



# Practice Test 2

Level C2

# Contents

<b>Introduction to Skills for English</b>	<b>4</b>
About Skills for English	4
The Skills for English Practice Tests	4
What is included in this document?	5
How you can use this document	5
<b>Practice Test 2: C2 Speaking Test</b>	<b>6</b>
Speaking: Part 1	6
Speaking: Part 2	7
Speaking: Part 3	9
Sample answers and comments	10
Sample Answers	10
Comments	12
<b>Practice Test 2: C2 Listening Test</b>	<b>13</b>
Listening: Part 1	13
Listening: Part 2	16
Listening: Part 3	18
Listening Scripts	19
Part 1	19
Part 2	23
Part 3	26
Answer key	28
Part 1	28
Part 2	28
Part 3	28
<b>Practice Test 2: C2 Reading Test</b>	<b>29</b>
Reading: Part 1	29
Reading: Part 2	36
Reading: Part 3	39
Answer key	42
Part 1	42

Part 2	42
Part 3	42
<b>Practice Test 2: C2 Writing Test</b>	<b>43</b>
Writing: Part 1	43
Part 1 sample answer	44
Comments	44
Writing: Part 2	45
Part 2 sample answer	46
Comments	46

# Introduction to Skills for English

## About Skills for English

*Skills for English* is a qualification that enables you to demonstrate your knowledge of the English language for a range of purposes, including work, study or settlement. *Skills for English* tests make the process of taking a test and gaining an English language qualification as easy and convenient as possible.

*Skills for English: SELT* is a Secure English Language Test approved by the UK Home Office for UK Visa purposes. You take the level you need for your required visa, making the test quick and convenient. *Skills for English: SELT* is available to take in our network of test centres in over 120 countries.

*Skills for English: Global* is an SQA-assured test that you can take at your chosen level. You can take the test at home, using our secure online remote proctoring. *Skills for English: Global* is ideal for academic applications or professional development.

*Skills for English* provides an accurate measure of language proficiency through practical and realistic tasks that you would expect to undertake in an English-speaking environment. You choose the test level you require, from A1 (beginner) to C2 (proficient). That way, you know you are preparing for, and taking, the level of test you need for your chosen purpose

All *Skills for English* tests use computer-based delivery for all skills. Reading and listening are automatically marked during the test session itself; speaking and writing are marked by professional markers (who have no access to your personal details) after you have finished. You move through each of the skills sections in a single test session, at home or in a test centre, then receive your results in as little as three days. When you receive your results, you will be given details of the individual outcome (pass/fail) for each skill taken, plus your overall test outcome (also pass/fail). You need to pass each of the skills taken to pass the test overall.

## The Skills for English Practice Tests

Two sets of digital practice tests are available on the *Skills for English* website for people preparing to take the *Skills for English: SELT* and *Skills for English: Global* tests. Both practice tests are delivered on our testing platform and will give you a good idea of what to expect on test day. They cover all 6 levels of our tests and can be accessed by going to [www.skillsforenglish.com](http://www.skillsforenglish.com)

This booklet is a documented version of Practice Test 2, which is available on our website. It covers exactly the same material but is in a different format to help with your test

preparation activities. A separate booklet is available for each level of the test and can be used for both *Skills for English: SELT* and *Skills for English: Global* test preparation.

We ensure that *Skills for English* tests cover a variety of everyday contexts and scenarios including life, work and study. The contexts and scenarios in our practice tests are varied and representative of what you may see in our tests.

## What is included in this document?

This document contains all the tasks which you will see at a given level on the *Skills for English* practice test pages for Practice Test 2. It covers all aspects of the test including:

- Speaking test questions and tasks
- Speaking sample answers and comments
- Scripts, questions and answers for the Listening tests

At B1 and above these documents also include:

- Reading texts, questions and answers
- Writing tasks
- Writing sample answers and comments

The commentary on the sample answers for Speaking and Writing tests will show you why each sample is an example of a good response.

## How you can use this document

You can use this document in a variety of ways:

Test takers: you can use the information in this document alongside the digital practice tests on our website. We would suggest that you *always* try out the digital practice test as it will give you a good idea of what to expect on your test day. You can use this document to support any further preparation work you may want to do, for example to check on questions you may have missed or to reflect on your own performance.

Teachers and training providers: you can use the information in this document to support any training or practice work you may be doing with your students as well as any materials you may be developing for work in the classroom. This document will allow you to focus on specific parts or questions in the *Skills for English* tests and concentrate your student preparation on specific aspects of the tests.

For a full range of preparation and practice resources, visit [www.skillsforenglish.com](http://www.skillsforenglish.com)

## Practice Test 2: C2 Speaking Test

There are 3 parts to this test.

All your answers are recorded.

### Speaking: Part 1

In part 1, there are 5 questions about yourself.

Part 1 is not assessed.

After each question, you will hear a beep.

Answer the questions after each beep.

You will have 10 seconds to answer each question.

1. What is your name?  
**BEEP**
2. Can you spell your first name please?  
**BEEP**
3. Where are you from?  
**BEEP**
4. What is your date of birth?  
**BEEP**
5. What do you do?  
**BEEP**

That is the end of part 1.

## Speaking: Part 2

In part 2 there are questions about 2 topics.

You will answer 5 questions about each topic.

Remember to answer the questions after each beep.

You will have up to 40 seconds to answer each question.

Now I am going to ask you some questions about transport and travel.

Remember to answer the questions after each beep.

1. How could people in your hometown or region be encouraged to use public transport more often?

**BEEP**

2. What are the consequences if people continue using their own vehicles for transportation?

**BEEP**

3. What environmental responsibilities should vehicle manufacturers have?

**BEEP**

4. What could individuals do to become more environmentally friendly?

**BEEP**

5. What actions could governments take to reduce their country's carbon footprint?

**BEEP**

Now I am going to ask you about being competitive.

Remember to answer the questions after each beep.

1. Would you describe yourself as a competitive person? Explain your answer.

**BEEP**

2. Do you think it is important for schools to encourage competition between students?  
Why or why not?

**BEEP**

3. To what extent is it necessary to be competitive in order to succeed professionally?

**BEEP**

4. In which situations can a competitive nature be a disadvantage? Explain your answer.

**BEEP**

5. Competition between companies is desirable. To what extent do you agree with this statement?

**BEEP**

That is the end of part 2.



## Speaking: Part 3

In part 3 you will talk about a subject on a role card.

The words on the role card will help you.

You can say more things if you like but you must say something about each point on the role card.

You have 1 minute to look at the role card.

In part 3, you will have up to 5 minutes to speak.

Please remember to always check the *Skills for English* website for the latest version of your test specification.

### **Role Card: Giving advice to your friend about their time management**

- Explain why some people find it difficult to manage their time effectively.
- Describe how your friend's poor time management has affected you.
- Point out the consequences of poor time management in a work or study context.
- Give advice and suggestions about how your friend can improve their time management.
- Explore the benefits of improving their time management on a personal and professional level.

That is the end of the C2 Speaking test.

## Sample answers and comments

This page provides you with a transcript of model answers for a strong pass at C2 for Speaking Part 2 and Speaking Part 3. Note: Part 1 of the Speaking test is not assessed.

The comments show why these answers result in a strong pass.

