

FCE Reading and Use of English Part 1

For questions 1-8, read the text below and decide which answer (A, B, C or D) best fits each gap. There is an example at the beginning (0).

Off the beaten track

The expression ‘getting off the beaten track’ is used to 0 _____ to the experience of avoiding famous tourist attractions and choosing instead to explore less well-known places when travelling. For many people the whole 1 _____ of travel is to visit cities such as Paris or Venice that have a great 2 _____ as places of beauty and historic importance. Furthermore, they are not particularly 3 _____ by the crowds that are usually found in such locations. But for others who have more of a 4 _____ of adventure, a good holiday must 5 _____ unfamiliar experiences, even taking some risks.

Travelling off the beaten track may be done by some students who don’t 6 _____ to a rigid plan, but make decisions about what to do depending on how they feel. Other travellers prefer to spend money on guided tours to unusual locations. Such tours are designed to 7 _____ their particular needs, and all the arrangements are made for them. However people choose to get off the beaten track, the hope is always the same: to have a special, often unique 8 _____ of a different culture.

0	A refer	B represent	C indicate	D mention
1	A worth	B point	C aim	D profit
2	A favour	B approval	C reputation	D opinion
3	A bothered	B interrupted	C offended	D disturbed
4	A feeling	B impression	C mood	D sense
5	A possess	B consist	C involve	D concern
6	A fix	B stick	C fasten	D attach
7	A please	B fit	C agree	D meet
8	A experience	B understanding	C awareness	D knowledge

FCE Reading and Use of English Part 2

For questions 9-16, read the text below and think of the word which best fits each gap. Use only one word in each gap. There is an example at the beginning (0).

Write your answers IN CAPITAL LETTERS on the separate answer sheet.

Example: (0) **WHETHER**

Keep on learning!

It doesn’t matter 0 WHETHER you are still at school or in full-time employment, making the effort to learn new things is very important. Most of us have a few subjects on 9 _____ we focus. These may be associated 10 _____ our study or job, or sometimes a hobby. 11 _____ it is obviously important to develop a deep understanding of 12 _____ matters to us most, it is equally worthwhile to extend our range of knowledge beyond what we are familiar with, and that is true at 13 _____ age.

So the best advice is to find the time to **14** _____ on new challenges and learn new skills outside the areas where we feel most comfortable. People often choose subjects **15** _____ as new languages, computer skills, or painting. If you can't get to a class, then you can go online. Online courses can easily **16** _____ found, and learning online means you put in as much time as you want each day.

FCE Reading and Use of English Part 3

For questions **17-24**, read the text below. Use the word given in capitals at the end of some of the lines to form a word that fits in the gap in the same line. There is an example at the beginning (**0**).

Write your answers IN CAPITAL LETTERS on the separate answer sheet.

Example: (**0**) HISTORICAL

The first coffee shops

There is some **0 HISTORICAL** evidence to suggest that coffee was cultivated in Africa in the tenth century, but drinking coffee didn't become **17** _____ in Europe until the mid-seventeenth century, with many visitors to London claiming that going to a coffee shop was one of the great **18** _____ of life. People paid an **19** _____ charge of one penny to enter a coffee shop, to enjoy the supposedly **20** _____ effects of the drink. Doctors at the time believed it could cure several diseases, and many drinkers reported that coffee made them more **21** _____ and improved their mood.

22 _____, a visit to a coffee shop had a serious purpose too, as people started to meet there to discuss politics and new ideas. Good behaviour was essential and if you were **23** _____, you could be thrown out of a shop. However, coffee shops in Europe declined in popularity in the late eighteenth century due to the greater **24** _____ of tea, a drink that was easier to make than coffee.

- 0 HISTORY**
- 17 FASHION**
- 18 PLEASE**
- 19 ADMIT**
- 20 BENEFIT**
- 21 ENERGY**
- 22 INCREASE**
- 23 POLITE**
- 24 CONSUME**

FCE Reading and Use of English Part 4

For questions **25-30**, complete the second sentence so that it has a similar meaning to the first sentence, using the word given. Do not change the word given. You must use between three and six words, including the word given.

Example:

On holiday I prefer going sightseeing to relaxing on the beach.

RATHER

On holiday I _____ relax on the beach.

