

1. Read and answer

Studying Abroad

Nowadays it's a small world. A flick of the television switch shows us images of events happening thousands of miles away, some of them happy and, unfortunately, some of them sad. Modern tourists are able to soak up the new experiences offered by foreign travel, sometimes for no other reason than curiosity to explore foreign places. One consequence of this new perception of the planet has been an increase in the number of students travelling abroad to study.

Students who travel to another country to study derive many benefits. Living overseas gives young people the chance to gain information about another culture and way of life; finding out about ordinary things like clothes, food, or even just a different climate can be exhilarating.

Then there's the chance not only to learn about but also to participate in another culture, for example, in festivals or celebrations which were before unknown to you – imagine watching the liveliness of, say, Chinese New Year for the first time! Moreover, living abroad teaches young people a healthy tolerance of others, and that we are sisters and brothers, not rivals.

Despite the homesickness which might happen when studying abroad, new friends can be made, often with other students who are just as homesick for their own country as you are for yours. Some young people may travel overseas to study in a country where the main language spoken is not their own, giving them the valuable opportunity to learn a new language at first hand, much easier than learning it from a textbook.

Overseas students are sometimes able to study subjects which are unavailable in their own country. Indeed, that is often the main motivation for going overseas to study. Thus they are bringing knowledge and a level of expertise home with them which would not otherwise have existed there; the engineers, doctors and teachers, for example, of many countries studied abroad. On their return, they can contribute to the improvement of the living standards in their country and local community. Increased levels of maturity are usually noticed by parents of overseas students when they return – the shy, dependent teenager had been transformed into a confident, self-assured adult, better able to cope with the practicalities of modern living. The caterpillar has become a butterfly! Often those who have studied abroad feel a sense of personal satisfaction that they have responded to a challenge, that they have somehow passed a test they set themselves.

But there are disadvantages in studying overseas, many of these concerned with cost. The course studied may be more expensive than a course of study at home, often causing financial hardship to parents. Whereas some students are able to keep down the costs to their parents by staying at home, this is clearly not possible in a foreign setting, and student accommodation can be expensive. In addition, return trips home are often prohibitively expensive. Some overseas students study an accelerated course, by cramming, say, three years of study into two years; such pressure can have an adverse effect on health. Ironically, the intensity of such study deprives the students of the opportunity to experience a new culture, which was one of the advantages they probably anticipated when embarking on the course of study in the first place. Some overseas students become very homesick, missing parents, siblings, friends, the old way of life. Despite their best efforts to fit into a new cultural setting, they often find it impossible to do so. These painful feelings are intensified by the knowledge that return trips home can occur perhaps only annually, if at all.

Some people argue that overseas study deprives the home country of its best talent – the so called 'brain-drain'; the truth is that some students will never return to their home country, because they get the irresistible offer of a good job in the country of their studies. Another downside of studying abroad – for the families of the students at least – is that students may settle immediately in the foreign country and not wish to return home. Others may meet a future spouse in their chosen country of study, and marry and settle there.

Whatever way we look at it, it seems that studying overseas will always be an attractive option for some young people. This has indubitably been made easier by increased access to a wide range of travel, particularly by air. There is every reason to think that, given our unprecedented affluence, the attraction of studying overseas is likely to increase.

1. What are the main advantages of studying abroad?

2. What are the main disadvantages of studying abroad?

3. Why does the author feel that we are living in a small world?

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4. What is the main difficulty in trying to fit into a new culture?

5. Is the writer for or against studying abroad? Give reasons for your answer.

2. Read about this sporting disaster and fill in the blanks with a suitable connective

One of the worst disasters in the history of football took place in May 1985 at the Heysel stadium in Brussels. It was the European Final Cup Final between Liverpool, UK, and Juventus, Italy, and in many ways, it was a disaster waiting to happen. The stadium was over fifty years old and in _____ had a condition as one could imagine. To make _____ worse, some parts of it were said to be "crumbling" and _____ of this, the Liverpool manager had wanted the Cup Final to be moved to another stadium. In _____, there was a history of violence between Liverpool and Italian teams, though not Juventus. _____ the organisers went ahead with their idea of holding the match at Heysel. The stadium was crowded, and _____ the Liverpool and Juventus fans were seated in different parts of the stadium, the "neutral" section, _____ tickets were allocated to Belgian supporters, actually contained a lot of Juventus fans. _____ the match was about to start, Liverpool fans charged the "neutral" section, causing a large number of mainly Juventus supporters to flee to the back against the wall. The wall collapsed, killing 39 fans and injuring hundreds more. _____ the awful disaster, the match went ahead after the captains appealed for calm. As a _____ of the disaster, twenty-seven fans were arrested, most of whom were from Liverpool.