### Sample Answers

#### Speaking Part 2: Transport and travel

1. *There are several ways in which people near where I live could be encouraged to use public transport more often. I live in a very rural area, so the first thing is to provide a more regular and reliable bus services for the people living in villages or on farms, so that they can travel to the nearest towns and cities more comfortably. Currently, there are very few buses that travel past my village, and so it is difficult to use the bus services if you have an appointment or an urgent need to get into the town. The second solution could be to reduce the costs of travel. Currently the bus services is far more costly than running a car and so most people would rather use their cars to get into town.*

2. *The consequence for the environment are dire – more pollution and more damage to the environment and the flora and fauna of the natural world, an increase in CO2 and raising of global temperature will affect not only the animals and their migration patterns but will also destroy much of their habitat, making life for them and for humans increasingly difficult if not impossible.*

3. *They should lead the way in not only introducing safer and more environmentally friendly vehicles but should encourage people to invest in such technology by making them affordable. They should also be working more closely with governments to ensure that people who are investing in e-cars have the facilities they need to recharge these easily.*

4. *We all have a responsibility on an individual level to do what we can. Recycling is now easy in many cities but not so convenient in rural areas. But more so than recycling, we all need to change our everyday habits and be more conscious of what we do each day in our daily lives and how we can change our outlook in order to do things differently – saving more water, reusing and repairing equipment and shopping less for example.*

5. *Governments should make it easier for individuals to contribute to the global efforts to reduce pollution. However, they have a much bigger responsibility. By enacting laws and by enforcing these, they can have an enormous impact on the way a country tackles environmental issues. But governments also have an international responsibility. It is by working together and putting the health of the environment before consumerism and profit that we can begin to see a real change.*

## Speaking Part 2: Being competitive

1. *I would describe myself as a highly competitive person, but I have also learned to control the need to win. I have done this by removing myself from situations where the need to win can overcome all other needs. So, I have been able to focus my competitive streak towards activities that are more important to my general success – for example by focusing on my university grades and studying hard rather than on winning every football game I played.*

2. *I think a certain amount of competition is healthy in schools. After all, one of the purposes of school education is to ready children for the adult world of work, where they naturally will meet competition when applying for university places or for jobs. So, some managed competition in school sports or even between classes can encourage children to really try their best. What is unhealthy is when competition in schools becomes the be all and end all of all activities.*

3. *I am not sure to what extent competition is an important factor in professional success. It doesn't really go hand in hand with a culture of collaboration or team-working which most organisations tend to promote. Competition in the professional sphere only works really where different businesses are competing with each other, for example by bringing down prices or making offers to attract more customer.*

4. *A competitive nature can be a disadvantage when it alienates other people – whether they be friend, or family. If competition and winning take precedence over a sense of what is right or fair, then it can be a disadvantage. After all, winning isn't everything.*

5. *I agree with this statement up to a point. Competition between companies can lead to better products for consumers as well as cheaper prices. If there is no competition, then there is often less need for innovative solutions to everyday problems. Competition between companies becomes a disadvantage when they have an impact on other producers. Take for example the impact of supermarket competition on farming and farmers. By wanting to offer customers cheaper food, supermarkets are making it more and more difficult for small farmers to make a living.*

## Speaking Part 3: Giving advice to a friend about time management

*Hi there, I just wanted to talk to you about time management, as we seem to have had a couple of arguments about it lately. You know that time management is important in a lot of situations. But some people do find it difficult to keep to time and turn up at their appointments at the agreed time. This can be very frustrating for those left waiting. Why do some people find it difficult? I am not sure, but I think there may be several reasons. They are not good at organising themselves, leaving things to the last minute? Or in some cases, some people just don't care about the fact that they have kept other people waiting – their focus is just on themselves and what they need. I think in a lot of cases, it may just be down to the kind of parenting you have had.*

*But coming back to the effects this has, let me tell you how it makes me feel when you are late. As you know I always try and arrive at any appointment a little early. I leave plenty of time as a contingency, in case the car doesn't start or there's traffic. Anyway, when you are late*

*coming to our appointment, well, you must remember that I have already been waiting for a good few minutes. I always worry that perhaps something has happened to you. And I know you always text to let me know you are on your way, but it's no compensation to know that you know you are late, yet again. It's very frustrating and if it has an impact on what we are doing – like going to the cinema.*

*But, you know, frustrating as this is for your friends, it must be worse at your place of work. I wonder whether your colleagues also wait for you when you are late for meeting. At university I remember our lecturers wouldn't usually wait if you were late to a lecture. And there was that time when you arrived late for an examination as well. They wouldn't give you the extra time at the end and so you had less time than the rest of us to finish the examination. So, at work and in study, it is even more important to be on time. It may mean the difference between success and failure.*

*You ask me what it is that you can do to sort this? Well, I would suggest using the alarm on your watch more often – after all, that is one of the things that a smart watch can allow you to do. I also think perhaps you can, to organise your day better, plan things so that you are not running around like a headless chicken getting ready. Sort out what you are going to wear the day before, get a bus timetable and stick it on the kitchen notice board, and more importantly, don't always assume that your friends, family and colleagues will be patient and understanding.*

*By organising yourself better, you will arrive at important appointments in a better, more positive frame of mind. You will also give a better impression of who you are and what you can do which is especially important in a professional context. No one can take someone who arrives late and looks hassled seriously – it just doesn't give an impression of competence. If you can't organise yourself, how could people assume that you can organise complex projects. So really both on a personal and a professional level, better time management will have a very positive impact on your relationships with friends and at work. People will be able to rely on you more and take you more seriously.*

## Comments

This is an example of a good response at C2.

The candidate has addressed all the requirements of the task adequately, in both Parts 2 and 3, and added further information and example to support what they want to say.

The candidate has also used a variety of idiomatic and common colloquial phrases in their response: *positive frame of mind, running around like a headless chicken*.

The language is appropriate at C2 level and the candidate is able to show a wide range of vocabulary and phrases used correctly. The candidate responses are long and ideas are presented in a structured way. The candidate is able to talk in great detail in Part 2 and speak at some length in Part 3.

The response is also accurate with a mix of simple and complex sentence structures. There are no errors.

## Practice Test 2: C2 Listening Test

There are 3 parts to the listening test.

You will answer 10 questions in each part.

You will hear each recording twice.

### Listening: Part 1

You will hear 5 short recordings. For each recording there are 2 questions.

For each question, 1 to 10, choose the correct answer.

You will hear each recording twice.

You will hear a beep each time to tell you that the recording is about to start.

#### Questions 1 and 2

1. According to Harry, research shows that reading fiction can empower people to
  - a. express their views persuasively.
  - b. make more informed decisions.
  - c. process information more quickly.
  
2. Sarah argues that people who produce book recommendations
  - a. overestimate the value of reading fiction.
  - b. promote books they've written themselves.
  - c. want to appear knowledgeable.

#### Questions 3 and 4

3. When discussing people's views on climate change, Rajesh and Emma are both
  - a. disappointed that so few people are worried about it.
  - b. surprised how some people form their opinions.
  - c. encouraged at the number of people who follow scientific research.

4. With regard to gender, Rajesh makes the point that
- the research that Emma mentions was fundamentally flawed.
  - it is an insignificant factor in opinions about climate change.
  - both men and women see climate change as primarily a political issue.

#### Questions 5 and 6

5. Which aspect of the TV drama does Janet find particularly interesting?
- The background stories of the minor characters.
  - The growing tensions between the main couple.
  - The development of the central storyline.
6. Andrew and Janet disagree about
- what will happen in the end.
  - how plausible the story is.
  - the effectiveness of the actors' accents.

