

50 TOPICS - PART 2 - QUÝ 1/2022

TOPIC 1

Getting up early (topic for all test dates till 30 April 2022)

Describe an occasion when you got up extremely early

You should say:

when this happened

what you needed to do on that day

who you were with

how you felt about getting up early on that day

part 3 is 'Getting up early'

I've never considered myself a person who would wake up early voluntarily, feeling rested and energetic. So a couple of months ago, when my friends and I were planning a trip, I found out that we would have an early flight, at 5 a.m. to be exact. This piece of news made me more than upset. To my horror, this was the only available flight at a reasonable price back then. Therefore nobody was going to take into account my being disappointed.

I had to meet my friends at 3 a.m. at the airport. Although the recommended arrival time at the airport prior to departure of international flights is 3 hours, I was happy all of them understood there wasn't much sense coming so early and queuing there, so I could have one more hour of sleep.

As I expected, on a departure day, I woke up at the last minute and then scampered around the house to get ready, though I had promised to myself to do it " " day before without being in a hurry. I had to make a rush out of home, being afraid to be late. So you can just imagine when I got to the airport, I was angry with myself and everyone around. Needless to say, I felt drowsy and disoriented, just like a zombie, as I was used to getting up so early. Then I found out I had packed my swimsuit. For me, this was a disaster.. so irritated that, frankly speaking, I wished we had spent more money instead of waking up early.

TOPIC 2

Person who offered a clever solution to a problem (topic for Prev / Next all test dates till 30 April 2022) Describe a person you know who gave a clever solution to a problem You should say:

who this person is

what the problem was

what solution they gave

why you think it was a clever solution

Part 3 for this cue card is 'Intelligence'

Until recently, I had an unsolvable problem. Or at least, I was completely sure that my problem couldn't be resolved. I felt demotivated and disappointed as I made lists of tasks for each day but was unable to complete them no matter how hard I tried. I tried to cope with this problem myself. For example, I sorted tasks by priority and I avoided checking my emails or texting my friends, hoping that these strategies would help. No

matter what I did I couldn't get all the work done. And I was really angry with myself. The turning point for me was realizing that I didn't even want to start doing anything at all.

I was so upset that I complained about this situation to my colleague. I told him that I had already tried all the time management strategies, but nothing helped. This person gave me a really simple, yet efficient solution to my problem. He advised me to stop making to-do lists because I planned much more than I could do. I sat at a desk and thought that I had to complete all the tasks on the list. He told me that to-do lists don't work for visual thinkers like me and recommended me to start using a different approach to planning my day. At first, he drew a circular diagram which looked like a clock face. Then he took my long to-do list and asked me to estimate how much time each of the tasks would consume. So he transferred the tasks from my to-do list to this diagram. Every time he shaded a sector for the task. At some point, there were no empty sectors on the first diagram. He drew the second one. And I realised that when I made lists of things to do, it seemed to me I was obliged to do everything on the list by the end of the day. I realised that the problem was not about poor productivity, but my inability to make realistic plans. He taught me to set achievable goals and avoid planning too many things.

I am convinced this was a clever solution because, most of all, it worked for me and helped me solve my problem fast and efficiently. What's more, it didn't require me to put any extra effort into solving the problem.

TOPIC 3

Business person you admire (topic for all test dates till 30 April 2022)

Describe a business person you admire You should say:

who this person is

what you know about this person

why you admire this person

Part 3 for this cue card is 'Business'

The businessman I can't help admiring is Steve Jobs, a co-founder of Apple and the CEO of Pixar. It was he that invented the Macintosh computer and created a lot of innovative simple and stylish devices such as an iPhone, iPad, iPod and iMac. Also, he took part in developing Toy Story, the first feature-length computer-animated film. Although he passed away 10 years ago, he is still one of the most quoted and talked about business leaders in the world.

To tell the truth, it's very difficult to figure out when and how I found out about him as his name was and still is cited in business books and the Internet is awash with pictures of him. Probably, first I heard about him in connection with the launch of iPhone 4 when people were standing in a line the whole night to be the first owners of these devices. I was truly amazed. This was just a phone. There were many similar phones in the market, but people didn't stand in line to buy them. This later made me read a book and watch a feature film about his life and his achievements.

From what I know about him, I can conclude that he became so great a leader because he had strong communication and negotiation skills. Also, he could think strategically, which allowed him to see what other people didn't. And I guess he was excellent at motivating others.

Whether people like him or not, no one can deny the fact that Steve Jobs was an outstanding personality and iconic business leader who could inspire people to follow him and believe in his ideas. For instance, he believed in simplicity and made the whole

world appreciate it. What's more, due to his charisma he managed to surround himself with people who could help create the culture he desired to reach his goals despite all obstacles. But I guess the main reason why he deserves the highest praise is that he wasn't afraid to challenge the status quo in the world of computers although there were many people who said he would fail.

TOPIC 4

Describe an exciting book you read You should say:

what the book is and what it is about

why you read it

why you find it exciting

Part 3 for this cue card is 'Reading'

1/ The book that I read literally in one sitting was The Da Vinci Code by Dan Brown. Frankly speaking, I decided to read it just because it was one of the most talked about books at that moment which didn't necessarily mean that the book was really worth reading. So I didn't expect it to be really interesting. However, contrary to my expectations, it kept me glued until the last page.

Well, the action kicks off in modern-day Paris. Professor Robert Langdon is summoned to the Louvre to investigate a bizarre murder of the museum's curator who (being a member of a secret organisation) guarded a breathtaking historical secret. Fortunately, the curator finds the strength in his last moments to arrange his body in the shape of a famous artwork and leave a series of codes around the building such as a pentagram and Fibonacci number sequence. So, Professor Langdon together with the victim's granddaughter whose name is Sophie investigate mysterious murder and try to decipher cryptic codes and puzzles with Da Vinci's paintings. And, 'yes', the most important task they have is to uncover the mystery of the Holy Grail.

Being intricately layered with research and detail, this book nearly blew my mind. Whether or not Dan Brown intended to shake the foundations of mankind, in any case, he managed to undermine my views of religion, at least for some time. What's more, I enjoyed codes and riddles. Although I was not spectacularly good at cracking them, they were so interesting that I couldn't put down the book until I could barely keep my eyes open. It was the most captivating novel I had ever read.

2/ The book that I read recently, and the one I'm going to read from time to time is The Richest Man in Babylon by George Clason. Some time ago when I was in very serious debt, my friend passed me the book and said: 'Read it. It will change your life'. And it did.

This book takes the form of stories from Babylonian citizens each covering an aspect of personal finance. And this format of presenting the rules of managing money makes them easy to comprehend for a layman like me.

The book offers simple yet indispensable tips on money management which were applied by Babylonians and which still hold true today. One of the biggest things this book teaches is that no matter how small or big your income is, you should keep 10% of it. Another useful piece of advice is that you should save at least 10% of your paycheck. And it's very important to do so before you pay your bills and expenses. Doing so, you're telling yourself that your future is the most important thing to you, not the cable company. Also, it says that you should control your expenses and avoid spending more than you earn. I understand that there is nothing groundbreaking in these tips, but usually it's really difficult to follow even these simple rules. I think the book is absolutely fantastic as it really changed the way I view finances. And I'm going to read it again in the

near future as I need a reminder to keep following a new routine and not to let bad habits rule my life again. Also, last time I might have missed some really important points because there was too much information to remember at a time. One last thing, I want to remind myself that fortune doesn't depend on lady luck, but wise investment of my earnings.

TOPIC 5

Cafe you like (topic for all test dates till 30 April 2022)

Describe a cafe that you like to visit You should say:

what cafe it is,

where it is how often you go there

why you like to visit this cafe

Part 3 - 'Cafes and restaurants'

There's a place I'll keep coming back to week after week, and probably even year after year. And this place is a cafe located just across the street from my office. It's relatively large, with room for about 50 people. It's always busy although nearby there are several other cafes.

I can consider myself to be its regular visitor if we judge by a total number of visits without referring to the amount of food consumed 'cause I sometimes drop in just to have a cup of coffee, sometimes I have a substantial meal. Everything depends on my schedule, my mood, the people I'm accompanied by and the amount of money I have on me. But whatever the case, I know I'll find what to order and do there.

I like this place for many reasons. First of all, the food is delicious, the menu is constantly enhanced and refined. And they always provide a complimentary mini-biscuit or macaroon with your coffee or tea. By the way, it's not insanely expensive, which is also important to me. Another reason why I like it so much is that the service is efficient, so I never have to wait for more than half an hour to be served. It's a nice quiet place where I can pull out my laptop and work while waiting for my order. By the way, the wifi is very fast. In my opinion, it's a perfect place for meeting friends and celebrating special events such as birthdays. This cafe is also great for people-watching as it draws a wide variety of people. As I've said before, it's far more popular than all other cafes in the area. What's more, it has a convenient location and ample parking space for all those who are visiting the cafe. It's homey and has a good vibe. Solgo there for the atmosphere, food and convenience.

