



TEST YOUR BASIC ENGLISH SKILLS!

GRAMMAR

I. Insert the right forms of the verbs in brackets (= in Klammern!)

- 1) Three years ago Mac Millens last _____ (to go) to the Braemar Highland Gathering.
- 2) If the weather is fine, _____ (to go) to the Highland Games next week.
- 3) The Highland Games always _____ (to start) at 10 a.m.
- 4) So they _____ (to leave) their home town at 8 a.m. on Sunday.
- 5) "Look, there _____ (to be) a nice place for us to watch the games," Mr. Mac Millen says.
- 6) The games _____ (to start) with "Tossing the Caber".
- 7) But Mac Frazer, the crowd's favourite player, is a bit nervous, therefore Mr Mac Millen _____ (to advise):
- 8) Don't toss the caber until the referee _____ (to arrive)
- 9) Listen, the bagpipers _____ (to play) a march now.
- 10) It is a very exciting day, which they _____ (to have) for three years.

II. Adjective or adverb? Fill in the correct form!

- 1) Leo feels(sad) about the trouble at the office.
- 2) John is working very(hard) as an engineer in London.
- 3) Linda's performance was(good).
- 4) John says his job interview went (good), so he thinks he will get the job.

III. Fill in the gaps to answer the following questions with correct and complete sentences!

1) Will you be here at 6 p.m.?

- No, _____.

2) Will you keep me updated with any developments?

- Yes, _____.

3) Are the profits doing to rise by 12 %?

No, _____ at all .

4) Is marketing going to be more important than ever?

Yes, _____.

5) Did you come back on Sunday?

No, _____.

IV. Much or many?

1) Do you know songs?

2) people work here.

3) She doesn't speak English.

4) I haven't got time.

V. If-clauses: fill in the correct form of the verbs in brackets!

1) If he _____ (like /not) people, he wouldn't be a doctor.

2) If my friend _____ (work) hard, he will pass the exam.

3) If it _____ (to be) too late, I would have called you yesterday.

READING COMPREHENSION

I. Read the text *Love's Labour Lost* and tick if the following statements are true or false! Don't worry if you don't understand every word! Try to filter out the most important information for each task!

Statement	True	False
1. The author praises British trains.		
2. The author mentions that travelling by train used to be romantic in Britain.		
3. The author's trip described in the text took longer than he had expected.		
4. According to the article, travelling spontaneously is cheaper than booking in advance.		
5. British Rail belongs to a single private company.		
6. The author shows that a French high-speed train is considerably better and cheaper than a British high-train.		
7. The problems started after the privatisation in the 1990s.		
8. As private companies are eager to invest in the system, the prices of tickets fell and the safety improved.		
9. After a train accident in 2000, new speed limits were introduced. The trains have become slower than they used to be.		
10. The author expects politicians to take action in order to solve the problem. Therefore, the situation will change for the better.		

II. In your own words, explain the heading of the article. Why did the author choose this heading?

Love's Labour Lost

British Rail: much change for the worse

Travelling by train in Britain is adventurous. Trains are often run down and dirty, tickets are expensive, and travelling can be dangerous. Many Britons now prefer planes and cars.

5 There was once romance in British rail travel. There was the great plume of steam rising above the tracks of what was the world's first and most modern train system. Each carriage had its own door alighting to the platform. A remarkable infrastructure of stations and bridges, à la Harry Potter, was built. By 1850, you could travel all over Britain by rail. Trains brought people of different classes and from diverse regions together. There were
10 opportunities for stolen glances and kisses, such as in David Lean's 1945 film *Brief Encounter*, where love and heartbreak all transpire in the refreshment room of a provincial station.

Slow, expensive, and overcrowded

15 Train travel in Britain today is a suitable backdrop for a gritty film about urban decay. The romance is gone. Rail travel is slow, expensive, overcrowded and stressful. I recently travelled from Oxford to Bristol. A flexible one-way ticket cost 60 euros in standard class, a first class journey as much as 95 euros. This seems a little expensive for a journey of 120 kilometres that takes an hour and a half. The antiquated train car, littered with trash and
20 smelling strongly of beer, moved slowly until it came to a jolting stop. We waited. There was no announcement about the delay. Finally, apologies were made and three hours later, after two changes, I arrived feeling rather harried.

My experience is not unusual. British rail is divided between many different private
25 companies, making transfers common. No true high-speed rail system, like the TGV system in France, has been developed, except on the tracks leading to the Eurotunnel. Cheap tickets are available only in advance. Otherwise, it can cost 225 euros to travel the 200 miles from London to Manchester. This is one of Britain's fastest trains, but compares negatively to the Brussels to Paris line. The latter travels the same distance in about half the time (in just
30 over one hour) for half the cost.

Magnitude of problems

Many Brits blame the deterioration of their train infrastructure on privatisation. The
35 government of prime minister Margaret Thatcher sold off most state-owned industries in the 1980s. Trains were the last to be put into private hands in the early 1990s. An explosion of costs, deterioration of the rail tracks, and problems with safety followed. Companies did not invest sufficiently in the system, increasing their short-term profit margins. The crash of a train in Hatfield in 2000, where four people died and 70 were injured, showed the British the magnitude of the problems. Those responsible for track maintenance were charged and then
40 acquitted of manslaughter. Speed restrictions were put in place for safety reasons, making the rail system in Britain one of Europe's slowest.

This has led many Brits to choose to travel domestically by car on overcrowded motorways, or by low-cost airlines, which have an even higher environmental cost. Both the Labour and
45 Conservative parties have promised change in British rail travel in this spring's national election, but what change will mean in practice, and in the popular imagination, is far from clear.

by Joseph Pearson

(550 words)