#### Questions 7 and 8

7. Darren mentions studying French to suggest that
- it is hard for history students to know they are progressing.
  - learning history has little practical value for most people.
  - learning a language is of little value to students of history.
8. What is Alice's opinion about people's ability to interpret the present?
- It can be developed through a variety of subjects.
  - Studying history is the best way to develop it.
  - Some people develop it naturally.

**Questions 9 and 10**

9. How does the man feel about his relationship with Andy nowadays?

- a. He suspects that Andy dislikes his company.
- b. He feels he's made too little effort to stay in touch.
- c. He regrets the fact that they are no longer close friends.

10. What point does the woman make about maintaining old friendships?

- a. It's less important than developing new ones.
- b. It's essential to maintain childhood friendships.
- c. It's easier for people who continue working together.

That is the end of part 1.

## Listening: Part 2

You will hear two friends, Jack and Marta, talking about using interviews to conduct research.

Listen to the first part of the conversation and answer questions 1, 2 and 3.

For questions 1, 2 and 3, write **ONE OR TWO WORDS** from the recording to fill each gap. Your spelling must be accurate.

You will hear the recording twice.

You will hear a beep each time to tell you that the recording is about to start.

You have 20 seconds to read questions 1, 2 and 3.

1. Jack advises Marta to think of an interview as being similar to a \_\_\_\_\_.
2. Marta agrees with Jack that interviews would be suitable for studying how someone has experienced \_\_\_\_\_.
3. Jack says that Marta underestimates the amount of \_\_\_\_\_ required for each interview.

Now listen to the rest of the conversation and answer questions 4 to 10.

For questions 4 to 10, choose the correct answer.

You will hear the recording twice.

You will hear a beep each time to tell you that the recording is about to start.

You have 40 seconds to read questions 4 to 10.

4. What advice did Marta get in her Research Methods seminars?
  - a. Interviews should consist of an average of ten questions.
  - b. Having too many questions can make it hard to get useful answers.
  - c. Participants should be told the number of questions in advance.
5. What puts Marta off the idea of conducting structured interviews?
  - a. The limited options provided rarely lead to adequate answers.
  - b. Participants may feel that their responses are undervalued.
  - c. The format could prevent her from exploring further.



6. Which aspect of interviewing does Jack think Marta would be good at?
  - a. Eliciting detailed responses from interviewees.
  - b. Explaining clearly the purpose of the interview.
  - c. Making the interview seem like natural conversation.
  
7. Why is Marta in favour of using social media to find people to interview?
  - a. A person's posts can suggest if they'll be suitable interviewees.
  - b. Social media enables her to get in touch with interviewees quickly.
  - c. She has many social media contacts to choose interviewees from.
  
8. What is Jack's criticism of bloggers who publish interviews?
  - a. They devote too little thought to how to introduce the interview.
  - b. They give away too much key information too early.
  - c. They say misleading things about the interviewee's achievements.
  
9. When Jack started working as a professional researcher
  - a. he learned a great deal in a short time.
  - b. he found it hard to get the results he wanted.
  - c. he realised that his university course was good preparation.
  
10. How does Jack react to Marta's account of her first interview?
  - a. He is surprised that the interviewee was uncooperative.
  - b. He is doubtful whether the record of the interview was accurate.
  - c. He is impressed that she found a way to deal with a problem.

That is the end of part 2.

## Listening: Part 3

You are going to hear a wildlife expert talking about rewilding.

Listen to the talk and answer questions 1 to 10.

For questions 1 to 10, choose **ONE WORD ONLY** from the recording and write your answers to complete the notes. Your spelling must be accurate.

You will hear the recording twice.

You will hear a beep each time to tell you that the recording is about to start.

You have 1 minute to read the questions.

### Rewilding

Definition: reintroducing species into their former habitats and allowing nature to take over, e.g. by removing (1)\_\_\_\_\_.

### An example of a successful rewilding programme: Yellowstone National Park, USA

After many years, (2)\_\_\_\_\_ were brought back into the national park.

Deer avoided going into a/an (3)\_\_\_\_\_, for their own safety.

Fewer deer meant there is now an increase in (4)\_\_\_\_\_.

The rewilding scheme changed the behaviour of rivers by reducing the amount of (5)\_\_\_\_\_.

### Rewilding in the UK

A successful reintroduction has led to commuters seeing kites (6)\_\_\_\_\_ by the roadside.

However, red kites still face a threat from (7)\_\_\_\_\_.

Increased (8)\_\_\_\_\_ of the advantages of re-wilding can help change the opinions of those who oppose it.

Animals are at greater risk from (9)\_\_\_\_\_ than from species introduced through rewilding.

There are plans to introduce bison to the UK, whose habits will create habitats for (10)\_\_\_\_\_.

That is the end of the listening test.

# Listening Scripts

## Part 1

### Questions 1 and 2

You will hear two friends, Harry and Sarah, talking about books.

Speaker 1	You know what Sarah, if you look at research that's come out recently, they reckon if someone's really into reading literary fiction, well, it can actually train you to keep an open mind. Especially while you're working out where you stand on a particular issue. Some people have a need for cognitive closure, that means wanting certainty, wanting a quick and easy answer to a problem, and not being able to cope with ambiguity. And they can come across as overly confident and fixed in their beliefs. But reading fiction helps you overcome that tendency, helps you change your point of view over time as new information becomes available, and allows you to reach a more considered view.
Speaker 2	Yeah interesting, Harry. But have you ever looked at any of those lists of must-read books that various top business leaders put out?
Speaker 1	What, like 'my 10 best books of the year'?
Speaker 2	Exactly. Well, it's funny how these books are almost all non-fiction. And I suppose you <u>could</u> argue that facts are what these business gurus want to learn and that they see reading up on facts as a way of acquiring all this information. But I think there's more to it than that, and a lot of these businesspeople, you know, they're writing on their own blog, or being interviewed in the press, and their main focus is on cultivating their image. So if, say, they admit to reading romantic fiction, they're not going to come across as being so clued-up. At least, not as much as they do by talking about their love of non-fiction books that, you know, give them this "deeper understanding" of how the world works. That's what I think anyway.
Speaker 1	Hmm, well I'm not so sure about that.

### Questions 3 and 4

You will hear two colleagues called Emma and Rajesh discussing research into people's attitudes towards climate change.

Speaker 1	Rajesh, did you read that online research I sent you a link to, into different attitudes to climate change?
Speaker 2	You mean the finding that people are more likely to express concern about rising temperatures on warm days than on days when they thought the temperature was normal? Yeah, I read it, Emma.

Speaker 1	I mean I know the science on global warming can be hard to get your head round. But it's staggering that something that's clearly got very little bearing on global trends, like what the current temperature happens to be, that this can somehow nudge people into a particular opinion about whether climate change is a major threat, or just a minor one.
Speaker 2	Sure, I mean, it'd be like asking someone how confident they are about the national economy, and then checking the amount of cash they have in their wallet first, before giving an answer! Bizarre isn't it! I mean, who needs scientific facts!
Speaker 1	Exactly, well, research shows that there are lots of other influences on how concerned a person's likely to be about climate change. Like gender, with women more likely than men to believe in human-caused climate change, according to what I've read.
Speaker 2	Well, hang on a minute, that <i>might</i> be true, at least if we take the research on all that stuff at face value. I haven't looked into it, so I can't say if I think it's valid. But my understanding is that gender makes an absolutely minuscule impact on a person's views about climate change. Just a fraction of the power of political beliefs, which is the real indicator. So, whether a person is male or female, in most cases that's neither here nor there.