TOPIC 6

Being friendly with someone you didn't like (topic for all test dates till 30 April 2022)

Describe a situation when you had to be friendly with someone you didn't like

You should say:

what the situation was

who this person was

when it was

why you had to be friendly

part 3 - 'Being polite and friendly'

Well... If people never had fights, we would all live in a perfect world. Sadly, things are different in reality. For instance, I've been working for the same company for several years now, and I get on well with my colleagues. The only person I can't stand is our new department manager 'cause he is a nag, and he often shouts at people for no reason.

Recently I had just another unpleasant situation. He shouted at me because of a mistake I'd made the day before. He was really rude to me. I apologized for it and said I'd already fixed the situation. Moreover, it was just a minor mistake that didn't entail any losses or negative consequences. You know, even if it had been a big one, he didn't have the right to humiliate me in the presence of others. I'm sure I didn't deserve such an attitude.

I was really angry and offended, but I had to keep calm because any emotional reactions would just aggravate the situation. And there's one unwritten rule in my company. Whatever your boss does, you cannot shout at them or react emotionally. I mean if I had shouted back or reacted emotionally, I would have risked being fired for insubordinate behaviour. What's more, at that moment I was still hoping to get a promotion. You see I'd been plugging away for several years for that. I didn't want to ruin my future because of this person

TOPIC 7

Good service you received (topic for all test dates till 30 April 2022)

Describe an occasion when you received good service from a company or shop You should say:

what company or business it was and what this company does

what the service was and who helped you

where you received this good service

why you think it was good service

Part 3 for this cue card is 'Service'

Recently I've had an experience of what I consider to be exceptional rather than just good customer service. I wanted to buy a new laptop. First, I wanted to find a suitable one online, but I was overwhelmed by the number of options available. In the end, I decided to go to a reputable electronics store as it was too expensive a purchase for me to throw money away and buy the first thing I saw online.

When I entered the store, one of the sales assistants greeted me. He waited for some time to let me look around, then approached me only after I made eye contact with him, showing I needed his assistance. The guy introduced himself and started asking me a lot of questions to find out what exactly I needed. While listening, he didn't interrupt me, he listened to me carefully and did want to find the right solution for my individual needs, not just sell me something because that something would pay him more. Also, he was knowledgeable about the product and very patient. If I'd been him, I would have killed myself as I asked a dozen silly questions, and some of them more than once. Unfortunately, the laptop I'd chosen appeared to be out of stock, so he offered to contact other branches to find the model I wanted. Again, he didn't try to sell me something that I didn't need. That is where I would say normal service ends. Of course, I agreed to wait a bit.

It took him about a week to find the laptop I wanted, but, in the meantime, he phoned me a couple of times to let me know how it was going. I think it is the intermediate phone calls that made this exceptional. He let me know that he hadn't forgotten about me. It doesn't sound like much, but it really made me feel valued as a customer. In my opinion,

he went beyond what the company would require or expect to find a positive solution and to provide me with good service. And I really appreciated that.

TOPIC 8

Difficult decision (topic for all test dates till 30 April 2022)

Describe a difficult decision that you once made You should say:

what the decision was

how you made your decision

what the results of the decision were explain

why it was difficult to make

part 3 - 'Making decisions'

Several months ago it was the first time I had been caught in a real dilemma. I had to decide whether I wanted to study abroad or locally. Once my parents and I were having dinner, when suddenly they told me it was time to start thinking about my future and... (this is where the nightmare began) that they were ready to pay for my education abroad if it was what I really wanted to do. At first, I was on cloud nine, but then I started agonizing over the decision.

You can't even imagine how painful the process was. I asked my friends what they would do if they were given such an opportunity. Needless to say, opinions differed wildly. Then I made a list of pros and cons and analyzed all 'what-ifs' which threw me into doubt all the time. I also read a few articles about education abroad and found out what other students were saying about experience. I even tried to consider job prospects in different countries.

I struggled to make a decision because my future was at stake. And, of course, I was afraid to suffer consequences of the wrong choice. It was difficult to to imagine what living abroad would be like (taking into account the current situation regarding covid-19). Also, I knew I would have to start my life from the very beginning. And to top it off, I realised I would have to leave my friends and family behind.

After a great deal of thought I decided to seize this opportunity as it's better to regret what you have done than what you haven't. Now I'm planning to study in Canada. Of course, the outcomes cannot be accurately predicted yet, but I hope I made the right decision. We'll see. I'm still worried and fear disappointment but at the same time I'm looking forward to this change.

TOPIC 9

Famous athlete (topic for all test dates till 30 April 2022)

Describe a successful sports person that you like

You should say:

who this person is what this person has achieved

how you know about this person explain

why you like this person

Part 3 for this cue card is 'Sports'

The only sport I enjoy watching, and sometimes even playing, is football. For this reason, of course, my favourite sports star is a football player. He is one of the greatest players

of all time. Football experts compare him to the legendary Maradona. And I'm talking about Lionel Messi. He started making headlines many years ago, and he's still very popular.

Messi was born in a small town in Argentina. He was just 5 when he started playing football. When he was a teenager, agents from Barcelona saw his talent, so he moved to Spain. He became one of the youngest players in Barcelona. By the way, several weeks ago, he announced that he was leaving Barcelona after 21 years of playing for the club (the only club he has played for, by the way) 'cause the club said it could no longer afford to pay. I even started crying when I saw him crying at his farewell press conference.

He has had a lot of extraordinary achievements and won a lot of trophies so far. For example, having scored 4 goals, he won the Golden Ball award for the World Cup's best player in 2014. He helped his club team Barcelona win the European Champions League and the World Club Championship. What's more, he's Argentina's all-time leading goalscorer.

I love to watch him playing, especially when he scores his beautiful goals from quick counter attacks. He is undoubtedly a natural talent. You know, the ball seems to be glued to his foot. He is a master at reading the game, and he's very quick. Everyone calls him the greatest dribbler of his generation. I particularly like when he dribbles at high speed, then he suddenly slows down, waits for the defender to get closer to him, then accelerates in the opposite direction. It doesn't matter how many defenders try to stop him, it's simply impossible. What's interesting is that everyone knows this trick, but he does it again and again, and defenders always go for that. I can't help admiring Messi because he does things that people talk about years later.

TOPIC 10

Trip by bike, car or motorbike (topic for all test dates till 30 April 2022)

Describe a long bike, motorbike, or car trip that you would like to take You should say:

when you want to go

where you want to go

how long it will take you

why it is interesting

Part 3 for this cue card is 'Travelling'

I've always been a serial traveller, but I've only bought package tours from reputable tour operators and I've never travelled by car. Recently I've been obsessed with the idea of taking a tour around the continent. To me, this sounds really adventurous and exciting. So, when an opportunity turns up, I'll start packing my suitcases right away and prepare for hitting the road.

In my opinion, it should last for about a month or two as, otherwise, I won't manage to visit many places. However, I don't want to think of any time limits. You know, if I get this inner feeling that my curiosity is filled up with enough impressions and knowledge, I'll go back home to share my new experience with my family and friends.

I believe a car trip is best for me as I'd like to get off the beaten track and travel to some unknown spots. Just imagine how independent I'll become. I will stop whenever and wherever I want, for example, if it's an amazing sight or just want to stretch my legs or buy something. Also, I'll take nearly as much luggage as I want. Maybe I won't be able to take my entire wardrobe with me, but in any case I'll take much more than I've taken so far. One more important benefit is that I'll be able to buy as many souvenirs as I want,

even fragile ones, and won't have to worry about breaking them.

As I've said before, I would try to avoid popular tourist holiday destinations, such as X and Y, but drive through the countryside, getting acquainted with local people and traditions. I truly believe that only by observing other people's way of life can we understand their culture.

Without any doubt, this trip is worth doing as it u only provides me with possibilities to broaden my horizons but also charges me with positive emotions for many years ahead.

TOPIC 11

Foreign person (topic for all test dates till 30 April 2022)

Describe an interesting foreign person that you know You should say:

who this person is

where you met this person

why you like this person

what you learnt from this person part 3 for this cue card is 'Foreigners'

Quite recently I met a very interesting person from the Arab Emirates when I was going on holiday to Dubai. I was on a plane. And there was a young man sitting next to me.

At first, I was busy using my laptop and didn't even look at him. Two or three hours later, when the battery went flat, I started looking at him secretly as I didn't want to seem impolite. I was really bored as I had absolutely nothing to do. But I was afraid to start a conversation. You know, he was a person from a different culture, and I didn't know if it was acceptable for him to talk to a stranger. He literally read my thoughts and initiated a conversation.

Time flew by unnoticed. He managed to keep a conversation going no matter what I asked about. Unfortunately, no sooner had we started discussing really interesting life issues than the plane landed, and we had to say goodbye to each other. I wish we'd had a longer conversation as he was very interesting to talk to.

I think it was after this meeting that I started, at least, trying to look at things from a whole new perspective and accept the differences within races, cultures and religious backgrounds. Also, I understood that it isn't that difficult to understand other cultures. People just have to communicate more, listen to each other and be more open-minded.

