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S TAKE IT FROM ME

GRAMMAR

Read the article and answer the questions.

- 1 Who decided to implement a new study skill?
- 2 Who learnt English to meet new acquaintances?
- 3 Who was greatly influenced by an unanticipated encounter?
- 4 Who was encouraged to learn for commercial reasons?
- 5 Who was initially reluctant to learn English?
- 6 Who felt upset about their lack of communication skills?

www.learningenglishblog.com



Saeed

I first had arrived here with my parents when I was eight. I was really worried about living in a new country, especially as I wasn't knowing the language at all. Not a word! I soon discovered that it had been impossible to make friends without being able to chat to them in any way, so I had been forcing myself to do it, even though I couldn't get my ideas across at all. But I made some amazing friends. Looking back, the best thing about it was how much they helped me – I had never regretted pushing myself out of my comfort zone.

Jules

By the time I left school, I was studying English for about six years, on and off, but not with any real interest. To tell you the truth, I looked forward to never saying another word in English. That summer, I went on holiday with my parents, and we had stayed in the same hotel as this Scottish family. The son, Nigel, was about my age. I never met anyone like him before, he was so open to adventure and had such a free spirit. I spent so much time talking to him about life, and what we both had hoped to get from it, I decided there and then to move to Scotland.

Johan

My parents were really wanting me to get better at English so I could become involved their business. I registered for an online course and immediately was getting to work on my new language skills. Soon, my parents took me to a meeting with an Australian businessman who has been working with our company for several years. I couldn't understand a word, but knew immediately that I have been finding it so difficult to get what he was saying because I had never written anything down during my course, not a single word of vocabulary. I had improved since then, obviously!



Find and correct five past verb form mistakes in each section of the article. The first one has been done for you.

I first arrived here ...

- Rearrange the words in bold to form correct sentences.
 - There is little doubt that the city busier / become / will / increasingly over the next five years.
 - 2 lover / heading / to / hopefully / am my sister's this evening.
 - 3 What time should we meet? I think starts / film / at / the / eight thirty.
 - I'm afraid there are no places left, but you / sure / stay / will / make / on / we the waiting list.
 - The rain has been terrible all day, but I far / to / is / going / it / worse / get / suspect before it gets better.
 - 6 For your party next week, everyone / inviting / be / you / will from work?
- Correct the mistakes in the sentences, then match them to the descriptions (A-E).
 - I'd love to come to your party, but I'm not sure if I can. I'm letting you know tomorrow.
 - 2 Markus says that he'll be here at five, unless the traffic is going to be dreadful.
 - 3 Have you heard about that amazing new restaurant in town? We go at the weekend.
 - 4 Suki will have her driving test at 11.00 tomorrow. That explains why she's so nervous.
 - 5 I'm sure I make friends when I start college, but I still don't want to go.
 - A Expressing a future intention, desire, or promise.
 - **B** Making a prediction about the future.
 - C Using the present simple to describe a scheduled event at a known time in the future.
 - Using the present simple in first conditional clauses after the condition or time word.
 - Using the present continuous to talk about a fixed plan or arrangement.

VOCABULARY

Correct the spelling or word choice mistakes in the sentences. Tick (✔) any sentences which are correct.

- Although we are so different, my best friend and I complement each other very well.
- 2 Ben was sitting among his parents when his university acceptance letter arrived.
- 3 I'd love to get some work experience at the gym, but I'm not sure whose the best person to contact.
- 4 I get nervous talking to the principle, but she always listens to what you're saying.
- 5 It's so much better when receipts are emailed to you the paper ones are too easy to lose.
- My school runs entirely on the principle that the harder you study, the better your grades.
- My teacher told me I was the most opinionated student she had ever had. I took it as a complement.
- 8 Now that the rain has finally stopped, I'm feeling all together more optimistic than I was yesterday.
- 9 It doesn't matter whose fault it was, we need to make sure we fix this mess quickly.
- That was a wonderful meal the chef is fantastic! I'd love to get the receipt for my main course.
- The wedding guests were gathered all together, waiting for the bride and groom to appear.
- Walking through the countryside is among the most relaxing things anyone can do.

