The Dodo Bird (A2 - Pre-Intermediate)

A — Before you start
Answer the questions with a partner.
1. What do you know about the dodo? (What was it like? Where/When did it live? etc.)
2. Can you name any other extinct animals?
3. Do you know when and why they became extinct?

B — Listen and answer
Read these statements. Then listen (without reading) and write T (true) or F (false).
1. The dodo was an aggressive bird.
2. It was the same size as a turkey.
3. It became extinct in the 17th century.
4. Colossal Biosciences is a British company which wants to try to bring the dodo back.
5. At present, it is trying to sequence the dodo's DNA.
6. The article mentions some ethical questions regarding these experiments.

C — Read and answer
Read the article and answer the questions.
1. What couldn't the dodo do? Why?
2. What did it look like?
3. Why did it become extinct?
4. Why do scientists think they could use the Nicobar pigeon to produce dodo eggs?
5. Why would it probably be more difficult to revive a bird than a mammal?
6. What problems might dodos have in today's world if they were brought back?

D — Learn it! Use it!
Complete these sentences with words from the glossary. (You may have to adapt the expression in some way; e.g. change the verb tense, or change from plural to singular.)
1. Once there were lots of blue whales in the Earth's oceans. Now they are an _____ species.
2. The boy _____ badly at the dinner table, so his mother made him go upstairs to his room.
3. Last spring there was a _____ in that tree with four tiny eggs in it.
4. The two drivers involved in the car accident gave different _____ of what had happened.
5. Anna promised to phone us from the USA, but we haven't heard from her _____ _____.
6. Don't go near that parrot! It has a very sharp _____ and it often tries to bite visitors.

E — Ready for the A2 KEY English Test? (Paper 1, Part 4)

Choose the best word for each space.

Colossal Biosciences is a biotechnology and genetic engineering company which aims, [1]_____ (among/between/above) other things, to resurrect the woolly mammoth. It expects the first hybrid mammoths [2]_____ (being/to be/will) born by 2027.

The last woolly mammoths lived in the Arctic around 10,000 years ago, during the Ice Age. Hunting [3]_____ (of/by/from) humans helped to make them extinct. Colossal Biosciences intends to revive them using the Asian Elephant, their closest living [4]_____ (parent/family/relative), and return them to the Arctic to fight climate change.

When the mammoth and other arctic animals disappeared, the area became covered in forests, which [5]_____ (bring/hold/keep) the earth warmer. If mammoths returned, they [6]_____ (would/will/can) destroy the trees and bushes and expose the earth to the extreme cold of the Arctic and therefore help to stop the melting of the arctic ice.

F — Check your pronunciation

Underline the stressed syllable in each of these words.

temperament   perform   kilograms   predators   behave
scientists   scientific   environment   docile   ancestor

G — Talk about it

In pairs or groups.
1. Are there any endangered species living in your country? If so, what are they?
2. Some people say it's useless to try to preserve endangered species. Do you agree?
3. Do you think it's right to bring back species that have been extinct for a long time? Why (not)?
4. Are there any extinct species that you would like to see brought back to life? Which ones?

The Mullet (B1 - Lower Intermediate)

A — Before you start

Answer the questions with a partner.
1. Do you often change hairstyles?
2. Have you ever cut your own hair? If so, when? Why? Were you happy with the result?
3. Does your present hairstyle have a name? If so, what is it? Is it fashionable?

B — Listen and answer

Read these statements. Then listen (without reading) and choose the correct answer.
1. If you have a mullet haircut, your hair is
a) shorter at the back.   b) all the same length.   c) longer at the back.
2. It's a hairstyle that was sometimes worn
a) in Greek and Roman times.   b) by Native American tribes.   c. Both of these.
3. The cut was first called a mullet
a) in 1990   b) in the 1990s.   c) in the 1980s.
4. One of the first singers to wear this style was
a) Tom Jones.   b) David Bowie.   c) Rod Stewart.
5. The USA Mullet Championship was founded in
a) 2021.   b) 2020.   c) 2018.
6. A similar competition had already started two years earlier in
a) Australia.   b. Austria.   b) the United Kingdom.

C — Read and answer
Read the article and answer the questions.
1. How did the haircut come to be called 'the mullet'?
2. Why was David Bowie's mullet so striking?
3. What kind of people wore a mullet in the 1980s?
4. Who continued to wear it even when it went out of fashion?
5. What explanation is given for the return of the hairstyle in 2020?
6. Why is it particularly popular in Australian?