TOPIC 12

Waiting for something special (topic for all test dates till 30 April 2022)

Describe a time you waited for something special to happen

You should say:

what you were waiting for,

how you felt

what you did while waiting

why you waited for it

Part 3 for this cue card is 'Waiting and patience'

I hate waiting in all its manifestations as I always feel like I'd be waiting forever, and this is what usually makes me feel restless. Several years ago there was one occasion that I

remember like it was yesterday as waiting was particularly stressful. I was waiting to get my visa to go to Canada. And as it was my first trip abroad I was more than nervous.

I should say I was excited while collecting all the documents and planning my trip. Even after I submitted a visa application, everything was more or less ok. I knew I'd have to wait for some time, and, at first, this didn't make me scared. If it hadn't been for my friends who kept telling me that Canada was one of the hardest places to get a visa to, I would have been relaxed and calm. But because of them, I started feeling panicky. While my visa application was being processed, I felt like I was waiting for something that wasn't going to happen. Sometimes it felt as though time had stopped.

Of course, I tried to distract myself with work, friends' meetings, but it was difficult not to think about it. The worst thing was that I was being kept in suspense as I could ask nobody about what was going on. And I didn't know when exactly I could expect to receive the results. But I was looking forward to getting it as this would make my dream to visit Canada come true.

TOPIC 13

Place you visited on vacation (topic for all test dates till 30 Prev / Next April 2022)
Describe a place you visited on vacation You should say:

where this place was

what you did there

who you went there with why you liked this place

Several years ago my boyfriend and I found a wonderful resort by the river, and we liked it so much that since that time we've visited this place every summer

This resort is situated in the coniferous forest, far from the hustle and bustle of the city. There are one- and two-storey wooden cottages scattered around a large territory so that you have a feeling that there are no people around. Just you and nature. I especially liked those overlooking the river. In my opinion, there is nothing more tranquil than strolling through a forest of tall pine trees, breathing in fresh air and enjoying the beauty of nature or sitting down by the river bank, looking at the water.

This place was fantastic, having all we needed for a good rest. In the daytime, we sunbathed, splashed in the water, swam and played different games. Once I remember we even went on a boat trip which was fun. In the evenings, we were sitting on the terrace, watching the sun set over the water, talking and drinking wine or tea. At night, we liked sitting on the edge of the pontoon and watching the moon reflecting on water. I could spend hours there as I couldn't take my eyes off the ripples in the water.

I really liked spending time there as, first of all, it was a good chance to be with my significant other away from city noise and everyday problems. Also, being there made me calmer and helped me to recharge my batteries. I will definitely return to this place many times in the future.

TOPIC 14

Creative person (topic for all test dates till 30 April 2022)

Describe a person whose creative work you admire You should say:

who this person is

how you know this person

what creative things this person likes to do

why you admire this person

The person I can't help telling you about is Mary. She is one of my close friends and the first person I rush to when I need a creative solution to some problem, be it preparing a birthday present or decorating a flat.

I met Mary by accident. Some years ago I was planning to have my flat refurbished, so I was looking for interior design ideas as I had no idea of what to do. I found her page on Facebook where she shared some ideas which were great yet easy to implement. I decided to ask her for advice. So I sent her a message. She befriended me on Facebook first and gradually we became very close friends in real life.

She is living proof that a creative person is creative in everything. First of all, she's a wizard with her hands. She makes unbelievably beautiful clay dolls which have a special meaning and serve as protective charms. What I admire most is that she can turn ordinary items into design objects. One of such examples is such a lamp made of plastic spoons and bottles. It looks incredibly stylish.

I don't know how she manages to come up with new wonderful ideas every time I ask her for help. And this happens every time I want to congratulate my friends or relatives on their birthdays. For instance, once she advised me to record a song for my boyfriend. Another time she helped me make a fancy cake. The most recent creative solution was to hide a present and make a map with prompts and riddles which my boyfriend used to find the gift. I wish I could come up with the same original ideas. However, I'm nowhere near as creative as her.

TOPIC 15

Paid more than expected (topic for all test dates till 30 April Prev / Next 2022) Describe an occasion when you paid more than expected You should say:

what you bought

how much you paid

why you bought it why you paid more

part 3 - Money and consumerism

Well, several years ago I bought a digital product for the first time in my life. And I have to say, it was quite an experience.

One day I decided to pay for the premium version of a fitness app in order to exercise at home. I was a little worried 'cause I had never done this before. What's more, I heard numerous stories about credit card data breaches and apps that simply steal your credit card details. You pay for some product, but get nothing.

So, at first, I decided to buy a 1-month subscription which cost, as far as I remember, about 10 dollars. I checked the currency exchange rate to find out how much I would be charged in my local currency. Then I made the payment.

To my surprise, I noticed an extra fee with an order? charge on my card statement. It wasn't a lot of money, but I was upset 'cause I expected to pay less. First, I thought my account details or PIN had been stolen. I got mad. I gave the app a 1-star review to warn others. I wrote to developers to complain about the issue. At that moment, I was still convinced that I had become a victim of a fraud or scam. I don't remember what made me do it, but I contacted my bank. And I was shocked when I found out that my credit

card charges crossborder and exchange fees.

TOPIC 16

Habit (topic for all test dates till 30 April 2022)

Describe a habit your friend has and you want to develop You should say:

who your friend is

what habit your friend has

when you noticed this habit

why you want to develop this habit

part 3 - Habits

A few months ago, my best friend decided to try to drink 1,5 litres of water daily. First, she told me about her intention. She said publicly announcing her goals makes her feel the pressure of having to follow through on her goal, or otherwise let everyone down. This strategy works with me too.

A few days later she started carrying around a bottle of water at all times. It was hard not to notice. The bottle didn't fit in her crossbody bag. So she had to carry it in hands. A little later, we went on holiday together. Sol got a chance to watch her develop the habit.

Well, what she didn't seem arduous. She drank a glass of water immediately after getting up. Also, she drank a glass of water with each meal. She carried around a bottle of water in order to consume some additional water while we were walking or exercising. Actually, this is what she's still doing.

Now I'd like to develop this habit too. I know that not drinking enough water can result in kidney stones, high blood pressure, dry skin, constant fatigue, frequent headaches, muscle weakness and many other health conditions. So I'm ready and I want to make one more attempt to start drinking water throughout the day. Although I should say it will be difficult 'cause water tastes bland to me. And to date I've had difficulty drinking it consistently. Right now my preferred dr with a meal is coffee. So, to be honest, I would be happy even if I managed to drink 1 litre of water daily for at least one month.

TOPIC 17

Waste of time (topic for all test dates till 30 April 2022)

Describe an activity you usually do that wastes your time You should say:

what it is

when you do it

why you do it

why it wastes your time

Well, I think the biggest time eater in my daily life is TikTok. I watch TikTok videos every day. This is the first thing I do right after getting up. I spend time on Tik Tok whenever I have a spare moment during the day and, to my regret, I use TikTok even when I'm supposed to be working. The app sends a notification teasing some crazy dance or challenge. And I'd like to say its notifications are really hard to ignore.

As soon as I open the Tik Tok app, a dozen stupid videos start playing immediately one after another. I say to myself that I have a lot of much more important things to do. Despite this, every time I end up scrolling through the endless stream of crazy dances and entertaining life hacks I know I'll never use. TikTok's information is presented in a 15

second form. I'm sure that meaningful content cannot be adequately displayed in such a short amount of time. These videos are neither inspirational nor educational. But what irritates me the most is that although I understand that watching these videos is a waste of time I can't stop watching them. Can't stop no matter what. I can even say that I hate using Tik Tok as it keeps me from doing important tasks, and it's robbing me of productivity.. But I can't stop using it. It seems to me that it's more addictive than smoking and taking drugs put together

TOPIC 18

Skill that was hard to learn (topic for all test dates till 30 April 2022)

Describe a skill that was hard to learn You should say:

what it was

when you learned it

why it was hard to learn

how you felt about it part 3 - Skills

Well, the skill that was hard to learn but appeared to be one of the most important skills in my daily life is driving a car. If I'm not mistaken, this was more than 10 years ago. Back then very few cars had an automatic gearbox, so acquiring this skill was much more difficult than now, therefore it required a lot of practice. As a result, it took a long time to master.

At first, I decided to take the line of least resistance and asked my father to teach me as he had had a wealth of experience. But being good at driving didn't mean being good at teaching. He lost temper and shouted at me every other second, which made both of us upset. I quickly understood that this wasn't as good an idea as I'd expected. Then I found an instructor who was much more patient than my father. For an obvious reason actually... He explained what to do and what mistake to avoid. He controlled every movement I made. It took me hours and hours of practice. In the end, I became a really confident driver.

