

# STUDENT'S BOOK



**Cambridge IGCSE™**

First Language  
**English**

Fifth edition

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**Sample**

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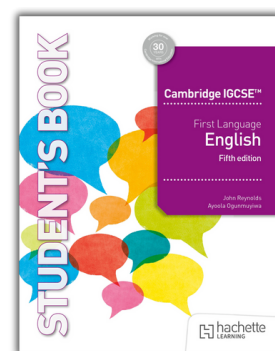
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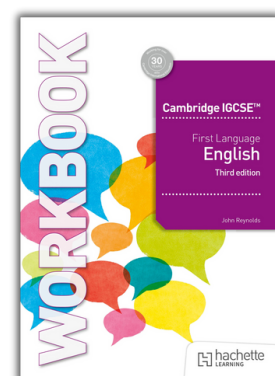


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# 1

## Active reading



In this unit, you will:

- ★ demonstrate understanding of explicit meanings
- ★ demonstrate understanding of implicit meanings and attitudes
- ★ select and use information for specific purposes
- ★ organise and structure facts, ideas and opinions for deliberate effect
- ★ use a range of vocabulary and sentence structures appropriate to context
- ★ make accurate use of spelling, punctuation and grammar.

This unit will focus on the following skills:

### Reading

- ★ demonstrating understanding of written texts, and of the words and phrases within them
- ★ summarising and using material for a specific context
- ★ selecting appropriate information for specific purposes
- ★ analysing and evaluating information and ideas from written texts.

### Writing

- ★ organising and conveying facts, ideas and opinions effectively
- ★ demonstrating a varied vocabulary appropriate to the context
- ★ demonstrating accuracy in spelling, punctuation and grammar.





## 1.1 Why do you read?

The written word is all around us. It is almost impossible to spend a day without reading something. Here are a few examples:

- » If you need to catch a train, you will probably read the timetable or a transport app to make sure you know when your train arrives/departs.
- » If you are planning to see the latest blockbuster movie, you will need to read details of performance times in a newspaper or on a website.



- » Whenever you use a computer, you need to read the different messages that appear on the screen.
- » When you settle down to relax after a hard day's study, you might decide to watch television. How do you find out which programmes are on? Most probably, you will read online reviews or check a website with TV listings. How do you know when the programme you intend to watch is about to start? Almost certainly because you will read the title as it flashes up on the screen in front of you.

Of course, you may decide that the most enjoyable way to relax is not by watching television at all, but by reading. But what will you read? Will you pick up your favourite sports magazine or look up the latest celebrity news on your phone? Or will you return to the novel that you left by your bed last night?



## 1.2 Passive and active reading

### Key terms

**Passive reading** The process by which we register what we read on road signs, etc. without consciously having to think about the meaning of the words used.

**Active reading** The process involved in making sense of more complicated pieces of writing, in which we have to engage more closely with what is written and think carefully about the meaning of the words used by the writers.

So, reading is something we spend our lives doing, often without being conscious of the fact that we are doing it. In fact, you might think that the printed word is so much a part of our lives that we take very little notice of it; it is just there.

We take the printed word for granted and, as a result, we frequently recognise familiar (and less familiar) words without really thinking about what they mean – we just accept what we see. This is what we mean by **passive reading** – the words are like wallpaper; we see them but do not really bother to think about them.

Reading, however, can also be an active process, in which you really think about what you are reading and try to get as much out of the text as you can. On many occasions (such as when reading a legal document before you sign it or making sure that you understand fully the information contained in a school textbook), you need to concentrate carefully on the sense of the words that you are reading. This is called **active reading**, and it is important that you develop this skill of reading for understanding.

An English Language course is unlike most other subjects, in that there are very few facts and details that you need to learn. However, it is important to spend time developing the skills you need. By the end of this course, you should be able to:

- » demonstrate understanding of explicit meanings
- » demonstrate understanding of implicit meanings and attitudes
- » analyse, evaluate and develop facts, ideas and opinions, using appropriate support from the text
- » demonstrate understanding of how writers achieve effects and influence readers
- » select and use information for specific purposes.

