

SECTION 2 Questions 15–27

Read the text below and answer Questions 15–20.

Shooting Star is an organisation which offers special training for school leavers.



Planning a Gap Year



The best reason to take a gap year between school and work or higher education is to improve your CV with experience overseas. This is why some school leavers in Britain now consider a year out to be essential. Many want to travel, with Sydney the favourite destination. Shooting Star is an organisation that helps school leavers by offering training followed by appropriate employment.

We at Shooting Star offer much more than a trip abroad. At Shooting Star you acquire skills that lead to interesting jobs both for your gap year and future holidays. Magazines are full of 'Wanted' adverts for washing up in a restaurant. Well, we don't do that – it's not our idea of excitement. We offer school leavers the chance for outdoor adventure, to teach things like sailing and snowboarding. No choice, really! In your year out you train, travel and work; you can combine work with pleasure and reap the rewards. You could become an experienced yacht skipper or instructor and many people go on to spend their future holidays being paid to enjoy their favourite sport.

Australians and New Zealanders travel to Europe and North America in large numbers to gain overseas experience. Those who qualify with Shooting Star are very soon using their skills in jobs they could only dream about before, working outdoors and seeing more of the world. Wherever you come from, a gap year with Shooting Star means professional training and international adventure.

Top tips for a successful gap year:

- ★ Design your gap year in outline before applying for a permanent job or a college place. Human Resources officers or Admissions tutors will be impressed by a thought-out plan.
- ★ What's more important to you – travel or work experience? You can be flexible with travel plans but you must research job opportunities in advance. Go to our website and click on Recruitment for ideas.
- ★ Who do you know who has taken a gap year before? Shooting Star can put you in touch with someone who has just completed one.
- ★ Sort out the admin in plenty of time – air tickets, visas, insurance and medical matters such as vaccinations for some destinations. These are your responsibility.
- ★ Who is in charge of your affairs while you are away? There will be forms to fill and letters to answer.
- ★ Allow plenty of time to settle back home on your return – and don't be surprised if it takes some time to readjust to everyday life!

Questions 21–27

Read the text below and answer Questions 21–27.

Succeeding at Interviews

- A** Getting invited to an interview means you have passed the first hurdle – your application must have made a good impression. Now you need to prepare yourself for the interview to make sure you make the most of this opportunity. There are a number of things you can do.
- B** Firstly you can do some research. Find out about the employer and the job, ask for an information pack or speak to people you know who work for the company. Try to plan for the interview by asking who will be interviewing you and whether there will be a test to take.
- C** Prepare for questions you might be asked. Some common ones are the reason why you want the job, whether you have done this kind of work before, what your strengths and weaknesses are, and which leisure pursuits you enjoy.
- D** Another important point is never to run the risk of arriving late. For example, consider making a ‘dummy run’ in advance to see how long the journey will take. Check out public transport or, if you are going by car, the nearest parking. Aim to arrive about 10 minutes before the interview is due to start.
- E** It is also crucial to give plenty of thought to what you are going to wear. This will depend on the job you are going for. There is no need to buy a new outfit, but aim to look neat and tidy. Remember, if you look good it will help you feel good.
- F** You need to make a good impression. Interviews can vary from a relatively informal ‘one-to-one’ chat to a very formal panel situation. Whatever the circumstances, you will give yourself an advantage by being friendly and polite, by making eye contact with the interviewer and by selling yourself by focusing on your strengths.
- G** There are also things you should avoid doing at your interview. First of all, don’t exaggerate. For example, if you don’t have the exact experience the employer is looking for, say so and explain you are willing to learn. Don’t simply give ‘yes’ and ‘no’ answers, but answer questions as fully as you can. And lastly don’t forget to ask questions as well as answering them.
- H** One final thing to remember: it is important to show good team spirit, that you possess good people skills and that you are friendly and approachable. Finally, remember to be enthusiastic and show that you can be flexible.