. So, although it was **supposedly** a group project, I ended up working all on my own as much as possible in order to see the task through.

As the work was vital for our company, we had to be successful. I therefore had no choice except to collaborate with her in order to finish the job. I would rather have done all the work alone, but if I had refused to work with her as part of the team, then the evaluation of my job performance would have been affected at the **end of** the year. So, knowing her personality as I did, I swallowed my pride and tried to be patient.

Despite our many arguments, we completed the task on time. I learned that sometimes people can work together, even though they don't get on with each other. It just needs a little bit of time and patience to work things out, and each person has to compromise to achieve a common goal.

VOCABULARY

✓ **disregard** = to pay no attention to something or someone.

✓ **bossy =** a bossy person is someone who is always telling other people what to do.

✓ **officious** = an officious person is someone who uses their authority or position to give orders to others - another word would be domineering.

✓ **irresponsible** = an irresponsible person has no feeling of responsibility for something.

✓ **supposedly** = according to what most people think.

✓ **end up** = to find yourself in a situation that you did not expect to be in.

✓ **on my own** = alone.

✓ **see.....through** = if we see something through, we do not give up until it is finished.

✓ **collaborate** = to work together with others to achieve something.

✓ **swallowed my pride** = to hide my feelings, even though I wanted to express what I was thinking.

✓ **get on with** = to get on with someone is to have a friendly relationship with them.

✓ **work things out** = to find a solution.

✓ **compromise** = to give up some of your ideas in order to come to an agreement with someone.

44. Describe an outdoor activity you like to do

You should say:

What it is

Where you like to do it

How you do it

And explain why you like to do it

ANSWER

My favorite outdoor activity is jogging. It's a kind of running **at a slow or leisurely pace** that helps to **build up** your **physical fitness**.

I much prefer to go jogging in open spaces like parks or lakesides. There, you can enjoy fresh air and watch people doing **various** types of physical activity such as running, aerobic exercises, playing badminton, and so on.

I normally go jogging in the morning with my close friend either at weekends, or in the afternoon, after a tiring schoolday. We often chat together while we're jogging, sharing with each other stories about school or sometimes discussing **stuff** that is **going viral** on the Internet.

I love jogging because it's **beneficial** to our health, that **goes without saying**, and it does not **require** as much **stamina** as fast running . Moreover, unlike other forms of exercise, jogging is quite easy to do and it allows me to watch people and things as I pass by. I think it's really relaxing and inspiring to see the world around us, watching everyone keeping active **doing their own thing** and feeling part of it all when I'm out jogging.

VOCABULARY

✓ at a slow /leisurely pace (với nhịp độ chậm rãi) [expression] at a slow speed/ unhurriedly

Example: You can even read **at a leisurely pace**, as these books have no due dates and can be returned at any time.

✓ build up [phrasal verb] make somebody stronger and fitter

Example: I am training to **build up** my fitness for the race.

✓ physical fitness (thể chất) [n] general state of health and well-being

Example: Researchers have suggested that **physical fitness** may play a key role in improving the brain health and academic performance of youngsters.

✓ various (nhiều)[a] many/ several different

Example: She spoke to **various** members of the club.

✓ stuff [n] items or products in general – informal – without specifying what they are

Example: The shop sells i-pads, laptops and **stuff** like that.

✓ go viral (lan truyền) [idiom] spread quickly and widely among Internet users

Example: "Gangnam Style" is a video that **went viral** several years ago, even though most of us don't understand a word of it.

✓ beneficial(có lợi)[a] helpful, useful

Example: The improvement in sales figure had a **beneficial** influence on the company as a whole.

✓ goes without saying(không cần phải nói) [idiom] be generally accepted or understood

Example: It **goes without saying** that you will improve your skills with practice.

✓ require (yêu cầu)[v] need (something)

Example: Skiing at 80 miles per hour **requires** total concentration.

✓ stamina [n] physical or mental strength that enables you to do something difficult for a long period of time

Example: You need a lot of **stamina** to run a marathon.

✓ doing their own thing [expression] following their own interests, without worrying about what other people think

Example: When young people leave home to live abroad, they enjoy **doing their own thing**, because they have more freedom to follow their interests.

45. Describe an advertisement you have seen.

You should say:

What the advertisement is

What it is for

And explain how you think about it.

ANSWER:

Well, I'd like to talk about a mooncake **commercial** that I saw yesterday during dinner. It made me feel quite **homesick.**

As you may know, the Mid-Autumn Festival is coming and this time is my favourite time of the year. One interesting thing I found is that most of the ads for this traditional festival are so **touching** and meaningful. Of course, the ad I mentioned is no exception. It starts with the image of a little girl **missing** her dad, who's in the army now and has been far from home for a long time. On the Mid-Autumn day, while all of her family members, except her father, are gathering around the five-fruit tray, celebrating the festival, she looks so sad **hugging** the Teddy Bear he gave her last year. Suddenly, the door opens and her dad comes in with a mooncake box, she **bursts into tears**, then he holds her tightly in his arms. At the end of the ad, the whole family is enjoying mooncakes happily together.

The meaning of the Mid-Autumn festival is for family members to gather**,** encouraging **affection** for children and expressing **gratitude** to the older generation, so for me, this advertisement successfully **conveyed** the message of family **reunion**. As I now live far from my family, it made me want to come back home right away and enjoy the taste of my favourite mooncakes with my parents. Actually when I saw the ad, my eyes filled with tears too, just like the little girl. Normally, I don't really like watching ads on TV, but if all the commercials can be that meaningful, maybe I'll change my habit.

VOCABULARY

✓ commercial (Quảng cáo) [n] an advertisement on the radio or TV

Example: They're looking for actors for a phone **commercial**.

✓ homesick [n] sad because you are away from your home and family

Example: After spending a month in the USA, I felt **homesick** for Vietnam.

✓ touching (Cảm động) [adj] making you feel sympathy or pity

Example: It was a **touching** story, which moved many of us to tears.

✓ miss [v] feel sad because you can no longer see somebody

Example: When I first went to university, I **missed** my sisters a lot.

✓ hug [v] put your arms around somebody and hold them tightly

Example: Before I got on the train, I said goodbye to my parents and I **hugged** them for a few moments.

✓ burst into tears (Òa khóc) [expression] begin to cry suddenly

Example: The children **burst into tears** on hearing about the death of their dog.

✓ affection (Tình cảm, cảm xúc) [n] the feeling of liking/loving somebody very much and caring about them

Example: Children need lots of love and **affection**.

✓ gratitude (Sự biết ơn) [n] the feeling of being grateful and wanting to express your thanks

Example: The boss expressed his **gratitude** to all the staff for their hard work during the year.

✓ convey (Truyền) [v] to make ideas or feelings known to somebody

Example: I will be late for the appointment, so please **convey** my apologies to the customer.

✓ reunion (Đoàn tụ, sum họp) [n] the act of people coming together, after they have been apart for some time

Example: Christmas is a time of reunion, when family and friends have the chance to see each other again.

46. Describe a website that you like to visit.

You should say:

What the website is

What it is used for

When you used it

And explain why you think it was interesting.

ANSWER

Today, I am going to tell you about one website which I'm really interested in. It's name is **m.ebay.com.**

It is an **e-commerce website** used for online shopping purposes. This website advertises various items classified by categories such as fashion, electronics, and motors. It allows people to order products, and make **transactions** online.

I always **give priority to** shopping online whenever I have spare time instead of going to stores or supermarkets. So, this website is very **handy** for me as I can take advantage of my mobile phone or computer with an Internet connection to access it and purchase what I need.

I find this website very **appealing** due to its good **layout** and attractive images of products. There is a box for me to enter what items I'm looking for so I can avoid **browsing** items unnecessarily, as I'm able to find quickly the things I need. After that the items I have bought will be delivered right to my door so I can save a lot of time.

Not only that, there is always the chance to **get a good deal** and discounts as there are various promotion programs.

This website has important advantages for me, such as convenience and the benefits of saving time and money. Now it plays a useful role in my daily life. In the future I will continue to visit the site and of course recommend it to my friends.

VOCABULARY

✓ **E-commerce:** the business of buying and selling goods and services on the internet

Example: Ebay is an **e-commerce** website used for online shopping purposes.

✓ **Transaction:** a piece of business that is done between people, especially an act of buying or selling

Example: You can call your bank and carry out a **transaction** using a Touch-Tone phone.

✓ **Give priority to**: something that you think is more important than other things and should be dealt with first

Example: The hospital **gives priority to** those patients who require urgent medical attention.

✓ **Handy:** convenient

Example: My flat is very handy for the shops and the park.

✓ **Appealing:** attractive or interesting

Example: Brightly colored packaging made the pens especially appealing to children.

✓ **Layout:** the structure of a website rather than its styling

Example: This page uses a 2 – column layout with one sidebar to the left of the main content area.

✓ **Browse:** the act of looking through a number of things in a book, a store or online

Example: I have only **browsed** through the new book on dinosaurs, but I intend to read it fully this weekend.

✓ **Get a good deal:** make a good agreement to buy or sell something

Example: I **got a good deal** on my new car – I bought it for half the price that the man was asking for it.

47. Describe a big company that you would like to work in.

You should say:

the name of this company

what this company does

where this company is

and explain why you would like to work in this company.

ANSWER:

Today, I would like to talk about a big company that I would like to work in. Last year, I had a chance to do an internship in Vincom for 3 months, and it is my dream workplace where I want to apply for a job when I graduate.

The Vingroup, as you know, is one of the biggest corporations involved in many different key fields, not only in Vietnam but also in other countries all over the world. Vincom, the real estate company, is supposed to be the most important sector contributing to the success of

the Vingroup. They have taken over a lot of well-known resorts, luxury villas and apartment buildings around Vietnam, incorporating a huge range of additional facilities.

My major involves the property business, so I decided to do my internship there. It is an extremely big company with dynamic and loyal staff, and a highly professional working style as well. They formulate their business strategy clearly and try to reach the targets which they have set. Their staff receive excellent compensation and benefits packages.

It was a valuable chance for me to broaden my own knowledge not only in my major but also in many other fields. It enhanced my soft skills and allowed me to enlarge my social network. Therefore, I will try my best to become an employee in Vincom in the near future.

Vocabulary:

internship: [noun] a period of time in which a student or new graduate gets experience in a job, for example during vacations.

Example: My cousin is doing an **internship** with a company of lawyers after graduating in law last month.

dream workplace: [noun] the ideal place where you would like to work.

Example: If you love chocolates, a chocolate factory would be your **dream workplace**.

real estate: [noun] property in the form of land or buildings.

Example: My aunt works in a **real estate** company, selling and renting houses to customers.

take over: [phrasal verb] gain control of.

Example: His small electronics company was **taken over** by Samsung.

resorts: [noun] a place where a lot of people go on holiday/vacation.

Example: Many British tourists go to beach **resorts** in Thailand.

luxury villas: [noun] expensive houses where people stay on holiday/vacation.

Example: The **luxury villas** in Spain have private swimming pools and expensive furniture.

facilities: [noun] services or equipment that are provided for a particular purpose.
Example: The hotel has many **facilities**, such as satellite TVs in every room and free wi-fi internet connection.

dynamic: [adjective] having a lot of energy and strong personality.
Example: We have to say that Batman and Superman are **dynamic** characters.

loyal: [adjective] always supporting someone or something.
Example: The minister has always been a **loyal** friend to the President.

formulate: [verb] to create or prepare something carefully and in detail.
Example: The owners of the company **formulated** a plan to take over a rival firm.

compensation: [noun] something, especially money, which you receive if you have been hurt, injured or if you have suffered in some way.
Example: When my father lost his job, the company paid him **compensation** of a full salary for 1 year.

benefits package: [noun] a number of things which an employer provides in addition to paying your salary.
Example: The job offers a good **benefits package**, which includes free health insurance and the use of a company car.

soft skills: [noun] personal qualities that enable you to deal successfully with other people.
Example: Candidates for the job should have **soft skills**, such as working well in a team and an ability to listen to and respect the opinions of work colleagues.

48. Describe something that you have shared with others (or another person)

You should say:
what you shared
who you shared it with.
why you shared it

and explain how you felt about sharing it

ANSWER:

Well, I'm kind of an introverted person so I do not tend to share my stories with others. The only person I fully trust to confide in is my best friend from secondary school, because we have been close for over 10 years.

At my first year in university, I was a little bored with the major that I had been studying, because it was not exactly what I had signed up for at first. I meant to apply for the commercial English department, but unfortunately I did not have a high enough score and, therefore, business management was my second choice. A lot of thoughts crossed my mind at that time, like this major was not really my thing, I would not be able to make it and similar negative feelings.

I was really depressed and eventually turned to her to ask for help. We had a conversation and she helped me analyze my interests, personality, strengths and weaknesses, which allowed me to reach a decision by myself. As a result, I kept studying my major and made time for learning English besides. As we enjoyed such a close relationship, I felt really reassured when I received her useful advice.

Now, I'm a final-year student at university, I am pleased with my decision, thanks to her. She really is my best friend, always stays by my side and never turns her back on me, and I treasure our friendship a lot.

Vocabulary:

introverted: [adjective] more interested in your own thoughts and feelings than in spending time with other people.

Example: As John never interacted with others in class, his teachers considered him to be an **introverted** student.

confide in: [phrasal verb] tell someone personal secrets or information because you believe that you can trust them.

Example: Whenever she had a problem, she **confided in** her mother.

close: [adjective] knowing someone very well and liking them very much.

Example: I have always been **close** to my grandfather, and I visit him regularly.

sign up: [phrasal verb] arrange to do a course of study by adding your name to the list of people doing it.
Example: I decided to **sign up** for extra English classes to help me with my business course.

crossed my mind: [expression] came into my mind.
Example: This morning, it **crossed my mind** that I need to see my tutor tomorrow.

not my thing: [expression] not something that I like to do.
Example: I don't want to go to the concert, because listening to rock music is **not really my thing.**

be able to make it: [expression] be able to succeed in something.
Example: I was surprised to win the competition – I never thought I'd **be able to make it.**

depressed: [adjective] feeling sad and without hope.
Example: He felt **depressed** when he failed the exam, but now he is determined to succeed next time.

reach a decision: [expression] decide something after some difficulty.
Example: I was not sure whether to visit Thailand or Singapore, but finally I **reached a decision** – I would go to Singapore.

reassured: [adjective] feel less frightened or anxious.
Example: The doctor told him that the medical tests were OK, so he felt very **reassured.**

turns her back on: [expression] rejects someone that she is close to.
Example: She never **turns her back on** the people in her family – she is always ready to support them.

treasure: [verb] have or keep something that is very valuable to you.
Example: Although he is no longer living, I will always **treasure** my memories of my grandfather.

49. Describe a photograph in your home.

You should say:

what is in the photo

where this photo is in your home

how this picture was taken

and explain what this photo means to you.

ANSWER:

Like many other Vietnamese families, I have a big photograph of my family which is hung on the wall of my living room. It is the first thing that you notice when you walk in the room.

This photo was taken a year ago on the occasion of my cousin's wedding. It was the first time **for ages** that my whole family had **gathered together**. Even my relatives who are living further away came home to attend the wedding. It was possibly the first picture of my **extended family** with my grandmother, all of my grandmother's children and the **in-laws**, and I have **lost count of** how many grandchildren are in it. It's a brilliant photo, with everyone smiling and laughing, taken by a professional photographer who **put everyone at their ease.**

As a typical traditional Vietnamese, I **treasure** my family. Our **ties** are worth more than gold. No matter what happens, I strongly believe that my parents, my **siblings** and relatives will always be on my side supporting me. Every time I look at the photograph of my loving family, I feel **blessed** and proud.

VOCABULARY

✓ **for ages:** [expression] a very long time.

Example: I waited **for ages**, because the flight had been delayed for several hours.

✓ **gathered together:** [verb] it was the first time for many years that my family had all come together in the same place, at the same time.

Example: the children were all **gathered together** in the garden.

✓ **extended family**: [noun] a family group that includes not only parents and children, but also aunts, uncles, cousins, grandparents and in-laws.

Example: she grew up surrounded by a large **extended family**.

✓ **the in-laws: [**noun] your relatives by marriage, especially the parents of your husband or wife.

Example: I am visiting my **in-laws** on Sunday [the parents of my wife and also her two sisters].

