B2 First for Schools - Reading Part 5 - Multiple Choice

You are going to read an article about a teenager's end-of-school trip. For questions 1–6, choose the answer (A, B, C or D) which you think fits best according to the text.

Saying Goodbye with a Suitcase

Our end-of-school trip had been advertised as three days on the coast, a final celebration before we all scattered into the next stage of life. When our headteacher announced it in assembly, the hall erupted into cheers and it felt as if we had been promised the perfect ending to our time at school.

The letter that arrived a week later changed the atmosphere completely. Beneath the bright description of activities was the price, printed in bold, which made people start doing nervous calculations in their heads. Several classmates quietly admitted that their parents could not afford it, while others tried to hide their worries behind jokes about travelling in someone's suitcase. I felt excited about going, yet uncomfortably aware of the financial pressure on some families. A trip that was meant to unite us was already exposing inequality in our year group.

After various staff meetings about the destination, we finally set off for a coastal town three hours away. On the coach people swapped snacks, compared playlists and secretly filmed the teachers asleep. When we pulled up outside the hotel, it seemed impressive at first glance, with a pool and a generous buffet. Later we discovered the less glamorous reality: a lift that broke down regularly, walls so thin you could hear every late-night argument and pillows that felt as if they were filled with stones.

The programme the teachers had designed turned out to be a mixture of success and disappointment. Kayaking along the coast on the first morning was unforgettable, even for people who usually avoided sport, who ended up laughing as they struggled to steer their boats and crashed into each other. That afternoon we visited an "adventure park", which turned out to be a tired playground and a mini-golf course with cracked obstacles. Standing in the heat, queueing for the only safe climbing wall, several of us wondered whether we would have had more fun doing something organised by our own PE department back at school.

In spite of these weaker moments, the trip changed our year group. Once we were outside the classroom, people mixed differently and the usual cliques started to blur. Students who rarely spoke at school ended up sharing sun cream, headphones and personal stories. Late at night, when the teachers assumed we were asleep, our room became a space for serious conversations about university, family pressure and the fear of leaving home. Realising that other people, even the confident ones, were just as anxious as I was made the future seem less intimidating.

At the same time, spending twenty-four hours a day together made the negative side of our year impossible to ignore. A few students attempted to smuggle stuff in their luggage and posted videos online, ignoring the crystal-clear rules. Some people left plates on the tables and their rooms in a complete mess, assuming that teachers or hotel staff would tidy up after them. Arguments broke out about noise, cleaning duties and who was responsible whenever something was damaged. Watching this behaviour, I began to understand why some teachers insist that end-of-school trips create more conflicts than memories.

On the way home I realised that the lesson was not about surviving on little sleep. An end-of-school trip tests more than your ability to have fun; it tests how mature you are. You have to look after your belongings, respect other people's space and consider how your decisions affect the group. These trips can bring students closer and prepare them for life beyond school, but they also reveal that not everyone begins that life with the same opportunities.

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1 What does the writer say was the main result of receiving the letter about the trip?

A Some students demanded that the school cancel the trip for everyone.
B Conversations about the trip became practical, with people focusing more on the plan.
C The general excitement faded, and the trip was mentioned much less often in the corridors.
D Many students started to worry that not everyone would be able to go on the trip.

2 In paragraph 3, what contrast does the writer draw about the hotel?

A It was more basic than they had expected from the way the trip had been advertised.
B It looked disappointing from the outside, but the facilities were better than expected inside.
C It appeared attractive at first, but later its practical problems became obvious.
D It offered excellent rooms, but the food and pool were a big disappointment.

3 What is the writer's opinion of the programme of activities?

A It did not take into account the different interests in the group, so some students felt left out.
B It combined some very positive experiences with activities that felt rather pointless.
C It was physically too demanding for many students, especially those who usually avoided sport.
D It was predictable, because most activities were things they had already done in PE lessons.

4 In paragraph 5, what does the writer imply when they say that "the usual cliques started to blur"?

A Some students felt uncomfortable mixing with new people.
B A few students moved permanently from one friendship group to another.
C Students began spending time with people outside their normal friendship groups.
D Students talked more openly, but only with the people they were already close to at school.

5 The writer says they began to understand teachers who criticise end-of-school trips because they

A recognised how much extra work teachers had to do when students ignored simple rules.
B realised how easily small rule-breaking and untidiness could lead to constant conflicts.
C saw that some students were more interested in posting videos than in following the rules.
D noticed that even a small group of irresponsible students could affect the whole year group.

6 Which statement best summarises the writer's overall view of end-of-school trips?

A They can be powerful social learning experiences about responsibility and inequality.
B They are helpful mainly for showing students how tiredness can influence the way they behave.
C They are only worth running if all students in the year group can afford to take part.
D They are exciting while they last, but they rarely change how students feel about the future.

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ANSWER KEY

1 D
The price makes people do "nervous calculations", some admit their parents cannot afford it, others hide worries. The key result is anxiety that not everyone will be able to go.

2 C
The hotel "seemed impressive at first glance", but later they find a broken lift, thin walls and hard pillows. So it looks good at first, then the practical problems appear.

3 B
The programme is "a mixture of success and disappointment": kayaking is "unforgettable", the "adventure park" is tired and dull, and they think PE at school might have been better. That is a mix of very positive and rather pointless activities.

4 C
"The usual cliques started to blur" is followed by people mixing differently and "students who rarely spoke at school" sharing sun cream, headphones and stories. That shows students spending time outside their normal friendship groups.

5 B
A few students ignore "crystal-clear rules", leave a mess and argue about noise, cleaning and damage. The writer then mentions teachers who say trips create "more conflicts than memories", linking misbehaviour and untidiness to constant conflict.

6 A
In the last paragraph, trips test maturity (responsibility), "can bring students closer and prepare them for life beyond school", but also reveal that "not everyone begins that life with the same opportunities" (inequality). That matches a balanced, positive-but-realistic view.

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