If you improve your skills in active reading, this will help you in many other school subjects as well, such as history or economics.

While studying English Language, you will need to read different types of materials. You might, for example, be presented with:

- » a piece of **non-fiction** (possibly taken from a newspaper or an online news article)
- » an extract from a novel or short story
- » a piece of personal writing, such as an autobiography.

Remember that words alone are not the only way by which writers **convey** meaning: pictures, diagrams, sub-headings (which draw a reader's attention to a specific point), changes of font and typeface (such as the use of italics or bold print) are all means by which writers try to influence your responses as a reader.

### Key terms

**Non-fiction** A piece of writing in which the content is factual and not imaginative.

**Convey** Communicate; writers convey meaning when they make their ideas understandable for their readers.

## 1.3 How do you develop the skill of active reading?

Throughout your course, it is a good idea to practise active reading, as this will help you to fully understand the texts you encounter. Here are some suggestions of ways in which you can do this:

- » Read a wide range of texts, not just novels and magazines but also newspaper articles, in particular editorials and opinion columns, and any leaflets or pamphlets you can find.
- » Remember, work in other subjects, such as history or sociology, also requires you to read non-fiction books which contain complicated and well-structured arguments. Other types of non-fiction writing include journals, travel books, blueprints, diagrams, letters and web and magazine articles.
- » With everything that you read, make sure that you think carefully about what the words, sentences and paragraphs actually mean. It may help to:
  - ask yourself questions as you go along, or think of comprehension questions that might be set to test understanding of what you are reading
  - imagine what you would ask someone else if they had read the text and you had not.
- » It is a good idea to have a pencil, highlighter and notepad close to hand whenever you are reading, in order to underline, highlight or make notes of key words and phrases as you read.
- » Make annotations in the margin to summarise points.
- » Read critically by asking yourself questions as you read the text. Who wrote it? When? Who is the intended audience?
- » Look for 'signposts' that help you to understand the text – for example phrases like *most importantly*, *in contrast* and *on the other hand*.

When you are working on comprehension passages in class, it is almost certain that your teacher will keep asking you questions. This is to help you to gain a complete understanding of what you have read, and you should ensure that your answers are as precise and specific as possible.

So, when you are reading on your own, try to think about what questions your teacher would ask if they were there with you. This should help to ensure that you have thought about the main concerns of the passages and understood them to the best of your ability.

Once you have mastered this approach, you will find that you are reading with a much clearer and more focused understanding – this will allow you to maximise the use of your skills in any situation and when answering a comprehension question.

### Test your active reading skills

#### Exercise 1

- 1 Read through the following paragraphs, in which the writer describes a journey on the luxurious Simplon-Orient-Express train.
- 2 As you read, make notes of any words or phrases that you are not sure about and then check their meaning in a dictionary.
- 3 Write down a one-sentence summary of each paragraph.
- 4 Make up five questions (with answers) to test your understanding of the passage and then give them to a partner to answer.

# Aboard the Orient Express

Appropriately enough for a train steeped in romance, the principal routes of the Venice Simplon-Orient-Express link three of Europe's most beguiling cities, London, Paris and Venice. The chocolate-and-cream British Pullman train departs from London Victoria and glides through Kent on the way to the Channel. In France the royal-blue train with brass insignia, lined by uniformed and white-gloved attendants, is waiting to take you to the capital, while a four-course dinner is served. The dinner is made unforgettable by the sumptuous surroundings of the Lalique glass and wood-panelled dining cars as well as the quality of the food, a miracle of skill conjured up in the tiny galley kitchen.

In Paris the train uses the same station, Gare de l'Est, from which the first Orient Express departed on October 4, 1883. The sense of dinner-jacketed style is enhanced by the contrast with passengers milling about on the platforms, the bar car's piano and period tunes a world away from the music-streaming smartphones of today's Parisian commuters.

It is likely to be dark by the time the train weaves through the hills growing the grapes that produce the champagne served on board. Passengers slumber through eastern France and northern Switzerland, usually waking somewhere east of Zürich. Raising the blind to reveal the waters of Zürichsee or the majestic peaks lining the northern shore of Walensee is part of the pleasure of overnight train travel – that sense of being somewhere so different from the landscapes and architecture of the previous evening.