✓ **lose count of:** [verb] to forget how many there are of something [because there are a lot of them].

Example: I have **lost count of** how many times I have told the students to do their homework.

✓ **put everyone at their ease:** [verb] the photographer made everyone feel relaxed.

Example: in the exam, the examiner **put the students at their ease** by being friendly and informal.

✓ **treasure:** [verb] to have something that you love and is very valuable to you.

Example: I **treasure** his friendship, because it is very important to me to have him as my friend.

✓ **ties:** [noun] strong connections between people

Example: the **ties** of friendship and **family ties** are the most important connections in our lives.

✓ **siblings:** [noun] brothers or sisters

Example: the younger children were badly treated by their older **siblings.**

✓ **blessed:** [adjective] fortunate, in a way that brings a feeling of peace.

Example: he was **blessed** with many good friends and a loving family.

50, 51, 52. Describe a place where you read and write (not your home) /Describe a café restaurant that you like (to go to)./Describe a place where you (usually / often) go to relax. (Not your home)

Describe a place where you read and write (not your home)

You should say:
where it is
how often you go there *
what you read and write there / who else goes there **
and explain why you read and write at this place.

Describe a café restaurant that you like (to go to).

You should say:
where it is
how often you go there
what types of food it has
and explain why you like it.

Describe a place where you (usually / often) go to relax. (Not your home)

You should say:
where this place is
when you go there
what you do there
who is usually there with you
and explain why you choose to go to this place to relax.

Answers:

- Today, I'm going **to share with you** a place where I usually/often go to relax/read and write/ **hang out with my friends**, which is a small café/restaurant near my company/my house named "ABC"

- As a full-time employee/student, I have to go to work/ school 5 days a week; **therefore**, the only time that I can visit this place is **on weekends.** I always try **to make time for** my little trip to "ABC" café every Saturday or Sunday.

- The coffee house is **located on a quiet street** with a lot of trees planted on both sides. **Additionally**, it has a patio with **hanging gardens** which I like very much; it makes me feel like I'm sitting in a garden of my own.

- Separated from the **hustle and bustle** of the **city life in** Hanoi, this place allows me to sit quietly and **reflect**, relaxing after a week of hard work. I can **concentrate on** a personal project such as reading or **writing in my journal** without being interrupted by other people.

- It **serves** great coffee, tea, and cakes, thus, the place always smells very nice. In addition, **the employees** are also friendly and helpful.

- Sometimes, I go there with my friends. Over a nice cup of coffee/tea, we share our stories and smell the beautiful scent of the flowers. At that moment, we can escape from reality for a little while and enjoy ourselves even more.

VOCABULARY

✓ **to share with you:** in this context, to share with someone means to tell someone about something, you are going to share some information or a story with another person; in another context you could share an actual thing with someone, like share a meal with another person or share something that you have, like some fireworks, with another; "I'd like to share a story with you about my grandmother when she was a young girl." "He doesn't want to share the fish he caught with us."

✓ **hang out with my friends:** to spend time with friends, talking, relaxing, visiting; "He likes to hang out with his friends at the pizza place after school."

✓ **therefore:** used when you want to give more information or explain the reason for something; consequently; for that reason; "I am going to be in New York next week; therefore, I'd like to visit the Metropolitan Museum of Art."

✓ **on weekends:** use the preposition on when talking about things you do on Saturday and Sunday, the weekend; in this case we use the plural because you are talking about weekends in general, rather than a specific weekend; "He likes to play golf on weekends." British English prefers to say at the weekend or at weekends.

✓ **to make time for:** to prioritize things so that you have time to do a certain thing that you want; you have to make time for something in order to ensure that you do it, if you don't make time for something, you won't do it; "He wants his father to make more time for him on weekends."

✓ **located on a quiet street:** when we are talking about the location of something we use the preposition on, something is located on the corner, on the right or left side, on a hill, on a mountain; you can also use in for things located in another area, like the office is located in the building on the left side of the street or the video store is located in the mall, as in inside the mall; "Our new restaurant is located on one of the busiest streets in San Francisco."

✓ **Additionally:** used to give more information; "Additionally, the scientists found that there were two more species in the area that had never been discovered."

✓ **hanging gardens:** plants and flowers that are hanging in pots from the ceiling; "The hanging gardens in the train station made the place feel very warm and welcoming, unlike most train stations."

✓ **Separated from:** apart from, away from; in a different part of a place; "The children's play area is separated from the main part of the building; it is a great place where families can take their children to play outside."

✓ **hustle and bustle:** describes the noise and high level of activity; "My grandfather hates the hustle and bustle of the city; he prefers the calm and quiet of the countryside."

✓ **city life in:** used to describe the activity, noise, movement of people and traffic in a city; use the preposition in or of; "The city life in New York is famous for the variety of things you can do while there: Broadway shows, concerts, restaurants, bars, museums and so much more."

✓ **to reflect:** to think deeply about something; "After the meeting, he needed time to reflect on his options before making a final decision."

✓ **concentrate on:** to think about something in a focused way, without distractions; "He found it hard to concentrate on his homework while his friends were playing video games in his room."

✓ **writing in my journal:** you use the preposition in when talking about writing in a journal or notebook; "I like to write in my journal right before I go to bed."

✓ **serves:** in this context it is referring to what is offered at the café; it's what a food establishment offers to their customers; "They don't serve meat at this restaurant because it is a vegetarian restaurant."

✓ **the employees:** the people who work at the café or restaurant; "The employees were upset with their boss and didn't want to go to work."

✓ **Over a nice cup of coffee/tea:** in this context, using the word over means that you are doing something, like visiting, while you drink a cup of tea; "We finalized our joint business venture over dinner last night." (This means that we finished talking about our joint business venture while we ate dinner together.)

✓ **escape from reality:** to leave the reality of something, like your life or a specific situation; you want to escape from reality especially if reality is something that is difficult for

you to handle, like a difficult job, having lots of work to do, etc. “Many people drink alcohol to escape from reality, though this strategy has its own problems.”

✓ **enjoy ourselves:** to have fun, to have a pleasant time; “We enjoyed ourselves last weekend at our friend’s beach house.”

53, 54. Describe an occasion when you got up very early./Describe a long car journey you went on

Describe an occasion when you got up very early.
You should say:
when it happened
why you got up early
who you were with
and explain how you felt about getting up early.

Describe a long car journey you went on
You should say:
where you went
why you went there
who you travelled with
what you saw on the trip (on the way).
and explain why you went by car.

ANSWER

- Like **many other** young people, I don’t have **the habit** of waking up early every day, only for special occasions. **Last weekend**, I and a group of my friends decided to go on a trip to the mountainous area of Vietnam called **Mu Cang Chai**. We had to leave **very early** in the morning so that we did not get stuck in the traffic. In addition, we would have **more time** to spend there.
- It wasn’t **easy** to get up early in the morning, because I had been **so excited** about the trip that I had barely slept that night. I had **never been** to Mu Cang Chai before. It is located in the **northern** part of Vietnam, so I knew that we faced **a long drive** ahead . We had decided to go by car since, that way, all 5 of us could **travel together**. Moreover, everyone reckoned that it would be **safer** than going by motorbike. / Waking up early did not feel that

bad at all, even though it was **the first time** I had done so for many months. **To begin with**, I felt a bit sleepy, but then **the pure morning air** freshened me completely.

- After 5 hours driving, we arrived at our destination. We were **amazed** to see a **vast** land filled with the yellow color of terraced **rice fields**, ready to be harvested. Under the sunlight, these rice fields **sparkled** like **gold**.
- We stayed for **one night** with a local host and helped the family with their regular tasks before **setting out for home** the next day. It was such an **amazing** trip, and it helped us to learn more about the countryside and **the way of life** of those who live there. I'd love to make **more trips like that** in the future.

VOCABULARY:

✓ **get stuck:** [verb phrase] to be in an unpleasant situation that you can't escape from.
Example: I left work early, because I didn't want to get stuck in traffic on my way home.

✓ **barely:** [adverb] something that can be achieved, but only with difficulty.
Example: We barely had time to catch the train, so we ran all the way to the station.

✓ **faced a long drive ahead:** [verb phrase] a long car journey.
Example: My advice is to sleep well if you face a long drive ahead the next day.

✓ **reckon:** [verb] to think or have an opinion about something.
Example: If I want to lose weight, I reckon that I will have to eat less bread.

✓ **freshen:** [verb] to make something cooler and more pleasant.
Example: The rain freshened the air.

✓ **vast:** [adjective] very big.
Example: The Amazon is a vast rainforest.

✓ **harvest:** [verb] to cut and collect a crop, such as rice.
Example: Every year, bananas are harvested from the trees on my uncle's farm.

✓ **sparkle:** [verb] to shine brightly.

Example: The sky sparkled with thousands of stars.

✓ **setting out:** [phrasal verb] leaving a place and beginning a journey.

Example: I finished my breakfast and set out for the train station.

55. Describe an indoor game that you liked to play when you were a child

Describe an indoor game that you played when you were a child

You should say:
what the game was
who you played it with
how you played it
where you played it
and explain why you liked playing that game.

ANSWER:

- An indoor game that I liked to play when I was **a child** was **badminton**. It started when I was in 6th grade. At **that time**, I was living near my uncle's house. Every morning, he would wake me and my cousins up **early** and drive us to the **sport center** near our house.

- It was actually a badminton **class**, so we had teachers and other students too. We practiced badminton here **for an hour**. During the summer **holiday**, we even **stayed there** for another half an hour. Just like **tennis**, you can play badminton as a **singles** match or **doubles** match. The **rules** are pretty much the same as **tennis**. The only difference is that the **badminton shuttlecock** is lighter than the tennis ball, thus, it requires **less strength**.

- Due to my **short-sightedness**, I was not very good at playing this game but I **enjoyed it** anyway. **Firstly**, it helped keep me fit. In addition, I could **train my eyes** to look further and faster, and it **quickened** my reflexes. Last but not least, it helped me a lot in improving my **teamwork skills**.

VOCABULARY:

✓ **badminton**: [noun] an indoor game. Players hit a small light ball, with feathers round it, across a high net, using a racket, like tennis.

Example: A net in **badminton** is much higher than in **tennis**, and the **ball and rackets** are **smaller** and not as **heavy**.

✓ **singles match:** [noun] a game in which one player plays against one opponent.

✓ **doubles match:** [noun] a game in which two players play against two opponents.

Example: She won the women's **singles** gold medal in tennis in the Olympic Games. Then, **playing with her friend**, they won the women's **doubles** gold medal by defeating two American opponents.

✓ **shuttlecock**: [noun] badminton uses a shuttlecock, not a tennis ball. It is very light and it has feathers round the edge.

Example: Players hit the **shuttlecock** across the net in badminton.

✓ **short-sightedness:** [noun] a person who can only see things if they are very close, is short-sighted.

Example: I need glasses for reading, because of my **short-sightedness**.

✓ **train my eyes**: [verb phrase] I developed my ability to see things quickly and accurately.

Example: The detective **trained his eyes** to look for small but important details at the scene of the crime.

✓ **quickened my reflexes:** playing badminton improved my ability to move and think quickly when I played the game.

Example: Many people say that video games **quicken your reflexes** and you become more expert.

56, 57. Describe a change that you think would improve your local area/Describe a law about the environment that you would like to see.

Describe a change that you think would improve your local area

You should say:

what local area

what change

how the change could be made

and explain how this change would be an improvement to your local area.

or

Describe a law about the environment that you would like to see.

You should say:

what the law would be about

how the law would work *

what effects this law would have (= what changes would result from this law)

and explain why you would like to see this law in existence or why you think this law is needed.

ANSWER:

I was born and raised in Hanoi and have been here for 27 years. I have watched the city develop from a small town and grow into a modern metropolitan area in the new era. With the skyrocketing population of recent years, the city's environment has become significantly polluted. As a result, I think environmental laws should be enacted immediately to solve this problem.

First of all, Hanoi's mayor should consider putting more trash bins out in the streets so that people won't throw rubbish anywhere anytime. In addition, the city police should heavily fine those who are caught littering the streets. By doing so, not only could we save a lot of money on cleaning costs but we could also improve the surrounding public scenery.

Secondly, the city should run a campaign to educate people on how to classify and separate garbage before throwing it out. This is necessary because unsorted garbage contributes to the pollution of underground water and the earth.

In my opinion, although these above actions are minor, they would contribute to diminishing the impacts of pollution in our local area if they were done on a collective level.

VOCABULARY

 born and raised in: to describe that you were born in a certain place and that you grew up there with your parents; “He was born and raised in New York but moved to California when he was 35.”

 skyrocketing: increasing, to describe when something goes up rapidly by a lot; “The skyrocketing airline prices have hurt the tourist towns, as fewer people are traveling.”

 significantly: in a sufficiently great or important way as to be worthy of attention, “Our profit was significantly less this month than we had predicted.”

 enacted: to put a law into place; “New laws have been enacted to keep people safe from gun violence.”

 rubbish: trash, garbage waste; “There is too much rubbish in this yard. Let’s clean it up!”

 heavily fine: to fine someone heavily means to charge them a lot of money because they have violated a law or regulation; “The companies were heavily fined for polluting the river.”

 littering: throwing trash on the ground rather than putting it in the bin; “Littering is against the law and you can be fined $1000.”

 scenery: what you see in the natural environment; a beautiful scenery usually includes beautiful nature scenes, but ugly scenery would have trash and pollution; “The scenery in the Turkish countryside is beautiful.”

 run a campaign: to organize and work on a program to reach a goal, such as a campaign to educate people about pollution or teenage pregnancy or alcohol abuse; “He is in charge of running the campaign to save dogs in our rural areas.”

 to classify and separate: in the context of recycling, to classify means to figure out what bin each item belongs in, such as glass, plastic, paper and then to put them into the appropriate bins; “He is lazy and doesn’t like to classify and separate his garbage.”

 to throw something out: to get rid of something; to put it in the trash; “My mother threw out all my boyfriend’s old letters.”

 unsorted: not separated; “The shirts were unsorted, so all the colors were mixed together and it made it hard to find all the red ones.”

 minor: small or insignificant; “We had a minor accident in our car today.”

 diminishing: going down, lessening; “The pain has been diminishing since I took the aspirin.”

 impacts of: the effects of something on something else; “The impact of the storm has yet to be fully understood.”

 collective level: a collective is a group of people, so in this context if you are working at a collective level, it means that people are working together to solve a problem; “This problem will only be solved if we work at it on a collective level, not an individual level.”

58, 59. Describe an historic building that you have visited./Describe a long walk that you went on

Describe an historic building that you have visited.

You should say:
what it was
where it was
and explain what features of the building you found interesting.

Describe an educational trip you went on.

You should say:
where the place was
what you did at this place
who you went there with
and explain what you learned on that trip.

ANSWER:

- **Today,** I am going to share with you one of my **favorite historic buildings** that I have visited, that is The **Temple of Literature** or “Văn Miếu – Quốc Tử Giám” in Vietnamese.
- **Van Mieu – Quoc Tu Giam** - located to the south of the Imperial Citadel of Thang Long – is **now** part of Hanoi City. This was the **first university** in Vietnam, which was built in **1070** in King Ly Thanh Tong’s reign. The **Temple** was dedicated to Confucius and it was built to educate Vietnam’s **bureaucrats, nobles, royalty** and other members of the elite.

- Like **many other** temples, The Temple of **Literature** was built in a vast area with many pavilions, halls, statues, yards…. However, one of **the best** features that I liked most is the **Turtle Steles** with the names of those successful at the **royal exams**. I remembered when I was **a senior** in high school, I would come here to pray for **luck** for my university entrance exam. This tradition is **very popular** among Hanoian students and pupils. In addition, during **the Tet holiday**, we can come here to ask for a pair of **"Hán"** wishes from **calligraphists** to bring home as a lucky charm or gift.

VOCABULARY

✓ **citadel:** [noun] a castle on high ground in or near a city, where people could go when the city was attacked.

Example: The enemy attacked the city, but all the people were safe inside the **citadel**.

✓ **reign:** [noun] the period during which an emperor, queen or king is the ruler of a country.

Example: The **reign** of the emperor Ly Thanh Tong lasted for 18 years.

✓ **dedicate:** [verb] to hold a ceremony to say that a building is special to the memory of a particular person or people.

Example: A statue was **dedicated to** those who died in the war.