ANSWER: *would rather go sightseeing than*

25. Nobody explained why the flight had been delayed.

REASON

Nobody gave _____ to the flight.

26. Last year's skiing holiday was more exciting than this year's holiday by the sea.

AS

This year's holiday by the sea _____ last year's skiing holiday.

27. Maria doesn't think we should visit the museum because it's not very interesting.

POINT

Maria says _____ the museum because it's not very interesting.

28. All of us are excited about our trip to China next month.

LOOKING

Everyone _____ our trip to China next month.

29. When I was in Sweden, I managed to learn some Swedish.

PICK

When I was in Sweden, I was _____ some Swedish.

30. The architecture here makes me think of the buildings in Amsterdam.

REMINDS

The architecture here _____ of the buildings in Amsterdam.

FCE Reading and Use of English Part 5

You are going to read a review of a TV programme about homes of the future. For questions **31-36**, choose the answer (**A, B, C** or **D**) which you think fits best according to the text.

The homes of the future viewed from today

Mark Finchley reviews TV series Tomorrow's Homes

Having just watched the whole of Channel 8's TV series Tomorrow's Homes, I've been wondering about how anyone can predict the future of domestic life. You'd imagine that if you knew what architects and technology companies were developing now to make life easier, more exciting and more beautiful, you'd have a pretty good idea of what to expect in tomorrow's homes. In reality, it's more complicated, and just as much about what we'll choose to hang on to from today's – the things that are 'future-proof'. In the 1950s, people thought that in the twenty-first century household tasks would be done by labour-saving devices or robots – with food pills for dinner. Yet people still wash up and cook, even though the technology exists that makes neither of these tasks necessary.

Tomorrow's Homes, however, dared to make predictions which it turned into reality using an average home belonging to a family called the Forseys. Four miles of cable were installed in the house so that all the electrics, from lights to the fridge, could be controlled via the internet, and various other devices and gadgets were introduced in addition to this. The family were then filmed as they got used to their new home life. Programme presenter Harry Thwaites is also a consultant who spends his work life imagining the future, so testing out his ideas for the programme was a fascinating experiment for him. His approach was to use technology that was not totally brand new, but had only recently become more affordable. CCTV cameras for security have been around for years, for example, but they are no longer only an option for the mega-rich.

The Forsey family consists of a husband and wife with four children and two grandchildren. They appear to be very natural and ordinary on the programme, and it was always interesting to see how they reacted to the technology they were testing. One example that sticks in the mind is when Janine, the mother, enters her reconstructed, all-white home (after successfully unlocking her new front door by using her thumb print as a key), and she immediately bursts into tears – quite understandably it has to be said. A short while later, her husband Ben gets locked out because

the skin on his thumb is too rough. As the series progresses, however, they slowly come to accept the technology, and even start to believe it could have some value in their lives.

I was keen to see during the show if anything emerged as potentially future-proof, and there were some great examples. To help Janine deal with various worries, she was provided with a mind-controlled relaxation tool. This was a kind of headband connected to a DVD, which, incredibly, she could control with her thoughts. When she relaxed mentally, she made an image of the sun go down, as it would at night, on the DVD. When she had tried the gadget and achieved the sun set, she was asked how effective the gadget had been. Janine commented, 'Nothing can compare to a nice cup of tea and a good soap opera!'

31. The writer makes the point in the first paragraph that predicting how homes will be in the future

- A requires detailed study of architectural trends
- B is impossible if you only look at new developments.
- C has been very difficult until now.
- D is made easier by programmes and articles about them in the media.

32. What does 'today's' refer to in the first paragraph?

- A current ideas
- B the present reality
- C the homes we currently live in
- D modern architecture

33. According to the second paragraph, the technology installed in the Forseys' house

- A was chosen to match the specific needs of the family.
- B was previously only used by a limited section of the population.
- C was still too expensive for anybody except the wealthiest.
- D was tried out by experts before the family used it.

34. What does 'sticks' mean in the third paragraph?

- A blocks something
- B remains there
- C corrects an error
- D highlights something

35. According to the third paragraph, how did the family members react to the new technology?

- A Their attitude towards it became increasingly positive
- B Some of them adjusted more quickly to it than others.
- C The parents struggled with it throughout the series.
- D Some of their responses to it were surprising.