### Questions 5 and 6

You will hear two friends, Andrew and Janet, discussing a TV drama serial they have both been watching.

Speaker 1	I've been watching that TV drama – <i>Hidden Millions</i> . Have you seen it Janet?
Speaker 2	I'm halfway through it, Andrew. And I do love the fact that it's very fast-moving, but the central drama sort of lacks originality. I kind of feel I've sat through this one before. Will they get the money or won't they?
Speaker 1	Right, the woman and her husband?
Speaker 2	Yeah, although it's never explicit how they actually feel about each other, if it's just a marriage of convenience. What exactly are the stresses in their relationship? I'm not convinced the scriptwriter managed to really nail that one, to make us understand the world from their perspective, if you get what I mean. But then at the same time, you've got all these other supporting characters, the peripheral ones. The most absorbing bit for me is what else is going on in <i>their</i> lives behind the scenes, even the things not directly related to the main plot.
Speaker 1	Yeah, I know what you mean.
Speaker 2	I mean, don't get me wrong, I'll certainly see it through till the end of the series, it's got a lot going for it. I don't know about you, but I can actually envisage something like this happening in real life. It wouldn't surprise me at all!

Speaker 1	Well, if you ask me, I think the plot relies on too many coincidences. It all seems a bit far-fetched really.
Speaker 2	I can't see it ending well for the central couple though.
Speaker 1	No, I think they'll get what's coming to them.
Speaker 2	And deserve it too! What do you think about the British accents of the two American actors?
Speaker 1	They really bring it off, don't they?
Speaker 2	Actually, you wouldn't know they're not British.
Speaker 1	I was gobsmacked!

### Questions 7 and 8

You will hear two friends, Alice and Darren, talking about the study of history.

Speaker 1	When you were at school Darren, did you see the point of history?
Speaker 2	Well, I had some reservations about it. I mean, if you compare it to, say, I don't know, French, well if you're learning the language you know that any day, you can just go over to France and actually put into practice what you've learned, chatting to people in shops and cafés. Fundamentally different to history, though, isn't it, I mean, unless someone comes up with a time machine, it's hard to see how you can get anything in real terms out of studying it. OK, I accept that specialists, say geologists, they need to know the history of their subject, how people's ideas have changed over the years, but that's not to say the same sort of thing applies to the rest of us. You know what I mean?
Speaker 1	Well, I guess.
Speaker 2	What about you then Alice, were you into history?
Speaker 1	Well, I suppose I was a bit lukewarm about it. Not that I can blame the teacher for that, she was keen to make it very clear that through the study of the past, we can gain the know-how to analyse the present, to interpret it.
Speaker 2	A useful skill.
Speaker 1	Definitely. But the thing is, learning to interpret stuff, I mean that's not exclusive to history, is it? You could say the same of any number of subjects on the curriculum.
Speaker 2	Yeah, certainly true of the sciences.
Speaker 1	Right, I mean she really went the extra mile to make sure we were all engaged, in every minute of every lesson. She was a natural. Really brought the topic to life, so I count myself lucky to have been in her class. I just didn't buy into the whole argument about using the past to understand the present really.

### Question 9 and 10

You will hear two friends talking about someone the man was friends with at university.

Speaker 1	You still in touch with Andy, your mate from university?
Speaker 2	Well, not really. But you know what, I've often thought about the way we've drifted apart over the years.
Speaker 1	'Cos you were best buddies back then, weren't you?!
Speaker 2	Yeah, well, we run into each other, maybe once a year. And it feels awkward, to be honest.
Speaker 1	What do you mean?
Speaker 2	It's not like the old days, when we had such a laugh, always winding each other up, but never anything nasty, all done in a spirit of fun, and I miss it. But we don't have the same banter now, it's more just polite chit-chat. There's a kind of distance between us. Not like when we were twenty, you know?
Speaker 1	That's the thing isn't it, as you go through life – you've got to weigh it up: after you move home or leave university, or whatever, is it worth spending the time to keep alive the friendships you used to have? After all, you're not around those people so much, your circumstances have changed.
Speaker 2	Sure. Or you've changed. You move on in life, don't you? New start, new job...
Speaker 1	Well, that's it, I mean, you can make an effort to stay in touch with mates from your old life if you want, but maybe what you should be prioritising is bonding with your new colleagues and other people you meet instead. See where that leads.
Speaker 2	Yeah. I know what you mean.
Speaker 1	After all, when you're trying to juggle so many things, you've only got a limited amount of time you can spend maintaining friendships.

## Part 2

Speaker 1	How's your sociology course going, Marta?
Speaker 2	OK. We're studying interview techniques at the moment – could we have a chat about it, as you're now doing it for a living?
Speaker 1	Cool Marta, interviews are trickier than people think.
Speaker 2	Harder than just having a chat!
Speaker 1	You said it! Some people think of interviewing as being like a survey, but a spoken version. But it might help if you picture it as something along the lines of a focus group, eliciting people's opinions in a more sophisticated way.
Speaker 2	Sure.
Speaker 1	But for depth, me personally, I'd go for interviews. Say someone's been through illness, and a researcher wants a first-hand account of what it felt like.
Speaker 2	Definitely, or how they feel about a product, maybe. I don't suppose it'd be a problem to think of questions to ask while you're talking to the person, right?
Speaker 1	Well, no, but bear in mind that any successful interview requires planning. It's more involved than you might think, to make sure you're being efficient and that your questions are targeted to the information you actually need.

Speaker 2	We've had some seminars about research methods, and I wonder what your take is. They said that prior to interviewing someone, set yourselves a ceiling of ten questions – any more than that and the participants can get interview fatigue, and don't yield quality data.
Speaker 1	Makes sense. I suppose they covered different kinds of interview?
Speaker 2	Like structured interviews.
Speaker 1	Where you'd replicate the same interview with everyone you speak to.
Speaker 2	Right, I don't much fancy doing that. I mean, you ask everyone exactly the same questions, and give them a choice of possible answers. But then, say the person you're interviewing says something intriguing, and you want to probe more – but the format of the interview precludes you from departing from the script. So you can't give them the chance they deserve.
Speaker 1	Then you're better off with an unstructured interview.
Speaker 2	Assuming that fits in with your research, of course.

Speaker 1	Exactly. And knowing you, you'd be able to pull it off, an unstructured interview.
Speaker 2	Yeah?
Speaker 1	Yeah, you've got the kind of personality where you're able to put people at ease, so I don't think you'd get this stilted, awkward thing where there's a question, then you wait for an answer, with the interviewee wondering what it's all about! Quite the opposite – I think you'd be able to make it flow, you'd give it the sort of spontaneity that an impromptu discussion normally has. And get through lots of different topics, but without getting bogged down in too much detail.
Speaker 2	Oh, thanks Jack!
Speaker 1	So, I suppose you'll use social media to contact people to interview?
Speaker 2	Yeah, it's certainly convenient. The thing is, what appears on someone's feed on any platform, right, well I figure that instantaneously gives you a clear indication of what they're like as individuals.
Speaker 1	Right, so you mean it helps you decide whether they're the sort of person you're looking for?
Speaker 2	Yeah, people who have something of value to say, because let's face it, we all know people on social media who don't...! That certainly goes for some people whose accounts I follow; I see it all the time.
Speaker 1	Sure.
Speaker 2	It's really helpful to read interviews that other people publish on their blogs.
Speaker 1	Definitely worth doing, although I sometimes find that bloggers sort of undermine the interview itself by making sure they squeeze all the juicy bits from the interview into the introduction, the bit that's designed to grab your attention. So then when you read the full interview, it has little real impact 'cos of what you've already read.
Speaker 2	Yeah, well I suppose they want to promote the interviewee, make you want to read about them.
Speaker 1	Sure, well nothing wrong with that.
Speaker 2	You must have done quite a lot of interviews, one way and another.
Speaker 1	A fair few, yes. I did a couple as part of my course at uni, but they were really rudimentary, so when I got a job in a market research firm, it was a steep learning curve – it was really a case of in at the deep end! Luckily, I was given plenty of support, or it might have been a disaster.
Speaker 2	The first interview I ever designed and conducted – it was part of my course, so I just interviewed a flatmate... We had to do all the ethical stuff.



