

Writing Test, Year 9

Choose one of the writing tasks below. Write at least 150–180 words. You should use your own ideas, knowledge and experience, and support your arguments with relevant evidence.

Task 1.

Is visiting new places more enjoyable than returning to familiar ones?

Write an essay in which you:

- briefly describe a place you have visited
- explain why people enjoy discovering new places
- discuss why some people prefer returning to places they already know
- give your personal opinion, supported by reasons and examples

Task 2.

Planning a trip abroad

You are going to visit your friend's country. Write an email to your friend in which you:

- explain the reason for writing
- describe your travel plans
- ask for advice about the best time to visit, places to see and ways of travelling around
- say what you are most looking forward to seeing

Task 3.

A trip I will never forget

You are writing a post for your personal blog.

Write about a holiday or experience that did not go as planned. In your blog post:

- explain when and where the experience happened
- say who you were with
- describe what went wrong and how you felt about it
- explain how the situation ended
- say what you learnt from this experience

Speaking Test, Year 9

Directions:

In this part of the test, select three task slips from those in front of you. Next choose the one you feel most confident speaking about and put the other two face down. Then take about a minute to collect your thoughts before you start to speak on the topic. You may refer to the topic as needed. Give reasons or details to support your answer. Take a deep breath and begin.

1. Talk about the kind of photos you like taking. Include this information:
 - Did you take many photos on your last holiday?
 - What were they like?
 - What's your favourite photo from your school days?
 - Can you describe it?
2. Talk about your plans for the future. Include this information:
 - What are you going to do after classes today?
 - What are you going to do this weekend?
 - What are you going to cook this evening?
 - Are you going to go on holiday this year? Where to?
 - Are you going to buy anything this weekend? What?
3. Talk about what you like doing in your free time. Include this information:
 - What do you like doing in your free time?
 - What are your favourite leisure activities?
 - What is something you don't do now but you would like to start doing?
 - Do you play any sports or musical instruments?
 - Do you think it's important to have hobbies?
4. Talk about the food you like eating. Include this information:
 - What is your favourite food?
 - How much fresh fruit and vegetables do you eat?
 - Which food did you like when you were a child?
 - What do you like eating for breakfast/lunch/dinner?
5. Talk about your future work. Include this information:
 - What would life be like if we did not have to work?
 - Would you like to have your own business?
 - Would you like to work in another country?
 - What is the best job in your country?
 - What do you want to do for work?
 - What do your parents do for work?
6. Novelist Chuck Palahniuk said: 'The only reason why we ask other people how their weekend was is so we can tell them about our own weekend.' Do you agree?
 - What do you usually do at weekends?
 - What's the most memorable weekend you have had in the past few years?
 - What would life be like without weekends?
 - Is there anything you dislike about weekends?
7. Talk about your typical day. Include this information:
 - What time do you usually get up?
 - When do your lessons start?

- What time do you get home from school?
 - What do you usually do after classes?
8. Talk about typical weather where you live. Include this information:
- What is your favourite weather?
 - What do you think of today's weather?
 - Has the weather in your country changed over the past few decades?
 - How does the weather change your feelings?
 - When was the last time the weather destroyed one of your plans?
9. Talk about the kinds of films you like watching. Include this information:
- How often do you go to the cinema? What have you seen recently?
 - Do you prefer going to the cinema or watching something online? Why?
 - What is your favourite kind of films?
 - Have you ever watched films in English?
10. Talk about the transport system in your town/city. Include this information:
- What is your favourite method of transport? Why?
 - Which methods of transport do you use most often?
 - Which is the safest method of transport in your opinion?
11. Talk about your school. Include this information:
- What do you find easy at school?
 - What is the most difficult subject for you?
 - Have you ever been punished at your school? What for?
 - What do you think about discipline at your school?
12. Talk about whether you like reading or not. Include this information:
- What do you enjoy reading most?
 - Do you like reading in English?
 - Do you prefer reading books or things on the Internet?
 - Have you cried while reading a book?
 - What new books have you read recently?
13. Talk about your holidays. Include this information:
- Where did you go last summer?
 - Who did you go with?
 - What did you do there?
 - What are you going to do this summer?
 - How do you usually travel on holiday?
14. Talk about your experiences visiting museums. Include this information:
- What do you like most and least about museums?
 - What is the best museum you've ever been to? Talk about it.
 - Do you prefer going to museums alone or with others?
 - Do you think museums should be free to enter?
 - Are all museums good for children?
15. Talk about a restaurant you often go to. Include this information:
- What is your favourite restaurant and why?
 - How often do you go to restaurants?
 - What kind of restaurant would you like to open?