36. How did Janine feel about the mind-controlled relaxation tool?

- A She was amazed at what it was capable of.
- B She thought it would work if used with other things.
- C She found it totally useless.
- D She preferred more traditional methods of relaxation.

FCE Reading and Use of English Part 6

You are going to read an article about how a desert marathon runner found a pet dog. Six sentences have been removed from the article. Choose from the sentences A-G the one which fits each gap (37-42). There is one extra sentence which you do not need to use.

The desert runner and the dog

The story of how a homeless dog became an internet star and found a home in the UK begins in China, in the Gobi Desert, during an ultramarathon in which competitors cross 250 kilometres of desert in seven days. The dog ‘adopted’ Australian marathon runner Dion Leonard when it chose to join the racers on the second day. Leonard’s affection for the dog grew as it ran hour after hour with him in the harsh desert conditions, and by the last stage of the race, they could not be separated. He named her Gobi, after the desert.

37 __. He claims she helped him do so well in the race. In fact, Gobi set the pace for Leonard, and the two days she didn’t run with him, his times were not as fast as when she did. He added that she sometimes beat him too – but when Gobi ran too quickly she would stop and wait for him to catch up, and then they would continue together.

Dion Leonard’s affection for the dog was so strong that he decided he would take her back to Scotland, where he currently lives. **38** __. This included setting up a crowdfunding campaign (raising many small amounts of money from a large number of people) on the internet to cover the costs of medical and fitness checks for Gobi and for her to be flown to Scotland.

However, the drama of the story increased when Gobi disappeared just before she was due to travel to Beijing. **39** __. She had escaped by dashing outside through an open door in Urumqi, the Chinese city where some of the ultramarathon race team were caring for her.

After hearing this news, Leonard took a flight back to China as soon as he could, and began to search for Gobi. He knew there was little chance of finding Gobi on his own, so he set up a media and social media campaign, and put posters up all over the city. Soon, groups of local volunteers were helping him hunt for Gobi all across Urumqi, looking in parks and dog shelters, and asking all the people they came across whether they’d seen the dog. Leonard became quite well-known after he was interviewed by local television, and people often stopped him in the street to wish him luck and give him encouragement. **40** __.

Leonard didn’t give in, and eventually the call that he’d been waiting for came: a man and his son had seen a small dog while walking their dog in a local park. **41** __. Leonard was doubtful – the man had sent pictures, but they were a bit too dark to be able to identify the dog as Gobi.

When he walked into the room where they agreed to meet the man with the dog he’d found, Leonard was not feeling at all hopeful that it was Gobi. But as soon as the dog saw him, she rushed towards him and jumped up, barking excitedly. **42** __. He’s deeply grateful to the residents of Urumqi, as he would never have found her if they hadn’t helped him in his search.

A. He soon found that the process for achieving this was difficult and expensive, so he returned home and started making arrangements from there.

B. They had taken her home and thought she could be Gobi.

C. It was as if the two had never been apart, and Leonard says he felt just like he had when they were racing together.

- D. She had to be monitored there for three months before she was allowed to travel out of China.
- E. Leonard managed to win second place in the race, despite having to carry Gobi across rivers and giving her food and water from the supplies he had to carry.
- F. Furthermore, he feared the dog could easily have run a long way out into the surrounding countryside.
- G. Leonard even launched a live blog to keep people interested in and up-to-date with his search.

FCE Reading and Use of English Part 7

You are going to read an article about what five young people think about fame. For questions 43-52, choose from the sections of the article (A-E). The sections may be chosen more than once.

Which person ...

- 43. admits he finds certain aspects of fame attractive? ___
- 44. believes that fame makes those who get it focus too much on themselves? ___
- 45. describes some common beliefs about fame that he feels are untrue? ___
- 46. is critical of the way that famous people are treated? ___
- 47. says he is uninterested in the details of famous people's lives? ___
- 48. thinks being famous makes people distrust the motives of people they are close to? ___
- 49. outlines how fame can benefit society? ___
- 50. explains why he has some respect for everyone who is famous? ___
- 51. lists some of the ways that people might attract an audience? ___
- 52. suggests childhood experiences may cause some people to seek fame? ___

Fame and fortune

A Stefan

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

B Leo

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

C Franz

To be honest, the idea of being on a stage and having everyone focus on you is quite appealing to me, but I know that there's no way I'd enjoy the reality of being famous. When everyone knows who you are, it's as if you're not human anymore. Fame means endless requests for pictures, autographs and stories for the tabloid press. Every mistake is exaggerated and nothing in your family life remains private. How could you not get fed up with that? I think that's

why some stars become arrogant or unhappy, and unable to act like normal people, especially if they become famous at a young age and have to grow up with the public watching their every move.