✓ **bureaucrats:** [noun] officials working in an organization or government department.

Example: Some people think that their lives are regulated too strictly by **bureaucrats.**

✓ **the elite:** [noun] a small group of people who are powerful in a society and have a lot of influence.

Example: In some countries, only **the elite** can afford to send their children to university.

✓ **pavilions:** [noun] buildings to hold events, designed to be beautiful.

Example: In the park, there is a beautiful **pavilion**, in which concerts and exhibitions are held.

✓ **pray:** [verb] to speak to God, especially to give thanks or to ask for help.

Example: We **prayed** that she would recover from her illness.

✓ **calligraphists:** [noun] people who are skilled at writing beautifully, using a special pen or brush.

Example: In the past, many **calligraphists** were monks, who copied texts using beautiful handwriting.

✓ **charm: [noun]** a small object worn on a chain or as a bracelet, to bring good luck.

Example: In British tradition, a **charm** of a rabbit's foot was worn on a chain around the neck of a person to bring good luck.

60, 61, 62. Describe a person you know who dresses well/ Describe a person you know who speaks a second (or foreign) language well. /Describe a person (you know) who travels a lot by plane.

Describe a person you know who dresses well

You should say:

who this person is

what kind of clothes this person likes to wear (or, wears)

how you know this person

and explain why you think this person dresses well.

Describe a person you know who speaks a second (or foreign) language well.

You should say:

who this person is

how you know this person

what language this person speaks

how often they speak it

and explain why you say they speak it "well".

Describe a person (you know) who travels a lot by plane.

You should say:

who this person is

how you know this person

where this person travels to

and explain why they (= he or she) choose to travel by plane

ANSWER:

Today, I am going to share with you a person I know/ who dresses well/speaks a second (foreign) language well/ travels a lot by plane/. That person is my friend/boss/.....

As a **typical** saleswoman for a multinational company, my friend/my boss has to meet many people from all over the world. That's why she speaks English as fluently as Vietnamese. In addition, she also **dresses well** because **appearance** is very important in the sales market.

She is tall and thin, thus she always chooses to wear blouses with **pencil skirts** or **midi dresses** because such **smart** clothes not only **complement her figure**, but also give her a formal **look** suitable for business meetings. Every time she appears in public, she **draws everyone's attention**; people look at her with admiration. I think that's one of the reasons why she is such an effective salesperson.

Due to the characteristics of her job, she has to travel to Ho Chi Minh City/uses English quite often because our company has a large **customer base** in the south/ internationally. As a result, travelling by plane is the only choice. There are months when she has to go there once a week to prepare for a client meeting or provide training to new employees/ Being competent in English helps her a lot in **closing the deal** with international clients, since nowadays English is considered to be the most common language in the business world. She speaks English so well that one of our clients **complimented** her on sounding exactly like a native speaker.

VOCABULARY

✓ **typical:** [adjective] having all the usual qualities or features that we expect. A woman whose job is to sell products will usually have to meet a lot of people, and sometimes these may be international customers. My friend/my boss is no different – she is a typical saleswoman.

Example: A **typical** street in the centre of London has crowds of shoppers, and the roads are full of cars, taxis and buses.

✓ **dresses well:** [verb+adverb] she wears a particular style or type of clothes and these give her a good appearance.

Example: In England, people **dress formally** when they go for a job interview.

✓ **appearance:** [noun] the way that somebody looks. If you are selling products, your appearance must be tidy and professional.

Example: Photographers always follow famous people, so those people pay a lot of attention to their **appearance** – they want to look good !

✓ **skirt:** [noun] a piece of clothing for a girl or woman which goes from the waist and covers part of the legs.

✓ **pencil skirts:** [adjective+noun] a skirt which is narrow and straight.

Example: **Pencil skirts** are often worn by professional women, such as secretaries or executives.

✓ **midi dresses:** [noun] dresses which cover the legs to below the knees.

✓ **smart:** [adjective] looking clean, new and attractive.

Example: I have to be **smart** for work.

✓ **complement:** [verb] to add something in a way that makes it look more attractive or improves it.

Example: His smart tie **complemented** his formal suit.

✓ **figure:** [noun] the shape of the body.

✓ **look:** [noun] this is another word for appearance – the way that somebody looks.

Example: My friend has a very professional **look** when she is at work.

✓ **draw attention:** [verb+noun] my boss/my friend attracts the interest of everyone.

Example: In the world of men's fashion, David Beckham **draws the attention** of the world media.

✓ **customer base:** [noun combination] all the people who buy or use a particular product or service.

Example: We need to appeal to a wider **customer base.**

✓ **closing the deal:** [verb+noun] making an agreement with a customer or supplier.

Example: As a professional saleswoman, my friend usually **closes the deal** and makes a sale to her clients.

✓ **compliment:** [verb] to say something which expresses praise or admiration for a person.

Example: My boss complimented me on the work which I **completed** last week

63. Describe the member of your family who you spend the most time with.

You should say:

who it is

when you are usually together

what you do together

and explain why you spend the most time with this member of your family

ANSWER:

Today, I am going to share with you a family member who I spend most of my time with. That is my /father/mother/older sister/brother/cousin…

My father/mother/older sister/brother/cousin… is a very **considerate** and **thoughtful** person. When I was small, he/she **usually took good care of** me; taught me good lessons and never **let me out of his/her sight**. Even now, whenever I have a bad day, he/she has **always been there for me**, and helps me **get through** it.

As I have got older, my father/mother/older sister/brother/cousin… has become my best friend. I can share my interests, my career plans or even things about my love life with them – in fact, anything at all. Especially when I am **down,** he/she gives me the encouragement that I need to **move on.** To me, he/she is a **role model** whom I always look up to/admire/and **follow in his/her footsteps.**

He/she constantly reminds me that I have to **try my best** in everything I choose to pursue so that I can achieve my goal in this life. **Thanks to** his/her advice, I have made significant progress in my personal life in general.

Although, of course, I love all my family, because he/she is so special to me, I think that we will **always keep in touch**, just as we do now almost every day.

VOCABULARY

✓ **considerate:** [adjective] always thinking of the wishes and feelings of other people.

Example: My mother is very **considerate** when guests come to visit our house and she always offers some food or something to drink.

✓ **thoughtful:** [adjective] showing that you think about other people and care about them.

Example: A good teacher should be kind and **thoughtful**.

✓ **take care of:** [verb] to provide the things which you need for your protection and health.

Example: A lot of patience is necessary when you **take care of** very young or very old people.

✓ **let me out of his sight**: [expression] he/she always kept me where they could see me – they protected me all the time.

Example: She never **lets her daughter out of her sight.**

✓ **be there for:** [expression] to be available if somebody wants to talk to you or needs your help.

Example: If I was in trouble, my parents were always **there for me**.

✓ **get through:** [expression] to successfully deal with a problem or overcome a difficulty.

Example: I would find it hard to get through the day if I had no friends to talk to.

✓ **down:** [adjective] sad, unhappy.

✓ **move on:** [verb] to make progress by starting something new.

Example: After I pass the exam, I want to **move on** to the next step in my career.

✓ **role model:** [noun] a person that you admire and try to copy.

Example: Parents are a child's most important **role models**.

✓ **follow in the footsteps of:** to do the same job or to have the same style of life.

Example: She works as a journalist, **following in her father's footsteps**.

✓ **try my best:** [expression] to do as much as possible to achieve something.

Example: I will **try my best** to achieve my goal.

✓ **Thanks to:** [expression] As a result of/with the help of their advice, I made progress in my studies and my career.

✓ **keep in touch:** [expression] to maintain contact with somebody so that I know what is happening.

64. Describe a wedding that you have attended.

You should say:

whose wedding it was

who was there

what happened

and explain how you felt.

ANSWER (Bài này hơi dài. Các bạn có thể lấy ý để chỉnh sửa dùng cho bài của chính các bạn)

Today, I'm gonna share with you a wedding of my friend that I attended. Last month, I received a wedding invitation from my old friend from primary school. The wedding was held at the beginning of April. We have been close to each other for over 15 years, therefore, I definitely wanted to attend at all costs, due to the fact that we hadn't had a chance to get together for ages.

Her wedding ceremony took place at The Sum Villa, located near West Lake. It was decorated impressively with a lot of lights, candles and flowers around the room. There were

three glamorous wedding photo albums, showing tables right at the centre of the official gate. The principal colours were likely to be white and violet, so all the guests were requested to wear clothes with one or both of these colours. Personally, I wore a white dress with small accessories.

It was meant to be a casual wedding, which I had never attended before. It turned out to be refreshingly informal. One of the best moments that really touched me was when the bridegroom sang a song for the bride and all the guests sang along with him. Also, he made a photo clip by himself marking their 4-year romance, to show to everyone in the room. It was no surprise that everyone clapped their hands and cheered them. Of course, I was no exception.

It was also a good chance to catch up with my old friends and we all had a great time. We definitely made the most of the occasion and took a lot of pictures with the bride and the bridegroom. I gave my friend a gift to celebrate her wedding day. I had given much thought to my wedding present when I was choosing it, and I wished her lots of happiness for the future.

VOCABULARY

✓ hold: [verb] have a meeting/conversation/party/wedding/event.

Example: The next Olympic Games will be **held** in Brazil.

✓ close to: [expression] knowing someone well and liking them very much.

Example: She has always been **close to** her grandparents and often visits them.

✓ at all costs: [expression] whatever is needed to achieve something.

Example: I knew that, **at all costs**, I had to catch the last train home.

✓ for ages: [expression] for a long time.

Example: I waited **for ages** to speak to the doctor.

✓ decorate: [verb] make something more attractive.

Example: Her living room is always **decorated** with flowers.

✓ glamorous: [adjective] especially attractive and exciting.

Example: When my sister was young, she wanted to have a **glamorous** job, like a model or a film actress.

✓ albums: [noun] a book in which you keep photographs.

Example: All of my parent's photographs are still in the family photo **albums** in my drawer.

✓ accessories: [noun] things like belts or bags, which you carry to match your clothes.

Example: The shop sells only fashion **accessories**, and my friend buys all her bracelets there.

✓ bridegroom: [noun] a man on his wedding day.

Example: The **bridegroom** was very nervous during the wedding ceremony.

✓ bride: [noun] a woman on her wedding day.

Example: The **bride** wore a very beautiful white dress.

✓ romance: [noun] a relationship between two people who are in love.

Example: Romeo and Juliet is a play about the **romance** of two young lovers.

✓ clapped their hands: [expression] hit their open hands together, to show that they liked or enjoyed something.

Example: At the end of the fantastic show, all the audience **clapped their hands**.

✓ cheer: [verb] to shout loudly, to show support or to encourage someone.

Example: The crowd **cheered** when Barcelona scored the winning goal.

65. Describe a time when you tried a new food for the first time.

You should say:

what food it was

where you ate it

what it tasted like

and explain whether or not you liked this food

ANSWER

Well, I'm a great fan of **barbecues** and I would like to talk about the **first time** I tried some **typical** barbecue food. This happened when I was **10 years old**.

My familiy went out to **have dinner** to celebrate my younger sister's birthday. After putting so much thought into some **new savoury food** to have for our meal, we decided to go to a BBQ restautant on Ba Trieu street.

We ordered **four** dishes with three **different tastes**. **One** of them which really **interested** me was grilled-Australian **beef**, flavoured with something **spicy**, **rich** and **aromatic**. It not only **tasted** delicious, but also **looked** appealing. Also, it went well with two kinds of **dipping sauces** and was served with **baguettes**. There was also a **salad**, which gave it a **mild** taste to contrast with the spicy flavours.

The **idea** of a barbecue originated in **America**, and for us it was a **novel** and **sophisticated** meal.

What I **really** enjoyed was that we could **watch** as it was cooked **in front of us**. I loved how **juicy** it was and the **aroma** it had. Just **mentioning** it makes my mouth water. I mean, the

BBQ was out of this world. That was the **first time** I had tried it, and I **would have liked** to have kept on coming back for **more**, but I was just too **full**.

VOCABULARY

✓ barbecues: [noun] a meal, usually eaten outdoors, which is cooked over an open fire.

Example: Every summer, my friends and I have **barbecues** on the beach and we each bring some beef or other meat to grill.

✓ put thought into: [expression] considered seriously and carefully.

Example: I **put so much thought** into my school project that I received a very high score.

✓ savoury: [adjective] having a delicious taste, usually containing salt.

Example: We ate some tasty **savoury** biscuits with cheese to finish our meal.

✓ dish: [noun] food prepared in a particular way as part of a meal.

Example: Our meal arrived at the table – two **dishes** of meat, with rice and salad.

✓ flavour: [verb] add to food to give it a special taste.

Example: The fish was **flavoured** with spices and it tasted delicious.

✓ aromatic: [adjective] having a pleasant smell or aroma.

Example: She grows a number of **aromatic** plants in her garden.

✓ dipping sauces: [noun] different types of sauces in which you can put your food quickly, take the food out again and eat it.

Example: The chef flavours his **dipping sauces** with different spices – some sweet spices and some hot ones.

✓ baguettes: [noun] white bread in the shape of long sticks.

Example: The cheese **baguettes** which we ordered were hard on the outside and soft on the inside.

✓ mild: [adjective] not strong or severe.

Example: I prefer cheese that is **mild** rather than cheese with a strong flavour.

✓ originate: [verb] happen or appear for the first time in a particular place or situation.

Example: Tobacco **originated** in America and was later brought to Europe.

✓ novel: [adjective] new, and different from anything known before.

Example: Drive-in restaurants are a **novel** idea which originated in America.

✓ sophisticated: [adjective] typical of rich or socially important people.

Example: They like to dress in very **sophisticated** clothes, although they don't have a lot of money.

✓ juicy: [adjective] having a lot of juice, so that it is good to eat.

Example: He bought some delicious **juicy** oranges at the market.

✓ makes my mouth water: [expression] makes me feel hungry.

Example: Thinking about Thai cuisine **makes my mouth water.**

✓ out of this world: [expression] wonderful and exciting.

Example: The new James Bond film is **out of this world**.

✓ full: [adjective] having had enough to eat.

Example: Although I was **full** after lunch, I still ate an ice-cream in the afternoon.

66. Describe an occasion when you were surprised to meet someone you know.

Describe an occasion when you unexpectedly met someone you know.

You should say:
who it was
where you met this person
what you did when you met
and explain why you were surprised to meet this person.

ANSWER:

- Well, it doesn't happen a lot when you **unexpectedly** meet someone you know. But **a couple of days ago** when I was out for lunch, I bumped into a **high school classmate** whom I haven't seen since we graduated.

- I was walking along **the street** when I saw him standing in front of a restaurant. He **hasn't changed a bit,** so I recognized him **right away**. I approached him and said **hi**; however, it took him a while to realize that I was his high school classmate. At that moment, I felt **very awkward**. Luckily, it didn't last **long** and we started to give each other a quick **update** about our lives recently, such as where we are **working** currently, our **families** and, of course, we swapped **phone numbers** and promised to keep in touch in future.

- Since we were both in **a hurry**, we didn't spend much time **chatting** to each other. However, it always feels **good** when you unexpectedly meet a **long-lost friend**. If we had had **more time,** we'd probably have **reminisced** about our high school memories with all the **crazy things** that we did back then.

VOCABULARY:

✓ **bump into:** [phrasal verb] to meet unexpectedly by accident.

Example: To my surprise, I **bumped into** my English teacher in the supermarket.

✓ **he hasn't changed a bit**: [verb phrase] he looks or acts exactly the same.

Example: My uncle looks the same as in the photos of him 20 years ago. It's amazing, **he hasn't changed a bit.**

✓ **right away:** [adverb] immediately

Example: This message is very urgent, so please send it **right away**.

✓ **awkward:** [adjective] making you feel embarrassed.

Example: At the restaurant, my friend had to pay for our meal. It was an **awkward** situation, because I had forgotten to bring any money !

✓ **update:** [noun] a report containing the most recent information.

Example: I planned to go to the beach, so I checked on the Internet for an **update** on the weather forecast.

✓ **swap:** [verb] to give something to somebody and receive something in exchange.

Example: I **swapped** places with a man on the bus, so that I could sit near the front.

✓ **keep in touch:** [verb phrase] to communicate with somebody, especially by writing or telephoning.

Example: Most young people nowadays **keep in touch** by e-mailing or texting their friends.