3. Now read about this organisation and fill in the gaps with ONE suitable word

Pets for Patients is an organisation _____ provides small pets for those suffering from certain mental and physical illnesses. It believes it is _____ time were reconsidered our long-held belief that animals should be kept out of hospitals and away _____ sick people. For years medical experts _____ considered animals to be the source of dangerous infections, completely unsuitable for an environment containing vulnerable and sick people. Now new research has shown that _____ than posing a risk to patients, pets can promote recovery and have beneficial psychological effects. Patients suffering from severe disabling conditions, _____ as those which prevent them from leaving their beds and moving around, have been given small pets to look _____. Doctors have noted _____ the effect on patients' psychological states has been remarkable. It appears that the stimulus provided _____ looking after pets has given patients a high sense of responsibility and improved their general self-confidence. According _____ the researchers, it is almost impossible to overstate the positive effects of pet therapy. Pets for Patients is currently raising money to provide pets to all the long-term care centres in the country.

4. Put the verbs in brackets in the right tense. When you see a + use a modal

With the growing interest in exotic pets, unscrupulous criminals have been making large sums of money by illegally _____ (smuggle) animals into many countries. As the number

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of these incidents _____ (rise) customs authorities and ecological organisations are becoming more worried about the effect on local wildlife.

_____ (take) animals from their natural habitat is always a questionable practice because once they _____ (bring) into a foreign country there's always the possibility that they _____ (+ easily escape) and cause devastation to local animal populations. Many species bring disease to which indigenous animals have no defence. The ecological balance _____ (+ be) permanently upset, threatening the most vulnerable species with extinction.

The animals come from various sources. Some are captured in the wild, others _____ (Steal) from their rightful owners (often zoos or nature reserves). One of the most serious problems seems ' _____ (be) the theft of eggs. The adult birds are frightened off and thieves _____ (+ easily take) the eggs _____ (lie) at the bottom of the nest. Eggs are obviously much easier _____ (smuggle) than live birds and robbing nests is an easy way to acquire birds which _____ (+ be) difficult to catch when fully grown.

Methods of smuggling range from the ingenious to the ridiculous. In December 2010 a woman arrived in New York with a monkey hidden under her shirt. When _____ (question) about the suspicious lump, she claimed that she was pregnant. If the customs officials hadn't insisted on checking her, she _____ (get away) with it.

Something _____ (+ do) about this problem. A leading ecological campaigner _____ (speak) at a conference last week called on governments _____ (raise) the fines and prison sentences given to animal smugglers. Increased penalties _____ (deter) many criminals, she believes.

It is true that if governments took stronger measures, the rate of smuggling _____ (fall) radically. Our only hope is that politicians realize that they _____ (+ take) quick action on this issue.

5. Complete the following conversation between two friends.

Mel: _____ plans for the weekend, Sara?

Sara: Not really.

Mel: Well, would _____ join us for a barbeque on Sunday?

Sara: Er, I'm not sure. I've got a lot of work to do. I mean, revision for my exams next week.

Mel: Well, why _____ for a couple of hours? You'd still have plenty of time for revision.

Sara: Mmmm, _____ so. But how _____ to your place? I mean, my car is at the garage at the moment.

Mel: No problem. I _____ to give you a lift.

Sara: Fine, but ask her to phone first, OK?

Mel: _____ to phone you?

Sara: The doorbell isn't working, so I don't know when people arrive at the front door.

Mel: Oh, I see. I'll ask _____ she gets to your house.

Sara: Is there _____ bring?

Mel: Not really. Well, I suppose it would be nice _____ Your camera. Mine isn't working.

Sara: Fine.

6. Compostion. Write about 300 words on ONE of the following

- Write a story that shows that "There are two sides to every coin".

OR

- "What the world really needs today is ... (complete with a suitable word)." Discuss.