Speaker 1	Sign consent forms?
Speaker 2	Yeah. Well, my friend, she consented to the interview but not to being audio-recorded.
Speaker 1	So what did you do?
Speaker 2	Luckily, another friend happened to be there. So, I asked the questions, and got him to transcribe her answers. At least the gist of them.
Speaker 1	Ah, well that was very resourceful of you. It's easy to assume that there's going to be this fantastic recording of the interview, so you can listen later to every single answer. But if someone won't give consent for that, that's tricky. Not sure I'd have been as quick-witted as you!
Speaker 2	Oh, you'd have managed!

## Part 3

<p>Speaker 1</p>	<p>I'm going to talk to you about rewilding, which can be defined as bringing back certain species of animal or plant into environments in which they once thrived, but have since disappeared from. The idea is that humans step back from imposing their designs on the environment. For instance, doing away with fencing that only allows herds to graze in restricted areas is one way in which a landscape can be returned to its natural condition, allowing natural forces and species to regain control.</p> <p>So before focusing on the state of rewilding here in the UK, I'd like to tell you about the benefits of a rewilding scheme in Yellowstone National Park in the US, home to bears and many other species. Following a seventy-year absence, the decision was taken to re-establish wolves throughout the park. Now, you might expect this to reduce the populations of other mammals living within the park. Well, sure enough, deer became prey once again, but soon learnt that they were particularly vulnerable to ambush in one particular gorge, and adapted their behaviour by steering well clear of this, and accessing the river elsewhere when they wanted to drink. But the presence of this newcomer didn't mean that animal numbers overall went into freefall, far from it. And here's why. A direct consequence of the downturn in the deer population was an expansion in the amount of vegetation, because not so much of it was being consumed by herbivores. And this in turn has had knock-on effects as well; for example, it's no exaggeration to say that the behaviour of rivers throughout the park has indirectly been modified by the rewilding scheme. You see, what's happened is that the soil has been stabilised by the additional root systems, and become less susceptible to erosion by the water. Which in turn means that rather than gradually shifting in shape, the rivers have become more permanent. Comparison of maps and aerial photographs taken over time reveal a more consistent profile in terms of location than we'd seen previously.</p> <p>So, could rewilding be equally successful here in the UK? Well, you could argue that it already is. One early rewilding project was the red kite, a large bird of prey. Following a successful reintroduction programme not far from London, kites can frequently be seen scavenging for a meal beside the motorway connecting the city and its main airport with the west of the country. For an animal which had all but disappeared, the scheme has been a resounding success, and the country is</p>
------------------	--

thought to be home now to some five thousand breeding pairs. Despite this success, they're still vulnerable to poisoning as an unfortunate by-product of attempts to reduce the number of foxes in the country.

Schemes such as this enjoy a high level of public support from environmentalists but still face widespread opposition in some quarters, most notably and vocally from farmers who are wary about the introduction of any potential predators. While some of their concerns are valid to a certain extent, I do believe that a greater awareness of the potential benefits can help to win hearts and minds.

Of course, there are concerns about what could happen to say, sheep, if a potential predator such as the medium-sized wild cat the lynx were to be reintroduced into the British Isles. But any threat tends to be overstated, as people overlook the fact that far more livestock lose their lives to parasites than they ever would to hunters such as the lynx. And this would continue to be the case.

Also on the cards in Britain in the coming months is the release of a herd of bison. Initially one male and three females will be set free, the idea being that natural breeding will increase the numbers at a rate of one calf per year. Other species will benefit as a result: the bark removed when the bison rub themselves against trees becomes an ideal environment in which insects can thrive. These in turn provide food for birds, and so ultimately the whole ecosystem benefits.

## Answer key

### Part 1

1. b
2. c
3. b
4. b
5. a
6. b
7. b
8. a
9. c
10. a

### Part 2

1. focus group
2. illness
3. planning
4. b
5. c
6. c
7. a
8. b
9. a
10. c

### Part 3

1. fencing
2. wolves
3. gorge
4. vegetation
5. erosion
6. scavenging
7. poisoning
8. awareness
9. parasites
10. insects

## Practice Test 2: C2 Reading Test

There are 3 parts to the reading test.

You will answer 10 questions in each part.

You have 1 hour and 15 minutes for the reading test.

### Reading: Part 1

Read each short text and answer the question that follows. For each question, choose the correct answer, a, b or c.

#### Text for Questions 1 and 2

[Article]

#### Spoilt for choice?

Nobody ever seriously questions the exaggerated claims made that consumers benefit immeasurably from a wide range of choice. It is one of the foundations on which modern capitalism is built and therefore viewed as entirely desirable. Always being able to choose from 20 brands of toothpaste is taken as an **inalienable right** and a triumphant expression of our self-determination as individuals. But deeper analysis suggests that having such choice is not all that it is cracked up to be. It is apparent that excessive choice can lead to chronic indecision as consumers weigh up the pros and cons of a particular product. The phrase 'decision fatigue' has been coined by some researchers to describe how people may tire of having to make a seemingly endless succession of choices. There is evidence that the quality of those decisions may decline rapidly over time. Another common phenomenon is 'fear of missing out': a belief that whatever choice is made will subsequently prove to be flawed, since others will report more positive outcomes from having made quite different decisions. Such a painful realisation would then lead directly to emotional turmoil, envy, or even damaged self-esteem. This all sounds psychologically plausible as there are many who seek perfection and consequently are more willing to invest time in identifying the best possible bargain. Such people may be more prone to suffer if they fail to do so. An abundance of choice can be equally troublesome for those who temperamentally are inclined to insist on less idealistic standards. Such individuals cannot be bothered to painstakingly assess all available options. Instead, they resort to one that a highly respected friend or colleague casually

recommended, and which only approximately fits their needs, and so they may end up just as upset and disillusioned.

### Questions 1 and 2

1. Why does the writer say that consumer choice is an inalienable right?
  - a. To show that the term may be misunderstood.
  - b. To express the fact that it is rarely researched.
  - c. To emphasise that it is fundamental.
  
2. In the second paragraph, the writer believes that too much consumer choice ...
  - a. occurs when individuals fail to give sufficient weight to the opinions of peers.
  - b. creates uncomfortable psychological challenges.
  - c. encourages people to constantly prove how much happier they are than others.

### Text for Questions 3 and 4

[Blog entry]

#### Friendship

The contemporary concept of friendship is considerably broader than was once the case. People frequently boast to researchers about their extraordinarily large number of online friends. However, such exaggerated claims are likely to be met with scepticism by the researchers, who may conclude that virtual relationships are hardly comparable to the friends we meet face to face; furthermore, they may doubt that such connections have a genuine emotional dimension. The reality is that most individuals only have a handful of close friends, though when seeking to establish how many someone has, researchers encounter difficulties and face the frustration of needing to state unambiguously what a friend is before proceeding any further.

