

Name:	
Klasse/Jahrgang:	



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Read the texts about unpleasant experiences during camping trips. Choose the correct text (A-E) for each question (1-8). You can use a text more than once. Write your answers in the boxes provided on the answer sheet. The first one (0) has been done for you.



## Uncomfortable camping holidays

### A

Cliff camping seemed like a great idea during the pandemic, when we were craving adventure. After a couple of hours spotting seals, abseiling and rock climbing with our very patient guide, we abseiled down to our bed for the night, and spent the next seven hours lying on a portable ledge above the crashing waves. I spent the night going from laughter to fear. There were some moments of calm however, and we even spotted a few shooting stars. It was the most unique place I've ever slept, and not a night I will ever forget.

### B

We went on a four-day survival challenge course in late July, based in some woods near Haywards Heath. While Haywards Heath doesn't sound very intimidating, we had to resist escaping to the nearby village and learn to survive by ourselves, which included foraging for our own food (we became very hungry), collecting our own water, and building and sleeping in our own shelters. The shelter was made from tree branches and "waterproofed" with bracken. It took us about half a day to make and we were proud of it – until we realised it wasn't slug-proof. Every night we were attacked by large slugs, which got caught in our hair. The course was great, but I would not recommend sleeping in a homemade shelter over a tent. After three nights of slug slime and very little sleep, we were glad when it was over.

### C

I've experienced extreme discomfort while camping in the past: body-numbing cold, subsiding tents and violent electric storms. But while these climatic experiences are common to intrepid campers, Storm Evert was something else. Ridiculously high winds, incessant torrential rain and flooding hit in late July, transforming our campsite in north Norfolk into an apocalyptic disaster scene, complete with soaking wet clothes and bedding, a collapsed tent, shattered tentpoles and floating air beds. We drove to the local Travelodge. But like a form of collective madness, we'll be back next year. I can't wait.

**D**

My partner and I went wild camping on Arran in June, exploring the small but beautiful island by bike. Having arrived in Brodick via the ferry, we cycled up the north-east side of the island to Lochranza, where we found a beautiful camping spot in a small copse by a stream. We set up our tent and settled down for the night. I was woken up at 4am by a rustling noise outside our tent. Assuming it was an escaped sheep, we peeked outside. What we saw was a huge red stag, antlers and all, chewing the vegetation outside our tent. My partner and I looked at each other half-petrified, half in awe of its beauty. The stag continued to graze then calmly went on its way. Unpredictability is what makes wild camping in Scotland so special.

**E**

In August, two friends and I camped at a campsite near Holt in Norfolk. We were the first people to use the site and so had a beautiful four-acre space to ourselves. We set up tarps, tents and bivvies, and prepared ourselves for two days of relaxing – chatting, drinking and cooking over a fire pit. We knew the weather was going to be “interesting”, but didn’t expect what followed. One afternoon, the skies bruised to dark purple and hours of torrential rain flooded down. Lightning flashed unnervingly close by, with deafening thunderclaps following a second later. Undeterred, we sat it out as rivers of rainwater poured off our shelter. Cars occasionally slowed to look at our pitch, perhaps wondering who the deranged campers were. However, the elemental beauty of the extreme weather was invigorating to us. We left feeling refreshed and glad of the experience.

Which camper(s)...

spent the night in an unusually dangerous place?	0	
finally decided to escape a risky situation?	1	
enjoyed the positive side of a rainstorm?	2	
experienced two contrasting emotions?	3	4
had physical contact with animals?	5	
were surprised despite having a history of camping?	6	
refused to leave their tents despite the poor weather?	7	
were proven wrong when checking out a situation more closely?	8	

Read the text about changes in insect populations. Then choose the correct answer (A, B, C or D) for each question (1-7). Put a cross (☒) in the correct box on the answer sheet. The first one (0) has been done for you.

## Are insects disappearing?

In recent years, many of us have come to appreciate the huge importance of insects to our natural ecosystems – from the life-enhancing beauty of butterflies to the vital role that pollinating insects play in our food supply. So it's hardly surprising there is huge concern over the so-called "insectageddon".

