

Skills test 1

READING

A place to stay

1 C

Whether you are thinking about taking a year off before starting college, taking time off from a job for a few months, or studying as part of a university or college program – it's important to think about where you are going to stay. For longer stays, some people decide to rent an apartment, while some choose for hotel or student accommodations. With apartment and student housing, you're likely to have to share your space with roommates – which is more economical and means you get to meet people, too. Another option is to choose a local homestay. This means staying in a family home, and eating your meals with the family. This option can work well for people staying in a different country for a longer period of time, although it's possible to arrange a homestay for a week or so – or even just a couple of days.

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For a longer trip, there are obvious advantages to a homestay – being around a host family means you are practicing the language all the time, even if you don't always feel like it! You also get to learn about the local culture, the local food at mealtimes, and the host family's lifestyle. If you're lucky, your host family may help you meet people – for example, being invited to family outings and other events. A homestay also provides a support network if things don't go as planned; if you are sick, homesick, or just need some advice, you shouldn't have to fend for yourself entirely. Share your problems with your host family; after all, they don't want a stressed-out foreign guest on their hands! It's likely they'll be more than happy to help out if they can.

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It's important to think about what you hope to achieve during your stay, and specifically what you imagine you will get out of the experience. It's best not to have very high expectations, since you may be disappointed, for example, if your homestay family are very busy and spend a lot of time out of the house, (although it would be weird if they didn't spend any time at all with you, helping you to settle in!) Be prepared to make your own friends so you don't end up housebound. You might, for example, get to know other students in your program, or through local networks like sports clubs, or through groups such as a reading or hiking group.

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Think about what you can offer your homestay family; it's nice if you can add an element of exchange to your visit. You should take some small gifts for them (nothing too spectacular!) which represent your hometown. You might, for example, take T-shirts or hats with your town or country printed on them, or a coffee table book with nice pictures. You could also choose some gifts for the family's children – chocolates, markers, or age-appropriate books. During your stay, you might offer to help around the house, or show off what a fabulous cook you are and prepare the family dinner; choosing to prepare a local dish from your own country would be appreciated. Showing pictures of your family, friends, and even your pets, would also make a good talking point.

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Every family will be different, and some things you experience during your homestay will be good, while others might be bad. Try to make the best of things, and don't hesitate to discuss any concerns with the family. Some problems can be solved simply by saying something – your host "mom" or "dad" isn't a mind reader – but once you let them know what's on your mind, there's most likely a simple way to take things forward. For example, if you really don't like the food, you might offer to help with the grocery shopping so that you can choose some things you like to eat. If talking to the family doesn't solve a particular problem and you feel strongly about something – then you should talk to one of the homestay program directors. If one host family doesn't work, you can always make other arrangements and change homestays.

1 Read the article. Match the headings (A–G) with the paragraphs. There are two headings you do not need to use.

- A Benefits of a homestay
- B Sharing your own culture
- C ~~Where should I live?~~
- D Communicate with your host family
- E Planning a schedule
- F Be prepared to help yourself
- G Some families are pretty weird

2 points for each correct answer

8

2 Read the article again. Are the following statements true (T), false (F), or not stated (NS)?

- 1 It's important to take a year off before starting college. ____
- 2 Host families are all very busy, so don't expect much from them. ____
- 3 During your stay, it's a good idea to help out around the house. ____
- 4 Most problems arise from differences in eating habits. ____
- 5 Talking to the family about problems won't solve anything, so talk to the organizers instead. ____

2 points for each correct answer

10

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3 Find the compound adjectives or nouns in the text which match the definitions below.

