

PRACTICE TEST 4

PAPER 1: READING

Part 1

You are going to read a magazine article about travel writing. For questions 1-8, choose the answer (A, B, C or D) which you think fits best according to the text.

If my memory serves me well, even in primary school, I had a vivid imagination and would often come up with entertaining short stories. Certainly by the time I entered high school, I had begun toying with the idea of going into journalism. Ironically, although I took journalism at university, I fell into travel writing quite by accident. I was the chief editor of the student newspaper at the time. Somebody came up with the bright idea of doing a travel feature and I was offered free rail tickets in Europe for the summer in return for a series of articles on the places I visited. The pieces I wrote actually won me an award for best student travel writer of the year! And from that point on, there was no looking back.

The early acclaim my articles had received gave me confidence. What quickly became clear, however, was the gap between writing a few articles as a student and making ends meet as a travel writer. Like most budding travel writers, I earned next to nothing in my first year. Despite what one might call the perks of the profession – an occasional offer of free accommodation or a meal on the house (the latter being frowned upon by publishers because declaring yourself as a travel writer invites favourable treatment) – the fact is that until you have established yourself and found interested publishers, you spend far more than you earn. I had to eat into my savings to cover expenses.

My initial attempts at having my articles published were unsuccessful. Luckily, after rejecting yet another piece of mine, one kind publisher gave me some sound advice. “Take a look at what’s happening in travel writing,” he said. “Your articles are just too old-fashioned.” Curious as to what he meant, I threw out my old guidebooks and began
line 37 reading all the latest travel blogs, Internet sites and travel magazines I could get my hands on. He was right – my writing style was hopelessly out of touch.

Travel writing had changed dramatically and I hadn’t kept track. It probably started with the shift

in the kind of people who travel. If in the past only the wealthy could consider travelling for pleasure, today, the typical tourist may be anyone from the millionaire on his yacht to the back-packing student. This means that guidebooks now supply a much broader range of details and information to satisfy the needs of the ever-increasing variety of travellers.

The more I read, the more I realised that in order to succeed I had to find a niche – my own particular area of expertise – in this huge market. Gradually, I became aware of the increasing number of “specialty” travel writers, who focused on specific groups of tourists and their particular interests and needs. I’ve always been a bit of an adventurer and loved the idea of exploring out-of-the-way places. I began to write articles aimed at the seasoned traveller who has seen the best-known tourist sights and is looking for a novel experience off the beaten track. Slowly but surely, I found my own voice as a writer, and my new articles were greeted with enthusiasm.

Today, I can safely say that I find my career rewarding. But it’s definitely not for everyone. Those of you who see travel writing as glamorous may be disappointed. A travel writer must be prepared to spend days of relentless sightseeing – far more than any normal tourist would take on, and not all of it interesting. Copying down rail and bus itineraries is essential, but hardly inspiring. Finally, at the end of an exhausting day, you have to sit down and write an organised and informative account of your experiences – which may take you into the early hours of the morning. In fact, systematic writing is the key to success – you have to sit down and write at least 2,000 words a day to perfect your technique. And if you’re willing to take on that kind of commitment, travel writing can be very fulfilling. I have been at it for six years now, and wouldn’t trade it for a nine-to-five desk job, no matter how well-paid!

- 1 When the writer says she began ‘toying with the idea of’ going into journalism, she means
- A she didn’t consider journalism a serious career.
 - B that being a journalist was a childhood ambition.
 - C she was considering journalism as a possibility.
 - D she used to daydream about being a journalist.
- 2 What surprised the writer about her new career as a travel writer?
- A She was not able to earn a living.
 - B She was forbidden to reveal her identity.
 - C She didn’t have to pay for hotels or meals.
 - D It was a year before she got anything published.
- 3 The writer gives the example of travel blogs (line 37) to illustrate
- A a typical Internet travel site.
 - B how travel writing had developed.
 - C the inspiration for her first book.
 - D a good source of travel information.
- 4 One reason for the recent developments in travel writing was
- A the greater number of well-to-do travellers.
 - B the different forms of transport now available.
 - C the increase in the number of tourists.
 - D the growing diversity of tourists.
- 5 According to the writer, which event influenced her choice of career most?
- A discovering her ability as a child
 - B winning a travel writing award
 - C the advice of a publisher
 - D realising she was adventurous
- 6 What did the writer learn after doing her research?
- A facts about unusual destinations
 - B how exciting travel writing was
 - C where her particular talents lay
 - D what modern tourists are looking for
- 7 In appealing to travel writers, the main purpose of the last paragraph is to
- A warn them that such exciting jobs involve long hours.
 - B recommend that they do as much touring as possible.
 - C remind writers to include lots of practical details.
 - D emphasise the importance of the quality of their writing.
- 8 Which best sums up the writer’s attitude towards her profession?
- A It requires years of training to become a professional.
 - B Financially it is more rewarding than an office job.
 - C Despite the problems, it is well worth pursuing it.
 - D Few people are actually suited to this type of work.