A recent study adds to an emerging narrative of severe decline and builds on the perception that there were more insects in nature in years gone by – and that things were better in the past. One often-cited memory is that car windshields used to be splattered with insects, and this latest study uses a "splat rate" to conclude that numbers of flying insects have plunged by almost 60% in Britain between 2004 and 2021. But how reliable is this conclusion, and how worried should we be?

Understanding the severity of insect decline requires detailed and long-term records of species changes. Britain has a long history of monitoring nature going back many decades, so we can rely on one of the best datasets in the world to help us understand these changes and what might be causing them. The "splatometer" joins other established monitoring initiatives including light traps for moths and other night-flying insects, and walk-and-count transects for butterflies.

So if we have so much information, why is there still debate about the severity of decline? An important finding from recent analyses is that patterns of change are more complex than statements pointing to catastrophic declines would have you believe. We know that nature is dynamic, so there is often considerable turnover in which species occur at any given site, and a constant reshuffling of communities. One 2020 study of more than 5,000 species in Britain highlights winners and losers. Analysis of nearly 50 years of insect data reveals long-term declines in moths but not aphids, and that there is evidence of shorter-term periods of recovery – a decidedly more optimistic picture than you might imagine.

It illustrates the complexity of the landscape when reporting on the wellbeing of insect populations. Understanding why some species are losers but others are winners is key for developing action plans to help all nature thrive.

Another problem is that the types of datasets that are analysed, such as the number of species at a site or types of species present, and the measurements that are taken may not always tell the same story. Deciding which historical baselines to compare changes against is also important, given that short-term reporting may not reflect long-term trends, especially in insects whose populations can respond very quickly to their environment. This high variability of insect populations means we need gold-standard data to distinguish between long-term trends and normal year-to-year variation.

Let's be clear: most researchers are concerned about insect declines, but most will also caution against the increasingly common hyperbole of impending doom. Instead, we should be focusing our efforts to ensure the actions we are taking to combat the climate crisis are also benefiting biodiversity. Given the current focus on tree planting and increasing woodlands in the UK, it is concerning that moth declines are worst in woodlands, for instance.

Our appreciation of green spaces together with government commitments for nature recovery are cause for optimism. There are many examples where careful management and restoration of sites can hugely boost biodiversity, but we need to be doing this over much more of the landscape. The introduction of butterflies into the Cotswolds and Rockingham Forest are examples of success. For many species, we already know how to manage landscapes to ensure their success. And that, of course, may mean more insects splattered on car windscreens.

### 0 Some new scientific research on insects

- A used subjective belief as a starting point.
- B contradicted older studies.
- C focused on the reasons for insects disappearing.
- D proved dominant ideas wrong.

- 1 Being able to fully grasp developments in the insect world is
  - A hardly ever possible in typical scientific settings.
  - B dependent on lengthy in-depth observation.
  - C only achieved by looking at international data.
  - D something only scientists can do.
- 2 A new method of investigating the insect population
  - A focuses on one particular kind of insect.
  - B lacks features other methods have.
  - C mainly aims to document the reasons for changes.
  - D is used alongside other methods.
- 3 Current data on the drop in insect numbers have shown that
  - A one insect species is affected more strongly than others.
  - B media coverage has played down the problem.
  - C developments are less straightforward than they seem.
  - D the reduction in the number of insects is dramatic.
- 4 A study spanning several decades has shown that
  - A drops in insect population mainly last for short periods.
  - B there are more insects now than there used to be.
  - C most insect species are affected the same way.
  - D changes are probably less dramatic than assumed.
- 5 One critical challenge when evaluating information about insects is that
  - A insects are very difficult to observe.
  - B data and observation results might differ.
  - C observation over a long period is hardly ever possible.
  - D insects change too fast for researchers to record details.
- 6 With regard to one current UK measure, researchers are worried that
  - A the measure fails to show an immediate positive effect.
  - B people might fail to understand its importance.
  - C the measure might be bad for native plants.
  - D deer might be affected negatively by it in the future.
- 7 In cooperation with the authorities, it has been possible to
  - A reintroduce insects to certain areas.
  - B prevent many insects from being killed by vehicles.
  - C focus on most parts of the countryside in the UK.
  - D stop insect decline on a large scale.