The snow-capped peaks of tiny Liechtenstein are a prelude to the Austrian Alps, as a continental breakfast is delivered to your compartment. A pause at the Tyrolean capital of Innsbruck is an opportunity to stretch one's legs before the train reverses to head south through the Brenner Pass, its crags periodically topped by stone fortresses controlling valleys through the Dolomites. Lunch

is served as the train drops down from the summit on the border with Italy, conifer-clad slopes giving way to huddled villages surrounded by vineyards and orchards.

The architectural style of the pale stone castle and palaces forming Buonconsiglio Castle in Trento emphasises the transition from central European to Mediterranean culture. With the Adige River for company, the train makes for Verona, forever associated with the doomed love of Romeo and Juliet.

Afternoon tea is served as the train crosses the fertile landscape of the countryside around Vicenza. The last major city before journey's end is Padua, where Galileo once taught mathematics at the university, founded in 1222. The causeway linking Venice Mestre and the island is the perfect approach to the city and its towers and domes rising above the tiled roofs. Then, when the train arrives and you walk out of Santa Lucia terminus, you find yourself on the bank of the Grand Canal.

Source: Adapted from [www.telegraph.co.uk/travel/rail-journeys/The-Orient-Express-Great-Train-Journeys](http://www.telegraph.co.uk/travel/rail-journeys/The-Orient-Express-Great-Train-Journeys)





**Key terms**

**Skimming** Reading quickly through a passage or an article in order to gain an overall understanding of its content, in particular by using clues from headlines, sub-headings, etc.

**Scanning** Reading sections of the passage or article more closely once you have established the overall meaning by skimming, in order to ensure understanding of the most important points relating to the overall meaning.

**Gist** The substance or general meaning of a piece of writing.

**Key words** Words in a question that either give clear instructions as to what you should do to answer the question (for example *explain*, *describe*) or that make clear what should be the focus of your answer (for example a character's behaviour, details of a place etc.).

## 1.4 Skimming and scanning – getting the gist

Sometimes you need to be able to read as much as you can, and understand it as fully as you can, in a limited period of time. This is why developing your active reading skills is so important. You must read through the whole question carefully, but if you are skilled at reading actively, then you can save some time by employing the techniques known as **skimming** and **scanning**.

- » Skimming means reading quickly through a passage in order to gain a clear, overall view of what it is about. This is what we mean by 'getting the **gist**'.
- » Scanning is a refinement of this approach, as it means reading in order to extract specific details.

Before we look a little more closely at how to apply these techniques, there is one other very important point to consider, and it is also one that is easy to overlook.

### Identifying key words in a question

When preparing to answer a reading comprehension task, it is important to not only focus on the passage, but also to read through the questions carefully.

A clear understanding of exactly what the question requires will help you to focus on those parts of the passage in which the relevant points can be found.

When reading a question, you may find it useful to underline the **key words**. For example, look at this summary question based on the passage 'Meeting a Great White' (page 9):

*Read carefully the passage 'Meeting a Great White' and then summarise what it tells us about how the shark behaved and the writer's thoughts and feelings about her encounter with the shark.*

From your skimming of this question, you will pick up that the passage is about a scuba diver meeting a great white shark in the wild for the first time. The key words to underline as part of your scanning process are the instruction *summarise* and then the specific details on which you are to focus: *how the shark behaved* and *the writer's thoughts and feelings* about her encounter with the shark.

### Exercise 2

The following are stems of instructions for different types of questions. Some key words have been underlined for you.

- a From paragraphs 1 and 2, give two facts that the writer provides ...
- b What made ...
- c By referring closely to paragraph 9, explain using your own words ...
- d Using your own words, explain what you learn about ...
- e Which word in paragraph 11 tells you ...
- f By referring to paragraphs 3 and 11, explain using your own words ...
- g Re-read the passage and then, referring closely to the words and phrases used by ...
- h Explain how the writer conveys to the reader ...
- i Remember to use one example from the text in your answer.
- j Choose three powerful words or phrases from each paragraph. Your choices should include imagery. Explain how each word or phrase selected is used effectively in the context.