One sociologist, basing his conclusion on investigations into human groups throughout history, asserted that it's inconceivable that anyone can know more than 150 individuals well, and by 'know' he meant understanding their personality and how they fit into their social networks. In the past, people's social networks invariably consisted of multiple relationships where each individual knew almost everyone else. Most people remained within narrow geographical confines, close to their ancestral roots. Now it's undeniable that our networks are less densely interconnected as people

move around more, with some old friendships maintained relatively easily, while simultaneously a few brand-new ones are formed. But these new contacts are unlikely to cross paths with the old friends. This may seem a matter of little consequence. And yet common-sense, supported by research, shows that social networks where all your friends know each other are more tightly-knit and its members more willing to come to each other's aid in crises, perhaps lending money or assisting with household repairs. Thus, it seems reasonable to question the desirability of the modern model characterised by looser bonds and a minimal sense of obligation to others.

### Questions 3 and 4

3. The writer's main purpose in the first paragraph is to ...
  - a. highlight the sincerity of most online friendships.
  - b. assess the complex way in which friendship is defined nowadays.
  - c. expose the challenges facing researchers investigating modern friendships.
  
4. The writer's view of modern social networks is that they ...
  - a. depend on people's willingness to deepen their emotional connections with acquaintances.
  - b. offer their members relatively little emotional and practical support.
  - c. function effectively even if they involve individuals resident in different places.

### Text for Questions 5 and 6

[Online article]

#### Travelling alone

For many, the idea of travelling alone may seem a daunting proposition, something requiring a degree of self-confidence more timid souls might regard as exceptionally foolish, especially if the intention is to venture off the beaten track. But there's no reason why someone pondering a trip on their own can't plan everything with exactly the same attention to detail and consideration for safety that would guide conscientious parents before embarking on a family trip to a distant, unfamiliar destination.

The attractions of travelling alone, near to home or further afield, should be obvious: there's no need for uncomfortable compromises regarding the itinerary or the time allocated to a particular tourist hot spot, no arguments over the practicalities of accommodation and mealtimes, and above all, a trip can be planned that's tailor-made for their unique personality and interests. Yes, there

may be occasional feelings of melancholy for the traveller when they enjoy a remarkable experience and realise this cannot be shared with a companion. However, solo travel can offer precious opportunities for self-development. Travellers may discover how resourceful and adaptable they can be when operating in a challenging new environment, and their success at handling the demands placed upon them, even if only partial, may lead to a considerable boost to self-esteem. People may be empowered by their ability to cope with the unexpected setbacks that are an inevitable part of any long trip, while not losing heart or becoming disillusioned. It may gradually dawn on them that their entire outlook has been subtly transformed. This inner shift in their approach to problems may be keenly felt only when they finally return from their adventures and settle back into normal life, enabling them to achieve things both personally and professionally that they may have struggled with for a long time.

### Questions 5 and 6

5. What is the writer doing in the first paragraph?
- a. Challenging the belief that individuals can't take a responsible approach to travelling alone.
  - b. Defending the position of those who prefer to be well-prepared when travelling.
  - c. Describing what might make someone feel compelled to undertake an ambitious trip alone.
6. The writer argues that travelling alone can lead to some individuals ...
- a. recognising that long-distance travel is seldom as demanding as they had imagined.
  - b. acquiring the confidence to tackle previously insurmountable challenges in their lives back home.
  - c. concluding that they may need to be a little more adventurous in their daily lives.



## Text for Questions 7 and 8

[Article in business magazine]

### Open Plan Offices

Open plan offices first became widespread in the 1960s. Employees were no longer confined to separate cubicles but shared a larger open space where they could interact and collaborate more easily. Their initial popularity reflected a desire by management to cultivate a modern ethos. The central idea, which was genuinely revolutionary, was to make everyone more accessible. It certainly was a success initially, helped by the novelty factor and the fashionable commitment to introducing more egalitarian office structures. In theory, anyone could informally approach a senior manager and resolve problems.

But the open plan office may function less effectively in the digital age. We are all familiar with the phenomenon of colleagues emailing each other despite being seated in close proximity. This demonstrates how proponents of open plan offices need to ask whether their designs lead to desirable outcomes. The aim is to facilitate social interaction that guarantees work is done more efficiently. But unfortunately, the reality is that employees can still retreat into their private worlds, perhaps by wearing headphones, or pretending to be utterly engrossed in a task and therefore unable to talk.

Recent research should give office designers pause for thought since it suggests that face-to-face interactions decline when open plan offices are introduced. An analysis of the interactions that occur is essential for office designers, although observing employees whilst they collaborate on administrative tasks is inevitably intrusive. There also needs to be clarification for designers on precisely what interactions are considered necessary and the most practical way to encourage them. In the absence of such a rigorous approach, there remains a serious problem. Too many designers are reluctant to turn their back on idealistic notions about how employees relate to one another after innovative modifications to office architecture.

## Questions 7 and 8

7. The writer says that open plan offices may have worked well in the 1960s because there was ...

- a. a greater willingness by managers to prioritise efficiency and productivity.
- b. a desire to embrace less hierarchical principles in the workplace.
- c. a more relaxed attitude to social contact during the working day.

8. The writer suggests that those responsible for designing offices should ...
- a. develop an understanding of why individuals work more effectively when detached from others.
  - b. consult employees regarding their working conditions rather than study them while performing routine tasks.
  - c. abandon unrealistic ideals about human behaviour and focus on conducting research.

### Text for Questions 9 and 10

[Letter to newspaper]

#### **Sustainable Living: fantasy or realistic goal?**

Following your article on sustainable living, I see little point in debating the sustainability of our current economic and social situation since the increasingly disturbing statistical and physical evidence of collapsing eco-systems around the world is hard to refute. Some go so far as to argue passionately that no truly ethical consumption is possible while capitalism remains in place, and we are effectively its prisoners. But leaving aside such anti-capitalist polemic for a moment, it's important to consider whether living sustainably in an inherently unsustainable system is ever a realistic goal. Those who parade the notion that they live sustainably may in some cases be trying to make themselves feel virtuous, whilst knowing deep down that they have a guilty secret, namely that they are making few meaningful sacrifices and merely paying lip-service to environmentalism. For those who are more genuinely committed, there's the burning sense of having a mission and the wish to set a good example.

However, perhaps the level of commitment to environmental campaigns is not the issue. Cynics point out that an individual's impact is, by definition, utterly insignificant, pointing to depressing evidence that one person's efforts over the course of a lifetime are cancelled out by the actions of a single global corporation in a matter of minutes. Faced with such a bleak reality, it's no wonder that some people can't be bothered to even try, dismissing environmental campaigns focused on the individual as shifting the responsibility from corporations and the governments who should be regulating them onto consumers. Despite this, there is a market for supposedly 'eco-friendly' products, which consumers invariably end up paying more for, though many will see it as a price worth paying in order to feel that they are contributing to saving the planet.

## Questions 9 and 10

9. Who is the writer criticising in the first paragraph?
- a. Those who argue that the data on environmental crisis cannot be challenged.
  - b. Those who endorse attacks on the current social and economic structures.
  - c. Those who pretend to subscribe to a set of beliefs while taking little action.
10. The writer is not surprised that individuals who do little for the environment ...
- a. have become apathetic because they are asked to shoulder an unfair burden.
  - b. have failed to comprehend the contribution that individuals can make.
  - c. are likely to be discouraged by the cost of supporting companies with green credentials.