Read the extract from a book about climbing the highest mountain in the world. First decide whether the statements (1-8) are true (T) or false (F) and put a cross (☒) in the correct box on the answer sheet. Then identify the sentence in the text which supports your decision. Write the first 4 words of this sentence in the space provided. There may be more than one correct answer; write down only one. The first one (0) has been done for you.



## The expedition

This morning, according to Rob's grand plan, we would climb from Camp Two to Camp Three and spend a night at 24,000 feet.

Rob had told us to be ready to leave at 4:45 sharp – forty-five minutes hence – which allowed barely enough time to dress, force down a candy bar and some tea, and strap on my crampons. Shining my headlamp on a dime-store thermometer clipped to the parka I'd been using as a pillow, I saw that the temperature inside the cramped, two-person tent was seven degrees below zero Fahrenheit. "Doug!" I yelled at the lump burrowed in the sleeping bag beside me. "Time to get rolling, Slick. You awake over there?"

"Awake?" he rasped in a weary voice. "What makes you think I ever went to sleep? I feel like shit. I think something's wrong with my throat. Man, I'm getting too old for this stuff."

During the night, our fetid exhalations had condensed on the tent fabric to form a fragile interior sheath of hoarfrost; as I sat up and began rooting around in the dark for my clothing, it was impossible not to brush against the low nylon walls, and every time I did so it instigated a blizzard inside the tent, covering everything with ice crystals. Shivering hard, I zipped my body into three layers of fuzzy polypropylene pile underwear and an outer shell of windproof nylon, then pulled my clunky plastic boots on. Yanking the laces tight made me wince in pain; for the past two weeks the condition of my cracked, bleeding fingertips had been steadily deteriorating in the cold air.

I tramped out of camp by headlamp behind Rob and Frank, wending between ice towers and piles of rock rubble to reach the main body of the glacier. For the next two hours we ascended an incline pitched as gently as a beginner's ski slope, eventually arriving at the bergschrund that delineated the Khumbu Glacier's upper end. Immediately above rose the Lhotse Face, a vast, tilted sea of ice that gleamed like dirty chrome in the dawn's slanting light. Snaking down the

frozen expanse as if suspended from heaven, a single strand of nine-millimetre rope beckoned like Jack's beanstalk. I picked up the bottom end of it, attached my jumar to the slightly frayed line, and began to climb.

I'd been uncomfortably cold since leaving camp, having underdressed in anticipation of the solar-oven effect that had occurred every other morning when the sun hit the Western Cwm. But on this morning the temperature was held in check by a biting wind that gusted down from the upper mountain, creating a windchill that dipped to perhaps forty below zero. I had an extra pile sweater in my backpack but to put it on I would first have to remove my gloves, pack, and wind jacket while dangling from the fixed rope. Worrying that I was likely to drop something, I decided to wait until I reached a part of the face that was less steep, where I could balance without hanging from the rope. So I continued climbing, and as I did so I grew colder and colder.

The wind kicked up huge swirling waves of powder snow that washed down the mountain like breaking surf, plastering my clothing with frost. A carapace of ice formed over my goggles, making it difficult to see. I began to lose feeling in my feet. My fingers turned to wood. It seemed increasingly unsafe to keep going up in these conditions. I was at the head of the line, at 23,000 feet, fifteen minutes in front of guide Mike Groom; I decided to wait for him and talk things over. But just before he reached me, Rob's voice barked over the radio Mike carried inside his jacket, and he stopped climbing to answer the call. "Rob wants everybody to go down!" he declared, shouting to make himself heard above the wind. "We're getting out of here!"