Writing total 25

- 1 para 1 accommodation with a family ____
- 2 para 1 people you share an apartment with ____
- 3 para 2 breakfast, lunch, and dinner ____
- 4 para 4 a low piece of living room furniture with four legs ____
- 5 para 4 something that encourages discussion ____
- 6 para 4 the place where you come from ____
- 7 para 5 someone who can understand what another person is thinking ____

1 point for each correct answer 7Reading total 25

WRITING

1 Imagine something amazing has happened in the news in your country. Write a short email to your best friend telling him/her about it. Write about:

- what took place.
- when it happened.
- what your reaction was.
- what other people's reactions were in comparison with yours.
- how you think the media have handled it.
- whether it could happen again.

Write your email in 80–120 words.

Shorter writing task 10

2 Write a review of a movie you saw recently. Write about:

- what genre of movie it is.
- where it's set and how authentic the setting is.
- who the main characters are and how they relate to each other.
- what you like/dislike about it.
- what happens at the end and whether it matches earlier expectations.

Write your review in 120–160 words.

Longer writing task 15

LISTENING

Part 1

1 Listen to three people talking about bad experiences they have had while traveling. Match two statements from a–i to each speaker. There are three statements you do not need to use.

Speaker 1 ____ , ____

Speaker 2 ____ , ____

Speaker 3 ____ , ____

- a found a local practice unsettling
- b got sick on a boat
- c was hiking with a friend
- d was working abroad
- e got food poisoning
- f was laughed at by a group of kids
- g had been on a river cruise
- h got really scared
- i got lost in the mountains for hours

1 point for each correct answer 6

2 Listen again. Are the statements below true (T), false (F), or not stated (NS)?

- 1 Speaker 1 said that the driver was continually asked to stop. ____
- 2 Speaker 1 loved visiting the pyramids. ____
- 3 Speaker 2 only went to the market on Saturdays. ____
- 4 Speaker 2 became a vegetarian because of the experience. ____
- 5 Speaker 3 got annoyed by the schoolchildren. ____
- 6 Speaker 3 didn't try to get past the animals. ____

2 points for each correct answer 12

Part 2

3 Listen to two people describing a bad experience. Read the question and circle the correct answer. Which speaker felt ashamed of what they did?

- a Neither Speaker 1 nor Speaker 2
- b Only Speaker 1
- c Only Speaker 2

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d Both Speaker 1 and Speaker 2

2 points for the correct answer

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4 Listen again. Circle the correct answer.

- 1 Emil gave up meat ...
 - a when he started college.
 - b because he didn't like how it tasted.
 - c because it wasn't ethical.
- 2 Emil was finding it hard to sleep because ...
 - a of the pressure he was under.
 - b he was homesick.
 - c all he could think about was eating chicken.
- 3 When Sarah's son told her that he was getting headaches, Sarah initially ...
 - a contacted her doctor.
 - b went online to do further research.
 - c wasn't worried and did nothing.
- 4 Sarah was ...
 - a told not to worry by her doctor.
 - b advised to get rid of the phones by her doctor.
 - c shown all the research by her doctor.
- 5 Sarah and her husband ...
 - a suffer from migraines.
 - b agreed to get rid of the phones.
 - c were concerned about their son.

1 point for each correct answer

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Listening total	25
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SPEAKING

1 Ask and answer the questions with a partner.

- What's happening in world news right now?
Can you remember any headlines?
- What was the last movie that you saw? What did you like/dislike about it?
- Have you ever had a bad experience? What were you doing when it happened and how did it make you feel?
- What's the most exciting trip you've been on? Where did you go and what did you do?
- Which things would you miss about your own country if you were abroad?

max. 1 point for each topic

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2 Look at the photos. Compare and contrast the different types of movies. Which types do you usually go and see? In your opinion, should people watch movies in the original language or not?

max. 10 points

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3 Discuss the statements. Do you agree or disagree?

- "The amount of litter we produce is out of control. It is nothing short of an environmental emergency. In the future there will be garbage sites the size of cities."
- "News programs on TV are all about ratings and profit and very little about reporting serious news. It is little more than entertainment."

max. 5 points for each topic

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Speaking total

	25
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Skills test 1A total

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