

Premium B2 lesson 33

- 1a** Read through the following text about a boy called Jack. Where might you find a text like this? Compare your answers with a partner.

Jack had never been on a wildlife trip into the countryside before, so when the idea was suggested by his teacher, and welcomed by the rest of the class, he was immediately alarmed. Having spent his whole life in the centre of one of the world's busiest cities, he regarded the countryside with some suspicion, as a place where his parents had once taken him on a camping holiday, when it poured with rain. Apart from that, even though his class had had nature trips into the city parks, Jack was far more into computers and technology.

- 1a** Read through the following text about a boy called Jack. Where might you find a text like this? Compare your answers with a partner.

Jack had never been on a wildlife trip into the countryside before, so when the idea was suggested by his teacher, and welcomed by the rest of the class, he was immediately alarmed. Having spent his whole life in the centre of one of the world's busiest cities, he regarded the countryside with some suspicion, as a place where his parents had once taken him on a camping holiday, when it poured with rain. Apart from that, even though his class had had nature trips into the city parks, Jack was far more into computers and technology.

- b** Now read the question, and choose the best answer (A, B, C or D).

Why does the writer mention that Jack had spent his whole life in a city?

- A to emphasise what a different experience the proposed trip might be for him
- B to show the contrast between the subject of the trip and Jack's own interests
- C to explain why Jack had had little opportunity to get involved with wildlife
- D to suggest that his teacher's plan might not be a very successful one

- c** Compare your answer with a partner. Why do you think the other options are wrong?

- 2a** Read the next section of the text, and decide the most suitable way to complete the sentence below.

Once Jack got to the countryside, he felt...

However, despite his doubts, Jack reluctantly agreed with his parents that he would go on the trip. On the day, the coach driver dropped them at a campsite in the middle of a forest – next to the most enormous stretch of water that Jack had ever seen, apart from on family trips to the beach. Jack couldn't help wandering down to the water's edge, where he immediately spotted a number of tiny fish darting around in the shallows, together with a variety of small wingless insects skittering over the water, making barely a ripple as they touched the surface of the lake with their tiny legs. And in spite of his initial hostility, Jack thought it was one of the most absorbing sights he'd seen – for a while at least ...

- b** Now look at the four options below. Which one is closest to your answer?

- A determined to prove to his parents that the trip was a mistake.
- B more interested in what he found there than he had originally expected.
- C concerned that the place they were camping in wasn't very suitable.
- D surprised to discover that he would be staying on the coast.

- 3** There is a word underlined in the text – 'skittering'. Read the section carefully. What do you think the word means? Now look at the question below. Which of the four options matches your idea most closely?

What does the writer mean when describing the insects as 'skittering' in line 5?

- A They were diving into and out of the water.
- B They were flying close to the surface of the water.
- C They were swimming through the water.
- D They were moving lightly across the water.

DESERT TREK

by Kara Lane

My family and I are from the US, but we're currently living in China. And last year we undertook an incredible trip across the country! My dad's a busy but very successful architect, working in one of the country's biggest cities. However, we were all in need of a break, so he decided we'd do a nature trip into the countryside, which we often did. And for him, because he was always keen to push himself to the limits, this time that had to be a trip to some of the country's remotest areas. He knew we'd look back and remember it as the adventure of a lifetime. But as always, he did check it met with our approval too – which of course it did! After all, who'd turn down the chance of a trip like that?

Dad's dream was a trip across the desert where we could experience its raw wildness, and spot some wild animals such as camels that had become endangered. The dream sounded awesome – but the practical arrangements turned out to be incredibly complicated. In all his enthusiasm, dad hadn't particularly considered the practicalities, even though in his professional life he has to do exactly that all the time. To start with, getting someone to accompany us was a challenge, as few tour companies had the right experience for this kind of trip. So my parents were left trying to find the right team, and sort out the equipment they planned to take. Gathering it all took weeks, and we ended up taking far too much stuff. But finally we were ready.

Personally I couldn't wait for the off, and certainly didn't think twice about going on the trip or what risks might be involved. To me, it was yet another adventure I'd be having with my parents. However, they finally very reluctantly admitted to me that they'd come in for some harsh criticism for taking a teenager along on a challenging and potentially dangerous trip. That was hard for me to hear. But those critics clearly just hadn't taken in the fact that I'd been totally at home with trekking through the toughest of terrains from a young age, and that their interference wasn't needed. Trips like this had become a way of life.