Now complete the following activities with a partner:

- 1 Discuss whether there are any other words that should also be considered key words, either in the list above or in any other questions you have seen.
- 2 Once you have decided on the key words, try to work out exactly what they mean and why they are important to answering the questions correctly.

### Skim, scan and select

Now we can look at how the process of skimming and scanning works when reading the passage 'Meeting a Great White'.

Here is the question again, with the key words underlined:

*Read carefully the passage 'Meeting a Great White' and then summarise what it tells us about how the shark behaved and the writer's thoughts and feelings about her encounter with the shark.*

#### 1 Skim the text

You will notice that there is a title, followed by a smaller title (sub-heading). There is also a photograph with a caption, and an extracted quote halfway through the article.

These all contain details which can be easily taken in when you first skim/scan the page. They give you a quick, overall view of the subject of the text and the writer's attitude towards the subject. It is important that you make use of clues of this sort when you set out to read the passage.

#### 2 Scan the text

Pick out details relevant to the question which you now have firmly fixed in your mind.

#### 3 Select the points you intend to use

By scanning, you weed out those details you do not need.

For this question, you are being asked to identify facts about how the shark behaved and the writer's thoughts and feelings about coming across the shark. It is important that you understand the distinction between facts and opinions:

- » Facts are objective details that can be supported by evidence.
- » Opinions are subjective views held by the writer and cannot, therefore, be proved as being either right or wrong.

Sometimes you may need to separate facts from opinions to show that you can distinguish between them. Or you may simply have to identify one or the other. Look again at the question. It asks for both factual details and your understanding of the writer's thoughts and feelings. You are not, however, required to judge what the writer did and thought. You should, therefore, include only the required details in your answer. Having a clear understanding of the difference between facts and opinions will make it easier to eliminate irrelevant opinions from your summary.

With these guidelines in mind, we will now look at the passage.

# Meeting a Great White

## A thrilling and fearful experience

By Katy Simons

The first three paragraphs set the scene. Although you will be taking in the details as useful background information, you will be aware that they contain some facts about the writer's experience as a diver and what she has learned about sharks, which give some indication of her original state of mind. If you are reading actively, you will notice that this prepares us for her later reaction.

As you read through the fourth and fifth paragraphs, it is likely that you will be asking yourself questions such as 'What do these details tell us about the writer's thoughts and feelings?' You should be thinking about not only the facts she gives in her account but also how the vocabulary she uses helps to reinforce them. For example, consider the phrase 'one of the most majestic and powerful predators to be found in the world's oceans'.

As you move on through the passage, the writer's descriptions of the shark's appearance and actions provide further evidence of her feelings, although for the purpose of writing your summary it is important to focus on the overall impression that is given, rather than

I have been scuba diving seriously for over ten years, and in that time have had many rewarding encounters with exotic sea creatures. It was only last summer, however, when diving in the Indian Ocean off the coast of KwaZulu-Natal in South Africa, that I experienced the most awesome moment of my diving career.



The grace and beauty of the huge predator

Sharks of all species are the aquatic animals to which I'm most drawn and which I find the most fascinating. I have seen enough of these beautiful, powerful and graceful creatures in their natural habitat to understand that they are far more than the man-eating stereotypes of *Jaws*-inspired movies. Among other things, as the main predators of coral reefs, they are crucial to maintaining a healthy marine ecosystem.

The area in which I was diving was one to which ragged-tooth sharks, in particular, migrate in the breeding season, where they can feed on the shoals of sardines that are found there. It was this breed of shark that I was hoping to observe. 'Raggies' are known to be docile, slow-moving animals, which are very tolerant of humans in their environment.

It was while I was on the last dive of the day and searching for some of the teeth that these sharks regularly discard that I saw a sleek form ahead, which at first I thought was a large fish. As it got closer, I realised from its outline that it was a shark. It got bigger and bigger, and was swimming straight towards me. I experienced a thrill of fear as the shark came closer and as its silhouette took on the unmistakable form, not of a raggie but of a great white, one of the most majestic and powerful predators to be found in the world's oceans.