✓ **chat:** [verb] to talk in a friendly, informal way to somebody

Example: I decided to invite my friend for a coffee, so we could **chat** about our recent holidays

✓ **a long-lost friend:** [noun] a friend that you have not seen for a long time.

Example: At the bus station, I bumped into **a long-lost friend** that I had not seen since my school days.

✓ **reminisce:** [verb] to think, talk or write about a happy time in your past.

Example: My father often **reminisces** about his years at university.

✓ back then: [adverb] at a particular time in the past.

Example: I remember when I visited Thailand many years ago. **Back then,** there were very few tourists.

67. Describe a time when you waited for (or, had to wait for) something (or someone).

You should say:

who or what you waited for

where you waited

why you waited (or, had to wait)
and explain how you felt while you were waiting

ANSWER

- Having to wait for somebody is a **common situation** in our daily lives. There was this **one time** I had to wait for my friends, which was **so special** I'd like to share the story with you today.
- It was my **birthday** and I had invited a group of friends to a **coffee house** to celebrate it. We were scheduled to meet there at **8** that evening. I was so eager that I came **early**. Certainly, **none of them** were there, but it was easy to understand because **I was early**. **However**, I waited for half an hour, but nobody **showed up**, and then I started to feel **uncomfortable** and worried. As I was **losing my patience**, I began to call each of them to ask **why** they had not come yet. To my surprise, **none of them** picked up the phone. I was **really fed up,** as you can imagine, because it was **my birthday** and my friends had treated me like that.

- I waited for a couple more minutes until I couldn't **stand it** anymore, and decided to leave. As soon as I called the waiter for **the bill**, I heard the "**Happy birthday**" song start up in the coffee house. **Out of nowhere**, all of my friends suddenly appeared with a birthday cake. They **hugged me** and wished me happy birthday. It was such a **surprise**. My anger quickly gave way to **laughter** and we had an **unforgettable night** chatting until the early hours, drinking coffee and, **of course**, eating cake.

VOCABULARY

✓ **show up:** [phrasal verb] to arrive where you had arranged to meet somebody

Example: It was getting late when she finally **showed up.**

✓ **lose my patience:** [verb phrase] to become annoyed or angry as a result of a delay.

Example: The train is now 1 hour late, and I am **losing my patience**.

✓ **fed up:** [adjective] bored and unhappy, especially with a situation that has continued for a long time.

Example: The traffic congestion in our city never seems to get better, so people are really **fed up** with the time it takes to get to work.

✓ **stand [something]:** [verb] to dislike – used especially in negative sentences.

Example: I like John, but I can't **stand** his sister, she is very rude.

✓ **out of nowhere: [**expression] appearing or happening suddenly and unexpectedly

Example: The woman cried for help and, **out of nowhere**, a policeman arrived.

✓ **hug: [verb]** to put your arms around someone and hold them tightly, to show that you like or love them.

Example: The child ran out of the school and he **hugged** his mother, who was waiting at the school gate.

✓ **the early hours:** [expression] early in the morning, for example about 2, 3 or 4 am.

68. Describe someone or something that made a lot of noise.

You should say:
who or what made the noise
what the noise was like
and explain what you did when you heard this noise

ANSWER:

- If you live in Vietnam **long enough**, you will totally agree with **me** that those who are **driving** make **a lot of noise**, especially during peak traffic hours.

- Vietnamese roads have **never** been free of the honking noises of **all kinds** of vehicles from vans and cars, to mopeds. It is, in my opinion, the **most annoying sound** you could imagine. Whenever I heard people **honking** like angry geese, I felt very **annoyed** and **frustrated**. Vietnamese people should learn when to use the horn **properly**. It seems to me that they push the horn **all the time** because they want to be able to drive **fast,** while **everyone else** gets out of their way.

- Despite the fact that I **hate it** so much, I cannot give up driving here. So I learned to **ignore** it, and use my horn **sparingly** or just in case of **emergency**. However, I still think that the city should have a **campaign** on **educating people** to use the horn in a **proper way** so that the city is not polluted by noise.

VOCABULARY

✓ **peak traffic hours:** [noun phrase] the times when there is most traffic on the roads, usually when people are travelling to or from work.

Example: Because of all the traffic, it is difficult to cross the road during **peak traffic hours.**

✓ **honk:** [verb] if you honk the horn of a car or other vehicle, it makes a loud noise like a warning sound.

Example: She knew that the taxi had arrived, because she heard the horn **honking** outside the door.

✓ **geese: [plural noun]** this is the plural form of 'goose' – a large bird with a long neck. It makes a loud honking noise.

Example: The **geese** were on the lake, with some smaller birds nearby, which were probably ducks.

✓ **horn: [noun]** a device in a vehicle for making a loud noise as a warning.

Example: In the traffic jam, some of the drivers were honking the **horns** of their cars because they were frustrated with the delay.

✓ **get out of the way:** [verb phrase] move out of the route which someone else is taking.

Example: All of the drivers **got out of the way**, to allow the ambulance to pass.

✓ **sparingly:** [adverb] in a way that is careful, so that we only use a little.

Example: He spent his money **sparingly**, because he only had enough for a simple meal.

69. Describe a bicycle/motorbike/car trip that is interesting

You should say:
where you would like to go;
how you would like to go there;
who you would like to go with;
and explain why you would like to go there by car, motorbike or bike.

I'd like to describe a travelling idea that I think would make an awesome experience. It's a motorbike trip to Tam Dao, a town of Vinh Phu province, which has become an attractive place for Hanoi residents to visit at weekends and during holidays.

Tam Dao, also known as Da Lat of the North due to its cool weather around the year, is not far from Hanoi. It's just 70 kilometers away from our **capital city**, so I think it'd be **sensible** to travel there by motorbike.

I think it'd be an ideal trip if we had a small group of 4 or 5 members, who all knew each other well, as **travelling companions**. We would need to share a lot of **common interests** as well as characteristics, you know, so the experience would be more **laid-back**, fun and memorable, in my opinion.

There are several reasons why I prefer travelling by motorbike rather than by car, but most of all, I wouldn't want to miss the **breathtaking** scenery along the way. Moreover, my travelling timeline would be more **flexible** if I went there by motorbike, as I wouldn't have to worry about being **stuck in traffic jams**. Last but not least, I think it would be a way to make the trip somehow more challenging and interesting, so we would have more things to **recall** afterwards.

VOCABULARY

✓ captital city (thủ đô) [n]

a city which physically includes the offices and meeting places of the seat of government and is usually fixed as the capital by law or by the constitution

Example: Hanoi is the **capital city** of Vietnam and the country's second largest city.

✓ sensible (hợp lí) [adj] reasonable and practical.

Example: It's **sensible** to keep a note of your passport number

✓ Travelling companion (bạn đồng hành trong chuyến du lịch) [expression] someone you spend a lot of time with during your trip, who accompanies you.

Example: We should also agree about money when choosing a **travelling companion**; it can be pretty uncomfortable when you reach your first destination and find your companion wants to spend on a meal way beyond your budget.

✓ common interests (sở thích chung) [expression] similar interests

Example: Studies show that shared **common interests** between people boost the chances of a lasting relationship, and also bring about a 2% increase in life satisfaction.

✓ laid-back [adj] relaxed, without any worries

Example: I prefer a **laid-back** holiday, just sunbathing on the beach and listening to the sound of the sea.

✓ breathtaking (hấp dẫn, ngoạn mục)[adj] very impressive, exciting or surprising

Example: The view from my bedroom window was absolutely **breathtaking.**

70. Describe a film you watched at home or in a cinema.

You should say:
what film it was
what it was about
why you chose to watch that film
who you watched it with
and explain if you learned anything important from the film

ANSWER

As a frequent **moviegoer,** I watch a lot of films. One of the movies that I enjoyed the most recently was The Martian.

The movie was based on a novel of the same title by Andy Weir. Just like many other **sci-fi** films, it was about man travelling in space, however, this time, our main character was **stuck** on Mars due to a **dust storm** which nearly killed him. All of the **crewmates** thought that he was dead, so they went back to Earth without him. But fortunately he was still alive, thus two and a half hours of the movie told the story of how he **fought for** his life in the **brutal** environment of Mars, until NASA **devised** a plan to rescue him.

My best friend is a big fan of **astronomy**, so she had read [2] the novel before. That's why she insisted on me going to see the movie with her. After watching the **trailer** and reading the **plot**, I was **hooked**. It was maybe the best two and a half hours of my week so far.

After watching the movie, I was amazed at how **ingenious** and strong humans can be when it comes to a life and death situation. Mark Watney, the hero of the movie, was a perfect **portrayal** of a young, humorous, brilliant and skillful engineer cum **botanist**. Although the **hostile e**nvironment of Mars **threatened** his **existence** many times, he **relentlessly** refused to quit. Instead, he overcame one problem at a time until he was successfully rescued. The message that I learned from the film is never to give up, however **hopeless** things seem to be.

VOCABULARY:

✓ **moviegoer**: [noun] a person who goes to the cinema.

✓ **sci-fi:** [noun] science fiction; based on imagined scientific discoveries of the future, such as space travel or life on other planets.

Example: **Sci-fi** movies have become more popular since space travel has become possible.

✓ **stuck on Mars**: the man was unable to escape from the planet.

Example: we were stuck in traffic and so we arrived late for work.

✓ **dust storm:** [noun] a storm that carries clouds of dust in the wind over a wide area.

Example: a lot of plants die after a **dust storm** passes through an area.

✓ **crewmates:** [noun] all the people working on a ship or, in this case, a spacecraft.

✓ **fought for his life:** [verb phrase] he made a great effort to stay alive.

Example: The man was badly injured in the accident, but he **fought for his** life and he recovered later in hospital.

✓ **brutal:** [adjective] if an environment is described as brutal this means that it is very dangerous and it is difficult for a person to survive.

✓ **devised:** [verb] NASA invented something new to rescue the man.

Example: a new system has been **devised** to control traffic in the city.

✓ **astronomy:** [noun] the scientific study of the sun, moon, stars and planets.

✓ **trailer:** [noun] a series of short scenes from a film or programme, shown in advance to advertise it.

Example: after watching an exciting trailer, I decided to go to see the film.

✓ **plot:** [noun] the events which form the story of a book, play or film.

Example: the book has **a plot** about a prisoner who escaped.

✓ **hooked:** [adjective] enjoying something so much that you want to see or do it.

✓ **ingenious:** [adjective] very clever at inventing new ideas.

Example: many **ingenious** researchers are working on ways to combat cancer.

✓ **portrayal:** [noun] the act of describing or showing something or somebody in a book, play or film.

Example: the actor gave a fantastic **portrayal** of a clever detective in the film.

✓ **botanist:** [noun] a person who studies plants.

✓ **hostile:** [adjective] a hostile environment is unsafe for humans, because there are many dangers.

Example: in the **hostile** environment of the desert, you must take a lot of water with you.

✓ **threatened his existence:** the many dangers and difficult conditions on Mars were a danger to his life.

✓ **relentlessly:** [adverb] in a way that continues strongly, without giving up.

Example: the soldiers **relentlessly** pursued their enemies after the battle.

✓ **hopeless:** [adjective] without hope

Example: after searching for the lost plane for many days, the situation seemed **hopeless** and it seemed that the rescuers would never find it.

71. Describe a (recent) time when you looked at the sky (either day or night)

You should say:
what you were doing when you looked at the sky
who you were with
what you saw
and explain how you felt when you looked at the sky.

ANSWER:

- Last week, my friends and I decided to go camping on the **outskirts** for the weekend.

- Living in a big city doesn't **offer** me much of a chance to enjoy the sky at night because of the **pollution,** the lights**,** and the **skyscrapers**. That's the reason why I liked this short trip so much because I could enjoy looking up at the **clear sky**, searching for stars and **observing** the moon.

- Luckily for me, there was a **full moon** that night. We made a small **campfire** and sat around the fire, **grilled** potatoes and **marshmallows**, happily **chatting** with each other.

- When the moon had risen high up in the sky, we all looked up, and started counting stars. I had never seen so many stars in the sky as I did that night. They **twinkled** while the moon shone brightly. At that moment, I **felt at peace**. My **mind was blank**; I wasn't thinking of anything else, all my sadness and **disappointments** disappeared. All I thought of was that I was content in that moment.

VOCABULARY:

✓ **outskirts:** the part of town that is far away from the center.

Example: We lived on the outskirts of town for about 10 years and then finally moved closer to the center last year.

✓ **offer**: in this context to offer you something means to make it available to you.

Example: Living in the city offers many exciting activities like going to the theater, attending concerts and lots of different types of restaurants.

✓ **pollution:** harmful substances in the air or water.

Example: The air pollution in the city is getting worse every year.

✓ **skyscrapers:** tall buildings that can be used for offices or residential units.

Example: New York City has many tall skyscrapers.

✓ **clear sky:** a sky that is clear of any pollution or other things (like clouds) that make it hard to see the stars and the moon.

Example: Tonight, when I looked up at the clear sky, I saw millions of stars.

✓ **observing:** watching, looking at, seeing.

Example: The scientist will be observing the monkeys this afternoon.

✓ **full moon:** The phase of the moon at which the moon, as viewed from Earth, appears to be fully illuminated by the sun. The full phase marks the half-way point of a single revolution of the moon around the earth.

Example: Did you see the full moon last night?

✓ **campfire:** a fire that is made while camping and around which you sit to cook food, roast marshmallows and talk.

Example: My son is always in charge of making the campfire.

✓ **grilled/to grill:** a way of cooking something on a grill over a fire.

Example: We grilled some hamburgers and hot dogs last night for dinner.

✓ **marshmallow:** A light, spongy, very sweet confection made of corn syrup, gelatin, sugar, and often vanilla.

Example: Kids love to roast marshmallows while camping.

✓ **chatting**: talking.

Example: They have been chatting for over two hours already.

✓ **to twinkle:** to shine and sparkle, flicker, glimmer - what stars do. Stars twinkle.

Example: The stars twinkled in the clear night sky.

✓ **to feel at peace:** to be peaceful or feel peaceful, without any worries or concerns.

Example: He felt at peace when he was meditating.

✓ **mind was blank:** to have nothing in your mind, to not be thinking about anything at all.

Example: After staying up all night studying, my mind was blank during class.

✓ **disappointment**: frustration, something that you feel disappointed or dissatisfied about.

Example: His grandmother has suffered many disappointments throughout her lifetime, but now she is living the good life

72. Describe a recent event (or something you did) that made you happy.

You should say:
what you did
where you were
who you were with
and explain why it made you happy.

ANSWER:

- Today, I am going to share with you a recent event that made me happy. A month ago, my friend and I attended a **hip-hop** and **contemporary** dance performance **sponsored by** the Japan Foundation Center, Goethe Institute, and L'Espace Center called "Europe Meets Asia".

- The tickets were free so we did not see any reason for not going; we both like dancing a lot. The performance was **given by** artists from Japan and Israel. It was a **combination of** hip-hop and contemporary dance.

- With their **talents**, they created such an amazing performance. We were surprised to see how **flexible** they were while performing. The dance also delivered a message which could be **interpreted** differently by different people. To me, it was about young people in the modern world, bored with the **daily routine** of life and trying to escape from this boredom in order to do something **spectacular** or at least **pursue their passions**.

- After a 40-hour workweek, this event was like a **fresh breeze** in my life. It was a new experience that I had **rarely** had before, because in Hanoi, we don't get to see art performances by foreign artists that often.

VOCABULARY

- **hip-hop**: a style of music usually based on rap and often including elements of other styles such as funk or rhythm and blues.

Example: My best friend is an awesome hip-hop artist who performs all around the world.

- **contemporary:** current, modern, nowadays.

Example**:** As an art collector, he focuses on contemporary artists from Asia and Europe.

- **sponsored by:** an individual or organization that puts something on, that supports an event financially.

Example: This evening's event was sponsored by Apple, Microsoft and Dell computers.

- **given by:** in this context the artists give a performance or perform and so we say it was given by them.

Example: The keynote presentation was given by Mark Zuckerberg, speaking Chinese.

- **combination of:** when two or more things are combined to create something new.

Example: The combination of science and art classes helps students learn in a creative way.

- **talent:** a special skill that one has.

Example: He has a talent for making movies and will likely become a director some day.

- **flexible:** to be able to bend your body in all sorts of ways.