To be honest, it was only when I learned to drive a car that I understood what freedom was. Even when I didn't have my own car, I could take my parents' vehicle and go somewhere without waiting for one of them to give me a lift. On many occasions it made getting around the city far more comfortable than it used to be. Now that I have my own car, I think driving is an indispensable skill for me. It saves a lot of time as I don't have to catch the bus, wait for a taxi or ask somebody to give me a lift, completely depending on them. I can stop or change the route any time I want. I'm free to go wherever I need, especially to some places which are difficult to get to by public transport, for example, out of town. What's more, I can take as much stuff with me as I need without keeping an eye on it on a bus. I don't have fingers that are numb after carrying my heavy bags all day round. Also, I can transport a lot of stuff without hiring special companies. I can say without any exaggeration that since I learned to drive my life has improved in countless ways.

TOPIC 19

Family member that made you feel proud (topic for all test dates till 30 April 2022)

Describe a family member that did something that made you feel proud

You should say:

who this person is,

what this person did

why you felt proud of them Part 3 - 'Rewards, being proud'

The person I'm enormously proud of is my father because he managed to quit smoking after being a heavy smoker for many years.

You see, for him smoking was such a necessary permanent habit just like eating and sleeping. He smoked one cigarette after another and needed almost two packs of cigarettes per day. So my mom and I thought he would be hooked on nicotine and cigarettes until the end of his life. Taking into account the number of unsuccessful attempts that he'd made before, the fact that he finally got rid of this habit can be regarded as a great achievement.

At first, he tried to stop smoking by gradually doing it less and less, but it didn't work for him. And he ended up going back to his old habit. So he decided to quit cold turkey.

I can't help feeling proud of him 'cause I saw how difficult it was for him to get rid of this bad habit. I've read that nicotine is considered a strongly addictive drug. I was afraid he would start smoking again as smoking was a large part of his daily ritual. From morning till the evening hours nearly every activity involved smoking. So it wasn't easy for him as he had to occupy himself by doing something. He tried to focus on some activities and take up new hobbies not to think about his craving for tobacco. Also, he said he'd felt a bit tight chested and had breathing problems. I'm not exaggerating saying that only with a great effort of will did he manage to win this battle. And now that he has been a non-smoker for more than half a year, I'm terribly proud that he didn't give up.

TOPIC 20

Something you did that was difficult but successful

Describe something you did that was difficult but successful You should say:

what you did

how you did it

how difficult it was

why you are proud of it Part 3 - Challenges

Well, it's probably difficult to believe, but last year I knocked off X kilos in about 6 months, and this is what I'm still enormously proud of. I have to confess. I used to be a very lazy girl who loved fast food and hated sports. And at that time I was so slim that I didn't even think that one day being overweight would become my number 1 problem. So when I realised that I'd put on X kilos, I decided to lose weight and get fit, no matter what.

And so it began. I started exercising daily. I went jogging in the mornings and I walked in the evenings. Also, I ditched junk food and stopped buying snacks, which I couldn't live without. I started sticking to a diet. You know, no sweets, no rice, no cheeseburgers and! French fries. Nothing. Only salads, vegetables, fruits and plenty of fluids. I ate only healthy food and drank a lot of water daily. I cooked foods in healthier ways such as boiling, baking and stewing. I read somewhere that it is better to have a few light meals instead of one main meal. So I followed this advice too. I continued this practice for six straight months. As a result, I lost more than X kilograms.

Now I'm not only as slim as I used to be, but I'm alenough. And I'm genuinely proud of my achievement. I should say it was hard to change my habits, my a. my lifestyle, and at some point I was about to give up because all those activities were really time consuming. But I didn't, thank God, though I was facing a lot of difficulties. Another thing that makes me feel inordinately proud of myself is that I achieved great results without

anybody's help. I just read blogs and forums, used a lot of online resources, but it was I that decided what to do with myself. This is something I never thought I could do. You can't even imagine how much effort I put in achieving this result. I would even say I was fighting the battle of my life. And I won.

TOPIC 23

Advice you gave (topic for all test dates till 30 April 2022)

Describe a time when you gave advice to others You should say:

who you gave advice to

what the situation was what advice you gave

what the result was

part 3 for this cue card is 'Advice'

Just recently one of my close friend's decided to quit a job after an argument with some colleague. And what's more, he was determined to do it as soon as possible.

To be honest, I didn't want to interfere and tell my friend what I thought about his idea 'cause giving advice to people who don't ask for it just doesn't work. Also, I'm sure people should make their own mistakes and learn their own lessons. But I realized that this would impact his life significantly, so I just couldn't keep my mouth shut.

I advised my friend not to make emotional decisions. I said that I didn't think it was wise to quit a job without another one lined up because this would entail uncertainty and having no income for an indefinite period of time.

To my regret, my friend didn't listen to me as he is too stubborn to listen to anybody's advice. A few days later, he resigned. And a few months after that he called me to borrow some money because he was still looking for a job

TOPIC 24

Famous person (topic for all test dates till 30 April 2022)

Describe a famous person you're interested in You should say:

who this person is

how you know this person

why you think this person is interesting

Part 3 for this cue card is 'Famous people'

One of the people that I've always admired is Arnold Schwarzenegger, an American actor, retired professional bodybuilder, a former politician, and a very rich man. So it's not surprising that I'd like to meet him in person. When I was a child, he was my idol, my role model and my inspiration. The walls in my room were covered with posters depicting him. I remember I made quite a scene when someone, probably my younger brother, tore one of them. It was a tragedy, really.

The first time I saw Arni was probably in the first Terminator movie. By the way, it was one of my favourite movies, so I watched it over and over again. I guess some of the scenes are forever burned into my mind.

I thought he was really cool. And I was really inspired by his success story, a typical story of an underdog, wasn't born with a silver spoon in his mouth. He started from the bottom and became rich and famous. Isn't it amazing? Moreover, almost nobody believed in him. Despite this, Schwarzenegger achieved unprecedented heights and fame.

As you might imagine, I don't know him personally. So, of course, I can't be sure that what I think of him is true, but judging by his achievements, he really is ambitious, hardworking, brave and disciplined. Otherwise, I think he wouldn't have achieved success.

TOPIC 25

Person who impressed you in primary school (topic for all test Prev / Next dates till 30 April 2022)

Describe a person who impressed you most when you were in primary school You should say:

who this person was

how you knew them

why this person impressed you

how you felt about this person

part 3 - Childhood, teachers

Oh, I remember when I studied in primary school, once I caught the flu in winter. And I was so sick that I had to stay home for a couple months. As a result, I missed a lot of school, and I found it really hard to catch up. I particularly struggled with Math. I didn't understand the teacher and gradually lost confidence. My parents realized I would have to have catch-up classes to get to the same place with the rest of the class.

So my parents got me a private tutor to help me catch up in Maths. When I first saw her, I thought she was an angel. She had long blonde hair and was dressed to the nines. Later I realized I just loved that impeccable, perfectly perfect look, all matched and prearranged. I wanted to be like her.

She was an amazing teacher as well. She impressed me with her kindness and patience, dedication and commitment. She patiently and calmly repeated the explanation when I couldn't understand something. I was looking forward to class each week.

She was an amazing teacher as well. She impressed me with her kindness and patience, dedication and commitment. She patiently and calmly repeated the explanation when I couldn't understand something. I was looking forward to class each week. Soon I realized that she helped me love Maths again.

TOPIC 26

Course that impressed you (topic for all test dates till 31 Prev / Next August 2022)

Describe a lesson that you remember well You should say:

when it was

where it was

what you did

what your teacher did

why it was special

Part 3 - 'Remembering things'

Many moons ago when I was a child I attended an English language course at a language centre.

I'm convinced that one of the reasons why that course still remains in my memory is that our teacher did her best to perfectly arrange everything. Although there was nothing

unusual at all, I vividly remember almost each class as our teacher created an unforgettable and pleasant atmosphere.

A typical lesson consisted of several interconnected stages each of which was filled with an awesome activity, so there was no chance to get bored. I remember I did a lot of different things with my groupmates. Firstly, the teacher carefully checked the homework assignment, which was an indispensable part of every lesson. It took quite a lot of time as we asked various questions. The teacher answered all the questions, which helped me get a good understanding of the grammar points we dealt with. After that we played fun educational games. As I love interacting with people, I really enjoyed those oral activities. They were designed to be done together with classmates so I greatly developed my communication skills. In addition, I enjoyed doing crossword puzzles, that's why when I was told to do that at the lesson, I was really glad. At the end of the lesson, we got a challenging task which was to compose spooky stories in English. I am fond of creative writing, so it was a real pleasure for me when I got that task. Then every student read their story aloud. The teacher praised us from time to time, therefore our language confidence significantly increased, and I bet everybody was convinced that their story was a masterpiece.

To my mind, that lesson was special because I had a wonderful opportunity to develop my communication and writing skills and got a good understanding of tricky grammatical structures. Moreover, it's worth mentioning that it was only after this lesson that I started feeling an overwhelming desire to learn English. Every minute of the lesson was incredibly interesting to me. In other words, the teacher aroused my interest in the English language.