D Mahomet

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

E Johann

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

Answer Keys

Part 1

1 B – point. If you talk about the point of something, you mean the purpose of the action or activity, why you are doing it to begin with. ‘Aim’ is about what you want to achieve – similar to purpose, but more specific. Compare: ‘our aim is to get across the country on bicycles’ and ‘The point of going by bikes is to see whether we are physically fit’. ‘Worth’ and ‘profit’ do not fit this context.

2 C – reputation. To be well-known for something. ‘Favour’ and ‘approval’ would normally need an object, e.g. ‘to win somebody’s favour’, ‘to have somebody’s approval to do something’.

3 A – bothered. If you are not bothered by something, then you do not see it as a problem. This phrase has more figurative meaning in comparison with ‘disturbed’ or ‘offended’ – both of these mean literal discomfort. ‘Interrupted’ does not make much sense in this context.

4 D – sense. Yet another tricky collocation – ‘a sense of adventure’. As a foreign speaker, you might struggle with collocations because more often than not, they are formed culturally over the years and some of them might not sound very natural to you at first.

5 C – involve. We are limited by the preposition following the gap. Compare: ‘To consist OF something’ and ‘To involve something’. ‘Possess’ has the same meaning as ‘have’ (‘have’ would have worked here by the way), but it is usually not used with inanimate objects. ‘Concern’ means ‘to be about something’, but it does not collocate well with the list of words after the gap.

6 B – stick. All the words here convey the same idea, but only ‘stick’ works well in the more figurative meaning that is used here.

7 D – meet. ‘Meet’ is the only one that collocates well with ‘needs’. This is a less obvious one. When preparing, it is always a good idea to use a collocations dictionary to check yourself. I highly recommend freecollocation.com.

8 A – experience. Note the indefinite article used before the phrase. ‘An experience’ is a memorable event that you learn from. It can be both a pleasant and an unpleasant one.

Part 2

9 which. A pronoun that helps connect the ideas here. ‘On that’ is not used in a situation like this.

10 with. ‘Associated with’ means ‘connected with’ here.

11 while/whereas. In a sentence where ‘while’ is used for contrast, ‘whereas’ can be used to the same effect.

12 what. Remember that ‘what’ will not always mean a question and the associated change in word order that comes with it (verb before the subject).

13 any. ‘At any age’, but ‘at all ages’. Since ‘age’ is singular here, we go with the first option.

14 take. The trickiest gap here, it expects you to know the phrasal verb ‘to take on something’, which means ‘to accept some responsibility or duty’. To take on a new challenge means to face or accept it.

15 such. ‘Such as’ is the only way in this context to introduce a list. We never say ‘like as’, we can only use

‘like’.

16 be. An easy case of passive voice that should not pose any problems to a B2-C1 student.

Part 3

17 fashionable. An adjective with the meaning ‘popular, trendy, in demand’.

18 pleasures. Note the plural form – it absolutely has to be used here because of ‘one of the’ structures, which suggests plurality.

19 admission/admittance. Admission (or admittance) charge is the payment you need to make in order to be allowed to go inside something like a night club or any other paid place or event.

20 beneficial. Answer ‘benefitting’ is wrong as it would imply that effects themselves benefit from something.

21 energetic/energized/energised. Even though ‘energetic’ and ‘energised’ have different meanings, both can be used here. ‘Energetic’ means having energy as a part of character; this could mean that coffee would have a long-term effect on the way a person is. ‘Energised’ simply means higher than usual levels of energy.

22 increasingly. The point of the sentence is that coffee shops were more and more seen as a place of meeting, not just somewhere to have a cup of coffee.