Example: Ballet dancers and yoga instructors are very flexible.

- **interpret:** to understand something in a certain way.

Example: The two people interpreted the performance in two completely different ways.

- **daily routine:** that which you do every day, like get up, eat breakfast, go to work, come home, clean up, watch TV, go to bed.

Example: His daily routine starts at 5 a.m. and ends at 10 p.m.

- **spectacular:** amazing, fantastic, super special.

Example: His new book is spectacular. Have you read it yet?

- **pursue their passions:** to follow your interests and desires.

Example: He wants to pursue his passion for chemistry by getting a PhD.

- **fresh breeze:** used in this context to describe something that is new and refreshing.

Example: Spending a day out in the woods was like a fresh breeze, compared to my usual boring daily routine.

- **rarely:** not very often.

Example: I rarely go downtown due to the traffic.

73. A Polluted Place

Describe a polluted place.

You should say:

- What the place is
- What type of pollution it is/ are
- Cause and effect of pollution

and explain how can this pollution be controlled.

ANSWER:

It is regrettable that **Hanoi**, where I'm living, is negatively affected by **pollution** and the major environmental problems it is facing are water pollution, air pollution and noise pollution.

There are **various reasons** why this city is badly polluted. **Firstly**, due to **modernization**, more and more vehicles such as cars and motorbikes are used. This leads to **an increase** in exhaust emissions which contaminate the atmosphere, not to mention the rising level of **noise** pollution. **Secondly**, factories and industrial zones in the city have discharged **a huge amount of untreated waste** into rivers, causing death to many fish and other aquatic animals.

In fact, pollution makes people here less healthy, and **some** even suffer from **life-threatening** diseases such as lung cancer, skin cancer, and so on. Therefore, the government must deal with this problem **right away**. Cutting down on vehicle use is the best way **to reduce** air pollution and noise pollution. We can **do this** by encouraging people to use public transportation. Besides, those who **litter** should pay a heavy fine. Finally, I think **the best solution** is to raise awareness and educate people to protect the environment.

VOCABULARY

✓ **regrettable:** [adjective] something that you are sorry about and wish that it had not happened.

Example: It is **regrettable** that only a minority of people are concerned about the environment.

✓ **exhaust emissions:** [noun phrase] waste gases that come out of a car or other vehicle.

Example: The **exhaust emissions** from big trucks cause serious air pollution in my city.

✓ **contaminate:** [verb] make a place or thing dirty, by adding a substance that is dangerous or polluting.

Example: Every day, more and more vehicles enter the city centre and **contaminate** the atmosphere with their exhaust emissions.

✓ **discharge:** [verb] when somebody discharges a gas or liquid, they release it and it goes into the water or the air.

Example: The factory was fined for **discharging** chemicals into the river.

✓ **aquatic:** [adjective] living in water

Example: Rivers which are clean have a lot of **aquatic** life, such as fish and frogs.

✓ **life-threatening:** [adjective] likely to kill someone.

Example: Aid workers in poor countries often have to deal with difficult, **life-threatening** situations.

✓ **cutting down on:** [phrasal verb] reducing the size, amount or number of something.

Example: You will improve your health by **cutting down on** cigarettes.

✓ **awareness:** [noun] knowing that something exists and is important.

Example: In schools, campaigns about **awareness** of road safety are essential for young children.

74. Describe a piece of good news that you received.

You should say

what the news was

where you were when you received this news [Or: What you were doing when you received this news]

who gave you this news

and explain why you felt this was good news.

ANSWER

I'm going to talk about the time when I received the official notification of my scholarship to study in Japan over a year ago.

It's been a long time but I can still remember that day so well. At the time I got the news, I was **taking a quick nap**, then the alert sound from my phone woke me up. A new email had arrived.

It was an email from the International Affairs Office of a university in Japan informing me that I had been chosen to receive a scholarship during my exchange semester there. Several months before that day, I had applied for an academic exchange program in this university, they had accepted my application and nominated me to the **Scholarship Committee**.

So, when I received this email, it took my brain a few seconds for this news to **sink in,** and then **my heart suddenly jumped**. I **leapt out of my bed** and **screamed out loud,** because I was extremely excited. I had been waiting for this email for two months since I gained the **admission**. If I hadn't won the scholarship, my living expenses would have become a heavy **financial burden** for my parents, but thanks to the monthly **grants** that I received from the university, I could really enjoy my time in Japan without worrying about financial problems. Even now, I still keep this lucky email in my mailbox to remind me of that day.

VOCABULARY

✓ **Take a nap**: take a short sleep, especially during the day.

Example: I usually take a nap after lunch.

✓ **Nominate**: to formally suggest that somebody should be chosen for an important role, prize, position, etc.

Example: He was nominated as the best actor.

✓ **Scholarship Committee**: the committee in charge of reviewing and selecting recipients for university's scholarship.

Example: The Scholarship Committee has announced the list of scholarship recipients this semester.

✓ **Sink in:** be fully understood or realized**.**

Example: I was so surprised by the news of the disaster that it took a few moments to sink in.

✓ **Jump**: to make a sudden movement because of surprise, fear or excitement.

Example: Her heart jumped when she heard the news.

✓ **Leap**: to move or do something suddenly and quickly.

Example: She leapt out of bed.

✓ **Scream out loud**: to give a loud, high cry, because you are hurt, frightened, excited, etc. (in this situation: excited).

Example: I screamed out loud when I saw my old friend.

✓ **Admission**: the act of accepting somebody into an institution, organization, etc.; the right to enter a place or to join an institution or organization.

Example: She failed to gain admission to the university of her choice.

✓ **Burden**: a duty, responsibility, etc. that causes worry, difficulty or hard work.

Example: His illness placed a heavy financial burden on his family.

✓ **Grant:** a sum of money to be used for a particular purpose – in this case, given by the university to pay for my education during that semester.

Example: The University awarded me a grant, which enabled me to undertake a new piece of research.

75. Describe something special that you saved money to buy.

You should say:

What was it

Why you bought is

How long you saved money to buy it

and explain why it was important to you to buy it.

ANSWER

I'm going to talk about the mobile phone that I'm currently using. Prior to this one, I had used 2 or 3 phones, but they were all bought with my parents' money, so for me this phone has a special meaning.

About a year ago, my old phone started to **deteriorate**, especially its battery, sometimes it suddenly turned itself off and its apps ran **frustratingly** slowly. So I decided to buy a new one using my own money, as I thought I couldn't keep asking my parents to buy me all the things I want anymore.

I visited some websites to check for smartphone types, brands and prices, and finally found the phone that I thought would **meet** all **my needs**. However, at that time, it was quite expensive for me to **afford**, and I had to start **saving up**. I did some part-time jobs such as working as a private tutor and interpreter to earn some extra income, and tried to reduce the

budget I spent on shopping to **economize** as much as possible. During that time, I rarely bought new clothes or ate out with friends. Finally, after nearly three months, I had enough money to buy my dream phone. At the moment I first held it in my hands, I was extremely happy. It was not only the feeling of owning a new **technology gadget**, but also the happiness of completing a task in my to-do-list. I have kept using this phone until now and I hope it will work well for a long time to come.

VOCABULARY

✓ **Deteriorate:** to become worse.

Example: Her health deteriorated rapidly.

✓ **Frustratingly**: in a way that causes you to feel annoyed and impatient because you cannot do or achieve what you want.

Example: Progress was frustratingly slow.

✓ **Meet one's needs:** satisfy what is needed

Example: The new online course meets my needs – it is exactly what I want.

✓ **Afford**: to have enough money or time to be able to buy or to do something.

Example: We can't afford to go abroad this summer.

✓ **Save up:** to save money for something.

Example: I'm saving (up) for a new bike.

✓ **Budget**: the money that is available to a person or an organization and a plan of how it will be spent over a period of time.

Example: We decorated the house on a tight budget.

✓ **Economize:** use less money than you normally use.

Example: I plan to economize on holidays this year by camping instead of booking a hotel.

✓ **Technology gadget**: a small technological object (such as a device or an appliance) that has a particular function.

Example: He is interested in technology gadgets.

76. Describe a situation that made you a little angry.

You should say:

where you were when this happened

what you were doing at the time

who you were with

and explain how you handled this situation or

and explain why you felt angry.

Today, I would like to share with you a situation that made me a little angry. Two months ago when I did some online shopping for a jacket on the internet, I had the worst online shopping experience ever, which made me so annoyed.

I was surfing the internet to browse the options, looking for a warm casual jacket to get me through the colder weather that will soon be upon us. I stumbled upon one that was exactly what I wanted, so I left a comment to catch the seller's attention. I decided to order and pay for it and asked for it to be delivered to my house as soon as possible. She promised me that it would arrive within 2 days.

However, after 2 days I had received nothing. I found myself being cheated and it really made my blood boil. I tried my best to reach her to ask about the jacket which I had paid for, but there was never any answer at all when I tried to contact her. That's when it dawned on me that she had lied to me and the whole thing was a scam. My anger grew and I felt frustrated and confused at that time, because I could not do anything about it.

So, I learned the hard way that it was so risky to buy products online. I should not have done it. In future, if I come across something on the internet that I would really like, I will head for a store to check it out carefully before making a purchase decision.

VOCABULARY:

surf: [verb] use [the internet].

Example: I am **surfing** the internet for information about the new James Bond film.

browse: [verb] look at a lot of things, hoping to find something that you like.

Example: I sometimes go to my local bookstore to **browse** through the fiction section.

casual: [adjective] comfortable and informal clothes.

Example: In my spare time, when I don't have to go to work, I prefer to wear **casual** clothes.

get me through: [expression] help me to cope with a situation successfully.

Example: When I can't sleep, I sometimes watch TV to help **get me through** the night.

stumble upon: [phrasal verb] discover something/someone unexpectedly.

Example: While I was browsing through some websites, I **stumbled upon** the information that I needed for my essay.

cheat: [verb] trick someone or make them believe something which is not true.

Example: Many people felt **cheated** when the government failed to build more schools, as it had promised to do.

made my blood boil: [expression] cause someone to be angry.

Example: When my laptop was stolen, it **made my blood boil** and I needed a few minutes to calm down.

dawn on: [phrasal verb] realize something for the first time.

Example: When I entered the airport, it **dawned on** me that I had forgotten my passport.

scam: [noun] a clever and dishonest plan for making money.

Example: The offer of a free holiday was false. It was simply a **scam** to encourage people to buy tickets from the airline.

learned the hard way: [expression] learn from a bad experience, rather than being taught.

Example: After I had an accident on my bike, I **learned the hard way** that I should always wear a protective helmet.

risky: [adjective] involving the possibility of something bad happening.

Example: Working on a construction site is a **risky** job – you always have to be careful.

head for: [phrasal verb] go towards, go to find something.

Example: While my wife went looking for a new coat to buy, I **headed for** the nearest coffee shop!

77. Describe your favourite season or time of the year.

You should say:

what season (or time of the year) it is

what the weather is like at this time

what people usually do at this time

and explain why you enjoy that season or time of the year or

and explain why you enjoy that season or time of the year more than other seasons or times of the year.

Well, I'm living in Hanoi and you know, the weather patterns are quite different between the North and the South of Vietnam. There are four distinct seasons in Hanoi and the one that I like the most is autumn.

Autumn in Hanoi usually lasts for about 3 months, starting in September and ending in November. It seems to be the most comfortable season in the whole year. The weather during the fall is normally cool with some sunny spells. The temperature tends to fluctuate from 20 to 25 degree celsius. Occasionally, there are light rains in the evening but they are often just short showers.

With the cool breezes, it is ideal for people to get together outside and hang out with their friends. Anothing thing is that everyone wants to have picnics in the urban areas near Hanoi and take some pictures with their family. Also, this time of the year marks the beginning of a new school year for students around Vietnam.

In contrast, the summer is boiling, so it is torturing to have to go out in the streets under the hot sun. Likewise, the winter is freezing and in a typical spring there are usually heavy rains. So, these are really unattractive features of the other seasons. However, the fresh weather during the autumn really makes me feel relaxed and energizes me to do a lot of things. That is the major reason why I prefer the fall and why it has always been my favourite time of the year.

Vocabulary:

weather patterns: [noun] the regular way in which the weather changes throughout the year.

Example: Due to climate change, the familiar **weather patterns** are becoming less predictable.

distinct: [adjective] clearly different or of a different type.

Example: Traditional Vietnamese dishes are very **distinct** from Thai cuisine.

fall: [noun] North American English uses 'fall' and British English uses 'autumn'.

Example: In the **fall**, many people are already buying warm winter clothes ready for the really cold weather.

spells: [noun] short periods of time.

Example: It will rain for most of the day, but there will be some dry **spells.**

light: [adjective] not great in amount.

Example: The weather forecast is for **light** showers only, so don't worry if you forget to take your umbrella.

showers: [noun] short periods of rain.

Example: Today, there will be some **showers**, but there will also be many sunny spells.

breezes: [noun] winds that are not strong.

Example: The gentle **breezes** moved the curtains in my window just a little.

hang out: [phrasal verb] spend a lot of time in a place.

Example: During the school holidays, I **hang out** in the park with my friends.

marks: [verb] indicates the time of an event or when something regularly happens.

Example: When the leaves of the trees turn to red, this **marks** the beginning of autumn/the fall.

boiling: [adjective] extremely hot.

Example: In the summer weather, I was **boiling** in my overcoat!

torturing: [verb] causing severe discomfort or unhappiness.

Example: It was **torturing** for me to see him slowly becoming more and more ill.

freezing: [adjective] extremely cold.

Example: Don't forget to wear your winter coat and hat – it's **freezing** outside.

energize: [verb] give someone more energy or strength.

Example: The words of the football manager during the interval really **energized** the players.

78. Describe someone you know who recently moved to new accommodation.

You should sat:

who he or she is

what kind of accommodation they moved to

and explain why they moved.

I'm going to share with you a story about one of my friends who recently moved to new accommodation. We had a chance to meet 5 years ago when I travelled to Ho Chi Minh city, and we hit it off pretty well. We have kept in touch with each other regularly since then. And she has now left there for Hanoi because of her upcoming job.

Before moving here, she gave me a call to ask me to help her to find a small apartment in the centre of Hanoi. Fortunately, I knew a person who had one to rent near Hoan Kiem lake. It seemed to fit her needs, I guess, so I sent her some photos of this apartment. Although I still could not be sure if she would like it, it turned out that she was really interested in it.

It is kind of a serviced fully furnished aparment including air conditioner, washing machine, hair dryer – just about everything you can think of. It is about 50 metres square with only one bedroom and modern interior decor. What she really loved was the small balcony with a view of Hoan Kiem lake. She finds it wonderful and relaxing when sitting there and enjoying a cup of coffee after a long stressful day at work. Also she can get to work in almost no time, just about 5 minutes.

My friend and I threw a house warming party for her. At weekends, the three of us tend to get together just to hang out and take it easy. Because she lives away from her family, I have tried my best to help her deal with unfamiliar situations in her new accommodation as much as possible. She is really grateful to me and she treated me to a dinner as a way of thank you.

Vocabulary:

hit it off: [expression] have a good friendly relationship with someone.

Example: I met some new work colleagues at the office today, and we **hit it off** straight away.

kept in touch: [expression] maintained contact with someone, by calling or writing to them.

Example: Have you **kept in touch** with your old friends from university?

upcoming: [adjective] something that will happen soon.

Example: It is not certain who will win the **upcoming** presidential election.

fit her needs: [expression] be suitable for her.

Example: The course was perfect to **fit her needs,** because the qualification at the end would enable her to become a teacher.

turned out: [phrasal verb] happened or ended in a particular way.

Example: I was not allowed to enter the country, because it **turned out** that my visa had expired.

serviced apartment: [noun] services like housekeeping, regular cleaning, parking, security are usually provided.

Example: A **serviced apartment** provides many of the comforts and conveniences of a hotel room.

just about: [adverb] almost.

Example: Although I only started the course last week, I know **just about** all of my fellow students.

decor: [noun] the style in which the inside of a building is decorated.

Example: The restaurant has an elegant new **decor**, including lighter colours and large paintings.

in almost no time: [expression] very rapidly.

Example: If you take the fast train, you should arrive there in almost no time.

house warming party: [noun] a party given by someone who has just moved into a new house.