D — Learn it! Use it!
Complete these sentences with words from the glossary. (You may have to adapt the expression in some way; e.g. change the verb tense, or change from plural to singular.)
1. Fish like salmon are covered in _____. Before cooking these fish, it's best to remove them.
2. Julie found it difficult to talk about her family, even when she was _____ friends.
3. Our grandma didn't open the door to the robber, though he _____ to be a police officer.
4. You'll have to hand in your exam paper at 4 o'clock, _____ you've finished or not.
5. I was sorry to hear about the _____ of that restaurant. It was one of my favourites.
6. Tom's had a haircut. He went to that new _____ _____ in the High Street.

E — Ready for the B1 PRELIMINARY English Exam? (Paper 1, Reading: Part 6)
Write one word only in each space.
In a 2019 interview, actor Kiefer Sutherland claimed that he was responsible 1_____ inventing the hairstyle later called 'the mullet'. In 1987, he was eighteen and was filming The Lost Boys, a vampire classic directed 2_____ Joel Schumacher. Sutherland had an important 3_____ as David, a terrifying vampire biker. Schumacher wanted Sutherland to 4_____ his long hair dyed white, but Sutherland didn't like the result 5_____ all, so he had the 6_____ cut short, like singer Billy Idol, but kept it long at the back and sides to please Schumacher.

F — Write about it
Write about a hairstyle that's fashionable in your country at the moment. Mention:
- whether it's a man's/woman's/unisex style;
- what it's like;
- when/why it became fashionable;
- whether you like it.

Mount Everest (B2 - Upper Intermediate)

A — Before you start
Answer the questions with a partner.
1. Do you like mountain sports? If so, which ones?
2. Are there any mountains near you?
3. Have you ever been mountain climbing? If so, where?
4. What is the highest mountain in your country?

B — Listen and answer
Listen to the main article (without reading) and write T (true) or F (false) beside these statements.
1. In Tibet, Everest is called Chomo-Lungma, which means 'Mother Goddess of the Snow.'
2. The summit of Everest rises over halfway up through the Earth's atmosphere.
3. In 1921, the first recorded attempt to climb Everest failed because of bad weather.
4. It is known that George Mallory and Andrew Irvine died on Everest before reaching the summit.

5. Tenzing Norgay, who conquered Everest with Edmund Hilary, was from Pakistan.
6. Hundreds of climbers have died on Everest over the years.
7. It is more common for people to die on the way up the mountain than on the way down.
8. Sometimes the mountain is crowded and climbers have to wait in line to reach the summit.

C – Read and answer
Read the main article and answer the questions.
1. How did Everest get its English name?
2. What is the height of Everest compared to in the article?
3. What is the Khumbu Icefall and why is it dangerous to cross it?
4. How high up was Hillary and Tenzing's last camp?
5. What is the 'death zone'?
6. What are the most common causes of death among people who attempt to climb Everest?
7. What was the worst tragedy on the mountain caused by?
8. What macabre sights do climbers see all along the way?

D – Listen to the interview (Optional)
N.B. This interview is graded as C1, so don't be discouraged if you find it difficult. Try to understand the main points.
Read these statements. Then listen to the interview with Jeff Bonaldi, without reading, and write T (true) or F (false).
1. Before starting his company The Explorer's Passage, Jeff Bonaldi had an office job.
2. The company offers an eighteen-day trek to Everest Base Camp.
3. This trek is an adventure trip that anyone can go on.
4. The starting point for the trek to Everest Base Camp is a five-hour drive away from Kathmandu.
5. It takes 8 days to walk up to Base Camp and five days to walk down again.
6. There's time for climbers to get used to the lower oxygen levels and time to visit historical sites. 7. Climbers taking part in the Base Camp trek spend one night at Base Camp.
8. Jeff says he has no intention of ever attempting to reach the summit of Everest.

E – Listen, read and check your answers
Listen to the interview while reading the text.(If you did Exercise D, check your answers while reading.)

F – Learn it! Use it!
Complete these sentences with words from the glossary. (You may have to adapt the expression in some way; e.g. change the verb tense or change from singular to plural.)
1. To get to the hotel, we had to walk up a _____ hill with our luggage. It was exhausting!
2. The airline said the flight delays were _____ _____ the severe weather conditions.
3. This kind of toy isn't _____ for a child under the age of five.
4. Online shopping websites are popular because they offer a wide _____ of products.
5. After eating three ice-creams, Joseph unsurprisingly said he _____ _____.
6. Belgium has _____ with the Netherlands, Germany, Luxembourg and France.

