

Reading Comprehension – Test 1



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Read each text carefully and choose the best answer (A, B, C or D) for each question.

Part 1: An email

Read the email from Lucia to her friend Tom and answer questions 1-7.

Hi Tom,

I'm sorry I haven't written for so long, but the last few weeks have been really busy. As you know, I started my new job at the city library at the beginning of March. I was quite nervous on my first day because I didn't know anyone, but my colleagues have been very friendly and patient with me. My manager, Mrs Okafor, even took me out for lunch at the end of my first week.

The work is more varied than I expected. In the mornings I usually help visitors find books or use the computers, and in the afternoons I organise activities for children. Last Saturday we had a storytelling event, and nearly forty kids came! It was noisy, but I loved it.

The only real problem is the journey. The library is on the other side of the city, so I have to take two buses, and it often takes more than an hour. I'm thinking about buying a bike when the weather gets warmer, because there's a cycle path along the river that goes almost all the way there.

Anyway, I'd love to see you soon. Are you free on the weekend of the 20th? My new flat is small, but there's a sofa bed, so you could stay with me. We could visit the old town and try the market I told you about.

Write back when you can!

Love,

Lucia

- What is the main purpose of Lucia's email?
 - A** To complain about her long journey to work
 - B** To give Tom news about her new job and invite him to visit
 - C** To ask Tom for advice about buying a bike
 - D** To describe a storytelling event at the library
- How did Lucia feel on her first day at work?
 - A** Bored
 - B** Excited
 - C** Nervous
 - D** Angry
- What does Lucia usually do in the afternoons?
 - A** She organises activities for children.
 - B** She helps visitors use the computers.
 - C** She has lunch with her manager.
 - D** She tells stories to adults.
- In paragraph 2, the word 'varied' is closest in meaning to _____.
 - A** difficult and tiring
 - B** the same every day
 - C** well paid
 - D** full of different tasks

5. Why is Lucia thinking about buying a bike?
- A Because her doctor told her to do more exercise
 - B Because the buses to the library have stopped running
 - C Because her journey by bus takes a long time
 - D Because her flat is next to the river
6. What can we understand about Mrs Okafor?
- A She is kind and welcoming to new staff.
 - B She is very strict with her employees.
 - C She does not like working with children.
 - D She was Lucia's friend before Lucia got the job.
7. Where would Tom sleep if he visited Lucia?
- A In a hotel in the old town
 - B On a sofa bed in Lucia's flat
 - C In Lucia's bedroom
 - D At a friend's house near the market

Part 2: A magazine article

Read the article about repair cafés and answer questions 8-14.

Don't Throw It Away – Fix It!

In many towns around the world, a new kind of café is becoming popular. But people don't go there just for coffee – they go to repair things. At a repair café, volunteers with practical skills help visitors fix broken objects for free, from lamps and toasters to bicycles and clothes.

The idea is simple. Instead of throwing away a radio that has stopped working, you bring it to the café. A volunteer sits with you, finds the problem and shows you how to solve it. The aim is not only to repair the object but also to teach people skills, so that next time they can do it themselves.

Daniel Reyes, who organises a monthly repair café in his neighbourhood, says the events are about more than saving money. 'Lots of people feel lonely these days,' he explains. 'Here, they meet neighbours they have never spoken to before. While they wait, they drink tea and chat.'

Repair cafés also help the environment. Huge amounts of electrical equipment end up as rubbish every year, although much of it could be repaired easily. When old things last longer, people buy fewer new products.

Of course, not everything can be saved. Some modern devices are very difficult to open. However, volunteers succeed in about two out of three cases. 'Even when we can't fix something,' Daniel adds, 'people usually leave happy because they understand why it broke.'

8. Which sentence best summarises the article?
- A Repair cafés are new coffee shops that sell cheap drinks.
 - B Repair cafés are places where volunteers help people fix their things and learn new skills.
 - C Repair cafés are shops that sell second-hand electrical equipment.
 - D Repair cafés are classes for people who want to become electricians.
9. How much do visitors pay to have their things repaired?
- A A small amount for each object
 - B The price of a cup of coffee
 - C It depends on the object.
 - D Nothing

10. Apart from repairing objects, what is the other aim of repair cafés?
- A To teach people how to fix things themselves
 - B To sell new products to visitors
 - C To collect old radios for a museum
 - D To find jobs for volunteers
11. According to Daniel Reyes, what is one social benefit of repair cafés?
- A People can make money by repairing things for others.
 - B People learn how to make tea and coffee.
 - C People who feel lonely can meet their neighbours.
 - D People can find cheaper places to live.
12. In paragraph 4, 'end up as rubbish' means that the equipment _____.
- A is finally thrown away
 - B is sent to repair cafés
 - C is sold again in shops
 - D is used to make new devices
13. What can we infer about the objects that people bring to repair cafés?
- A Almost all of them are bicycles and clothes.
 - B About one in three cannot be repaired.
 - C Only modern devices can be repaired.
 - D Every object is repaired in less than an hour.
14. Why are visitors usually happy even when their object cannot be fixed?
- A Because they receive a new object instead
 - B Because the volunteers give them their money back
 - C Because they get a free meal
 - D Because they understand why the object broke

Part 3: A short story

Read the story and answer questions 15–20.

