

Test 4

PAPER 1 READING (1 hour 15 minutes)

Part 1

You are going to read three extracts which are all concerned in some way with people living together. For questions 1–6, choose the answer (A, B, C or D) which you think fits best according to the text. Mark your answers on the separate answer sheet.

WRITING MY FAMILY MEMOIRS

One problem when writing family histories is knowing how to show people what your family is like. Recording their recollections is the best method, but this is difficult if, like my family, they communicate chiefly through shrugs and raised eyebrows. At one point I thought I had so little material I'd have to give up altogether, but then it dawned on me – my family may be an extreme case, but this is true to a certain extent of all families. Being so familiar with each other, we had learnt to read each other's facial expressions like meteorologists reading a sky.

One of my most potent teenage memories is of taking charge of some sick chickens on our family farm. I built them a special pen, and spent

my spare time feeding them. When I told my dad they had all died, I realised he had known this would happen, and that he would not have let my brother, a trainee farmer, persist in such a sentimental illusion. In short, it meant that everyone had realised before I did that I'd never make a farmer. Did my brother, father or mother remember the chickens as a major turning-point, too? No: they did not remember them at all. The only person who did was my sister. She had helped me with them herself – only for me, in my self-absorption, to subsequently forget about her. I soon realised how separate we all are, and that you can only ever tell your own story.

- 1 In the first paragraph, what does the writer say happened during the course of his research?
 - A He learnt to understand his own family's manner of communication.
 - B He realised his family was not very different from other families.
 - C He found a way of presenting his family to the reading public.
 - D He changed his opinion of the relationships within his family.
- 2 What is the writer's purpose in recounting the episode about the chickens?
 - A to highlight the differences in personality between the members of his family
 - B to emphasise how attitudes to people and events can change over time
 - C to underline the need to achieve a balanced view of a past occurrence
 - D to demonstrate the subjective nature of people's memories

Living on a commune

Communes have existed since history was first recorded. I grew up on one in the late 1960s, when more than 2,000 were formed in the USA. However, I was never sure what exactly a commune was defined as: only what it was like to live on one. When I left the commune at twelve years old, I was astounded to encounter almost entirely negative views of communes from people in 'mainstream' society.

There are two main types of communes. In the 'anarchistic commune' there is an agreement to reject establishment and organizational worlds. Usually anyone is welcome, members are temporary, and there are no rules. This type of commune usually doesn't last long. For example, the Oregon Farm, a small and short-lived rural commune, emphasized individualism so much so that there were no real guidelines for living – no norms for membership, behaviour or meal times. Members were transient and there were many arguments about who got what and why, and about work. For example, the women felt it was unfair that they had all the housework and childcare responsibilities while the men worked in the fields.

The second type is the 'service commune', in which people pool resources and agree to live a certain way with a motivating philosophy. Membership is more closed, residents must commit to the commune's purpose. This type is socially organized with leaders and rules. Usually this type of commune has a sense of purpose that binds the people within the commune together toward a common goal.

- 3 What does the writer imply about communes in the first paragraph?
- A They are better than life in mainstream society.
 - B They are generally misunderstood.
 - C They are ideal places for children.
 - D They are of very little value.
- 4 What is the main difference the writer identifies between 'anarchistic' and 'service' communes?
- A the people who join the commune
 - B the division of work on the commune
 - C the reason for setting up the commune
 - D the areas of conflict within the commune

Interviewing Londoners

A common ingredient in all the memories which people shared with me, as they looked back and thought about how they remembered their lives in a poor district of London in the 1930s and 40s, was a real sense of loss for the time when 'we were all one'. A time when you knew all your neighbours; when you sat outside the front door of your house on a kitchen chair during long summer nights chatting and when you helped each other if you had problems, without a second thought. And yet this affection is probably the result of hindsight. When families were living in such close proximity there could have been little opportunity for peace and quiet and even less for privacy.

A striking example of how things have changed in our perception of what we might expect from our local community was seen in the response to my questions about the problems of organising childcare. Women either needed me to explain what I was talking about or they laughed: what need was there for such formalised arrangements when you were part of a large whole which looked out for one another, regardless of whether they were family, friends or simply your next-door neighbour? It wasn't an issue. If a woman worked, and many did – had to – there was always someone to keep an eye out for the kids. That's the way it worked.

- 5 In the first paragraph, the writer suggests that the people he interviewed
 - A were bewildered by the changes in their lives.
 - B were disillusioned by family life.
 - C were objective in their view of the past.
 - D were influenced by a sense of nostalgia.

- 6 What does the writer imply by saying that the women laughed?
 - A They wished that modern arrangements had been available in the 1930s.
 - B They identified with the writer's difficulties in finding childcare.
 - C They recognised that childcare was a common problem nowadays.
 - D They thought that childcare hadn't needed to be organised in the 1930s.