TOPIC 27

Gift you want to buy (topic for all test dates till 31 August 2022)

Describe a gift you'd like to buy for your friend You should say:

what gift you want to buy

who you'd like to give it to

why you'd to buy a gift

why you've chosen that gift

part 3 - 'Gifts'

A few weeks ago, one of my close friends moved into a new apartment. So it's perfectly natural that she wants to present her new home to her friends, and for this, she's going to throw a housewarming party next month.

When I received an invitation, my first thought was 'Oh my God. What gift shall I give her?' To me, choosing the perfect gift is always a daunting task 'cause I hate giving something that will go unappreciated. For me, it's really important to give a gift a person is dreaming of. But the element of surprise is as important as the acceptance of the gift. That's why I never ask a giftreceiver about what they want or need directly. As a result, it usually takes time to find out what a person wants and find the perfect gift for them.

Fortunately, this time my friend literally saved me when she created a wishlist using Google Docs so that everyone can choose the gift of their choice and budget, but she won't see what people are getting her 'cause she set me as the owner of the spreadsheet. So she has no access to her own document. And we'll be able to keep all activity a secret until she starts unwrapping presents. So nothing will ruin the surprise. What's more, his system helps prevent the receipt of duplicate or unwanted gifts and allows us, gift-givers,

to figure out which stores have the items she needs.

All I did was open the document, look through the whole list and choose the gift I liked the most. And it was also the one that fitted my gift budget. I'm going to buy her a flatware set for 6. It's quite expensive. She told me she'd added some pricey items to the list but she doesn't expect to get them. Just imagine how surprised and delighted she will be when I give her the gift that she expects the least.

TOPIC 28

Story you remember (topic for all test dates till 31 August 2022)

Describe a story someone told you and you remember You should say:

what this story is about

who told you this story

when you heard it

why you remember it part 3 - 'Stories'

Last year in the winter my father was going to go outside wearing just slippers, trousers and a jumper. I told him to put on his winter coat, boots and a hat as I was afraid he would freeze to death. He said he would be back in 5 minutes. And he told me a story about a man who spent a whopping 20 hours lying paralyzed in snow outside his home and didn't even have any frostbite. I was amazed to hear that. I asked how it was possible. And it appeared that the man was saved by his dog.

So, there was some man who decided to go outside for a moment, just like my father. He wasn't going to stay out in the cold for a long time, that's why he was wearing slippers, trousers and a shirt. But he slipped and broke his neck. He couldn't stand up. He was lying in the snow screaming for help, but nobody could hear him. Luckily, his dog came to him and started barking for help. She kept him warm for about 20 hours by lying on top of him. Also, she kept him awake by licking his hands and face. If he had fallen asleep, he would have been doomed. The dog kept barking for help all night long. Thank God, she alerted the man's neighbour, who called the emergency services, and the man was taken to hospital.

The story moved me, but when my father finished it I asked him to put on warm clothes because we didn't have a dog that would rescue him.

TOPIC 29

New place you visited (topic for all test dates till 31 August 2022)

Describe a new place that you visited You should say:

what place it was

why you went there

what you did there

how you felt about it

part 3 - 'New places'

Before the COVID-19 pandemic started, I visited Dubai Miracle Garden, the world's largest natural flower park, for the first time in my life. I've never been someone who really loves flowers, so I went there just because I wanted to make the most of my trip to the UAE and visit as many popular places as possible. And I have never regretted going there. It is indeed a miracle garden.

I had a good couple of hours wandering around the numerous decorations. There were millions of flowers arranged in colourful arches and patterns. For example, the heart's passage was totally gorgeous as was the flower covered full size aircraft. Also, there was a huge floral clock made of real plants and flowers. There were giant cats, Disney characters, and a flower castle. All of them were totally covered with flowers. You feel like you are in some kind of a fairyland.

I took pictures of flowers and flower displays until I totally ran out of storage space on my phone. Then I just explored the park gasping in amazement every other minute. It's impressive how much work was put in it. If I had to choose one word to describe this amazing place, it would be 'magical'. It was the first and only time I saw so many colourful flowers. I saw the colours I never knew existed. It was truly a feast for the eyes.

When I came home, I was so impressed that I set a picture taken there as the home screen on my phone. So every time I unlock my device, I fondly recall my first (and only) visit to this beautiful place full of colour.

TOPIC 29

Rule you don't like (topic for all test dates till 31 August 2022)

Describe a rule that you don't like You should say:

what it is

why you don't like it

what others feel about it whether you follow the rule

part 3 - 'Rules'

What I really dislike is that some hotels don't allow guests to take any food from a hotel's breakfast buffet and restaurants to eat later or to eat, say, on the beach or in the room.

Of course, if people were permitted to take as much food as they want, most hotels would go bankrupt 'cause in hotels that don't have such restrictions some people just bring several containers and clean out the buffet, leaving nothing for the rest of the people in line. I think this is a bit over the top. So if all people acted like this, the rule would be justified.

But there are also many people like me. I would only grab just a few items for later 'cause I prefer to relax with my coffee and breakfast in my room rather than in the breakfast room. I think there is nothing wrong with taking food from a hotel's breakfast room as long as it's the same amount as I would have taken if eating IN the breakfast room. What's more, when you are staying at a hotel, you have paid for the buffet, so there is no difference if you eat a muffin and take another to eat later, or if you eat the two muffins directly.

You know, although I don't think the rules should be obeyed just because they are the rules, I never sneak food into my room. It's not that I'm such a law-abiding person, but I just don't do this. I don't know why.

TOPIC 31

Interesting city

Describe an interesting city You should say:

what city it is

how you know it

what it is famous for

why you think it is beautiful

part 3 - 'Cities, countryside, tourism'

Well, X is the city that I'm in love with. And because I was overwhelmed by its size and beauty, I remember almost every minute that I spent there like it was just yesterday although I went there 2 years ago.

X is a bustling city, the capital of X. It's so large that if you view the city from a tall building, you get the feeling that it doesn't end. And as I've just said it's by far the most beautiful city that I've ever visited.

X is divided into two parts, the old town and the modern city, therefore there's an eclectic mix of historic architecture and modern buildings that have bizarre shapes. What is really amazing is that there are no ugly, cooker-cutter buildings in the modern part of the city. Due to a clever use of materials, almost each building has its unique design. There are a lot of beautiful and green zones, too.

I'm a keen walker so I explored the whole city on foot. And I really liked both parts of the city. For example, while walking around its historic part, I leisurely explored historically significant architecture, peaceful green spaces, and unique local attractions along the way. You can walk for days and still have something new to see 'cause there are many places of cultural and historical value, and there are countless routes that can be taken in different parts of the city. Sometimes I just walked around the city having no destination in mind. I also visited the observation deck. It's one of the most famous attractions there. I just couldn't miss the opportunity to visit it although it was a bit pricey. So I walked, tried local food, visited famous attractions and enjoyed the beauty around. It really did feel like jumping from antiquity into modern times all the time. I think X is a magical place.

TOPIC 32

Long walk (topic for all test dates till 31 August 2022)

Describe a long walk you had You should say:

where it was

who you were with

why it was long

how you felt about it part 3 - 'Leisure'

I'm gonna tell you about something that started as a 3-hour walking tour and turned into a day-long adventure walk around Z 'cause I got lost.

So, several years ago I spent my summer vacation in X. I lived in Y city and almost every day had one-day bus trips to different places.

One day I went to Z city, and had a walking tour of the city. At first, everything was ok. But at some point, the guide started walking faster, and suddenly I realized I had lagged behind the rest of the group.

To my regret, my phone had died, so I could neither call the guide or use Google Maps. Then I asked some passers-by for directions, but they were tourists, just like me. They just shrugged their shoulders and apologized for not being able to help me. After that I decided to retrace my way, but it appeared to be more difficult than it seemed as there were many winding and narrow streets which looked exactly the same. So I ended up walking around in circles. I had no idea how to get back to the bus. I understood that I would have to take a taxi to return to the hotel. So I stopped worrying about it, relaxed

and continued exploring the city on foot. I guess I walked more than 20000 steps on that day. Unfortunately, I wasn't able to document my record 'cause my phone was dead.

TOPIC 33

Clothes as a gift (topic for all test dates till 31 August 2022)

Describe a piece of clothes that you received as a gift You should say:

when you received the clothes

what the piece of clothes was like

who gave it to you explain

how you feel about it part 3 - 'Clothes'

Oh, there's a crazy story behind my go-to pair of jeans. Once I saw cool jeans in a shop window of a high-street shop and fell for them. However, I didn't dare to go and try them on because everyone knows this shop is for people with deep pockets. Once my husband and I were passing by this shop window. He noticed the way I looked at the jeans and asked me whether I wanted to pop in and try them on. I tried to pretend not to be in the mood for shopping, but he insisted and we entered the shop.

It was an amazing pair of skinny jeans, the ones you have to fight some to put on, but the torment is forgotten as soon as you see yourself in the mirror. These were dark wash blue jeans with sanding. One might think there was nothing special about them as they were stripped of all details which could justify the price. There were neither zippers nor welts. But they elongated the line of my legs and felt like a second skin. They were perfect because I could match them with anything, be it formal, casual, street style or even corporate. I looked at the price tag, understood they cost a fortune and made my husband quickly leave the shop.