- Does restaurant food taste best?
- Have you ever complained about the food or service in a restaurant?

16. Talk about mobile phones. Include this information:

- What would your life be like without a mobile telephone?
- Can you remember your first mobile telephone?
- Are you happy with the mobile telephone you have now? Why or why not?
- What do you think of people who use mobile phones while driving?
- Do young people use mobile telephones too much?

17. Talk about the kinds of sport you like doing. Include this information:

- Do you exercise? What sort of exercise do you usually do?
- Have you ever made friends through playing sport? How? When?
- What kinds of activities do you enjoy most now?
- Do you usually keep fit? Are you keeping fit now?
- Do you prefer doing or watching sport?

18. Talk about shopping habits in your country. Include this information:

- Do you prefer going shopping alone or with friends?
- Which is better, shopping in shops or shopping online?
- What is the worst shopping experience you've ever had?
- Do you like going shopping in other countries?
- Would you like to go on a shopping holiday?

19. Talk about London. Include this information:

- Do you think London is the greatest city in the world?
- What do you know about life in London?
- What things can tourists do in London?
- Do you think London is a cheap or expensive city?
- Is London a dangerous place to visit?
- Would you like to live in London?

20. Talk about your studies at school. Include this information:

- What do you like studying?
- Do you like studying English?
- How has the Internet changed studying?
- What advice would you give someone on how to study English?
- What is the best way to study for exams?

Reading Comprehension Test, Year 9

Directions:

In this test you will read four texts. You are to do the tasks following the texts. For each task you will choose the best-suited answer (A, B, or C) or two symbols (+/- or T/F) as specified prior to each task. Mark the letter of your choice on the Answer Sheet.

TEXT 1

Mark Twain (1835-1910)

1 Mark Twain's real name was Samuel L. Clemens. He was born in Florida, Missouri, the sixth of seven children. When he was four, Sam's family moved to a small town, Hannibal, on the banks of the Mississippi River. Sam's father died when he was eleven. Soon after, Sam left school and got a job as a printer for a local newspaper.

2 Sam had several jobs in the 1850s. In 1853, he moved to New York and then to Philadelphia, where he worked for several different newspapers and began writing articles. In 1857, he returned home and worked as a riverboat pilot on the Mississippi River. But when the American Civil War started in 1861, all the traffic along the river stopped.

3 In 1861, Sam went west to Nevada with his brother, Orion, to work in the silver mines. He hoped to become rich, but he didn't find any silver. He had no money, so he got a job at a newspaper in Nevada in 1862. He started using his pen name, Mark Twain, for the first time.

4 In 1864, Sam moved to San Francisco and got a job at a newspaper there. In 1865, his big break came with the publication of his short story 'Jim Smiley and His Jumping Frog' in newspapers across the country. His writing became very popular.

5 During a trip to Europe, he met Charles Langdon. Charles showed Sam a picture of his sister, Olivia. Sam fell in love with her at first sight. They were married in 1870.

6 *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* was published in 1884. The fictional town of Saint Peters in the novel is similar to Hannibal, the town where Sam grew up. The writer Ernest Hemingway (1899-1961) later said that 'All modern American literature comes from one book by Mark Twain called *Huckleberry Finn*. There was nothing before. There has been nothing as good since.'

Now mark the sentences (T) true or (F) false.

- 1 Mark Twain was not a real name. ____
- 2 Mark Twain was an only child in the family. ____
- 3 Sam was eleven when his father died. ____
- 4 Sam worked in New York and in Philadelphia in the 1850s. ____
- 5 During the American Civil War, Sam worked on the Mississippi River. ____
- 6 Sam didn't get rich in Nevada. ____
- 7 His short story 'Jim Smiley and His Jumping Frog' was a success. ____
- 8 Charles Langdon was Olivia's father. ____
- 9 St Peters is a town near Hannibal in the USA. ____
- 10 Ernest Hemingway thought *Huckleberry Finn* was a very important novel. ____

TEXT 2

Read the text and choose the missing sentences:

A summer away from home

Many companies organise summer programmes abroad for young people aged fifteen to twenty. 11 _____ Travelling without your parents is a great way to become more independent, make new friends, and see a different country. But what is it really like to go on one of these trips? We spoke to three young travellers about their experiences.