G – Ready for the FIRST Certificate in English? (Reading and Use of English, Part 2)
Read the text and think of the word which best fits each gap. Use only one word for each gap.
In May 2012, at the age of 22, Matthew Dieumegard-Thornton was one of the the youngest climbers to reach the [1]_____ of Everest. In an interview, he reveals some of the scariest parts of his experience.
        The average trek takes five or six weeks because of the need to [2]_____ used to the thin air. Matthew says that [3]_____ he didn't suffer from altitude sickness, nothing can prepare you for the Death Zone where the air is [4]_____ thin that it makes you delirious. Then there are the wide crevasses that [5]_____ to be crossed on terrifying horizontal ladders.

Finally, on the last part of the climb, you can barely ⁶_____ a light weight on your back and you realise that, if you die there, there's ⁷_____ chance anyone will take your body down. Then you arrive at the top and the wind's howling, just ⁸_____ the sound of a horror movie. It's not a nice place to be. You just want to get down again.

H — Write about it
Write about the highest mountain in your country. Mention:
- its height;
- its location;
- how to get there;
- the first person to climb it;
- what tourist facilities there are.

Games: a Human History (C1 - Advanced)

A — Before you start
Answer the questions with a partner.
1. How many board games or card games can you name?
2. Which of them do you know how to play?
3. Are you good at them?
4. Have you ever played them online?
5. Do you think they could be played by a computer? Why (not)?

B — Listen and answer
Read these incomplete statements. Then listen (without reading) and complete them.
1. Bernard Suits defined playing games as "the voluntary attempt to overcome _____ _____."
2. Roeder's book examines checkers, _____, Go, backgammon, Scrabble, poker and _____.
3. According to Roeder, games are a form of _____ for skills that are useful in the real world.
4. Games are becoming increasingly important because people have more _____ _____.
5. Games have played an important role in the development of _____ _____.
6. In 1997, a computer named _____ _____ beat world chess champion Garry Kasparov.
7. With games like _____ and _____, it's still possible for humans to beat computers.
8. Roeder foresees the benefits of using the calculating power of machines along with the _____ and _____ of humans.

C — Read and answer
Read the article and answer the questions.
1. Why is Oliver Roeder's educational background relevant to the subject of his recent book?
2. What is the most obvious reason why people play games?
3. What skill do we develop through playing chess, according to Roeder?
4. How do games satisfy our desire to make decisions and have an impact?
5. Why did Bernard Suits think it would one day be possible for us to play games all day?
6. How was Deep Blue different from the AI projects of today?
7. How can humans use AI when playing games of chance?
8. What can't AlphaGo do? Why?

D — Learn it! Use it!
Complete these sentences with words from the glossary. (You may have to adapt the expression in some way; e.g. change the verb tense, or change from singular to plural.)

1. There are no decent hotels near the port. We'll have to look for one _____.
2. When Alice began to _____ _____ quantum physics, she became really interested in it.
3. Long before 2020, scientists had _____ that one day a virus would cause a pandemic.
4. Julie's parents questioned the _____ of her decision to use all her savings to open a café.
5. We didn't have a view of the sea from the cottage because it was _____ by the trees.
6. The two _____ with this keyboard are that it's small and the keys aren't very responsive.

E — Ready for the C1 ADVANCED English Test? (Reading and Use of English, Part 3)
Use the word in brackets to form a word that fits in the space given.
1. People have used games to relate to each other _____ (THROUGH) history.
2. In his book, Oliver Roeder looks at some of the world's most _____ (ENDURE) games.
3. He observes that in the game of poker we use hidden information and _____ (DECEIVE).
4. Games give us decision-making opportunities that we wouldn't _____ (OTHER) have.
5. AI is good at games in which the best moves are a mathematical _____ (CERTAIN).
6. Even if machines play better than humans, it's still _____ (ENJOY) to play against them.
7. As AI conquers new games, the response is anger, _____ (DENY), but then acceptance.
8. Roeder describes the calculating power of machines as raw and _____ (EMOTION).

F — Write about it
Write about a traditional board or card game that's popular in your country. Mention:
- what kind of game it is;
- when it originated;
- how many people can play it;
- what the aim of the game is;
- whether it can be played online;
- why you think it would/wouldn't be fun to play against a computer in this game.