Example: At my **house warming party**, I invited all my new neighbours.

hang out: [phrasal verb] spend time in a place, without any special purpose.

Example: I sometimes **hang out** at my local coffee shop, in case any of my friends call in for a coffee.

take it easy: [expression] relax.

Example: My doctor told me to **take it easy** and not to do any heavy physical work.

79. The First Time You Used a Foreign Language

Describe the first time you used a foreign language to communicate.

You should say:

what the situation was

where you were

who you communicated with

and explain why you used a foreign language to communicate on this occasion.

ANSWER:

I have been learning English for **a long time**, but I haven't had many chances to practice speaking English **with native speakers**. To the best of my recollection, **the first time** I used it was on **Christmas Eve** three years ago.

At that time, I was hanging out with my friends. Suddenly, **a foreigner** came up to me and asked for directions to a supermarket. Honestly, he spoke **too quickly** for me to catch everything. But after **he repeated** his words, I finally understood and showed him the way to the nearest supermarket. I used **body language** a lot to explain the directions to him, since I didn't speak English well then. **After that**, he said "**Thank you"** to me and headed for the supermarket.

I realize that **English** plays an important role in our life, **despite the fact** that we don't live in English-speaking countries. It is spoken **globally** and it's **becoming** the dominant language. Therefore, I have been trying to practice speaking English **daily** so that I can have a **good command** of this language, and I can talk **confidently** with foreigners, whatever the topic of conversation.

VOCABULARY

✓ **to the best of my recollection:** [expression] if I remember correctly.

Example: I was not present at that meeting, **to the best of my recollection**.

✓ **hanging out: [**phrasal verb] spending a lot of time in a particular place, but doing no special activity.

Example: My friends and I enjoy **hanging out** at our local coffee shop, just chatting and enjoying a coffee.

✓ **came up to:** [phrasal verb] approached.

Example: The manager **came up to me** and shook my hand.

✓ **catch everything:** [expression] hear or understand everything that he said.

Example: At the train station it was too noisy to hear all the information clearly, and I was unable to **catch everything.**

✓ **body language:** [noun] the way that you show what you feel or think by moving your body.

Example: Sometimes, our teacher uses **body language**, not words, to help to communicate an idea.

✓ **headed for:** [phrasal verb] moved in a particular direction.

Example: After the show finished, everyone **headed for** the exits.

✓ **have a good command of:** [expression] have a good knowledge of something.

Example: People who apply for this job must **have a good command of** English, in order to communicate with our American customers.

80. Describe a free-time activity that you like to do after you have finished your study or work.

You should say:
what you do
where you do it
when you do it
who you do it with
and explain why you like to do this activity.

Well, I am kind of a workaholic. I am so caught up in my work on a daily basis that I do not have too much time to relax after a long working day. Listening to music is the only thing that I really want to do to relax at home.

There are a few things that I normally try to do to wind down, but listening to music is how I usually like to spend my free time. Because my work takes almost all the time during the day, I want to make the most of my evening by creating a cozy atmosphere for myself and just put my feet up. When I stay home, I like to dim the lights, turn on some soft music and enjoy myself for the rest of the evening. Soft light and sounds help me to chill out pretty well.

I also enjoy grabbing a favourite book and relaxing in a big comfy chair with a blanket and my pet cat on my lap, while listening to music in the background. It works wonders. I find it therapeutic and relaxing when I take a little time for myself to play an inspirational song to unwind. You see, you don't have to waste a lot of time and money in order to have a restful evening.

If I take some days off, I will go for a short holiday to get away from all the pressures. However, for the rest of the days when I have finished my work already, listening to music is my preferred choice. That is wonderful for me, and so I do not see myself changing my habit any time soon.

Vocabulary:

workaholic: [noun] a person who works very hard and finds it difficult to stop working and do other things.

Example: My sister is a **workaholic** – she never takes a day off to relax and have fun.

caught up in: [phrasal verb] very involved in an activity, so that you do not notice other things.

Example: I was so **caught up in** my revision that I forgot to feed the dog.

wind down: [phrasal verb] rest or relax after a period of activity.

Example: After teaching all day, it's nice to go and have a coffee to **wind down.**

make the most of: [expression] use to the best advantage.

Example: I intend to **make the most of** the holidays by finishing my assignment.

cozy: [adjective] warm and comfortable, because you are in a small space.

Example: I feel **cozy** sitting in front of the fire in my small house.

put my feet up: [expression] sit down, lie back and rest.
Example: I like to sit in my favourite armchair with a cup of coffee and just **put my feet up** after I come home.

dim: [verb] make a light less bright.
Example: In the theatre, the play was about to begin. The lights were **dimmed** and the audience fell silent.

chill out: [phrasal verb] spend time relaxing.
Example: I like to go out with my friends and **chill out** – just chatting and having a coffee.

grabbing: [verb] having or taking something quickly.
Example: You should have a good lunch – **grabbing** a sandwich is a bad habit.

comfy: [adjective] comfortable.
Example: My new bed is really **comfy** and I fall asleep straight away.

works wonders: [expression] has a very good effect on someone or something.
Example: A good night's sleep **works wonders** for your mind and body.

therapeutic: [adjective] helping you to relax.
Example: My dentist plays soft music while her patients are waiting, because she says that it is **therapeutic.**

inspirational: [adjective] something that motivates you and makes you have exciting ideas.
Example: The President gave an **inspirational** speech to his supporters.

unwind: [verb] SEE: wind down.

any time soon: [expression] in the near future.
Example: After our big argument, I am not expecting her to call me **any time soon**.

81, 82, 83. Describe an educational TV program that you have seen./Describe a new skill you would like to learn/(Something that you cannot do now) /Describe an art or craft activity that you did at school.

Describe an educational TV program that you have seen

You should say:

what this program was (or, is) about

how often you have watched it

what types of people watch this program

and explain why you think it was (is) educational or explain what you liked or disliked about this program.

Describe a new skill you would like to learn.

You should say:

what skill (= what you would like to learn to do)

how you would learn it

how difficult you think it would be

and explain why you would like to learn this skill.

Describe an art or craft activity that you did at school.

You should say:

what activity it was

how you did it *

who you did it with

and explain how you felt about this activity.

ANSWER:

Since I am very interested in **handwork** activities, I would like to learn how to make a 3D card. I love watching TV programs that teach you how to do **crafts**.

Nowadays, there are so many TV channels that focus on **Do-It-Yourself** activities but the one that I find the most interesting and **doable** is "Art Attack" on Disney Channel. The show **airs** for 30 minutes once a week.

- **For topic Describe an educational TV program that you have seen**

This show is made especially for young children and **tweens**, however, I think it is also **suitable for** the parents and adults.

Each **episode** shows you how to make different arts and craft products, from a handmade craft to a picture frame, or how to **decorate** your room, how to make a flower vase from old newspaper, etc.

By watching **these kinds of** programs, children are encouraged to develop their imagination. In addition, it also helps bring parents and kids closer to each other, **creating a strong bond** among family members.

- **For topics Describe a new skill you would like to learn/(Something that you cannot do now) /Describe an art or craft activity that you did at school.**

The host of the show showed us step-by-step how **to fold a paper** to create a heart shape and how we could glue the heart shape onto the blank card so that when we opened it, the heart popped up.

It was very interesting to see the product after it was done. Nowadays, it is easy to buy preprinted cards, but none of them are 3D. Being handmade makes the card more unique and most importantly is that it was made by me. **Imagine if** someone gave you a present and said that it was made by him or her, how special you would feel!

Vocabulary

✓ **handwork activities:** when you create something with your own hands; "My daughter loved to do handwork activities when she was younger."

✓ **crafts:** projects that people like to do that involve creating something that is artsy, but is not considered fine art. Examples are things that you make to decorate your home, quilting, sewing, woodworking, etc. "I love to make crafts and give them to people as presents."

✓ **Do-It-Yourself:** also known as DIY, a popular term to talk about the things that people can do themselves, like minor house repairs and maintenance, building things and working in their yards; "My husband loves Do-It-Yourself house projects."

✓ **doable:** something is doable if it can be done, if you can do it; "Her son didn't think his homework was doable, but he was just complaining and being lazy."

✓ **airs:** to air means to run a program on TV or radio; "My favorite TV show airs every night at 5:00 p.m."

✓ **tweens:** describes kids between the ages of 10 and 12; they are in the tens, but they aren't yet considered teenagers because they haven't hit the numbers that say teen, like thirteen; "I have a class full of crazy tweens!"

✓ **suitable for:** appropriate for, it's okay for; "This show is not suitable for children and that is why it is rated TV14."

✓ **episode:** an episode is one installment of a series of shows; a season may have 8 to 10 episodes or more; "Did you see the new episode of Game of Thrones?"

✓ **decorate**: to put things in a room to add color and artwork; "My bedroom is so boring; I need to decorate it!"

✓ **these kinds of programs:** use these kinds of to talk about something in the plural; use this kind of to talk about something singular; "I like these kinds of bananas." or "I like this kind of banana."

✓ **to create a strong bond:** to make a strong connection with another person: "I created a strong bond with the members of my soccer team over the last two years."

✓ **to fold a paper:** to move the different parts of a piece of paper over other parts; "Origami is the art of folding paper into intricate shapes."

✓ i**magine if:** to think about a possibility, "Imagine if you were rich. What would you buy?"

84. Describe a famous person in your country

You should say:
Who this person is
How you know this person
What this person is famous for
And explain why you like this person

ANSWER

Today I am going to talk about a famous person in my country who I have admired since I was young. He is Professor Ngo Bao Chau.

I first heard about Ngo Bao Chau on the news 6 years ago when he received the Fields Medal, which is often described as the mathematician's Nobel Prize. However, earlier in

2005, he was granted the title of professor in Vietnam, becoming the country's youngest professor ever.

Professor Ngo Bao Chau has been awarded the highest academic honor due to his great mathematical research. He is best known for proving the Fundamental Lemma. His work has achieved such a distinction that it has been listed as one of the top ten scientific discoveries of 2009 by Time magazine.

The story of Ngo Bao Chau has inspired me considerably. I remember in an interview after receiving the Medal, Ngo Bao Chau said that he had been studying maths out of /due to / because of/ owing to his passion but not out of /due to / because of/ owing to a desire to achieve. This statement impressed me a lot. Besides, another characteristic I like regarding this professor is his persistence. During the time studying the Fundamental Lemma, became stuck and almost failed to solve this complex problem. Despite the difficulties, he did not choose to give up so finally he got through them. His personality has been an inspiration for me working harder towards my dream.

VOCABULARY:

✓ **Describe as (miêu tả là)** [verb] to portrait a person or a thing as something in a more particular state.

Example: My friend described our new teacher as a middle-aged woman wearing a thick pair of glasses.

✓ **Mathematician (nhà toán học)** [noun] an expert in Maths.

Example: Isaac Newton is not only a famous physicist but also a great mathematician whose book called Mathematical Principles of Natural Philosophy became the catalyst to understanding mechanics.

✓ **Best known for (nổi tiếng về)** [adjective] famous for.

Example: Nha Trang is one of interesting tourist attractions which is best known for stunning beaches and fresh seafood.

✓ **Get over (vượt qua)** [phrasal verb] to find a way to solve or deal with a difficult problem.

Example: You will get over the illness more quickly if you relax and follow the doctor's instruction.

✓ **Despite (dù cho)** [preposition] has a similar meaning to although or even though and expresses a contrast between two things. It is always followed by a noun or a noun phrase.

Example: You must keep moving forward to make a success despite despondency.

✓ **Persistence (sự kiên trì)** [noun] firm or obstinate continuance in a course of action in spite of difficulty or opposition.

Example: Her persistence and enthusiasm have helped the group to achieve its international success.

85. Describe an article you read in a magazine or on the internet about healthy living.

You should say:

what the article was about

where you read it (which magazine or website)

and explain what you learned/thought from the article

ANSWER:

- Recently I came across an interesting article on **the internet** about the benefits of drinking **warm water with lemon** in the **morning**. The website name is **bodyandsoul.com.au**.
- You would **normally think** that lemon water is just **one kind of drink** that helps keep your body hydrated, however, it brings you **many other benefits** that you can't imagine.
- The article says that if you build up a habit of **kicking off your day** with a glass of warm **water** with the juice of **half a lemon**, you will do your body and mind a great favor.
- **Firstly**, lemon juice is a great source of **Vitamin C**, thus it helps **boost** your immune system in fighting off colds and flu. Moreover, **lemons** are great for combating skin ageing because they are **rich** in antioxidant properties. Lemon **also** helps clean our urinary tract and detoxify our livers. The list of benefits doesn't **end** there. The high level of **potassium** in lemons can help **brain and nerve functioning** and control blood pressure. Lemon water can also ward off **stress and depression**, which have been linked to **low levels** of potassium. As a result, the article suggests if you continue drinking warm water with lemon **first thing in the morning** for at least **21** consecutive days, you will notice the difference in your **skin** and **general health** immediately.

VOCABULARY

✓ **hydrated:** [adjective] capable of absorbing or taking in water.

Example: In hot weather, keep your body hydrated by drinking lots of water.

✓ **build up:** [phrasal verb] to develop.

Example: In business, it is important to build up a good relationship with customers.

✓ **kicking off your day**: [verb phrase] starting your day [like starting a football match by kicking the ball]

Example: Kick off your day with a good breakfast, before you go to school.

✓ **boost your immune system:** [verb phrase] to make your body stronger to help it fight against illness.

Example: A healthy diet of fruit and vegetables, combined with exercise and sleep, will boost your immune system by making your body strong.

✓ **fight off:** [phrasal verb] to resist – in this case, illness.

Example: The soldiers fought off the enemy attack.

✓ **ageing:** [noun] the process of becoming old.

Example: There are some skin care products which claim to stop the ageing process.

✓ **antioxidant:** [adjective] removing harmful substances from the body.

Example: Vitamin C has antioxidant properties, so it is good to have it in your diet to prevent illness.

✓ **urinary tract:** [noun] the part of the body through which waste liquid passes.

Example: If you have pain when you go to the toilet , it may be a symptom of an infection of your urinary tract.

✓ **detoxify:** [verb] to remove harmful or poisonous substances, in this case from your liver.

Example: As harmful substances can build up during the night, you can clean your liver and detoxify it by drinking lemon water in the morning.

ward off: [phrasal verb] to protect or defend yourself against illness or danger.

✓ Example: She put up her hands to ward off her attacker.

86. Describe a time you missed an important appointment for something

You should say:

- when and where it happened
- what the appointment was for
- what happened when you missed it
- and explain how you felt about the appointment.

ANSWER

I'm going to describe the time I was late for my first job interview. It happened in the fall of 2012, as I recall, which is when I was a **sophomore**. I had always dreamed of becoming a **marketer**, so I'd already joined a marketing course and after that, I was ready to apply for an internship in this field.

The company I applied to was a **start-up** in **education technology**. Specifically, they offered online English courses to those who wanted to **brush up on** their English speaking skills. They were looking for a marketing intern, and as I was interested in both English and marketing, I applied for this position.

I sent them my CV and was accepted, so we made an appointment for an interview. However, when the day came, I was late for the interview because I was lost. I can still **recollect** the **panic** that I felt, and I finally managed to get to the interview, but 30 minutes late. "I am so **doomed**," I thought, and the next thing I knew, the interviewer just told me I was late for the interview without **prior** notice so regrettably I was **rejected**.

That was a painful experience for me, and since then I've tried my best not to be late for any appointments ever again.

VOCABULARY

✓ **Sophomore** [n] a student in the second year of a couse of study at a college or university:

e.g. Most universities provide internship opportunities for their third-year students, or even sophomores.

✓ **Marketer** [n] a person whose job it is to promote and sell the products of a company in the best possible way:

e.g. As a marketer and developer of software, I earn a lot of money these days.

✓ **Start-up** [n] a company that is just beginning to operate:

e.g. His company was a successful start-up in the field of bio-engineering.

✓ **Education technology** [expression] education using technology to deliver knowledge, e.g. using computers and projectors in class:

e.g. Education technology has become really popular these days.

✓ **To brush up on smt** [phrasal verb] to quickly improve a skill, especially when you have not used it for a long time:

e.g. I must brush up on my Spanish before I go to Spain.

✓ **To recollect** [v] to remember something, especially when you make an effort to remember it:

e.g. I recollect all the details of my flat in Paris.