Josh Tanner went to Lagos, Nigeria

I'm really good at football, so when I heard about a football volunteer programme in Africa, I was really excited. 12_____ But after I had showed them some information on the internet, they decided that it was safe for me to go. I was feeling tired when I arrived in Lagos, and I couldn't believe how hot it was. 13_____ I stayed with the Ngembo family in an apartment in the centre of Lagos. It was very small, and I had to share a room with three boys. But everyone was really nice to me, so I soon got used to having no privacy. I worked really hard, but I enjoyed my job, too. For most of the time, I was helping a Nigerian sports coach to teach football to ten-year-old boys and girls. I had a great time there, and I really got used to living in a big, noisy African city. By the time I left, I had really started to fit in!

Rebecca Jones went to Arles, France

Last year, I spent two weeks at a summer art school for young people in Arles. Arles is a beautiful little town in Provence, in the south of France. We were staying in a campsite and sharing tents, and most of the other students were French. I was nervous at first about speaking French to them. But everyone was nice to me, and they didn't criticise my mistakes. I really gained a lot of confidence after I'd been there for a week. The course was good too. We had drawing and painting lessons every morning. Then, every afternoon, the teachers took us out into the countryside to practise our skills. The famous painter Vincent Van Gogh used to live in Arles. 14_____ It's a really beautiful place. I think I painted some good pictures while I was staying there. When Van Gogh was painting in Arles, people didn't used to like his work. Now his paintings sell for millions of pounds. Who knows? Maybe the same thing will happen to my pictures one day.

Matt Hazelwood went to Bryce Canyon, USA

Last summer, I got a job at Bryce Canyon National Park in Utah, USA. It's a beautiful place, but it was very difficult to get there! After I'd flown ten hours from London to Las Vegas, I had to get a bus to Cedar Springs, Utah. And after someone had met us there, it was another three-hour drive to the park. 15_____ Lots of young people like me were working in the park last summer. We were helping people from the US National Park Service to repair and build things like picnic tables and information signs. We also helped to repair the walking paths and make them safe. That's important because a lot of middle-aged and elderly people visit the US national parks. I had to work really hard all summer and get up very early in the morning. But I soon got used to that, and it was great to work outside in such a beautiful place. Bryce Canyon is famous for its red rocks and cliffs – and when the sun comes up in the early morning, they look amazing!

- A When I'd finally arrived, I went to bed and slept for twelve hours!
- B But it only took me a few days to get used to the weather.
- C Many other artists used to visit the area too, and I can see why.
- D There aren't any big animals in these national parks, but you can see lots of birds.
- E From working with children in Africa to protecting an ancient Inca road in Peru, there are lots of different trips to choose from.
- F I phoned my parents every few days, so they weren't concerned about me.
- G My parents weren't so enthusiastic at first.

TEXT 3

Read the text and choose the correct answer (A, B, C, D)

A Scottish Summer Camp

Summer camps are becoming increasingly popular with young people, but what are they like? Last month, junior reporter Sally Henshaw travelled to Loch Lomond, Scotland, to find out.

'I've been travelling for ten hours,' I thought, when the minibus finally drove past a sign saying 'Welcome to Camp Lomond'. It was dark, and I just wanted to go indoors and jump into a nice, soft bed. But the camp leaders had other ideas. We all had a barbecue, then we sat around a campfire and talked (or fell asleep). Finally, one of the leaders divided us into groups of three and gave us the really bad news.

'Now it's time to put up your tents,' he said.

I don't know how three of us managed to sleep in a tent the size of a single bed, but somehow we did. When we woke up the next day, my new friend Ingrid opened the front of the tent, and we all looked out. There, shining silver between the trees, was Loch Lomond. 'Loch' means 'lake' in Scottish, and Loch Lomond is one of the

most beautiful places I've ever seen! That morning after breakfast, we went horse riding around the lake. I've never ridden in such an amazing place.

In the next few days, I went BMX biking, tried rock climbing and played volleyball every day until I couldn't stand up! It was great! The camp organises different activities every day. Most sports activities are in the afternoon, and in the morning you can choose lessons like drawing, chess, drama and cookery. I've never been very good at art or board games – and I'm not a great actor – so I went along to the cookery class. I love food, but I didn't know how to cook anything before I went to Scotland. Since I've been home, I've been baking cakes for my parents! (And they haven't been to hospital with food poisoning yet, so I must be quite good at it!)