SPEAKING

- Complete the dialogue with the correct options.
 - A I'm really enjoying our English lessons at the moment. The new teacher is really pushing us to improve with some of the activities we do, isn't she?
 - **B** (1) Why's that? / Like what?
 - A Well, getting us to use more idiomatic language in our speaking, for one thing. I feel like my conversations are starting to sound much more natural.
 - **B** (2) That's true / I know what you mean. I never realised how important that sort of thing is, if you're aiming to get to a really advanced level.
 - A (3) No way! / Me neither. I mean, when I started learning English, the teacher I had just made us do grammar exercises in every class. We never studied vocabulary and we certainly never practised our speaking.
 - **B** (4) Really? / What a nightmare!
 - A It was, but I just tried to keep reading as much as I could in English and kept a really good vocabulary notebook, even though the teacher never checked it.
 - **B** (5) That sounds amazing, / That must have been frustrating, especially because you were a student who really wanted to improve. My first teacher was nothing like that. In fact, every one of our classes was just focused on speaking.
 - A (6) You're having me on! / You're so lucky!
 - Well, I'm not sure I'd say that. I don't think we learnt much vocabulary in his class, either. He certainly never got us to take notes. Anyway, at least we're both with a great teacher now.
 - A (7) Exactly! / Me too!
- 2 02 Listen and check your answers to Exercise 1.



READING

Choose the correct heading for each of the sections (A-D).

- The appeal of simplicity and accessibility
- 2 A victim of its own popularity
- 3 The more things change, the more they stay the same
- 4 Modern techniques are only useful in the right hands

Mative encakers of English are

Native speakers of English are today in the minority, outnumbered five to one by those who use it as a second, third or even fourth language. With this has come a number of changes in the way the language is spoken, as people from across the world come together to communicate as best they possibly can, even with low levels of ability. It has led to some interesting transformations. For example, we have seen the emergence of *Spanglish* and *Singlish*; English mixed with, respectively, Spanish and Singaporean, in many cases creating elements of an entirely new language. Additionally, huge numbers of traditional 'mistakes' in grammar or vocabulary have tended to be disregarded, becoming entirely acceptable in conversation, even 'correct'. For these reasons, some people believe that, a hundred years from now, English will have become completely unrecognisable from the way in which it is currently used.

Globally, there is a growing proportion of people who have adopted English in addition to their own language, and this trend looks set to continue. A decade ago, it was expected that Chinese would soon replace English as the primary global language of communication, and a huge number of well-respected educators started encouraging schools to teach it to children from the age of four. Yet this development never quite happened and, in fact, some researchers now suggest that China is – or will soon become – the nation with the highest number of inhabitants who speak some form of English. Perhaps it is because the language is considered to be relatively easy to learn in comparison with most others spoken across the world. Indeed, given how easy it is to watch movies and TV shows in English, many people claim that they have learnt the language alone, in front of a screen. Equally importantly, though, most linguists believe that if you want to convey a simple message in simple terms, there is no better language available than English.

B ...

Another school of thought is that although English will change, particularly as native speakers are no longer the dominant group, it is conceivable that on the whole it will probably remain fundamentally the same. For one thing, as mobile technology becomes increasingly popular worldwide, texting is having a huge effect on the way we 'talk' to one another. Far from being, as many critics argue, an excessive oversimplification of the language, all texting has actually done is provide people with another form in which to communicate. It helps to make some of the more involved aspects of English less difficult, yet at the same time allows for a huge range of expression and creativity. So, in the future, the *medium* of communication will undergo huge changes, not the language itself.

D

English is, for many, also the global language of business. There are hundreds of apps available which claim to provide a reliable, instantaneous translation service, and thus can help anyone who wants to become an international business executive, even if they have only a beginner level of English. But how effective are these apps for the businessperson of the future? In high-level meetings, where decisions often need to be made quickly and decisively, would it not seem unprofessional to frequently stop a discussion to translate something you want to say through an app on your phone? There is also a strong case to argue that translation apps, while indisputably useful for tourists, will always lack accuracy and reliability when it comes to business situations where exactness is key and misunderstanding should be avoided where possible. While there is no doubt that improvements in technology can help more people to communicate in English, it needs to be used wisely.

Which section in the text:

- suggests that technology can be unreliable in certain situations?
- disagrees with B about whether English will survive in the future?
- 3 mentions the idea that English benefits from its lack of complexity?
- 4 praises the flexibility that technology can bring to conversations?
- 5 describes a prediction that did not come true?

Find words or phrases in the text that mean:

1	ignored (para A)
2	believable (para B)
3	essentially (para B)
4	complicated (para B)
5	comparatively (para C)
6	deliver (para C)
7	immediate (para D)

unquestionably (para D)