23 impolite. The negative meaning of the adjective is clearly suggested by context: ‘... you could be thrown out of a shop’.

24 consumption. A noun is needed here. Note that -ing forms of nouns, also called gerunds (‘consuming’), are not optimal in FCE Use of English Part 3 and should not be used if there is a better alternative.

Part 4

25 a reason for the delay. ‘A delay to something’ is less common than ‘a delay for something’, but can still be used. Note the indefinite article used with ‘reason’.

26 is not as exciting as. ‘As ... as ...’ structure is used to make a comparison here.

27 there is no point visiting. A tricky sentence that needs two words to be omitted (in brackets) in order to fit the required limit of five words: Maria says (that) there is no point (in) visiting the museum.

28 is looking forward to. A thing to note here is that ‘everyone’ is grammatically singular, therefore we use ‘is’ and not ‘are’.

29 able to pick up. ‘To pick something up’ in relation to a skill is to learn some of it.

30 reminds me. Only two words used here, fitting the minimal possible transformation. This is a rare, but possible situation.

Part 5

31 B. The key part here is in the middle of paragraph 1: “.. [it is] just as much about what we’ll choose to hang on to from today’s”. Answer A is not good – Architects and architecture are a minor point here. Answers C and D are not mentioned.

32 C. “Today’s” refers to today’s homes mentioned in the previous sentence.

33 B. The answer is in the last sentence of paragraph 2. Answer A does not get mentioned. Answer C is

incorrect – no mentioning of super-rich people is made except for the last paragraph, where the opposite is mentioned. Answer D is wrong as the expert is mentioned to use the show and the family to run an experiment – therefore, no experimenting is done before the technology is given to this family.

34 B. To stick is an informal verb that means to remain, to stay.

35 A. The last sentence shows how they were becoming increasingly accepting of the innovations around their house. Answer B is not mentioned. Answer C is wrong as it would imply that children found it easier to adjust to the changes, however nothing is said about them. Answer D shouldn't be chosen as the only example of 'surprise' is Janine's, which is said to be understandable rather than surprising.

36 D. Last sentence has her mentioning a cup of tea and a soap opera as better ways to make her feel relax. She doesn't suggest combining them (Answer B), says neither good nor bad things about it (Answers A and C respectively).

Part 6

37 E. An uncontested sentence here, it works great to introduce the new paragraph.

38 A. The author soon found out that the process of transporting the dog to his home country was more complicated than he had expected. The arrangements mentioned in the second part of sentence A are later referred to – starting a crowd-funding campaign.

39 D. Gobi had to stay in Beijing for three months before she could leave the country.

40 G. The second part of the paragraph focuses on Leonard's interaction with people who were not indifferent to the situation. Right after the gap, the next paragraph starts with 'Leonard didn't give in'. To give in here means to accept one's defeat.

41 B. We need this sentence as it connects well with the beginning of the last paragraph: "When he walked into the room..."

42 C. Another easy-to-pick sentence, the scene of two friends reunited belongs really well to the closing paragraph of the story.

NOT USED: Sentence F.

Part 7

43 C. In the very beginning of the paragraph, Franz admits that the idea of having everybody's attention is 'appealing' to him – in other words, he likes it.

44 E. Johann mentions how celebrities seem to think that they themselves are 'the only thing of importance'. Don't be fooled into choosing C as the answer because of the word 'focus' in it.

45 A. The paragraph starts with the beliefs the speaker thinks are false.

46 C. First of all, 'critical' here means that the person disapproves (doesn't like) the situation. The middle of the sentence mentions how celebrities are treated like they are 'not human', constantly disturbed by their fans as well as the press.

47 E. In second part of the first sentence, Johann says that he is not interested in the latest gossip from the glamorous world of celebrities.

48 B. Leo makes a valid points in the second part of the paragraph, saying that people might pretend to like

them because they are celebrities rather than for their personal qualities. As a result, celebrities often socialise with other famous people.

49 D. Mahomet gives examples of how being famous for having contributed to society is a good thing, listing various achievements that could bring you fame.

50 E. Johann gives examples of how celebrities can get back and recover emotionally from various failures in their lives.