You must work hard at a summer camp. Everybody must do chores, and you do activities all day, too – you can't just sit around and hang out. But I really had a great time. The best thing about the camp was making new friends. Since I came home, Ingrid and I have been texting every day. The activities are great, but the people are even better.

Have you ever wondered what it's like to go on a summer camp? I'll tell you the answer in two words: exhausting and fun!

16 How did Sally feel when she first arrived?

- A She was hungry and cold.
- B She missed her family.
- C She was angry with the camp leaders.
- D She wanted the evening to end early.

17 The next morning, Sally

- A put up a tent.
- B saw something amazing.
- C rode a horse for the first time.
- D cooked breakfast on a campfire.

18 What types of activities did Sally do at the camp?

- A Sports and cooking.
- B Drama and art.
- C Art and sports.
- D Drama and cooking.

19 What happened after she came home from the camp?

- A Ingrid visited her.
- B Her parents went to hospital.
- C She made something for her parents.
- D She emailed Ingrid photos of the camp.

20 Overall, how does Sally feel about Camp Lomond?

- A It was too tiring.
- B It was a very good experience.
- C She didn't like sleeping in a tent.
- D It helped her to become a friendlier person.

TEXT 4

Read the text and choose the correct answer (A, B, C, D)

Falling for TV

Apparently, historians are still arguing about the complex reasons for the fall of ancient Roman civilisation. By contrast, could it be that the fall of modern western civilisation has a simple explanation? Neil Postman, who has taught media studies at New York University, thinks that it does. He claims that the root of the problem can be summed up with only two letters: TV.

Postman highlights the sharp contrast between our culture, with the TV at its centre, and an older typographic culture that had the printed book at its centre. In that older culture, if people wanted to find out about their world they would have to read, and reading is often considered an activity that naturally encourages people to think more about the world they live in. Although, of course, some of the writing was humorous, the culture based on the printed word was generally thoughtful, serious, and rational. It was also a culture that gave status and fame to highly intelligent people who had read widely and could express themselves well in writing.

That all changed when TV moved to the centre of culture. To see the effect of TV consider, for instance, the news, which is supposed to be the serious side of the medium. For a start, there is the music and the impressive graphics, telling the viewers that the news is actually another show. Viewers are then given a selection of facts, usually only those accompanied by images because, according to Postman, TV gives more emphasis to images than words. The show skips quickly from one item to the next, with little time to dwell upon each story. As a result, the viewer is encouraged to think less and just let the mind go where the sequence of images takes it.

Actually, Postman is not entirely against TV. He says TV is full of junk, but he also says that 'The best things on TV are its junk.' What he disagrees with is the way TV helps to create a public life in which the activity of thinking carefully about and discussing the serious issues that society faces looks more and more like an old-fashioned hobby. Surely Postman is right when he says that if we stop thinking seriously about the ideas and principles that our society is based on then we really will have fallen a long way.

21. What do we learn about Neil Postman from the article?
 - A. He teaches history.
 - B. He was born in New York.
 - C. He dislikes all TV programmes.
 - D. He is critical of Western culture.
22. The author mentions the news on TV because ...
 - A. it is supposed to be serious.
 - B. it is the most popular programme.
 - C. it doesn't emphasise images.
 - D. it tells the truth about reality.
23. What is not said about the news on TV in this article?
 - A. It moves quickly from one topic to another.
 - B. Only some events get into the news.
 - C. It sometimes includes music.
 - D. It is a very popular type of programme.
24. According to the article, in western TV culture ...
 - A. no one reads books any longer.
 - B. people are not encouraged to think much.
 - C. everyone watches too much television.
 - D. people are encouraged to buy more than they need.
25. What opinion does the author of the article have about Neil Postman's ideas?
 - A. He disagrees entirely with Postman.
 - B. He agrees with at least one main idea.
 - C. He thinks Postman's ideas about TV are wrong.
 - D. He is not sure that Postman is right.

Grade 9 keys

Listening

1. T
2. T
3. T
4. F
5. F
6. C
7. C
8. B
9. B
10. A
11. C
12. C
13. A
14. A
15. C

READING

1. T
2. F
3. T
4. T
5. F
6. T
7. T
8. F
9. F
10. T
11. E
12. G
13. B
14. C
15. A
16. D
17. B
18. A
19. C
20. B
21. D
22. A
23. D
24. B
25. B