Part 2

You are going to read an article about puzzles. Seven sentences have been removed from the article. Choose from the sentences **A-H** the one which fits each gap (**9-15**). There is one extra sentence which you do not need to use.

Give Us a Clue!

Crossword puzzles were first invented around 90 years ago by American Arthur Wayne, whose first puzzle was published in a U.S. daily newspaper in 1913. His intention was to provide a new and interesting variation on familiar word games for holiday entertainment. Crossword puzzles continued to appear in newspapers and as they became better known, their popularity grew.

Yet, incredibly, crosswords were considered by some doctors of the day to be unhealthy and even dangerous! **9** However, a Broadway musical satirised these fears with a scene set in the “Crossword Puzzle Sanatorium”, a place for people who had gone mad trying to do crosswords!

Despite all the health warnings, by the 1920s, the public’s passion for crosswords had really taken hold. People couldn’t get enough of them, and puzzles began to appear in the most unusual places. For example, railway companies provided passengers with crosswords on the back of menus in the dining car. **10** One clothes company supplied a free booklet of crosswords with every dress it sold. Successfully completing a puzzle guaranteed the buyer a discount on future purchases. Songwriters even wrote songs about crossword puzzles!

Sometimes solving crossword puzzles led to rather bizarre situations. **11** His reaction at being sentenced to 10 days in jail surprised everyone. He claimed to be very happy that he would have so much time to solve puzzles.

Some time later the publishing trade jumped on the

bandwagon. A company called Simon and Schuster brought out the first book of puzzles. **12** Such fears were unfounded though; it became the first of a series of best-sellers.

While American crosswords used straightforward definitions as clues, on the other side of the Atlantic, the British preferred riddles, puns or allusions. **13** For example, “an important city in Czechoslovakia” with four letters could not be found on any map. But a closer inspection of the clue itself – the word *Czechoslovakia* – reveals the answer: *Oslo* – capital city of Norway. Interestingly, during World War II, crosswords did become “dangerous” – to the enemy. Secret information could easily be contained within the cryptic clues.

Crossword puzzles are still going strong today, but they have evolved to suit a society of couch potatoes, slumped in front of the small screen for hours every day. **14** It started in America, but Britain, France and Australia are just three of the many countries which have developed their own version of this extremely popular crossword-based TV game.

Today’s newspapers and magazines often give small cash prizes to people who successfully solve their puzzles. **15** It’s all a far cry from the intentions of the inventor of the crossword puzzle. Yet, if he were alive today and confronted with a gigantic crossword on the TV screen, I rather think he’d be delighted, firstly by modern technology and secondly by the fact that his game is as popular as ever.

- A** As time passed, jewellery designers made pins and brooches with crossword motifs.
- B** These were referred to as “cryptic” clues, whose meaning was not immediately apparent.
- C** A man who was arrested for refusing to leave a restaurant at closing time offered the excuse that he was in the middle of a puzzle that he just had to finish.
- D** Psychologists feared that the frustration of trying to solve such puzzles would cause mental problems and even insomnia.
- E** Television, on the other hand, has turned them into media spectacles with huge cash prizes at stake.
- F** For many people, this family game show is the highlight of the week.
- G** Reluctant to reveal its origins in case the idea failed, they launched it under an alias.
- H** You’ve possibly seen, or at least heard of, a television game show called *The Wheel of Fortune*.

Part 3

You are going to read a magazine article about going to a job centre. For questions **16-30**, choose from the people (**A-D**). The people may be chosen more than once.

