



Charles Darwin – The Man that Changed Science (B1 - Lower Intermediate)

A – Before you start

Answer the questions with a partner.

1. What do you know about the theory of evolution?
2. Are there any people in your country who don't believe in it?
3. If so, who are they?

B – Listen and answer

Read these incomplete statements. Then listen (without reading) and complete them.

1. Darwin was born on _____, 1809.
2. He studied divinity at _____ University.
3. After his degree, he spent _____ years travelling on the ship HMS Beagle.
4. He published a book about his travels in _____ and quickly became famous.
5. In 1842, he moved to Down House in _____ to continue his research on evolution.
6. In 1858, he and Alfred Russel Wallace, a British _____, presented their theories together.
7. In 1859, Darwin published On the Origin of Species by Means of _____.
8. He died of a _____ on 19th April, 1882.

C – Read and answer

Read the article and answer the questions.

1. Why do living things change over time, according to Darwin?
2. What did Darwin do during his voyage on HMS Beagle?
3. What did he realise about the fourteen species of finches on the Galapagos Islands?
4. Why was Darwin reluctant to publish his theory?
5. Why did he have to publish it when he did?
6. How did the Church respond to its publication?

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. Our cherry tree _____ early this year because of the exceptionally warm spring.
2. Amanda was very weak after her operation but _____ she gradually recovered.
3. The heron is a bird with a long neck, a long _____ and long legs.
4. The pizza I ordered was too big for one person so I _____ it with my flatmate.
5. After the _____ of his job in New York, James decided to move back to Scotland.
6. Orangutans, gorillas and chimpanzees are members of the _____ family.

E – Ready for the B1 PRELIMINARY English Exam? (Paper 1, Reading: Part 6)

Write one word only in each space..

As a medical student at Edinburgh University, Charles Darwin found the lectures boring. He 1_____ shooting and riding to studying. However, in his second year he decided to 2_____ a natural history group at the university and became interested 3_____ botany and geology. When he moved to Christ College, Cambridge, he met other naturalists and

4_____ collecting beetles.

5_____ graduating with excellent results in 1831, he was invited to take part in the HMS Beagle mapping expedition. His father disapproved, because he considered it a 6_____ of time and money. Luckily an uncle managed to persuade his father to agree to it and to finance him. The ship set sail with Darwin onboard on 27th December 1831.

F – Write about it

Write about one of your country's most illustrious scientists. Include information about:

- his/her life;
 - what field he/she worked in;
 - how he/she became famous.
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The Real Peaky Blinders (B2 - Upper Intermediate)

A – Before you start

Answer the questions with a partner.

1. Do you like watching TV series?
2. If so, what categories of TV series do you prefer?
3. What are the most popular TV series in your country?
4. What do you know about Peaky Blinders?
5. Are street gangs a problem in the area where you live?

B – Listen and answer

Read these statements. Then listen (without reading) and write T (true) or F (false).

1. The characters in the TV series Peaky Blinders really existed.
2. Street gangs called 'slogging gangs' appeared after the police began to close down pubs.
3. Some members of these gangs were adolescents.
4. The Peaky Blinders gang was the most organised criminal group in Birmingham.
5. They often fought against the members of other gangs.
6. They disappeared after World War II. .

C – Read and answer

Read the article and answer the questions.

1. When was the Peaky Blinders gang active?
2. What was life like for workers and their families in Birmingham at that time?
3. What kind of crime did young members of slogging gangs usually start with?
4. Why is it thought that Thomas Mucklow was possibly the founder of the Peaky Blinders?
5. How did the gang's members draw attention to themselves?
6. Who did the gang attack besides rival gangs?
7. What weapons did they use besides guns and knives?
8. Why did the gang disappear?

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.)

1. I don't believe the story about the leisure centre closing down. It's just _____.
2. The security checks at airports are designed to prevent terrorists from _____ aircraft.
3. The police have made many attempts to _____ on knife carrying.
4. The constant rise in the cost of living will result in real _____ for many families.
5. A button's come off my best jacket. I'll have to _____ it on before the party tomorrow.
6. Tickets for the group's _____ concert tour have already sold out.

E – Ready for the B2 FIRST Certificate in English? (Reading and Use of English, Part 1)

Read the text and decide which word in brackets best fits each gap.

The crime drama *Peaky Blinders* is 1_____ (done/set/placed/founded) in Birmingham. The story begins 2_____ (still/yet/already/just) after the end of World War I. Actor Cillian Murphy plays the 3_____ (leader/manager/principal/top) of the gang, Tommy Shelby, while Sam Neil 4_____ (works/recites/stars/plays) as the detective chief inspector sent to Birmingham by Winston Churchill to get 5_____ (news/rid/free/out) of the street gangs.

Episode 1 of Series 1 of *Peaky Blinders* was first broadcast on 12th September 2013. Since then, five more series 6_____ (are/were/are being/have been) produced, the latest of which premiered on 27th February 2022. There was 7_____ (planned/predicted/supposed/suggested) to be a seventh and final series. However, the show's creator, Stephen Knight, decided to wind 8_____ (up/in/over/out) the story in a feature film rather than a TV series.