However, I couldn't stop thinking about these jeans. One day I realised that I had to buy them no matter what. Well, I borrowed 500 euros from my friend and couldn't wait to purchase them. Much to my disappointment, when I came to the shop, I was told that the jeans had been sold a few days before. I was upset, but I had to put up with this fact somehow. Gradually I stopped thinking about them.

Several weeks later, on my birthday I found a gift box near my bed. Guess what was inside! Those jeans! It was my husband who bought them and prepared a surprise which definitely was a success.

TOPIC 34

Person you follow on social media (topic for all test dates till Prev Describe a person you follow on social media

You should say:

who this person is

how you know this person

what this person posts on social media explain

why you follow this person part 3 - 'Social media'

The person I've been following on Instagram for a while is Marina Mogilko. She is a YouTuber with 2 million subscribers, Instagram influencer and entrepreneur. Her YouTube channel is dedicated to learning English. And, actually, this is how I found her.

One day I was looking for an accent reduction course on YouTube. I watched one of her videos, then another one. They were really engaging. I just couldn't stop watching them. I

found her personal account on Instagram and started following her.

Her posts proved to be even more interesting than her videos because she wrote a lot about her life in America, described her business strategies, and shared her insights with the audience. So I've been following her on Instagram for almost a year now. I still find her ideas interesting, so I never miss her posts, especially those that she writes after attending some events.

I'm sure it is her ideas and beliefs that have helped her achieve the results I'm dreaming about. So I try to apply some of these things to my life. Some of her ideas are totally different from mine, thus, they made me look at things from a different perspective.

For example, in one of her recent posts she said she started to say more noes than yeses. She said this helps her focus on what's really important to her although there are lots of people who say that we should seize every opportunity that we have. Another interesting idea of hers is not to try to improve more than 2 spheres of your life at a time. Otherwise, you risk spending the whole day digging deeper and deeper into all kinds of problems. As a result, you'll just have low self-esteem and a bad mood. She also writes about difficulties she faces and what she does to overcome them. She writes about her achievements. It's inspiring. For example, sometimes she starts her post from 'This is how I did something, for example, started my own business at the age of 21 and how you can too.'

TOPIC 35

Skill you learned from older people

Describe a skill that you learned from older people You should say:

what skill it was

who you learned it from

how you did it how you feel about it

part 3 - 'Learning from others'

It is my father who taught me the most important life lessons and skills. And among many things, he taught me to drive safely and confidently.

I went to a driving school. I passed my driving test, but I wasn't a confident driver. So my father decided to teach me to drive like a pro. I liked the idea as I wanted to overcome my fear of driving. But I didn't want to drive a stick. I was going to buy a car with an automatic transmission, so I didn't understand why he wanted me to learn to drive a car with a manual transmission.

We had our driving sessions every weekend. I expected him to break down the process into a series of steps. I thought we would first practice in a simulated environment and focus on mastering one or two functions, say, steering and speed calibration. Although he would make me repeat each step until I got it right before leading me headlong into 'real' traffic conditions.

But my father has always been the 'sink or swim' type of a teacher. He took me on X Boulevard, one of the busiest roads in the city. My spine stiffened, my eyes popped and my face turned red like in the episode of 'Tom and Jerry' in which Tom gets his claws smashed by a hammer. I was really scared. Moreover, my father was constantly yelling at me and giving instructions. I'm sure that Apollo astronauts received fewer comme from mission control than I did from my father. SC can imagine... back in the day when I was 18, I didn't really appreciate the lessons. But his approach to teaching proved to be effective, and I overcame the fear of driving.

It was only when I learned to drive a car confidently that I understood what freedom was. Even when I didn't have my own car, I could take my parents' vehicle and go somewhere without waiting for one of them to give me a lift. On many occasions it made getting around the city far more comfortable than it used to be. Now that I have my own car, I think driving is an indispensable skill for me. It saves a lot of time as I don't have to catch the bus, wait for a taxi or ask somebody to give me a lift and completely depend on them. I can stop or change the route any time I want. I'm free to go wherever I need, especially to some places which are difficult to get to by public transport, for example, out of town. What's more, I can take as much stuff with me as I need without keeping an eye on it on a bus. I don't have fingers that are numb after carrying my heavy bag day round. Also, I can transport a lot of stuff by hiring special companies. I can say without any exaggeration that since I learned to drive my life has improved in countless ways.

TOPIC 36

Place in the village you visited (topic for all test dates till 31 August 2022)

Describe a place in the village you visited

You should say:

what place it is

when you went there

what you did there

how you feel about it part 3 - 'Countryside'

Last summer I finally visited my grandparents who live in a quiet, picturesque village situated on the bank of the river. During the pandemic, I was trying to stay away from grandparents in order to reduce the risk of infection. I missed them very much. What's more, my grandpa said he was more afraid to die of loneliness than of coronavirus.

So I decided to spend a couple of days in the village and kill two birds with one stone: spend time with my grandparents and get away from the noises and bustle of the city.

My grandparents live in a beautiful, quaint house with a lovely garden all around dotted with blooming orchids. Being there is like traveling back in time. Everything reminds me of my carefree childhood: my toys, old CDs, my bicycle. It feels like you step into another world. All the walls are still covered with old wallpaper. And my grandmother doesn't allow us to remove it. And she refuses to get their house refurbished 'cause she wants to keep all their memories alive. She says they both love their 50-year old chairs and armchairs, their old wooden table in the kitchen, paintings, clay pots, old pictures, lots of things that they bought when they were young.

She's right. There's something special about this old house. It's a magical place. I really love spending time there. So last summer I had a really good time there, as always. In the daytime, I went fishing and just explored the countryside. In the evenings I enjoyed the sunset sitting in the backyard of the house, sipping hot tea and munching buns with cinnamon baked by my grandmother. I wish I could go there more often.

TOPIC 37

Thing you did to learn a language (topic for all test dates till 31 August 2022)

Describe a thing you did to learn a language

You should say:

what language you learned

what you did

how it helped you

how you felt about it

part 3 - 'Learning languages'

A few years ago I realized that if I wanted to make further progress in English and sound more like a native English speaker, I would somehow have to gain more exposure to the language native English speakers would use every day. But I couldn't pack up and go to a country where English is spoken natively, so I knew I had to find a way to always get exposed to it at home.

All my friends said I had to subscribe to Netflix and start watching series and TV shows in English. And this is what I did. I remember I started with a TV series which I had already seen in my own language. It was Friends. Who hasn't watched Friends? After that I always found what to watch. First, I watched films and series in English with the subtitles in my own language, so I could check the meaning of any vocabulary I didn't know easily. Later, I had the subtitles in English ; paused if the characters spoke too quickly. When I started feeling more confident, I watched each episode without subtitles. I used the 10 second 'back' button to try again and again to catch all the new words and conversational phrases. Then I played each scene again and watched the scene with English subtitles on. Then I looked them up and watched the scene AGAIN to see how these new words were used in the context. I watched each episode as many times as I needed to get used to the speed, pronunciation, and common expressions used. After that, I always practiced SHADOWING, which I'm sure really helped improve my fluency. I tried to repeat what they were saying at the same time. Again, I used my favorite ten second 'back' button to practice saying and repeating some short phrases a few times.

I believe watching Netflix series and TV shows helped me a lot as I learned the most current version of a language, stuff that may not even exist in textbooks. I learned to speak naturally and easily. And it helped me develop my listening skills. What's important is that it was never boring.

TOPIC 38

Interesting song (topic for all test dates till 31 August 2022)

Describe a song that means something special to you

You should say:

what this song is about

when you heard this song for the first time

how often you listen to this song

why it is special to you Part 3 - 'Music'

'I will survive' by Diana Ross is a song that is very personal to me. This is a story of a woman that was abandoned by her beloved man. She really vividly describes what it feels like to have your heart broken.

So when I heard this song for the first time (I was a teenager), it touched a nerve as I had just broken up with my boyfriend (or girlfriend). My heart was broken, and I thought I would never love again. She sang about exactly the same feelings that I experienced at that moment. She was afraid, disappointed, frustrated and depressed. I remember I was crying the whole night, but somehow this provided emotional relief. Also, in the song she states that although it hurts, she will be strong and cope with this situation.

I heard it on the radio first and liked it straightaway. Now this song isn't as popular as it was years ago. But this doesn't make it less worth talking about. After that I downloaded it on my computer, and I couldn't stop listening to it until I had learnt it by heart so that I could sing along to the whole song.

It is really difficult to overestimate what impact this song had on me. First of all, it made me understand that whatever happens, life goes on. This insight helped me combat depression, let go of negative emotions and look at my problems from a different perspective. I don't know whether I would have got through a sticking point in my life as fast as I did if it hadn't been for this song.

Now I don't often listen to it as I don't do it deliberately. But, of course, sometimes I do if I accidentally hear it on the radio.