Which person

- | |
|---|
| <p>A Heather Talbot
 B Jill Spenser
 C Claudia Geraldo
 D Anne Gordon</p> |
|---|

- | | | |
|--|----|----------------------|
| was surprised how much she enjoyed working outdoors? | 16 | <input type="text"/> |
| couldn't see how they would get the necessary information? | 17 | <input type="text"/> |
| understands that she should have been more open-minded about jobs? | 18 | <input type="text"/> |
| just hopes she'll get what she deserves eventually? | 19 | <input type="text"/> |
| had no free time at all for a while, but feels it was worth it? | 20 | <input type="text"/> |
| finds it ironic that lack of knowledge started her on a new career? | 21 | <input type="text"/> |
| couldn't afford to spend time travelling to work? | 22 | <input type="text"/> |
| felt the suggestions were surprising considering they knew her personal situation? | 23 | <input type="text"/> |
| got an idea of what the work would involve? | 24 | <input type="text"/> |
| is glad she has justified their confidence in her abilities? | 25 | <input type="text"/> |
| is not sure why she failed the interview? | 26 | <input type="text"/> |
| admits that the work brought out talents she'd never suspected she had? | 27 | <input type="text"/> |
| decided that she couldn't devote all her time to learning new skills? | 28 | <input type="text"/> |
| has learned that advisors are far better trained than she thought? | 29 | <input type="text"/> |
| believes it was her previous experience that got her the job? | 30 | <input type="text"/> |

Looking for a Job

Luke Davies spoke to four people who describe their search for employment.

Getting a good job isn't as easy as one might imagine, especially if you've been out of the workforce for a while. "You can expect changes in the job market. You may have a lot of new things to learn," says **Heather Talbot**. "The same applies when you change jobs, either voluntarily or because you've been made redundant." Guidance from professionals can be very helpful, and that's where the Job Centre comes in. Trained experts match people with the right qualifications and experience to jobs available in the market.

"After I'd been working for the local authority for four years, two municipalities amalgamated and left me without a job," continued Heather. "I had no idea what I wanted to do, so the obvious place to start my search was the Job Centre.

At the first meeting, I filled in forms, did some psychometric tests and had a personal interview with the advisor. The psychometric tests reminded me of school. I couldn't imagine how an examiner could learn anything about me from the way I completed numbers in a series or identified items that didn't belong in a group. At least the personal interview gave me an opportunity to express myself.

At the second meeting, I realised I'd underestimated the advisor. She'd put her finger on my talents for organisation and dealing with people."

Heather's advisor suggested taking a course in hotel management, saying, "There's a part-time job going as a night clerk at the new hotel. You won't have a minute to yourself, but you'll get a bit of hands-on experience while you study." Heather took her advice, and has never looked back.

Women who take years off work to bring up their children often worry about getting back into the job market. **Jill Spenser** was a dress designer before her two children were born. "Unfortunately," says Jill, "there are no fashion houses near our home and commuting is out of

the question. I wasn't optimistic about finding anything exciting, so I'm eternally grateful to the advisor who got me thinking about an alternative direction for my talents. She asked me whether I had seen the advertisement for a window dresser at the department store and suggested that I try my luck there because my background would give me the edge over other applicants. She was right." The store manager took Jill on for a six-month trial period, and neither of them has had cause to regret it.

A less common challenge for a Centre is finding a job for someone who has moved from another country. When her husband was promoted to the English branch of his company, **Claudia Geraldo** from Rome was delighted.

"I'd had enough of being stuck behind a desk in an office," she says. "I was ready for a change. I knew that not having fluent English would be a drawback, but I was a bit taken aback when the advisor suggested I take a job at a plant nursery. Still, it was worth a try. The job turned out to be more than just looking after plants. We often advise clients about the layout of lawns and flowerbeds, and I discovered I have an eye for it. In the meantime, my English improved, and I'm now well on my way through a course in Landscape Architecture."

The Job Centre isn't the answer for everyone, though. **Anne Gordon** had been an assistant librarian for years and was disappointed when she was passed over for the post of head librarian. "Knowing that the Centre would be discreet, I went for an interview," she says. After making a careful assessment, the advisor had four suggestions. "Because of my financial commitments, which I had made clear to them, I had to reject three jobs that involved either full-time retraining or an appreciable drop in salary." Anne applied for the fourth one, a book shop position, but didn't get it. "Reluctantly, I decided to keep my library job, at least for the time being, but to be frank, I don't feel that the Job Centre has lived up to my expectations."