F – Write about it

Write about a notorious criminal organisation in your country. Mention:

- who it was founded by;
- when/where it was founded;
- whether it's still active;
- what its main criminal activities are/were;
- what has been done to combat it.

PoliNations (C1 Advanced - Advanced)

A – Before you start

Answer the questions with a partner.

1. Are you interested in plants?
2. Have you ever grown anything? If so, what?
3. Do you think your town or area is green enough? Why (not)?
4. Why is it important to plant more trees?

B – Listen and answer

Listen to the article (without reading) and choose the correct alternative.

1. PoliNations is an event that will take place in the suburbs of Birmingham.
a) True. b) False. c) The article doesn't say.
2. It is intended to draw attention to the many different origins of
a) the UK's population. b) the UK's plants. c) Both of these.
3. It's part of a series of events which began in
a) Northern Ireland. b) Scotland. c) Wales.
4. It won't cost anything to visit PoliNations.
a) True. b) False. c) The article doesn't say.
5. There will be
a) real plants. b) artificial plants. c) Both of these.
6. Another ... UNBOXED projects will take place across the UK this year.
a) nine b) ten c) nineteen
7. The plants to be used in the event will be
a) grown by members of the local community. b) imported from abroad. c) Neither of these.
8. Angie Bual says the main aim of the project is to help people to
a) grow their own food. b) understand the history of colonialism. c) realise how imagination and creativity can change the world.

C – Read and answer

Read the article and answer the questions.

1. What attractions will there be at PoliNations besides plants?
2. How will the event in Birmingham be different from the one in Edinburgh?
3. What special characteristics will the fabricated trees have?
4. What will happen at the end of the event?
5. What was the original aim of the project in 2018?
6. What point does Angie Bual make about most of the plants in British gardens?
7. Why is she particularly interested in the history of tea-growing?
8. How does Bual think this project will change Birmingham in the future?

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. Wedding guests often throw _____ or rice over the bride and groom after the ceremony.
2. We _____ a packet of seeds in the garden in spring, and now we have lots of flowers.
3. Don't _____ that box. The contents are very fragile.
4. The _____ of the new regulations is to reduce tax evasion.
5. Last night the wind was so strong that it _____ the roof of our garage off.
6. Luckily, the shop had a _____ over the door, so we stood under it to shelter from the rain.

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. Birmingham is being transformed into an _____ (IMMERSE) forest.
2. PoliNations is a _____ (REMIND) of the origins of the UK's people and plants.
3. It offers a _____ (VARY) of audio and visual experiences.
4. Angie Bual is the _____ (CREATE) director of PoliNations.
5. She explained that English gardens are _____ (SURPRISE) multicultural.
6. The event will end with a huge _____ (EXPLODE) party.
7. There will also be a citizens' _____ (ASSEMBLE) of 400 people.
8. Through PoliNations, people will take part in changing a huge urban _____ (LAND).

F – Write about it

Write about a recent cultural project in your country. Mention:

- where/when it took place;
- what its aims were;
- what it entailed;
- how successful it was.

Canadian Crime – Louise Penny (C1 - Advanced - Advanced)

A – Before you start

Answer the questions with a partner.

1. Do you like reading crime stories?
2. If so, do you have a favourite crime writer?
3. Have you ever read any books by Agatha Christie?
4. If so, what did you think of them?

B – Listen and answer

Read these statements. Then listen (without reading) and write T (true) or F (false).

1. The setting for Louise Penny's novels is a sinister country village in Quebec.
2. Her first novel Still Life is soon to be adapted for the cinema.

3. Penny soon realised it was unrealistic to have so many murders occurring in the same village.
4. Her first novel was refused by Canadian publishers.
5. The only fear she had as a child was the fear of spiders.
6. Her husband encouraged her to start writing a novel.
7. She is now working on a novel with a former member of the US government.
8. She won't write any more Three Pines novels, as she wants to explore other genres.

C – Read and answer

Read the article and answer the questions.

1. Who is the main character in the Three Pines novels?
2. How would Louise Penny have changed her stories if she had known they would be published?
3. At what point did she realise that too many murders were happening in the same small village?
4. Why did her experience as a journalist prove useful in her career as a novelist?
5. What helped Penny overcome her fear of spiders?
6. Why did she want to be a writer after this experience?
7. Why did she switch from writing a historical novel to writing a detective story?
8. How did she give her readers a sense of the different seasons in Quebec?

D – Listen to the interview (Optional)

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. In many European countries the _____ of inflation is rising at present.
2. In Ancient Greece, most women _____ the fabric needed to make their own clothes.
3. We sat down on a rock to _____ before continuing our walk to the top of the hill.
4. The box of books was too heavy. Adam couldn't _____ it by himself.
5. Most people love the _____ of freshly cut grass in summertime.
6. This supermarket has improved a lot. I think different people are _____ it now.