The Wrong Song

Priya had practised for weeks. Every evening after dinner, she sat on her bed with her guitar and played the same two songs until her fingers hurt. Tonight was the open-mic night at the little café on Green Street, and she had finally agreed to perform.

When she arrived, the café was fuller than she had imagined. Her best friend, Sam, waved from a table near the front and gave her a thumbs-up. Priya tried to smile, but her hands were shaking.

'Next, please welcome Priya!' the host announced.

She walked to the small stage, sat down and began to play. After a few notes, her heart sank. In her panic she had started the slow song, not the cheerful one she had planned to open with. For a moment she thought about stopping and starting again. Then she remembered what her music teacher always said: 'If you make a mistake, keep going. The audience doesn't know your plan.'

So she kept going. Slowly, the room became quiet. People put down their cups and listened. When she finished, there was a short silence, and then everyone began to clap loudly.

Afterwards, Sam hugged her. 'That was beautiful,' he said. 'Why were you so worried?'

Priya laughed. 'Because that wasn't the song I meant to play first!'

An older woman at the next table leaned over. 'Well, I'm glad you did,' she said. 'It was perfect for tonight.'

15. How did Priya prepare for the open-mic night?
- A** She took extra lessons with her music teacher.
 - B** She practised two songs every evening for weeks.
 - C** She performed at the café the week before.
 - D** She wrote a new song with Sam.
16. How did Priya feel when she arrived at the café?
- A** Nervous
 - B** Relaxed
 - C** Bored
 - D** Disappointed with Sam
17. What mistake did Priya make?
- A** She forgot the words of her song.
 - B** She arrived late at the café.
 - C** She started with the slow song instead of the cheerful one.
 - D** She played the wrong notes on her guitar.
18. In paragraph 4, 'her heart sank' means that Priya _____.
- A** felt very excited
 - B** suddenly felt worried and disappointed
 - C** felt ill and needed to sit down
 - D** started to feel more confident
19. Why did Priya continue playing instead of starting again?
- A** Because the host told her to continue
 - B** Because Sam gave her a thumbs-up
 - C** Because she had forgotten the cheerful song
 - D** Because she remembered her teacher's advice
20. What does the story suggest about the audience's reaction to Priya's song?
- A** They noticed her mistake immediately.
 - B** They were not interested and kept talking.
 - C** They were moved by the song and enjoyed it.
 - D** They wanted her to play the cheerful song again.

Answer key – Reading Comprehension – Test 1

1 B	2 C	3 A	4 D	5 C	6 A	7 B	8 B	9 D	10 A
11 C	12 A	13 B	14 D	15 B	16 A	17 C	18 B	19 D	20 C

Explanations

- B** – Lucia mainly describes her new job and then invites Tom to stay with her; the other options are only small parts of the email.
- C** – She writes that she was 'quite nervous on my first day because I didn't know anyone'.
- A** – The email says 'in the afternoons I organise activities for children'; helping with computers happens in the mornings.
- D** – Lucia explains that her work includes many different activities, so 'varied' means having different kinds of tasks.
- C** – She says the journey takes two buses and often more than an hour, and a cycle path goes almost all the way to the library.
- A** – Taking a new employee out for lunch after her first week shows that she is kind and welcoming.
- B** – Lucia writes that her flat has a sofa bed, so Tom could stay with her.
- B** – The whole article describes volunteers helping visitors repair objects and teaching them how to do it.
- D** – The first paragraph says volunteers help visitors fix broken objects 'for free'.
- A** – The text says the aim is also 'to teach people skills, so that next time they can do it themselves'.
- C** – Daniel says many people feel lonely and that at the café 'they meet neighbours they have never spoken to before'.
- A** – To 'end up as rubbish' means to finally become waste that people throw away.
- B** – If volunteers succeed in about two out of three cases, about one in three objects cannot be fixed.
- D** – Daniel says people leave happy 'because they understand why it broke'.
- B** – The story says she practised for weeks, playing the same two songs every evening after dinner.
- A** – Her hands were shaking and she could only try to smile, which shows she was nervous.
- C** – The story says she 'had started the slow song, not the cheerful one she had planned to open with'.
- B** – 'Her heart sank' is an expression meaning she suddenly felt worried or disappointed when she noticed her mistake.
- D** – She remembered her teacher saying 'If you make a mistake, keep going. The audience doesn't know your plan.'
- C** – People stopped drinking to listen, clapped loudly, and a woman said the song was perfect, so they clearly enjoyed it.

Notes for teachers: Give students about 35 minutes and encourage them to read each text once for general meaning before answering the questions. The distractors target common B1 problems: choosing an option because it repeats words from the text, confusing details from different paragraphs, and reading idioms such as 'her heart sank' literally. As a follow-up, ask students to write a reply to Lucia's email or to retell Priya's story from Sam's point of view.