Anyway, off we went into the desert, and before long we'd had some spectacular sightings of amazing wild horses. At first, though, I found it really hard to take in the sheer size and isolation of it all. But I just kept reminding myself we'd got plenty of supplies, and were with an experienced team – who'd hopefully get us out again! No amount of planning or training, though, could have prepared us for what happened one day – a day that brought home to me how powerless we were in the face of the forces of nature. A huge storm suddenly blasted across the area and transformed the desert from a dry wasteland to a winter wonderland. It was a timely reminder not to take anything for granted out there in the wilderness, and to remember our limitations.

Finally we had to start preparing for the long journey home to our busy, bustling city. But then the night before we set off, our guide admitted he'd once got stuck in the desert when a sandstorm swept over everything and his group were unable to travel for days. Luckily they'd all survived, and I guess it demonstrated how skilled a guide he was, and that we were in safe hands. But I remember wishing he hadn't mentioned it until we were back home again. It just reminded me of the dangers we were still facing, and wasn't exactly the kind of story I'd imagined I'd be telling all my friends. Anyway, despite my enthusiasm to get home, I still wasn't completely ready to say farewell to it all, and I knew a small part of me would always remain in the free, open spaces of the desert, with its vast skies and total silences.

- 31 The impression we get of Kara's father in the first paragraph is of someone who
- A wants his family to be high achievers like him.
 - B makes decisions that his family don't always agree with.
 - C puts his family's needs above his own whenever possible.
 - D considers whether his family will benefit when making plans.
- 32 Why does Kara make reference to her father's professional life in the second paragraph?
- A to explain why he paid such careful attention to some aspects of the trip
 - B to emphasise how different the trip would be from his own personal experience
 - C to suggest that his initial approach to preparing for the trip was surprising
 - D to say why he was just the right kind of person to take such a trip
- 33 In Paragraph 3 what does Kara mean when she says she 'didn't think twice about going on the trip'?
- A She knew she didn't have much choice.
 - B It never occurred to her that she shouldn't go.
 - C She tried to put it out of her mind until it was time to leave.
 - D It was better not to think too much about the dangers.

- 34 What was Kara's attitude towards people who criticised her parents?
- A She was irritated because it was unjustified.
 - B She was worried that the critics might be right.
 - C She was sad that her parents were upset by it.
 - D She was grateful that her parents hadn't told her earlier.
- 35 What seems to have particularly made an impression on Kara during her time in the desert?
- A the skills of the team of people travelling with them
 - B the fact that they were able to survive on just the supplies they'd taken
 - C the realisation that they had no control over certain events
 - D the range of rare and unusual wildlife they managed to see
- 36 The night before they were due to return home, Kara felt
- A saddened at having to leave the quiet of the desert.
 - B unprepared to resume her normal life again.
 - C reassured by something she heard from their guide.
 - D excited about all the stories she would be able to tell.

The aim of the national Tree of the Year competition is to promote and celebrate the most interesting trees around the country. Images and descriptions of a shortlist of 28 trees are put online and the public are asked to vote for their favourite.

The four trees that gain the most votes before 5 p.m. on 5th October will be given a grant of £1,000. In addition, all trees that receive 1,000 or more votes will get a grant of £500. The grants may be spent on a tree health check or advice from a tree expert, or an educational event, for example. **1**

Among the 28 shortlisted trees there are a wide range of tree species, each with its own unique, fascinating story. For example, the 'Ding Dong' tree is a copper beech tree growing in a primary school playground. It was named the 'Ding Dong' tree because of a game pupils invented in which they race to touch its trunk, shouting 'Ding Dong!' The protective space underneath the 50-year-old tree is used as a magical outdoor classroom, while the indoor classroom displays pictures of the tree through each season of the year. **2**

Many of the other trees in the competition are remarkable for their age alone. The Craighends Yew, for example, is thought to be up to 700 years old, making it one of the oldest in Scotland. It is an amazing sight as many of its branches have layered. **3**

As a result of these extra growths, the total size when

measured around the tree's crown (the main body of its leaves and branches) is a massive 100 metres.

Another very old tree, the Holm Oak in Kilbroney Park, Northern Ireland, is much loved by local people. It measures 3.6 metres around the trunk, and its beautiful bark looks like the skin of a snake. **4**

The advantage of this lack of uprightness is that young children can climb safely and easily on it. Kilbroney Park is home to many remarkable trees, but this tree was chosen as the favourite by community members.

A 500-year-old veteran oak tree stands in the ancient woodland pasture at Carngafallt in Wales. One of the interesting things about this twisted, hollow tree is that it has several 'air trees' growing out of it. An 'air tree' is one growing without its roots touching the ground. **5**

It extends its roots down inside the oak's hollow trunk.