E – Ready for the C1 ADVANCED English Test? (Reading and Use of English, Part 4)

Complete the second sentence so that it has a similar meaning to the first sentence, using the word given. Do not change the word given. Use between 3 and 6 words including the word given.

Example: The village got its name from the trees on the village green.

AFTER The village was named after the trees on the village green.

1. The people who live in Three Pines are friendly and eccentric.

BY Three Pines _____ friendly and eccentric people.

2. Usually so much homicide does not occur in so small a village.

SUCH Rarely does so much homicide occur in _____ village.

3. The fourth book has a different setting for this reason.

ELSE The fourth book is _____ for this reason.

4. Fear often features in her books.

COMMON Fear is _____ in her books.

5. She didn't overcome her fears for a long time.

GROW It took her a long time _____ her fears.

6. She invented all sorts of excuses for not becoming a writer.

CAME She _____ all sorts of excuses for not becoming a writer.

F – Write about it

Write about a well-known crime writer from your country. Include:

- some biographical information about the author;
- where his/her stories are usually set;

- who the main characters are;
 - the name of the best-known novel;
 - what prizes (if any) he/she has won.
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Answers (Charles Darwin B1 - Lower Intermediate)

B – Listen and answer

1. February 12th/12th February
2. Cambridge
3. five
4. 1839
5. Kent
6. naturalist
7. Natural Selection
8. heart attack

C – Read and answer

1. To survive better in their environment.
2. He collected specimens and investigated local geology.
3. He realised that the fourteen species of finches had a common ancestor and that their beaks had adapted to suit different diets and habitats.
4. Because it contradicted his Bible-based Christian point of view and he was afraid of the reaction of the Church, which was very influential at that time.
5. Because Alfred Russel Wallace had arrived at the same theory.
6. The Church attacked the book.

D – Learn it! Use it!

1. blossomed
2. over time
3. beak
4. shared
5. loss
6. ape

E – Ready for the B1 PRELIMINARY English Exam?

1. preferred
2. join
3. in
4. began/started
5. After
6. waste

Answers (The Real Peaky Blinders B2 - Upper Intermediate)

B – Listen and answer

1. F – They are invented.
2. F – They appeared after the police began to close down gambling dens.
3. T
4. F – It was the most violent. It was not really organised.
5. T
6. F – They had disappeared by the 1920s, after World War I.

C – Read and answer

1. It was active from the 1880s till the 1910s.
2. Life for workers and their families was terrible. There were slums where a violent subculture had developed.
3. They started by picking pockets.
4. His name appeared in an article in 1890.
5. After attacking someone, they sent letters to newspapers claiming they were responsible.
6. They attacked civilians and police constables.
7. They also used belt buckles, metal-tipped boots, fire irons and canes.
8. It disappeared as a result of the opposition of a larger gang, the Birmingham Boys, and the introduction of harsher policing and sentencing.

D – Learn it! Use it!

1. hearsay
2. hijacking
3. crack down
4. hardship
5. sew
6. upcoming

E – Ready for the B2 FIRST Certificate in English? (Reading and Use of English, Part 1)

1. set
2. just
3. leader
4. stars
5. rid
6. have been
7. supposed
8. up

Answers (PoliNations C1 - Advanced)

B – Listen and answer

1. b
2. c
3. b
4. a
5. c
6. a
7. a
8. c

C – Read and answer

1. There will be live music, light shows and spoken-word events.
2. In Edinburgh there was only a grand tree structure. In Birmingham there will be an oasis.
3. They will be able to absorb rainwater and create electricity using windpower.
4. The canopies of the trees will explode in a cloud of confetti and colour.
5. To unite the divided nation after the Brexit vote.
6. They came from other countries.
7. Because it had an impact on India and she is British-Indian.

8. She thinks it will make it greener.

D – Learn it! Use it!

1. confetti 2. sowed 3. drop 4. aim 5. blew 6. canopy

E – Ready for the C1 ADVANCED English Test?

1. immersive 2. reminder 3. variety 4. creative 5. surprisingly 6. explosive
7. assembly 8. landscape

Answers (Canadian Crime C1 - Advanced)

B – Listen and answer

1. F – It's an idyllic village. 2. F – It has already been adapted for the cinema. It's soon to be serialised on Netflix. 3. T 4. T 5. F – She was afraid of many things. 6. T 7. T 8. F – She says she's going to continue with Three Pines.

C – Read and answer

1. It's Chief Inspector Gamache of the Quebec police force. 2. She would have made Three Pines a little bigger. 3. After her third novel. 4. As a journalist, she learned about the importance of deadlines and discipline. 5. She was reading a book in which there was a character that she loved and she found out the character was a spider. 6. Because she realised how powerful storytelling and books were. 7. Because she suffered from writer's block while she was writing it. 8. She set each of the first four books in a different season.

D – Learn it! Use it!

1. rate 2. wove 3. rest 4. lift 5. scent 6. running

E – Ready for the C1 ADVANCED English Test?

1. is populated/inhabited by 2. such a small 3. set somewhere else 4. a common theme/feature 5. to grow out of 6. came up/out with