## Reading: Part 2

Read the email from a government minister to the leaders of local councils regarding public health campaigns.

[Formal letter]

**From:** Martin Fisher, Minister of State for Public Health

**To:** Council Leaders

Dear Colleagues,

We have conducted a review of recent public health campaigns and wish to make you aware of our conclusions so they can help inform and shape future planning by local authorities. Based on a comprehensive review of campaigns over the last two decades, it is evident that in future they will need to be more narrowly targeted in terms of age, gender, and cultural background. In particular, when campaigns set out to catch the attention of young people, the beliefs around peer group norms and the unique pressures teenagers have to contend with should be addressed, rather than making the assumption that they are interacting with others in an environment bearing a reasonably close resemblance to that inhabited by older age-groups.

We conducted an in-depth analysis of mass-media campaigns and, unsurprisingly, this concluded that messages with even slight ambiguity cause difficulties and may even be counter-productive. For example, some previous campaigns, particularly on the advisability of women taking folic acid supplements, suffered from a lack of clarity. In addition, some consideration should be given to the fact that campaigns alone are not sufficient if we wish to trigger permanent changes in people's behaviour, much as we would like to believe otherwise. A recent campaign to make adults aware that they should aim to do at least 30 minutes of moderately intense physical activity per week was viewed as considerably more successful than a simultaneous attempt to persuade people to give up smoking, but success was defined differently in each case. It appears that in the former case it merely meant raising awareness of the issue, as demonstrated by responses to surveys taken afterwards, but was not defined as increasing the level of participation in fitness programmes or sport.

It may be a more cost-effective investment to target individuals more temperamentally receptive to making radical changes to their lifestyle, once they are presented with the medical reasons for doing so, rather than attempt to reach absolutely everybody, regardless of their precise circumstances or level of motivation.

During the review, criticisms were levelled at the sort of messages communicated in government advertising campaigns, with particular reference being made to two on the subject of smoking, one of which may have appeared to convey some sense of threat, while a second employed a humorous approach that didn't quite work and appeared clumsy or ill-judged. Whatever tone is adopted, there is little doubt that we cannot afford to simply tell people what to do. Citizens expect a more sophisticated and nuanced message nowadays, with the emphasis on the so-called 'nudge' strategy of encouraging individuals to make decisions that are better for their health but doing so in a way that doesn't restrict their freedom or force a particular course of action upon them.

We also need to be realistic about the time it takes to modify ingrained social attitudes. An example of this is how people have only very slowly come to an appreciation of the potential risks involved in sunbathing without adequate protection. This change has come about for a multitude of reasons, and it is difficult to prove that it is the direct result of government campaigns. Unfortunately, it has taken the brutal reality of statistical evidence pointing to a substantial rise in the number of diagnoses of skin cancer to provide the tipping point for public opinion.

It is evident that mass-media campaigns can be effective when the aim is to reach large numbers of people in a short period of time, and when there is a need for urgent action. In such cases, it is also crucial to enlist journalists who support the aims of the campaign and are thus willing to produce reports and articles that convey a similar message, possibly in a more personalised and immediate way that will affect people emotionally. But all this would be insufficient if there is no assistance from local services and if local authorities don't commit to maintaining this infrastructure in the long term rather than setting it up merely as a temporary measure.

The other issue that has to be taken into account is that simple behaviour changes are easier to engineer with the help of wider support programmes. When we seek to bring about more complex behaviour changes, such as encouraging people to have a more balanced diet, then this can be enhanced by, for example, improved health education programmes in schools. Rather than reassessing the budget or increasing the grants available, further guidance will be issued in the months ahead so as to maximise the likelihood of success for public health campaigns in your area.

Yours sincerely,

**Martin Fisher MP**

Minister of State for Public Health

Complete the sentences below summarising the content of the email. Use only **ONE WORD** for each gap. Use only words from the text. Your spelling must be accurate.

### Improving public health campaigns

1. As a result of a recent investigation, it has been found that previous public health campaigns were not \_\_\_\_\_ at specific groups.
2. The \_\_\_\_\_ that different age groups move in a roughly similar social world should be challenged.
3. The language in campaigns can have a negative impact unless it avoids the problem of \_\_\_\_\_.
4. A recent campaign to get more people to do exercise was regarded favourably despite not achieving greater \_\_\_\_\_ when it came to physical activities.
5. In future, more effort should be made to communicate specifically with individuals who may already have some \_\_\_\_\_ to improve their health and fitness.
6. The \_\_\_\_\_ of the messages in some campaigns has been inappropriate.
7. Public health campaigns should give people a sense that ultimately they have the \_\_\_\_\_ to work out what is best for them.
8. Clear and shocking \_\_\_\_\_ of the prevalence of a specific health issue changes public opinion more rapidly than a government campaign.
9. Without a good local \_\_\_\_\_ to support people over time, a public health campaign cannot be successful.
10. To ensure that future campaigns achieve more, the government intends to provide additional support in the form of \_\_\_\_\_ for councils.

## Reading: Part 3

Read this extract from the preface to a book on the cultural history of television in the UK and answer questions 1 to 10.

### A CULTURAL HISTORY OF TELEVISION IN THE UK

**A** This fascinating book begins in 1929, when the first television broadcast took place in the UK. Watched by a handful of people on a tiny screen in the inventor John Logie Baird's cramped London studio, the content of that historic broadcast would be surprisingly familiar to today's audiences in featuring a stand-up comedian and a singer. But even the most far-sighted individuals present that day would not have dared to forecast that television would one day dominate the cultural landscape. By 1971, the meagre 9% of households that had no television may have felt slightly alienated from the rest of society and certainly excluded from a lot of conversation. This book explores that journey and TV's possible trajectory into the future.

**B** As the author documents, before long there was a feeling that if television didn't show a particular event, it was almost as if it hadn't occurred. One detailed example is of the Moon landing, which, had it not been shown live in 1969, exciting and inspiring millions, might have generated even more conspiracy theories insisting it was faked. The book illustrates how television had a major role in keeping people informed, not just entertained. In fact, for the British Broadcasting Corporation, this was enshrined in its founding charter, with penalties imposed for straying from these commitments. Intriguing case studies illuminate how the way a major event is shown on television inevitably influences the audience's perception of it. These extend to viewers appearing to need television presenters to tell them what to think about what was unfolding in the world, although the author questions whether television should be given such power.

**C** She doesn't forget those who found their lives turned upside down by the advent of the television age. Comedians and actors who had for generations made a living on the stage were challenged to transfer their skills to a new medium; many failed to manage the transition and therefore fell outside the mainstream. Meanwhile, politicians now needed to 'come across well on TV' in order to be seen as a plausible leader. Ordinary people had the tantalising possibility of achieving fame after a brief television appearance. Ultimately, television made possible the development of contemporary celebrity culture in which anyone could become famous simply for being a personality, without having contributed anything meaningful to society.

**D** The author explores how, from the 1960s onwards, criticism of what was shown on television increased sharply, as if it existed in a void without any relationship to the tastes and preferences of real people or to wider cultural trends. The truth, she argues, is that if one considers television both in its most culturally sophisticated form, and its third-rate or sensationalist output, it has always reflected society rather than shaped it. She examines detractors' viewpoints and illustrates how complaints of television 'dumbing down' its content to please the masses have been heard in every decade and are likely to continue. UK broadcasters can deflect such criticism by pointing to the international reputation of many of their documentaries, particularly on natural history, which have established a standard that others have been keen to emulate.