I had never met one of these creatures in real life and I have to admit that I had always been nervous of doing so, being aware of their fearsome reputation. I reminded myself of what I had read, that the vast majority of accidental encounters between sharks and humans are peaceful in nature and that great whites have much more reason to fear humans than humans have to fear them.

### **'Fear was present but so was excitement'**

My heart was beating fast with a mixture of emotions. Of course, fear was present but so was excitement and an almost overwhelming sense of how privileged I was to be able to be sharing this part of the ocean with such a magnificent creature – a majestic female over four metres in length.

My fear increased as the great white began circling around me and I was in a sort of trance and found it hard to believe what was happening; it seemed everything was taking place in slow motion. I fought not to be caught up in the current created by the shark's great strength as she cruised round me. As she completed her final circle, I was

## 1 ACTIVE READING

unnecessarily making the same point more than once. Her reflections on the episode, in which she considers the need to protect sharks, are certainly relevant to describing her thoughts, but you should be careful not to unbalance the summary by writing about these in too great detail. Similarly, the concluding paragraph provides further details regarding the writer's feelings about the experience, as it describes what she felt after the episode was over and thus gives a further perspective to her account.

close enough to see my reflection in her milky, opalescent eyes. My heart was in my mouth as she paused, as if to inspect me, and then regally turned away and moved off.

I focused on calming myself down, aware of the potential danger I had been in but feeling honoured to have been blessed with such an encounter and in awe of the magnificent creature who had so briefly shared my life. It was the greatest moment of my life as a diver.

I know that from that moment, my life and outlook have been forever changed. I was aware of my own insignificance in comparison with the might and majesty of the shark and how any vestige of the lurid depictions of these creatures in films and comic books are far removed from their actuality.

Now, reflecting on my experience and the connection I felt with the shark, I am fully convinced of the need for conservation. The great whites are powerful and highly efficient predators, but over the past fifty years, despite their strength and fearsome teeth, they have been unable to arrest the decline in their population that has led to the species being near to extinction as a result of their aggressive treatment by the human race. We should learn to celebrate them for what they are and rather than demonise them and hunt them for their fins, do what we can to protect them and their habitats.

In general, the language used in the passage is not difficult to understand and can be read quite easily by an average reader. The vocabulary, for the most part, does not consist of long and complicated words. However, in places, the writer uses some more sophisticated language, such as 'man-eating stereotypes' and 'milky, opalescent eyes'. It is a good idea to slow down your skim reading at such points and stop to consider exactly what the words mean. Do these sentences contain information relevant to the question? If so, you need to think about how best to put the information into your own words to show that you have understood. (Lifting the sentences as they stand and transferring them directly into your answer is a sure sign that you do not understand them.)

Even if your understanding of some of the more difficult pieces of vocabulary is not entirely secure, your awareness of what the question is asking you to look for should lead you to consider whether or not they refer to the writer's feelings or opinions. If they do not add new details but simply reinforce what you have learned from the rest of the passage, you can safely pass over them.

### Exercise 3

- 1 Once you have read through the passage carefully, make numbered notes under the heading 'How the shark behaved'.
- 2 Now make a further list of points under the heading: 'The writer's thoughts and feelings during her encounter with the shark'. Try to use your own words as much as possible.

#### Key term

##### Distractors

Information and details in a comprehension passage which, although interesting, are not relevant to answering any of the questions and should not be included in your answers.

As you can see from this example, selection of relevant details in your reading of a passage is vitally important when answering a question of this type. You must have a clear idea of what you are looking for and then focus on finding it and ignoring irrelevant comment or detail (which are referred to as **distractors**).

The quicker you can select the facts and opinions that you actually need to answer the questions, the more time you will have for clearly expressing your understanding of them. Writing your answer will be dealt with in more detail in Units 2 and 3.

The text types you will encounter in reading comprehension tasks may not always be non-fiction or factual. Sometimes, it will involve an extract from a short story or novel.

#### Remember

Concentration and alertness help to make you a good reader. The more you practise your reading skills, the better your understanding of the passages is likely to be.