Answers (The Dodo Bird A2 - Pre-Intermediate)

B — Listen and answer
1. F — It had a friendly temperament.   2. F — It was bigger than a turkey.   3. T   4. F — It's a US company.   5. F — It has already managed to sequence the dodo's DNA.   6. T

C — Read and answer
1. It couldn't fly because it had lost the ability through evolution. In fact its wings were tiny.
2. It was plump and it had blue-grey plumage and a long hooked beak.   3. Because the Dutch sailors who arrived in the 16th century hunted it and the animals they brought with them destroyed its nests and ate the eggs.   4. Because it's the closest living relative of the dodo.   5. Because less genomic research has been performed on birds than on mammals.
6. It's not known where they would live or how they could adapt to today's environment. It's also not known who could teach them to live and behave like their ancestors.

D — Learn it! Use it!
1. endangered   2. behaved   3. nest   4. accounts   5. so far   6. beak

E — Ready for the A2 KEY English Test?
1. among   2. to be   3. by   4. relative   5. keep   6. would

F — Check your pronunciation
<u>t</u>emperament   per<u>form</u>   <u>ki</u>lograms   <u>pred</u>ators   be<u>have</u>
<u>sc</u>ientists   scienti<u>fic</u>   en<u>v</u>ironment   <u>doc</u>ile   <u>an</u>cestor

---

Answers (The Mullet B1 - Lower Intermediate)

B — Listen and answer
1. c   2. c   3. b   4. a   5. b   6. a

C — Read and answer

1. It got that name when an American rap-rock band released a song with the title Mullet Head in 1994.   2. It was brilliant orange.   3. In the 1980s it was worn by stars of music, the arts and sport and also by their fans.   4. The members of certain subcultures, like American hockey stars and K-pop artists.   5. During Covid-19 lockdowns, hair salons were closed so many people cut their own hair and the mullet was an easy style to cut.   6. Because it's considered by many to be a symbol of Australian culture and identity.

D — Learn it! Use it!

1. scales   2. among   3. claimed   4. whether   5. closure   6. hair salon

E — Ready for the B2 FIRST Certificate in English?

1. for   2. by   3. role/part   4. have/get   5. at   6. top

Answers (Mount Everest B2 Upper Intermediate - C1 Advanced)

B — Listen and answer

1. F — It means Mother Goddess of the Land.   2. T   3. T   4. F — It is not known whether Mallory or Irvine reached the summit.   5. F — He was a Nepali-Indian Sherpa.   6. T   7. F — It's more common for them to die on the way down.   8. T

C — Read and answer

1. It was named after Sir George Everest, a 19th-century surveyor.   2. It's compared to the cruising altitude of a commercial flight.   3. It's a rapidly-moving section of the Khumbu Glacier. It's dangerous to cross it because deep crevasses open up in it and chunks of ice fall down the mountain.   4. It was at 8530 metres (7,920 + 610).   5. It's an area where there isn't enough oxygen for humans to survive.   6. They are avalanches, falls and collapses due to altitude sickness.   7. It was caused by an earthquake which, in turn, caused avalanches.   8. They see frozen bodies.

E — Listen, read and check your answers

1. T   2. T   3. F — It isn't for the faint-hearted.   4. F — After the five-hour drive, there's a fifteen-minute flight to where the trek begins.   5. T   6. T   7. F — Only those who are climbing to the summit are allowed to sleep at Base Camp.   8. T

F — Learn it! Use it!

1. steep   2. due to   3. suitable   4. range   5. felt sick   6. borders

G — Ready for the FIRST Certificate in English?

1. summit/top   2. get/become   3. although/though   4. so   5. have/need   6. carry   7. little/no   8. like

---

Answers (Games: a Human History - C1 Advanced)

B — Listen and answer

1. unnecessary obstacles   2. chess — bridge   3. practice   4. leisure time   5. artificial intelligence.   6. Deep Blue   7. poker — backgammon   8. wisdom — intuition

C — Read and answer

1. He studied artificial intelligence as well as game theory.   2. They are fun.   3. We develop the skill of planning ahead.   4. They put us in positions that we might not have access to in our real lives; for example, the role of a general leading an army into battle.   5. He predicted a world in which all our material needs are met by machines.   6. Deep Blue could only play chess, whereas the AI projects of today use neural networks that are modelled after the human brain, so they can be used in other more important fields.   7. They can use it to learn how to play more efficiently and boost their chances.   8. It can't teach others because it can't explain why it's doing certain things.

D – Learn it! Use it!
1. elsewhere   2. delve into   3. foreseen   4. wisdom   5. hidden   6. issues
E – Ready for the C1 ADVANCED English Test?
1. throughout   2. enduring   3. deception (deceit is also possible, but it has a very negative connotation, as it suggests malevolence)   4. otherwise   5. certainty   6. enjoyable   7. denial   8. emotionless

SpeakUp