0	The author could prepare for the day's climb without rushing.
1	Doug implied that he had been awake all night.
2	The author had a problem that made his footwear uncomfortable.
3	First the climbers had to get past obstacles.
4	The author connected himself to a climbing aid.
5	The author felt it would be a bad idea to deal with a certain problem in his present position.
6	The author's eyes were unprotected.
7	The author wanted to consult the climber ahead of him.
8	Mike passed on Rob's message to everyone via his communication device.

Read the text about Ms Rivera's research on how to succeed at a job interview. Some parts are missing. Choose the correct part from the list (A-K) for each gap (1-8). There are two extra parts that you should not use. Write your answers in the boxes provided on the answer sheet. The first one (0) has been done for you.

## How to get accepted for a top position

The most important quality recruiters are looking for is "fit": for all their supposedly rigorous testing of candidates, they would sooner choose an easy-going person with a second-class mind than a Mark Zuckerberg-type genius who rubs people up the wrong way. Staff in professional-services firms spend most of their time dealing with clients, so looking the part is essential. They also (0) \_\_\_ — learning the ropes in boot camps, working late in the office, having constant work dinners, getting stuck together in airports in godforsaken places. Recruiters repeatedly told Ms Rivera that (1) \_\_\_ as well as their colleagues. One compared hiring to "picking a team on the playground growing up"; another described his firm as "a fraternity of smart people".

It is easier to give the impression you will fit in if you have swotted up on the firm in question. Speak to any friend-of-a-friend you can find on the inside to learn about its internal culture and its inside gossip. One candidate in Ms Rivera's sample passed the interview by adopting the persona of a successful consultant that he knew at that firm. Even if you do not go that far, you (2) \_\_\_: there are plenty of jobs with tech companies for those types. The old-fashioned belief still prevails that playing team sports, especially posh ones like rowing, makes for a rounded character.

The final key to success is to turn your interviewer into a champion: someone who is willing to go to bat for you when the hiring committee meets to whittle down the list. Emphasise any similarities that you can find between the two of you. If (3) \_\_\_, a phenomenon known as "looking-glass merit", he will regard any attempt to eliminate your name as a personal slight.

### Minority margaritas

As for those who have not got into the elite universities, (4) \_\_\_. As Ms Rivera's book demonstrates, even the most tenuous connection with insiders can be of help. If you belong to an underrepresented group and meet a recruiter over cocktails at a "diversity event", exploit the connection ruthlessly.

Ms Rivera notes that (5) \_\_\_, if sold well. Recruiters love to hear stories about gritty candidates triumphing against the odds. She also notes that there are organisations that (6) \_\_\_. Sponsors for Educational Opportunity, an American outfit, has an excellent record of pre-selecting ethnic-minority youngsters and getting them internships that (7) \_\_\_. America's armed forces play a similar role of giving a career leg-up to the disadvantaged. "I've spent two years in a job where any minute might be my last," one military candidate told an interviewer coolly. "Yes, I think I can handle high-pressure situations." But don't harp on about the odds being still stacked against you, or reveal that you have a sick mother or a demanding child, or you kill the Horatio Alger buzz.

This overwhelming emphasis on style rather than substance may seem an odd way to select members of the 1%. But those at the top of the consulting, investment-banking and legal professions know that (8) \_\_\_. For all the talk of the world becoming dominated by a “cognitive elite”, in reality it appears it is nothing more than a “confidence elite”.

A	can lead on to full-time jobs
B	must show the interviewer that the top people get the top jobs
C	the most prized possession in uncertain times is not brainpower, but self-confidence
D	can help non-elite candidates to sell themselves
E	all hope of joining the bulge bracket of professional-services firms is not lost
F	they looked for people who could be their friends
G	is where it requires a combination of hard work and self-confidence to sell yourself
H	coming from an underprivileged background can actually be a plus
I	must at all costs avoid appearing nerdy or eccentric
J	expect their employees to spend extraordinary amounts of time together
K	the interviewer sees a little bit of himself in you