TOPIC 39

Special cake you received (topic for all test dates till 31 August Prev / Next 2022) Describe an occasion when you received a special cake You should say:

what kind of cake it was

when you had it

who gave it to you

why it was special part 3 - 'Food'

Several years ago my boyfriend messed up big time, and I was so angry with him that I didn't even want to listen to his 'I am so sorry. Please forgive me.' He kept saying he would do anything to make me forgive him. And I decided to give him a punishment he deserved. My boyfriend considered cooking to be a cruel form of punishment. I swear. He always said it was easier for him to work all night long than to make an omelet, let alone some exquisite dishes like lasagna or soup.

So I said I would forgive him if he could make my favorite three-tier chocolate biscuit cake. And I told him I would sit and watch him cooking to make sure he didn't cheat.

He found a video recipe on the Internet and just followed all the instructions step by step. First, he baked several cakes and made chocolate mousse. Then he assembled the cake, stacking the layers on top of each other. Also, he experimented with cake decorations a bit (who would've thought) and finally decided to make a chocolate lace collar around the bottom and middle cakes. The cake looked gorgeous. The crumb was delicate and moist, the frosting was rich and creamy and utterly chocolatey. It was filled with buttercream, fresh fruit, and nuts. He sprinkled the top tier of the cake with chocolate curls and dusted it with confectioners sugar.

My jaw dropped to the floor. I just couldn't believe how he managed to do it for me.

TOPIC 40

Interesting discussion (topic for all test dates till 31 August 2022)

Describe an interesting discussion you had with your friend

You should say:

what it was about

what opinions you and your friend had

why it was interesting

how you felt about it part 3 - 'Opinions and ideas, communication'

Recently my friend invited me to grab some coffee and catch up. One of the things he told me was that he started thinking of investing his life savings in cryptocurrency. He said it was the best time to invest 'cause the price of bitcoin and several other leading cryptocurrencies had suffered huge falls in December, so the price of bitcoin plunged to about 40000 dollars, but some analysts are predicting the price of bitcoin could hit 100000 dollars by the end of the next year. And there are a lot of new coins that he thinks will make a good investment as well. One more reason why he said cryptocurrency could make a good investment is that everyone says cryptocurrency is the future 'currency of the internet' and ultimate store of wealth. What's more, transactions are fast, digital, secure and worldwide, which allows the maintenance of records without risk of data being pirated.

Despite all this, it was obvious he couldn't make up his mind. I'm sure what I told him didn't help him at all 'cause my knowledge of cryptocurrency is limited. All I could tell him was a couple of stories of bitcoin millionaires and losses. For instance, I told him a sad story of some guy who accidentally threw away 7500 bitcoins when he got rid of an old laptop hard drive. He bought them when they were worth 1 dollar. And they are worth over 200 million dollars today. He now wants to dig up his local rubbish tip, hoping to find the old drive. Also, I told him that if I were him, I wouldn't invest more than I can afford to lose, and that I wouldn't invest all my life savings. In my opinion, the discussion was really fruitful as it helped me form a balanced opinion on this matter. And now I'm planning to invest a small amount of money in bitcoin in the near future. But it seems to me my friend began to doubt even more

TOPIC 41

Person who contributes to the society (topic for all test dates till Prev / Next 31 August 2022)

Describe a person who contributes to the society

You should say:

who this person is

how you know the person

how this person helps others

how you feel about what this person does part 3 is 'Jobs'

I'm lucky to be surrounded by many altruistic people who put others before themselves, but the person who deserves the highest praise is a young woman whose name is Diana. I once came across her post on Facebook, which was shared by one of my friends, and I decided to donate to some cause she was raising money for. This is how I found out about her volunteer work. Diana doesn't belong to any organisations. She thinks each of us can and should take initiative to change what we feel is wrong in our society.

We've met several times in person and she told me how it all began. Initially, she found posts of people asking for help, visited them in order to make sure they were not taking the money under false pretences and donated money, food or clothes. She helped many people in need, for example, families with many children, cancer patients and elderly people... all those who needed both physical and emotional support... But as her individual resources were limited, she decided to raise money and invite people to join her using Facebook.

Looking at her, you would never say that she singlehandedly has raised a lot of money for many good causes, be it helping the poor or the disabled. Not only does she help people, but also makes attempts to protect the environment by organising community

cleanups in different districts of the city. And I guess there is one more really important thing she does by spreading the information about the needy. She inspires people to do good and makes them pay attention to problems our society faces. Otherwise, many of us would ignore the difficulties of others, making tons of excuses such as a lack of time, problems at work and stuff like that. But when people see that she takes care of her husband and children, goes to work like all of us, they don't even dare to say that they would help if it weren't for something.

I doff my cap to her because I consider her contribution invaluable. I wish there were more people like her, people who understand that it is we that form society, so it is we that need to contribute towards its betterment.

TOPIC 42

Person you like to spend time with

Describe a person that you like to spend time with

You should say:

who this person is

how you know this person

what you like to do together

why you like to spend time with this person part 3 - 'Getting along with others'

The person I really enjoy spending time with is my boyfriend Denis. You know, it's like every time I say 'Goodbye' to him, right after that I start looking forward to the next meeting. This is what, in my opinion, shows how much I like being with him.

To tell the truth, if it hadn't been for his persistence, I wouldn't have even started communicating with him. So, how did it all begin? We met by accident. We went to the same fitness centre and saw each other from time to time, but I didn't pay attention to him as he wasn't my type. Once we had small talk at the reception and after that he befriended me on Facebook. Gradually we started communicating a lot and have become inseparable friends.

Everybody says we are a perfect match as, on one hand, we have a lot in common, on the other, we are really different and complement each other, so it is always interesting for us to be together. We both like walking in the park. We can speak on the phone till morning as every hour feels like a minute, and I don't realise how time flies when we are together. We often go to the cinema or just stay at home to watch a good film together. He invites me to different cafes and restaurants where we can taste new dishes and just chat. We discuss our plans for the future, visualizing what life will be like when we get married. We like reading books and discussing them. When the weather is bad, we like playing board games such as backgammon or checkers at home.

Actually, it doesn't really matter what we do as long as we are together. What I know for sure is if it were him, I would have missed out on so many things. For instance, I wouldn't have jumped with a parachute or swum in a cold river. Whatever we do, we always have a good time, laugh and enjoy each other.

TOPIC 43

House or apartment you'd like to live in (topic for all test dates till Prev / Next 31 August 2022)

Describe a house or apartment you'd like to live in

You should say:

what kind of accommodation it will be

where it will be if it will be big or small

what it will look like part 3 - 'Accommodation'

Well, if you'd asked me to describe my dream house a few weeks ago, I would have had no answer. But just several days ago I came across a video on YouTube that showed an unbelievably cool rectangular modern house with a grass backyard and an in-ground pool. When I saw it, my jaw dropped to the floor. I realized that this is the house of my dreams.

So, now I know that the house I'm dreaming of is a straight-lined white house made of concrete, steel and glass or a rectangular cottage with a black glass facade, possibly with multiple decks. Actually, it doesn't really matter whether it will be white or black. I just want it to be an ultra modern geometric building, without a traditional roof, you got the idea.

It goes without saying that the interior of the house should match its exterior. I think it will be a 2 storey house with a wide open floor plan, high ceilings, a flying staircase and big floor-to-ceiling windows that let a lot of natural light in. I'd like it to be either in a minimalist style or with some characteristics of a loft style such as massive oak planks, concrete walls, marble panels and some other elements made of natural stone glass and steel.

What's more, there will definitely be remote control heating, lighting, and sound systems, floor heating and cooling, and automatic blinds. Oh, and I nearly forgot one of the most important things... There will be a surrounding sound system all through the house.

It will definitely be a big house as a small one won't include all the rooms and elements of design that I want to have. I mean tall ceilings, lots of windows, spacious foyers, huge staircases, three or four garages, a kitchen and a dining room, a sun room, walk-in closets and 2 or 3 bedrooms complete with whirlpool tubs and separate showers, laundry rooms, media rooms and a home office. And I think the best place for such a fantastic house would be in the heart of London or New York, for example.

TOPIC 44

Something you received for free (topic for all test dates till 31 August 2022)

Describe a product or service that you got for free

You should say:

what it was

how you got it

how you felt about it part 3 - 'Free things'

Just a few days ago I decided to have a quick bite to eat at McDonald's as I didn't have a lot of time to have a meal at a cafe.

So I went to the McDrive and ordered a cheeseburger and small fries. I paid for my order at the first drive through window. And I expected to get my food as soon as I got to the second one as McDonald's guarantees one-minute drive-through service. But no such luck.

I was asked to drive forward, park the car and wait for my order. Well, after 5 minutes of

waiting I started getting nervous and decided to get their attention by beeping the car horn. After 10 minutes of waiting, I was going to go to the drive-through window and get a refund. And when I was about to get out of the car, I saw a girl with a takeout bag approaching my car.

She sincerely apologized for having kept me waiting for so long and awarded me with a free food voucher on a future McDonald's visit.