**E** The book details how television has progressively invaded every aspect of our lives with a TV becoming the focal point of every living room, and slowly creeping into bedrooms and kitchens, not to mention intruding into public places such as restaurants and hotel foyers. With the launch of breakfast television in 1983, television became part of the morning routine for millions who would never have previously contemplated the unprecedented notion of sitting down to watch some not particularly intellectually demanding television before leaving for work. Television achieved its success largely thanks to its unique ability to wrap the viewer in a cosy bubble. Even a deluge of gloomy news seems less alarming than might otherwise be the case, simply because, regardless of our assessment of its credibility, we absorb this mass of information in the comfort of our homes, and curiously this may insulate us from its full impact.

**F** Until the 1980s there were only three TV channels in the UK competing for the viewing public, and so a popular TV show could attract a third of the population. Although people would watch a popular programme at home, there was a sense of being part of a much wider audience which was accentuated the following day when praise and sometimes criticism of the show was shared in workplaces around the country. Now the explosion in the number of entertainment services coupled with new digital platforms enabling viewers to access shows originally released days or even years ago, means that the chances of any two people having enjoyed the same programme the previous night are minimal.



### Questions 1 to 3

Choose the correct answer a, b or c.

1. What does the writer say about those who witnessed the first ever television broadcast in the UK?

- a. Their experience was limited as a result of the uncomfortable conditions.
- b. The entertainment for this event was odd considering contemporary tastes.
- c. They could not have been expected to predict the appeal of the new technology.

2. The writer raises the issue of how, from the 1960s, television

- a. abandoned its legally binding responsibilities.
- b. influenced people's attitudes and opinions.
- c. reported stories that aroused suspicion.

3. In paragraph E, the writer attributes the appeal of television to the way it can

- a. create a reassuring atmosphere.
- b. reveal fascinating but negative aspects of modern life.
- c. make viewers respond to stories in surprising ways.

### Questions 4 to 10

In which paragraph of the text can the following be found? You may use a letter more than once.

- 4. A discussion of how television was once capable of bringing the nation together.
- 5. The disapproval of a modern phenomenon which the writer blames on television.
- 6. A reference to how negativity on television influences us less than might be expected.
- 7. Mention of a technical innovation that transformed people's viewing habits.
- 8. The view that there will always be people who strongly condemn the low standard of television programmes.
- 9. A reference to the way individuals who didn't embrace the new technology possibly had a sense of not fitting in.
- 10. A reference to how people were inclined to trust what they saw and heard on television.

## Answer key

### Part 1

1. c
2. b
3. c
4. b
5. a
6. b
7. b
8. c
9. c
10. a

### Part 2

1. targeted
2. assumption
3. ambiguity
4. participation
5. motivation
6. tone
7. freedom
8. evidence
9. infrastructure
10. guidance

### Part 3

1. c
2. b
3. a
4. F
5. C
6. E
7. F
8. D
9. A
10. B

## Practice Test 2: C2 Writing Test

There are 2 parts to this test.

You must write a response to the task in both part 1 and part 2.

You have 1 hour for the C2 Writing Test.

We recommend you spend 20 minutes on Part 1 and 40 minutes on Part 2.

### Writing: Part 1

Many shops have been closing in town centres due to the growth of internet shopping in recent years, with a corresponding impact on local facilities.

Write a forum post highlighting the importance of local shops to the communities they serve.

In your forum post:

- evaluate the effects of internet shopping
- explain why you believe it is important to keep town centres alive
- propose how traditional shops can contribute to that survival

Write your forum post here. You should write between 150 and 200 words.

## Part 1 sample answer

Like the incoming tide, the shift to shopping online was barely perceptible at first. Over time, the trickle has turned into a flood and most of us have now been sucked into its pull. On the surface, internet shopping only brings benefits – unlimited choice, cheaper prices. But from where I'm standing, there's a dark underbelly to this new wave. It turns us into sad lonely individuals solely focused on acquiring more stuff.

People are social animals whose identities are validated by interaction with others. The joy of a serendipitous encounter with an acquaintance can only occur if we put ourselves into a social space. Town centres are that space, where we can reinforce our sense of identity by embedding ourselves in our community.

Traditional shops need to fight back by becoming the backbone of this local community. They can become a part of local traditions by organising events that will bring people back to the town centre and give people a sense of belonging to the locality and the community. They can create safe and welcoming spaces that we are drawn back to because it gives us pleasure to be a part of something bigger than ourselves.

[176 words]

## Comments

This is a good example of a forum post. The candidate has used language to make the post more interesting to the reader (*Like the coming tide, the trickle has turned into a flood, sucked into its pull, On the surface....dark underbelly*). The response is also paragraphed well, with each paragraph addressing one of the bullet points.

The writing is accurate showing good control over complex grammatical structures (conditional if, relative pronouns). There are no errors with punctuation or spelling.

Use of language and vocabulary is sophisticated and accurate, using phrases that collocate well (*barely perceptible, validated by interaction, serendipitous encounter with an acquaintance, reinforce, embedding, backbone, a sense of belonging, something bigger than ourselves*).

## Writing: Part 2

Some educationalists argue that the formal classroom education of children should start from when they are four years old. Others disagree.

What are the advantages and disadvantages of starting formal education at such an age?

What, in your view, is the best age to start formal education?

Write your answer here. You should write between 250 and 300 words.

## Part 2 sample answer

There has been a lot of debate among educationalists as to when formal education should begin. There are those who advocate a starting age of four, but many others think this is far too early. So, who is right?

Starting formal education at an early age seems a sensible idea for a number of reasons. It gives the child early training in learning to read and write, and in numeracy, which are the foundations of a solid education. It enables teachers to earlier monitor children through classwork to assess their progress. This, in turn, allows teachers to quickly identify children with learning difficulties and offer them help. Moreover, there is an argument that children from a less stable home environment are better off in a more formal setting.

However, there must be good reasons why children in most countries start school later than in the UK. In my opinion, it is because they regard play as a much more important stage in a child's development. Scientists who have studied other mammals, such as chimpanzees, see how important play is among the young, it teaches them how to interact with the world and with each other. Educationalists and psychologists see children's play in the same way. They are learning through doing, whether with other children in the neighbourhood, or in pre-school kindergartens. Learning through instruction from a teacher does not seem appropriate at such an early age, and the testing that goes along with it can be very stressful.

As to my thoughts on the perfect age to begin proper schooling, we have to remember that a child's brain continues to develop throughout childhood. It seems to me that a child's brain is better equipped to deal with more formal schooling when it reaches six years old.

[296 words]

## Comments

This is a good response to the Part 2 task. The candidate has introduced the topic and addressed both questions competently. The response is paragraphed appropriately, and the candidate has used a variety of approaches to link and present their ideas (*So who is right, This, in turn, Moreover, However, In my opinion, As to my thought on the...*).

The response is sophisticated and accurate, and the candidate has shown good use of relevant vocabulary (*debate, advocate, numeracy, foundations, mammals, interact*) as well as long noun phrases (*less stable home environment, the foundations of a solid education*).

Spelling and punctuation are highly accurate.



© 2022 PSI Services LLC. All rights reserved.

*Skills for English* is a partnership between PSI Services LLC, a global leader in workforce solutions for over 70 years and the SQA: Scottish Qualifications Authority, the executive non-departmental public body of the Scottish Government responsible for accrediting educational awards.

[skillsforenglish.com](https://www.skillsforenglish.com)

 [@SkillsforEng](https://twitter.com/SkillsforEng)

 [Skills for Engli](https://www.linkedin.com/company/skills-for-english)