✓ **Panic** [n] a feeling of fear or anxiety that prevents you from thinking clearly:

e.g. Office workers fled in panic as the fire started to spread.

✓ **Doomed** [adj] certain to fail, die, or be destroyed:

e.g. This is a doomed city – the volcano will erupt very soon.

✓ **Prior** [adj] happening or existing before something else or before a particular time:

e.g. Please give us prior notice if you need an evening meal.

✓ **To reject** [v] to refuse to accept, use, or believe something or someone:

e.g. The prime minister rejected the suggestion that it was time for him to resign.

87. Describe a team project for study or entertainment

You should say:

- When you did it
- Where you did it
- Who you did it with
- How you did it
- Why you liked it or disliked it

ANSWER

Well, **when it comes to** teamwork, I can only think of a bad memory. I remember when I was a first year student, my teacher asked me and some other students in my class to set up a team project. A girl was **assigned** to be the leader and we had to prepare a presentation about our university. My teacher thought it would make a great contribution to our friendship, and the whole thing done with the best of intentions. But it turned out to be the worst team project ever.

All of us were **freshmen**, so my team was essentially **a bunch of** strangers who I happened to be teamed up with. I didn't know anything about the others, and they knew nothing about me. Moreover, it was obvious that the leader didn't have any leadership skill. She didn't know how to **allocate** work to individual team members. She always **sat on the fence**, I mean, she let every member raise their voice but she didn't know which one would be the best. As a result, she wasn't able to make any decisions. No one in our team showed any respect for her. They only did what they wanted to do. And I was no exception. I was too busy **doing my own thing**. In the end, no one did any work and nothing was done. Several weeks later, I was still **kicking myself for** taking part in such a team project.

VOCABULARY

✓ **When it comes to:** [expression] as for something; speaking about a particular topic

Example: When it comes to trouble, little boys know how to cause it.

✓ **assign:** [verb] to give a particular job or piece of work to someone

Example: The case has been assigned to our most senior officer.

✓ **freshmen:** [noun] first-year university or college students

Example: The dean of the university gave a speech of welcome to all the freshmen who had arrived there to study.

✓ **A bunch of:** [expression] a large group

Example: She gave me a bunch of flowers.

✓ **allocate:** [verb] to give something to someone as their share of a total amount, to use in a particular way

Example: The government is allocating £10 million for health education.

✓ **Sit on the fence:** [idiom] not to take sides in a dispute; not to make a clear choice between two possibilities in a dispute.

Example: My tutor told me to support one side of the argument or the other, and not to sit on the fence.

✓ **Do one's own thing:** [expression] following one's own interests and ideas, without considering other people

Example: On Sundays, I just enjoy doing my own thing without any regular commitments.

✓ **To kick oneself for:** [idiom] regret doing something

Example: I'm kicking myself for not buying that T-shirt.

88. Describe a place in other countries where you would like to work

You should say:

Where you would like to go

What kind of work/ job you would like to have

When you would like to go

And explain why you want to work in that place.

ANSWER

Today, I would like to talk about a place in foreign countries where I would like to work. It is Melbourne, the second largest city in Australia which has become home for millions of people from various countries around the world.

n Melbourne, I would like to work for an environmental NGO, as my specialty at/in university is Environmental Resources. So, right after I finish my studies in Vietnam, I will go to Melbourne to apply for a job there.

Well, the reasons why I would like to work in Melbourne are quite simple. First, I have a lot of friends and relatives who live and work in Melbourne. They can help me whenever I need. They also tell me that the community of Vietnamese overseas is very large in Melbourne. So, the multi-cultural challenge won't be a big problem for me. And what's more, like Sydney, Tokyo or some other cities in the world, Melbourne is a 'liveable city' due to / because of its high ranking-in education, research and healthy lifestyle/ way of life. So I think that to live, study or work there will be an interesting experience.

VOCABULARY

✓ Various (khác nhau, nhiều loại): [adjective] different, a variety of, many types of.

Example: My students come from various countries in the world, such as India, Laos, Thailand, etc.

✓ Specialty (chuyên môn, chuyên ngành):[noun] focus, special field of study

Example: Marie Cury was a well-known scientist with her specialty in radiation

✓ Apply for a job/position(nộp đơn xin, đăng ký xin việc):[verb] to enroll in, to write a letter asking for a job

Example: She submited a letter to apply for that post/ position

✓ Relatives (họ hàng, người nhà)

Someone who is close in the family branch, such as aunt, uncle, cousin, and so on.

Example: Tet holiday is an occasion for us to visit our relatives' houses and to give them best wishes

✓ Vietnamese overseas (Việt kiều)[noun]

Vietnamese people who live in foreign countries

Example: Each year, the Vietnamese overseas contribute a large amount of money to the country's development.

✓ Multi-cultural challenge(thử thách, khó khăn về đa văn hóa) [adj+n] difficulties caused by the clash between so many cultures

Example:Australia is an example of multi- cultural country

✓ Liveable (đáng sống, sống được) [adjective] + city: a city with favorable conditions for living

Example: This city is a liveable place for the poor

✓ Ranking (xếp hạng, thứ bậc, chất lượng)[noun] level, qualification

Example:

The ranking of education of Vietnam is still fairly low in the region

✓ Healthy (lành mạnh, khỏe mạnh) [adjective] good for health, good for operation

Example: Investors require a healthy environment for their business activities in Vietnam

89. Describe an interesting public place in your hometown, or where you are living now, that you like to go to

You should say:

where it is

how often you go there

what you do there

and explain why you think it is interesting.

ANSWER

Today, Im going to share with you an interesting public place where I really enjoy going to to hang out with my close friends in my spare time, which is a lovely café named The Hanoi Social Club.

It is situated at Hoi Vu alley – a small quiet lane near Hang Bong street in the centre of Hanoi. The coffee house is decorated in an old, traditional French style, with a lot of paintings on the wall, and it attracts a lot of foreign customers. As a full-time student, I have been so caught up in my studies, therefore, I just take a day off to go there on weekends after a long stressful week.

There are many live music events taking place there performed by acoustic guitarists, so I often check them out on the internet and come with my friends. Because this type of music is my kind of thing, I am in my element just humming the tune of the songs and relaxing in a comfy chair to enjoy myself.

The fast food tastes quite savoury and especially the coffee in The Hanoi Social Club is always irresistibly delicious. That might be the reason why it was ranked among the top 5 best coffee shops in Hanoi in 2015. What I really love is how cozy the atmosphere is, something which I have not found in any other coffee shop yet.

Whenever things go wrong, I often go there as a hideaway to escape from all the pressures and order a cup of coffee to relieve my stress. It always works wonders. I find it extremely therapeutic and soothing. Therefore, it's more than likely that I will still keep coming back to it as my favourite place in the near future.

VOCABULARY

✓ hang out: [phrasal verb] spend time in a particular place.

Example: I sometimes **hang out** at the shopping mall on Sundays and meet up with my friends.

✓ lane: [noun] a narrow street in a city, with buildings on both sides.

Example: The **lane** behind the museum will take you directly to the train station.

✓ decorate: [verb] make something more attractive.

Example: Her living room is always **decorated** with flowers.

✓ caught up: [phrasal verb] involved in a concentrated way, so that you forget other things around you.

Example: I was so **caught up** in the film that I forgot to feed the cat.

✓ acoustic: [adjective] designed to make natural sound, not sound produced by electrical equipment.

Example: Artists who play traditional music usually use **acoustic** instruments, copying the way in which the music was originally played.

✓ in my element: [expression] doing what I enjoy.

Example: I am really **in my element** at parties, because I love dancing and mixing with friends.

✓ hum: [verb] sing a tune with your lips closed.

Example: He began **humming** along to the music.

✓ comfy: [adjective] comfortable.

Example: This new jacket isn't as **comfy** as my old one.

✓ irresistibly: [adverb] in a way that is so strong that it cannot be stopped.

Example: Romeo and Juliet in Shakespeare's play were two young lovers who were **irresistibly** attracted to each other.

✓ cozy: [adjective] warm and comfortable and safe, often used to refer to something small.

Example: I felt **cozy** and relaxed sitting by the fire.

✓ hideaway: [noun] a place where you can go to be alone.

Example: He escapes to his **hideaway** in the country at weekends.

✓ relieve: [verb] remove or reduce an unpleasant feeling or pain.

Example: To **relieve** his feeling of guilt, he decided to tell the truth to the police.

✓ work wonders: [expression] have a very good effect on someone or something.

Example: If you have a bad cold, a hot lemon drink at night **works wonders.**

✓ therapeutic: [adjective] helping you to relax.

Example: I find that yoga is very **therapeutic**, and I always feel better after my yoga class.

✓ soothing: [adjective] that makes someone who is anxious or stressed, feel better.

Example: The doctor has such a **soothing** voice that his patients feel relaxed immediately.

90. Describe an item that you received and made you happy

You should say

When you received it

What the item was

Who gave you it

And explain why you felt happy

ANSWER (Trích từ đề "Describe an item of clothing that was bought for you")

I would like to describe **a coat** my parents gave me as a **present** on my **18th birthday**. I must say that it is **really smart** and **exactly** to my liking.

The coat is made of **cotton** only and by a **Vietnamese clothes brand**. It is a **knee-length black coat**, which was in fashion at that time. What I **like the most** is that there are **two deep side pockets**, so in **winter**, I always put my hands into those pockets to avoid the cold. Besides, I can **button the coat** from top to bottom and it's also got a decorative **waist belt**.

I am **so fond of** this coat that I usually wear it every winter. It **fits me perfectly** and makes me feel **comfortable and warm**, no matter how cold the weather is. I keep myself warm by wearing the coat **with jeans and boots**, which match it well.

In fact, I have never thought whether it will be out of fashion. As this coat is a gift from **my parents**, I treasure it a lot and – **for sure** - I will **keep wearing** this coat in the future.

VOCABULARY:

✓ **really smart:** [adjective] very clean, neat and attractive.

Example: If you want to look good on special social occasions, or even at work, it is important to dress in **really smart** clothes.

✓ **to my liking:** [expression] suitable, and how somebody likes something.

Example: The smart way in which she has decorated my house is exactly **to my liking.**

✓ **button the coat:** [verbal phrase] fasten the coat with buttons.

Example: Stepping outside my warm house, I quickly **buttoned the coat** which I was wearing to try and keep warm.

✓ **decorative:** [adjective] intended to look attractive, because of the way in which it is decorated.

Example: Many tourists visit the Temple of Literature because of the many **decorative** sculptures which they can see there.

✓ **fond of:** [expression] finding something pleasant or enjoyable, especially something that you have liked or enjoyed for a long time.

Example: My uncle is an excellent musician, and he is very **fond of** his hobby.

✓ **match:** [verb] if things match each other, they have the same colour or style and therefore look attractive together.

Example: None of these shoes **match** my jeans – they are all very different and they are too formal.

✓ **treasure:** [verb] have or keep something that you love and that is very valuable to you.

Example: Thank you for e-mailing the photos. They are superb and I will always **treasure** them and the memories that they bring.

91. Describe an item of electronic equipment that you would like to have.

You should say:

what it is

where you would get (buy) it from

what features it would have (or, special features you would like it to have)

and explain why you would like to have it.

ANSWER:

- Since I was **very small**, I have had a special interest in **cooking**. So, it is no surprise that, now that I have **grown up**, I dream of having an oven with rings for cooking **on top**, which is in very popular use **overseas**.
In Vietnam, this kind of oven is only sold at big electronic and appliance centers.

- Different from the **normal oven**, **this one** provides more **stable and exact** temperatures, which is one of the critical factors in **baking**. Besides, it has four **oven top elements**, which is highly convenient because it allows you to **cook and bake** at the same time. It also saves a lot of **space** in your kitchen because it is **free-standing**. **Another feature** that I would like the oven to have is a **self-cleaning system**. If you cook **frequently**, you will definitely appreciate this facility. It is inevitable that **when you cook**, your oven/cooker will get dirty. As a result, with the **self-cleaning feature**, it is **much easier** for us to clean.

VOCABULARY:

✓ **grow up:** [phrasal verb] to develop into an adult.

Example: The children have all **grown up** and left home now.

✓ **appliances**: [noun] a machine which is designed to do a particular job in the home, such as cleaning or preparing food.

Example: The store sells a range of **household appliances**, including microwave ovens and washing machines.

✓ **baking:** [noun] the process of cooking something in the oven using dry heat.

Example: My mother loves **baking** – she makes bread and cakes every week in her oven.

✓ **free-standing**: [adjective] not a part of or attached to something else.

Example: The cupboard was **free-standing**, so it was easy to move it away from the wall.

✓ **self-cleaning**: [adjective] able to be cleaned without a person having to clean it.

Example: Her new oven was **self-cleaning**; when it was dirty it cleaned itself automatically.

✓ **facility:** [noun] a special feature of a machine that enables it to do something extra.

Example: My computer has a **facility** for checking spelling.

92, 93. Describe a time when you forgot something important/Describe a time when you borrowed something.

Describe a time when you forgot something important.

You should say:

when it happened

what you forgot

who you were with

what was the result of your forgetting

and explain why it was important.

Describe a time when you borrowed something.

You should say:

what you borrowed

who you borrowed it from

what you used it for (how it was useful to you)

and explain why you borrowed it. *

ANSWER

Today I am going to share with you the time when I forgot something important/ I (once) borrowed something useful. It happened a few months ago when I had to attend an important exam for my accounting qualification.

The test strictly required candidates to use black ball point pen to write the paper. I was sure that morning when I left for the exam that I had put two pens in my backpack. However, I was not sure of their ink colors. So by the time I reached the examination hall, I quickly opened my backpack to check. To my surprise, they were both blue pens.

This could have resulted in my answer booklet being **disqualified** and I would have had to re-take the exam. Since the exam was held twice a year only, this mistake would not only have cost me valuable time but also a lot of money for the **upcoming** exams.

In **panic,** I looked around to see any familiar face to ask for help; however, I did not see anyone but the examiner. I took a deep **breath** and decided to ask him if he had a spare black pen that I could borrow.

Luckily, he did. He was willing to lend me one and did not forget to remind me about the regulation. I was relieved and ready to sit my exam, thanks to a kind examiner.

VOCABULARY

✓ **disqualified:** [verb] prevent somebody from doing something, because they have broken the regulations.

Example: The police stopped the man in his car. He had been drinking and driving and he was **disqualified** from driving for 3 years.

✓ **upcoming**: [adjective] something which is **upcoming** is going to happen soon.

Example: Brazil is preparing for the **upcoming** Olympic Games in 2016.

✓ **panic:** [noun] a sudden feeling of fear.

Example: As the fire spread through the school, the students ran out **in panic**.

✓ **breath:** [noun] an amount of air which enters your lungs at one time.

Example: He can count from 1 to 20 in one **breath.**

94. Describe a place with a lot of water (such as a river, a lake or the ocean) that you enjoyed visiting.

You should say:

where this place was

what people were doing at this place (Or, what you did there)

why you went there

who you went there with *

and explain why you liked this place.

ANSWER:

Last summer, my family went on a vacation to **Cat Ba island**, which is located in Hai Phong city and I was **really impressed** with the beach there.

To arrive at this destination, we had to take a ferry from the mainland, a journey which lasted roughly one hour. **Fortunately**, I was not seasick. When we **reached** there, to be honest, the scenery appealed to me **a lot**, especially the beach. The beach itself was **absolutely breathtaking** and the crystal clear water seemed to stretch **endlessly** to the horizon. In addition, from a distance, **huge waves** were crashing onto the shore, which sounded like a **melody.** I was **so excited** that I just wanted to jump into the sea right away.

On the beach, many people were enjoying the scenery, and some were swimming while their children were **making sandcastles**. My family quickly checked into the **hotel**, we **changed our clothes** and joined the people there.

Actually, this vacation gave me the chance **to relax** and all my worries seemed to fall away. Therefore, I hope that we will be able to enjoy **more holidays like this** every year.

VOCABULARY

✓ ***impressed***: [adjective] admiring something because it is good or beautiful.

Example: He never quit until he passed the exam, and we were **impressed** with his determination.

✓ ***ferry:*** [noun] a boat that carries people, vehicles or goods across a river or a short journey by sea.

Example: Some people take the **ferry** every day to cross Hong Kong harbour and arrive at work.