51 A. Stefan lists some outrageous examples, like eating bugs or living in a reality show, to make a point.

52 B. Traumatic experience in ‘early lives’ leads many of them to become famous, according to the first part of Leo’s paragraph. Be careful not to give C as the answer – even though ‘young age’ is there, it has no direct connection to the task.

Vocabulary

The vocabulary below is meant to help you with the more difficult words. If the word isn’t on the list then you are either supposed to know it at this level or it is too specific to be worth learning for the exam. Symbols in brackets mean part of speech (see bottom of the list). Sentences in italics give examples of usage for some more complex words and phrases.

And remember — you are not given a vocabulary list (or a dictionary) at your real exam.

Part 1

Unfamiliar (adj) – new, unknown to you.

Rigid (adj) – used figuratively here, it means without flexibility, unable to change or adapt.

Arrangements (n) – preparations for something, in this context it might include housing, food, guided tours and so on. All the arrangements were made to ensure we had a pleasant stay in the country.

Absorbing (adj) – (here) addictive, taking your attention, interesting.

Part 2

Cultivate (v) – (here) to grow in large quantities. My family has been cultivating many different crops for generations.

Worthwhile (adj) – worthy, important, something that deserves spending time on. My father doesn’t believe that art is a worthwhile career path.

Part 3, 4

Claim (v) – to state that something is true, especially if others might not believe you.

Supposedly (adv) – something that might not be necessarily true, especially if there is no clear evidence, but is said to be so. *Supposedly, Mark has split with Sarah and is dating Angela now!*

Sightseeing (n) – the act of looking at points of interest somewhere, especially if you are new to the place. I never get tired of going sightseeing in London, this city has so much to offer!

Part 5

Domestic (adj) – relating to home. Domestic violence is a serious issue than gets overlooked in some countries.

Hang on to (phr) – to keep something or continue doing something. You might want to hang on to that receipt if you want to get a refund for that thing you just've bought.

Future-proof (adj) – something that will not become obsolete (useless) in the future.

Dare (v) – to do something that can be risky and requires courage. Few climbers dared to go on top of that mountain as it was famous for its steep inclines.

CCTV cameras – CCTV stands for Closed-Circuit Television. These are the cameras that are used by both private individuals and companies to see and record what is happening on the premises of their homes, office spaces or buildings. This is usually done for security purposes.

Burst into tears – to suddenly start crying loud and hard.

Get locked out – if you get locked out of something or somewhere, you can no longer get in (or out) of it because you have lost the keys, something broke down, or for any other similar reason.

Part 6

Harsh (adj) – (here) rough and unwelcoming. Harsh climate of the region means that very few tourists choose it as their holiday destination

Set pace – to dictate how fast (or slow) something happens. Can be used both literally and figuratively. As a computer company, Apple sets the pace for the entire industry of portable devices.

Dash (v) – to run somewhere quickly and with great effort for a short period of time. Similar to sprint.

Bark (v) – the usual noise the dogs make with their mouth; to woof.

Arrangements (n) – preparations.

Part 7

Admit (v) – to accept that something is true, especially if you don't want to.

Outline (v) – to provide a rough explanation or description of something. Emma outlines her business idea and it sounded pretty impressive

Cruel (adj) – unkind, to the point of willing to hurt somebody. You would be surprised at how cruel can children be.

Key figure (n) – an important person in one's life, usually one of the relatives.

Appealing (adj) – interesting or attractive. While the idea of working abroad sounds appealing and even romantic, things can get very difficult if this is your first time leaving your home country.

Exaggerate (v) – to make something seem more than it really is. Ben loves exaggerating whenever he talks about his experiences at work – probably because nothing exciting has really happened to him and he wants to make his stories sound more interesting.

Fed up (phr v) – if you are fed up with something, you are extremely tired of it. I'm fed up with your constant excuses for being late at work. I am going to fire you next time you don't turn up on time.

Admiration (n) – feeling of respect and approval towards somebody or something.

Common ground – if there is common ground between two people, it means that they have something similar and it brings them closer together or makes understanding each other easier.

Merely (adv) – just, only. The joke was merely an attempt to make everybody laugh, it wasn't meant to make you feel bad about yourself

Obsessed (adj) – to be obsessed with something is to see it as the most important thing, to think about it a lot.

Headlines (n) – the headlines here are names of various articles in newspapers and magazines.