Of course, I didn't jump for joy as I was nervous and afraid to be late for my appointment with a doctor, But I was really pleased about it because I felt valued as a customer. No doubt I will be back in the future.

TOPIC 45

Something that was broken in your home (topic for all test dates till 31 August 2022)

Describe something that was broken in your home and then repaired You should say:

what it is

how it was broken

how it was repaired

how you felt about it part 3 - 'Repairing things'

There's a story I think I'll never forget. I was already in bed when I heard a strange noise coming from the kitchen. I rushed there, opened the door and what I saw made me totally shocked. Water was gushing out from the broken faucet.

Of course, it didn't happen unexpectedly. It was bound to happen sooner or later. First of all, the faucet was old. And it should have been replaced, but we were always too busy to deal with it. And we kept putting it off. What's more, we just ignored the harbingers of the impending disaster. For example, a few days before this happened I noticed the faucet was dripping. I told my husband about it, but he said there was absolutely nothing to worry about.

A few days later it became apparent that there was something to worry about. The worst thing was that it was almost midnight. So there was very little chance that we would find a 24-hour emergency plumbing repair service. In any case, we had to deal with the problem urgently. What we did immediately was turn off water at the main shutoff valve, which is at the water meter. Thank God, it didn't take us much time to find it. That's all we could do ourselves. The next morning I contacted a local plumbing repair service and scheduled a service call for plumbing repair 'cause fixing is not my husband's forte.

It was a nightmare, but I was feeling happy 'because we didn't flood our neighbours.

TOPIC 46

Something you can't live without

Describe something you can't live without (not a computer or phone) You should say:

what it is

how you use it

how often you use it

how it helps you and why you can't live without it part 3 - 'New and old things'

What I can't imagine my life without now is a vacuum cleaner. I use it every single day, sometimes even twice a day. I'm not obsessed with cleanliness (though my husband says I am a clean freak), but I hate to see dust, crumbs, cat's hair and other particles on the

floor, on carpets and on the furniture. I love my cat, but he sheds a ton of hair everywhere every day. It seems to me he drops more fur than one would think is possible. And I've got a chair that gets particularly covered in hair every day 'cause this is the place where my cat likes to chill. If I didn't vacuum every evening, there would be clumps of hair all over our clothes and everywhere. Plus, I like to walk around my flat barefoot, but I hate when my feet get dirty and when dirt and other particles stick to my feet. Again, the only way to prevent this from happening is to vacuum the floor carpets every day. I love my husband and kids, but hate to see little pieces of food, crackers and bread crumbs on the floor 'cause they like eating in the living room and don't feel guilty about it.

I'm happy that I have a really powerful vacuum cleaner which is specially designed for people who keep pets. It's a canister model which has the motor and dust collector, and the vacuum head connected to its main part by a flexible hose. It is a wheeled type and it has really high suction power, so I don't have to put too much effort in order to clean all the surfaces. It's compact and lightweight, therefore I don't have any difficulty using it.

So every evening I vacuum all the surfaces using different heads for different tasks. And I do it even if I feel drained after a hard working day. If it weren't for this vacuum cleaner, the whole flat would be covered in cat's hair, crumbs, dust, torn paper pieces and other particles, which would really annoy me.

Without exaggeration, I'm really happy that humar once created this household device because it saves a lot of my time, and I clean the whole flat relatively

TOPIC 47

Ambition you haven't achieved (topic for all test dates till 31 Prev | Next August 2022)
Describe an ambition you haven't achieved You should say:

what it is

why you haven't achieved it

what you did

how you felt about it part 3 - 'Ambitions'

Four years ago I was dreaming of setting up my own business - something that I could do while working my daily job. I decided to use the dropshipping model. It's an online business model in which you don't keep the products you sell in stock. When you sell a product, a manufacturer, wholesaler, or another retailer ships the product directly to a customer.

So for me, it was the easiest way to start my own business. I was told I wouldn't have to stock products, order inventory in bulk, or physically fulfill the orders in any way. But I had to have some capital to launch a website and invest at least a small amount of money in advertising.

However, the most important thing was to decide which product to sell. And this is what became my biggest problem. I couldn't decide what to sell for too long. I spent a lion's share of time on doing market research to figure out what products or services would be in high demand. And when I was about to start acting, there was an outbreak of coronavirus. Obviously, it wasn't the best time to start a business. So I decided to put my plans on hold.

Of course, I felt down for a while, but then I remembered that there's always a second chance. I'll try again later.

TOPIC 48

Person you met once and want to know more about (topic for all test dates till 31 August 2022)

*Describe a person you met only once and you want to know more about You should say:
who this person is*

how you met this person

when you met this person

why you want to know more about this person

Last summer I decided to take a 5-day personal development course. I knew this would help me not only to improve myself, but also to meet like-minded people and form lifelong friendships with them. So, as I expected to have a chance to network with lots of such people. But one of them seemed to be particularly interesting to me. This was a young lady named Helen.

At the very beginning each of us presented a short story in order to introduce ourselves to other group members. She said she was there because she was keen on Psychology. Also, from what other people knew about her I found out she was a successful businesswoman who owned an online store which sold unusual handmade gifts all over the world. During breaks between lectures she always disappeared and I didn't have an opportunity to talk to her in a relaxed atmosphere. I was really surprised to find out that during these breaks she always went to feed her newborn baby who was looked after by her mother while she was studying.

I wish I'd had an opportunity to get to know her. And still want to get in touch with her in order to know more. I'd like to find out how she manages to take care of her husband and children, always look impeccable, and run a successful business. Another thing I want to know is what makes her so energetic. I'd like to communicate with her to be like her because I really like that she always looks on the bright side of life and she has qualities that are in short supply nowadays. Those who know her well say she is industrious, ambitious, sinlominded, knowledgeable, caring and risky. I admire people and want to surround myself with people like her

TOPIC 49

Toy (topic for all test dates till 31 August 2022)

Describe a toy that you liked when you were a child You should say:

what the toy was

who gave it to you

how you used this toy

how you felt when you got this toy part 3 - 'Toys, kids and ads'

I was a really spoiled kid, so there were tons of different toys competing for my attention, but my all-time favourite was a teddy bear. When I was about 7, my dad came home with a giant box. When I opened it, I saw a brown bear with a big head and black beady eyes staring at me. I started leaping for joy because this toy had been on my wishlist for a long time and I begged my parents for it. It was really cute and cuddly. The whole next day I was really busy choosing the best name for my fluffy furry friend. I'm afraid it wasn't original but I called my teddy Winnie, after my favourite cartoon character Winnie-the-Pooh. It became my best buddy for many years.

Not that I didn't like spending time with my peers, but unlike my friends, Winnie was always by my side, sharing all the moments of my life. I dragged it around everywhere.

Once I found out that one eye was n. I tried to find it, but didn't succeed. I was really upset because I thought it wouldn't have happened if I had looked after Winnie more carefully. So my mom had to get a replacement on the same evening.

Winnie and I spent a lot of time together. I fed it and talked to it. In the evenings I read stories to my teddy bear. When it got sick, I treated it with pretend tea and honey. It is without doubt I took it to bed and it even had its own pillow. Probably it was Winnie that chased away bad dreams. I also taught my bear to read and write, and it was a really assiduous student. Besides, my Winnie must have been the most fashionable bear of all. In the summer it had on some shorts, a tee shirt, sandals, sunglasses, and a hat. When it was cold and wintry, I would put on a jacket, sweater, boots, shoes, and a cute snowy hat! Winnie is much more than a toy, it is a symbol of my childhood, so it is still with me, hibernating in one of my closets.

TOPIC 50

Happy event you organised (topic for all test dates till 31 August 2022)

Describe a time when you prepared for a happy event successfully

You should say:

what the event was

when and where it was say whether it was easy or difficult

how you prepared part 3 - 'Organizing things'

I love different celebrations and parties, but not when I'm the person who is responsible for organising things. For me, the process of preparation is a chore to be endured. But at least once a year I have to organise my birthday party.

I have a birthday in November. So as you understand, I went through the whole process just a couple of months ago. This time I started preparing a party one month before the date as I didn't want to do everything at the last minute like I usually do.

First of all, I chose a date for the party. Thank God, I didn't need to make sure that most of my friends were free because they know that I always celebrate my birthday on the same day as I was born. It has been for many years, so they don't plan anything on the day. I planned to invite quite a few guests, so obviously I couldn't invite them to my place as my dwelling is just a one-room flat. For this reason, I booked a table at my favourite restaurant, I ordered food, drinks and a birthday cake. I ordered big colourful balloons and prepared a basket of props handy for people to use to take funny photos. You know, some funny hats and glasses. I discussed a party_playlist.

To tell the truth, although it may seem that I didn't do a lot, the process was really tiring. First of all, though I started well in advance, I was pressed for time. Secondly, I didn't want to spend a fortune, so I had to choose everything carefully and compare prices in different places. And sometimes it was difficult for me to make up my mind about some things such as what dishes to choose, what colour balloons to order, such things. But the party was even better than I expected.

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