The original Bramley apple tree in Nottinghamshire is younger than many in this competition, but is the famous parent of all modern Bramley apple trees. **6**

Many years later, Matthew Bramley, the new owner of the tree, was carrying some of his fruit when he met a gardener called Henry Merryweather. Henry asked if he could take some cuttings from Matthew's trees to grow his own trees. Mr Bramley agreed, provided they were named 'Bramley's Seedling'.

- A** This means that they are touching the ground and have taken root.
- B** These roots have become enormous with age and have now emerged above the ground. Children love to jump over them like horses in a race.
- C** But the most distinctive thing about this tree is that its main trunk is leaning towards the ground at an angle of 45 degrees.
- D** The best example of this on the big old tree is another species of tree called a rowan.
- E** Alternatively, they could be used to hold a community event in honour of the tree.
- F** It was planted from a seed in 1809 by a woman called Ann Brailsford.
- G** Children hang bird feeders from its branches and it is used as the focus of many of the educational activities going on around it.

Write the end of the second sentences so that they mean the same as the first. Use the word in brackets.

1. When members of the audience enter the theatre, someone checks their tickets. (have)
When members of the audience enter the theatre, they
2. When stars drive to the hotel, someone drives their car to the car park. (have)
When stars drive to the hotel, they
3. Nearly every time famous people go out, someone takes their photo. (get)
Nearly every time famous people go out, they
4. When authors write a bestseller, someone edits it. (get)
When authors write a bestseller, they
5. Famous people write autobiographies and someone publishes them. (get)
Famous people write autobiographies and they
6. Before actors go on stage someone does their make-up. (have)
Before actors go on stage they

1–10 choose from the people (A–E). The people may be chosen more than once.

Which person

admits he finds certain aspects of fame attractive?	1	
believes that fame makes those who get it focus too much on themselves?	2	
describes some common beliefs about fame that he feels are untrue?	3	
is critical of the way that famous people are treated?	4	
says he is uninterested in the details of famous people's lives?	5	
thinks being famous makes people distrust the motives of people they are close to?	6	
outlines how fame can benefit society?	7	
explains why he has some respect for everyone who is famous?	8	
lists some of the ways that people might attract an audience?	9	
suggests childhood experiences may cause some people to seek fame?	10	

Fame and fortune

Five young people say what they think about fame.

A Stefan

Fame will bring you all the money, attention and love you could ever want! It will solve all your problems and make you feel fantastic! You'll never feel lonely ever again! These are the kind of lies about being famous the media feeds society through various channels. We are taught to highly value public attention, which celebrity-chasing individuals can get by eating insects in online videos, living in a crowded TV house, or being cruel or offensive on social media – it seems how we get it does not matter.

B Leo

One thing I've noticed about famous people is that they've often been through a negative event during their early lives – like the loss of a parent, or being rejected by a key figure in their lives. This has left them with a lack of self-confidence, which drives them to seek success on stage or screen to give them a sense of self-worth. The problem is that when they achieve fame, they begin to wonder if people love them for who they really are, or simply for the fact that they are famous. This makes it challenging for famous people to form secure relationships. Partly as a result of that, they end up socialising with other celebrities who have similar emotional problems, and this makes their situation worse.

C Franz

To be honest, the idea of being on a stage and having everyone focus on you is quite appealing to me, but I know that there's no way I'd enjoy the reality of being famous. When everyone knows who you are, it's as

if you're not human anymore. Fame means endless requests for pictures, autographs and stories for the tabloid press. Every mistake is exaggerated and nothing in your family life remains private. How could you not get fed up with that? I think that's why some stars become arrogant or unhappy, and unable to act like normal people, especially if they become famous at a young age and have to grow up with the public watching their every move.

D Mahomet

There is nothing wrong with being famous if it's because you are very skilled at something, whether you've written a bestseller, you're a brilliant surgeon or a great entertainer. Fame based on earning the respect or admiration of your readers, patients or audience can inspire people. It also provides a link between people – common ground that helps us feel part of a community. However, when fame is used merely as self-promotion to gain money or more attention for its own sake, then it adds very little to the world.

E Johann

I try to avoid reading about so-called 'stars' – they're just people like everyone else, and I really don't care if they're getting married, divorced or buying a new pet cat! On the whole, people who are famous seem to live in another world, where they are the only thing of importance. They are obsessed with their own lives, and the longer they stay in the headlines, the worse they get. One thing I do admire, though, is the ability they all share to recover time after time, when the media turns against them or their latest project has failed.