✓ ***the mainland:*** [noun] the main area of land of a country – not including any islands near it.

Example: The island is a short journey from the mainland by ferry.

✓ ***roughly:*** [adverb] approximately, but not exactly.

Example: I didn't count them, but there were **roughly** 50 students in the exam hall.

✓ ***seasick:*** [adjective] feeling ill and wanting to vomit when you travel on a boat or ship.

Example: During the storm, most of the passengers on the boat felt **seasick** and they did not recover until they reached the mainland.

✓ ***scenery:*** [noun] the natural features of an area, such as mountains, forests, rivers, when you are thinking about them as being attractive to look at.

Example: Many tourists go to Thailand to enjoy the magnificent **scenery**, especially on the coast.

✓ ***breathtaking:*** [adjective] very exciting or impressive.

Example: My hotel has a **breathtaking** view of the city – I can see all the famous buildings from the window of my room.

✓ ***crystal clear:*** [adjective] completely clear and bright.

Example: The sea is not polluted on Cat Ba island – it is **crystal clear** and you can see lots of beautiful fish.

✓ ***stretch:*** [verb] spread over an area of land or sea.

Example: The desert **stretches** for thousands of kilometres until you reach the sea.

✓ ***endlessly:*** [adverb] in a way that seems to have no end.

Example: The road appeared to continue **endlessly** into the distance.

✓ ***the horizon:*** [noun] the furthest point that you can see, where the sky and the land or sea appear to meet.

Example: When the ship appeared on **the horizon,** we knew that it had crossed the ocean safely.

✓ ***crashing:*** [verb] hitting something hard while moving and making a lot of noise as a result.

Example: The sea was **crashing** onto the rocks and it was much too dangerous to swim there.

✓ ***the shore:*** [noun] the land along the edge of a sea or ocean.

Example: In some areas of the beach, **the shore** was littered with rubbish left by tourists.

✓ ***melody***: [noun] a piece of music with a simple, clear tune.

Example: The sound of the birds singing in the morning is so beautiful that it is like a **melody.**

✓ ***right away***: [adverb] immediately.

Example: I would like you to go **right away**, because the shops will close very soon

✓ ***sandcastle:*** [noun] a pile of sand made to look like a castle [children make these on the beach].

Example: The children made two big **sandcastles** and put a flag on top of each one.

✓ checked into: [phrasal verb] arrived and registered at a hotel.

Example: We **checked into** our hotel and the receptionist gave us the keys to our room.

✓ ***fall away:*** [phrasal verb] gradually become smaller or fewer until they disappear.

Example: When I relax with my friends, my worries **fall away** and I can just enjoy myself.

95. Describe a family (not your own family) that you like.

You should say:

where this family lives

who the members of the family are

how you know them

what each person in this family does in life (student/work/retired etc.)

and explain why you like this family.

ANSWER:

I would like to talk about a family that I am very **close to**, it's my **uncle's** family.

His family has **2 daughters** who are around the **same age** as me; therefore, I usually drop in to his house to chat with them. At times, we **bake some cakes** and take them to our grandparents' house; then we have an **overnight sleep** there. Besides, we often **hang out** together, especially at **the weekends** just to take it easy and enjoy ourselves so as to get ready for a new week.

Their parents, I mean my uncle and aunt, are very warm-hearted, and they **both** work as college teachers. **So**, whenever I run into difficulties with **my homework**, I usually turn to them for help. I remember **when I was small**, I used to live in my **uncle's house** and they

looked after me as if I had been their daughter. Hence, our relationships are **out-of-this-world**, although we don't have much time together like before. But on **special occasions** such as the **Tet holiday,** we will gather at my grandparents' house to make **Chung cake**, enjoy a **firework performance** as well as wish New year's greetings to each other.

As a final point, I hope that we can maintain this close relationship for ever.

VOCABULARY

✓ ***close to***: [adjective] knowing someone very well and liking them a lot.

Example: I am still very **close to** my best friend, and we meet up regularly.

✓ ***drop in:*** [phrasal verb] pay an informal visit to someone.

Example: I was passing your house, so I decided to **drop in** and have a chat.

✓ ***overnight:*** [adjective] for one night.

Example: All the hotels were full and I could not find any **overnight** accommodation.

✓ ***hang out:*** [phrasal verb] spend a lot of time in a place.

Example: During the school holidays, a lot of kids **hang out** at the shopping mall.

✓ ***take it easy:*** [expression] relax and avoid working too hard or doing too much.

Example: The doctor told me to **take it easy** for a few days until I felt better.

✓ ***warm-hearted:*** [adjective] kind and generous.

Example: My parents were very **warm-hearted** and they always helped other people with their problems.

✓ ***run into difficulties:*** [expression] experience difficulties.

Example: As I did not understand much French, I soon **ran into difficulties** when I visited Paris.

✓ ***looked after***: [phrasal verb] were responsible for and took care of me.

Example: My aunt **looked after** us while our mother was in hospital.

✓ ***out-of-this-world:*** [expression] used to emphasize how good something is.

Example: Visitors to Vietnam think that the traditional food is **out-of-this-world.**

96, 97. Describe a person you know whose job is important to society/Describe someone in the news who you would like to meet.

Describe a person you know whose job is important to society

You should say:

who this person is

how you know this person

what job they do (= he or she does)
and explain why you think their job is important or why you think their work contributes to society.

Describe someone in the news who you would like to meet.

You should say:
who this person is
why they are in the news
and explain why you would like to meet this person.

ANSWER:

Today, I am going to talk about a person whose job is important to society/ in the news whom I would like to meet. It is **Kenny G**, the **saxophonist**.
I **first listened** to his music when I was very small, starting with the well-known piece "**Forever in Love**". It was so **melodious** and **relaxing** that every time I listened to it, I felt like I was on **cloud 9**.
Recently, Kenny G decided to **hold a concert** in Vietnam and it quickly became a **major news story,** covered in all of our media from newspapers to **TV**, and most radio channels. For **people like me**, who have been used to listening to his saxophone recordings **since we were young**, this was a **once in a lifetime chance** to meet him **in person** and listen to his music at a **live concert**, not on a music CD or online playlist.
Maybe to **many people**, being a musician doesn't contribute much to our society. However, **I think** that any career that we choose to pursue plays an important role in our lives. If a **business person** is important, so is **a musician**. Imagine a world **without** music, it would definitely be so **dull and boring**. In addition, music also helps us **soothe our soul** and **relax our brain** after hard days at work. Although we cannot quantify its benefit, the positive effects that music brings to our lives are undeniably worth valuing.

VOCABULARY

✓ ***saxophonist:*** [noun] a person who plays the saxophone.

Example: At the music concert, I thought that the **saxophonist** and the pianist were particularly good.

✓ ***piece:*** [noun] here we use 'piece' to mean a 'piece of music'. We usually use it to refer to classical music or jazz –not modern or rock music.

Example: At the concert, Kenny G played two **pieces** which he had written himself.

✓ ***melodious:*** [adjective] music which is pleasant to listen to is 'melodious'.

Example: The piece was so **melodious** that I remember it whenever I am feeling relaxed and comfortable.

✓ ***on cloud 9:*** [expression] extremely happy.

Example: When I read that I had passed the exam, I was **on cloud 9**.

✓ ***hold a concert:*** [verb phrase] to have a concert – we also use 'hold a meeting/hold a competition' in the same way.

Example: The organisers decided to **hold the concert** in New York.

✓ ***once in a lifetime***: [expression] used to describe something special that is not likely to happen to you again.

Example: When my friend invited me to Brazil, I knew that this was a **once in a lifetime** chance to visit the Amazon rainforest.

✓ ***live concert:*** [noun] a concert when people are watching and listening when the event is actually taking place.

Example: One thousand people attended the **live concert** to hear the musicians perform in person.

✓ ***soothe our soul:*** [verb phrase] to make us feel relaxed and peaceful.

Example: Rock music is loud, but to feel relaxed I prefer to listen to classical music to **soothe my soul.**

✓ ***quantify:*** [verb] to express something as an amount or number.

Example: The pleasure that we feel when we see or hear something beautiful is impossible to **quantify**.

98. A Childhood Toy

Describe a special toy you had in your childhood.

You should say:

what it was

who gave it to you

how often you played with it (or, how you played with it) *

and explain why it was special for you.

ANSWER:

I remember that when I was **young**, I was keen on watching the cartoon called "The many **adventures** of **Winnie the Pooh**", so much that I kept **pestering** my father for the stuffed bear Winnie the Pooh. **Finally**, my father gave me one as a present for my 6th birthday. When I got this toy, I **jumped for joy** and even paid no attention to my other presents.

This stuffed bear was, incredibly, **identical** to the character in the cartoon I had watched. He also had a **short red shirt** and was holding **a jar of honey** which was his favorite food. Therefore, I felt as if he had come from the movie.

Since then, I considered him **my closest friend** and I couldn't go anywhere without him, even when I went to sleep. Every day, I talked with the bear and told him about my daily routine. **Unfortunately**, I lost the bear at an amusement center, which made me cry for almost a week. **At that time**, I felt like I had lost a good friend who I could share everything with.

At present, whenever I **watch this cartoon** or see **any photos** of Winnie the Pooh, all the wonderful memories about him are brought back. **Thanks to the bear**, I experienced a happy childhood.

VOCABULARY:

✓ ***was keen on:*** [phrasal verb] was eager to/was enthusiastic about

Example: He was keen on fishing when he was a boy, and he still loves to go fishing at weekends.

✓ ***pestering:*** [verb] annoying someone by asking them many times.

Example: In the shop, some children were pestering their mother to buy ice-cream.

✓ ***stuffed bear:*** [noun] a toy in the shape of a bear, made of cloth and filled with soft material.

Example: Stuffed bears have always been popular as toys for young children.

✓ ***identical to:*** [adjective] exactly the same as someone or something else.

Example: His sports bag is identical to mine, and as a result one day I took his bag by mistake.

✓ ***amusement center:*** [noun] a center which has a lot of things which you can play on and many different activities to enjoy.

Example: Our city has a huge shopping mall, and it has a fantastic amusement center for children to play while their parents are shopping.

99. Describe a skill you learned when you were a child.

You should say:

what skill it was

who taught you this skill

how you learned it

and explain why you learned this skill.

ANSWER

Today, I would like to share with you a skill I learned when I was a child. Music is really my kind of thing, especially the sound of musical instruments. One of those that I enjoyed immensely was piano. I had always been attracted to this sound, therefore, I signed up for a piano course when I was in grade 5.

My piano teacher was on the wrong side of 30, but she looked quite young for her age. To be honest, I didn't pick up playing the piano very easily, so I had a problem in learning this skill at first. Fortunately, she was a very experienced and enthusiastic teacher, and she helped to familiarize me with every single lesson. I definitely found it soothing and inspiring when she taught me how to play the piano effectively.

Besides taking piano lessons, I also tried my best to learn on my own through the internet, spending a lot of time searching for online lessons to work on. I did pretty well, and as a result, I had a chance to join a piano contest that took place at The Opera House in Hanoi. I was really proud of that.

I have discovered that music plays an integral part in my life, getting me through tough situations, even the hardest days. Sometimes, I think everybody needs to take a little time to wind down and enjoy ourselves. Playing piano is actually how I usually spend my free time because it is really a good way for me to relax and refresh my mind.

VOCABULARY

✓ my kind of thing (expression): something that you like or that you are into

Example: Hip hop music is my kind of thing, but I can't stand country music.

✓ immensely (adv): greatly, especially

Example: She loves Taylor Swift immensely. I think she is her biggest fan.

✓ to be attracted to (expression): to really like someone or something

Example: She has been attracted to fashion since she was only two or three years old. She loves to shop for clothing.

✓ on the wrong side of 30 (expression): to be on the downhill side of a decade, so after 35, going toward 40, in this case.

Example: My professor must be on the wrong side of 50, but his girlfriend doesn't care.

✓ pick up (phrasal verb): to learn something

Example: When I was living in France, I picked up French very easily after only a few months.

✓ Fortunately (adv): used to say that something good or lucky has happened

Example: Fortunately for him, his mother paid for his plane ticket to New York.

✓ enthusiastic (adj): excited, having a positive and upbeat attitude

Example: He is an enthusiastic swimmer; he swims every day for 2 hours.

✓ familiarize me with (expression): to learn about something new

Example: I need to familiarize myself with this new cell phone that I just purchased yesterday.

✓ definitely (adv): for sure

Example: I definitely do not want to eat pizza again this evening. I have eaten it every night this week.

✓ soothing (adj): relaxing, usually something soft and quiet

Example: She put on some soothing music and took a bath.

✓ inspiring (adj): that which motivates you to do something

Example: The speech that the president gave turned out to be so inspiring that the workers decided to stop their strike.

✓ to work on (phrasal verb): to do, to practice

Example: I have to work on my English if I want to pass the IELTS exam.

✓ to play an integral part in (something) (expression): to be an important part of something

Example: My husband plays an integral part in running the day-to-day operations of our family business.

✓ wind down (phrasal verb): to relax, usually after doing something hard

Example: After coming home from work, she had a glass of wine and a bath to wind down.

✓ refresh (verb): to make (someone) have more energy and feel less tired or less hot

Example: When he finishes his workout, he takes a shower to refresh himself before going to work.

100. Describe a short trip that you frequently make (or, take) but dislike.

You should say:

where you travel from and to

how often you make this trip

why you make this trip

and explain why you dislike this trip.

ANSWER

I would like to talk about a short trip that I frequently take but dislike. My family and I have been living in Hanoi, however, we always make time for visiting my grandparents every other weekend in our hometown. It is situated in Ninh Binh province, which lies about 90 kms from Hanoi.

It normally takes us around 1 hour and a half to get there by car. To be honest, I usually get carsick, so I do not really enjoy travelling by car on trips outside the city. I mean, it makes me feel very tired and I have a headache throughout the journey, therefore I tend to fall asleep instead of staying awake to talk.

Despite the fact that carsickness makes it difficult for me to put up with even this short trip, I still try my best to take time to visit my grandparents with my small family. You know, because we are living in a big city, we are so caught up in work and study as well, that our lifestyle does not allow us to have much time to get together too often.

We always make the most of the family get-together, sharing the cooking, having meals and swapping a lot of stories with each other. What I really enjoy are the beautiful views of the countryside that my hometown offers. Once you have seen it, I guess, you would keep coming back for more. Although it is so tough to stop my carsickness, our family ties and the beauty of my small hometown will keep drawing me back there.

VOCABULARY

✓ every other: [adjective] each alternate, every second.

Example: We have to pay the electricity bill **every other** month – in January, March, May and so on.

✓ carsick: [adjective] a feeling in your stomach that makes you want to be sick/vomit because of the movement of a car.

Example: Whenever I try to read a book or newspaper in a car, I start to feel **carsick.**

✓ staying awake: [expression] not going to sleep.

Example: After studying all night, I found it difficult **staying awake** during the exam.

✓ carsickness: [noun] the feeling that you are going to be sick when you travel in a car.

Example: We had to stop the car several times during the journey, because I was suffering from **carsickness**. I felt better after a short break and a walk for a couple of minutes.

✓ put up with: [phrasal verb] accept someone or something which is annoying or unpleasant, without complaining.

Example: Although our hotel room was small and uncomfortable, we decided to **put up with** it for one night.

✓ caught up in: [phrasal verb] very involved in an activity, so that you do not notice other things.

Example: I was so **caught up in** my revision that I forgot to feed the dog.

✓ get together: [expression] if two or more people get together, they meet each other, having arranged the meeting before.

Example: Shall we **get together** for a coffee and a chat on Friday?

✓ make the most of: [expression] use to the best advantage.

Example: I will **make the most of** my year in Spain to improve my Spanish.

✓ swapping: [verb] giving something and receiving something in exchange.

Example: **Swapping** e-mails after the holiday, we arranged to keep in contact in future.

✓ offers: [verb] provides the opportunity for something.

Example: The hotel **offers** excellent facilities for families.

✓ tough: [adjective] difficult.

Example: I will have to study hard, because the exam is really **tough.**

✓ family ties: [noun] strong connections between members of a family.

Example: Now that my sister has moved to Australia, it is difficult to maintain our old **family ties.**

✓ drawing me back: [phrasal verb] attracting or encouraging me to return.

Example: My memories of Paris keep **drawing me back** to visit the city.