## 1.5 Practise your active reading skills

In this section, we will look at two examples of the different types of reading passages you may encounter. Practise reading through them and see how easily you can grasp their meaning.

### Key terms

#### Informative writing

A type of non-fiction writing that gives factual information about something. Examples can be found in newspapers and reference books.

#### Topic sentence

The sentence in a paragraph that sums up the main idea of the paragraph. It is often, *but not always*, the opening sentence of that paragraph.

### Informative writing

The extract on page 12 is a straightforward piece of **informative writing**.

- » Its intention is to explain something to you, and when you are reading it you are likely to be scanning it for useful facts and details.
- » Unlike the passage about encountering a great white shark, it does not contain any photographs or sub-headings to help convey the writer's meaning. You will, therefore, need to think carefully about the meaning as you read through it. Try to identify the main points of the writer's argument and separate them from the examples given to illustrate them.

### Study tip

A useful tip when reading this type of writing is to assume that each new paragraph deals with an important new point. If you can identify the **topic sentence** in each paragraph, you will have found a good 'hook' on which to hang your understanding.

For example, in the second paragraph of the passage on page 12, the opening sentence is clearly the topic sentence as it states the main point of the paragraph, and then the following sentences develop this point. Spotting the topic sentences helps you to keep tight control of your understanding of a writer's argument.

Points to consider:

### Remember

When skimming and scanning the passages, try to identify the main points of their content and to keep these clearly in mind when answering the questions.

- » Skim through the passage and make a note of the opening words of each paragraph – do these give a clear pointer to what each paragraph is about? Is the opening sentence of a paragraph in this article always the topic sentence?
- » Have you noticed any words that the writer uses whose meaning you are not sure of? Make a note of these words, but do not worry about them.
- » Now look at the closing sentences of paragraphs 2, 3, 4 and 5; in what way do these relate to and clarify the introductory point made in the first paragraph?
- » Now that you have thought about the overall structure of the writer's argument, read through the whole passage carefully and, while doing so, try to make sense of any words whose meaning you are not sure of by using clues from their context.

# Artificial intelligence – the future?

Artificial intelligence, or AI, is the term used to describe how IT software can be developed to mimic human intelligence. This is done using algorithms, which analyse available information in order to decide the best course of action. Despite what you may have seen in blockbuster movies or read in science fiction stories, in reality AI, is a long way from killer robots planning to take over the Earth from human beings.

The principle behind AI is that by creating software that simulates the way the human brain works, machines can be developed that can carry out tasks usually performed by humans, whether simple or complex. It is intended that rather than posing a threat to humans, AI machines will work alongside them in performing a wide range of tasks. Developments in AI are increasing almost day by day, and are producing technology that is able to emulate the way humans learn and reason. Some researchers believe it will be possible in the near future to develop systems that go beyond the mental capacity of humans in many activities. Others, however, are less confident of this, as machines are incapable of making the same moral judgements as humans, who can base their decisions on real-life experiences.

A generation ago, our view of AI was based on the ability of technology to calculate basic mathematical functions or 'read' text through optical character recognition. Such a view is now outdated because these are basic functions of any computer – nowadays, our understanding of AI is far more advanced. AI is continuing to develop and is increasingly being used in many industries and also across a range of academic disciplines.

The use of AI offers infinite possibilities, in particular for health treatment and the automobile industry, where self-driving cars are a real possibility but there is still much to be done to ensure safety is maintained.

As exciting as these possibilities are, at present we are several decades away from developing fully autonomous AI. If we can remain in control of this developing technology, it will contribute to solving many of the world's problems, but no one really knows what will happen if machines become more intelligent than the humans that make them.

## Exercise 4

- 1 **Using your own words**, explain what the text means by:
  - 'is able to emulate the way humans learn and reason' (line 11)
  - 'incapable of making the same moral judgements as humans, who can base their decisions on real-life experiences' (lines 14–15)
- 2 From paragraph 3, **using your own words** explain why the attitude of earlier generations to AI is now considered 'an outdated view'.
- 3 Re-read paragraph 2 ('The principle behind AI... on real-life experiences').
  - Explain why some people think that 'rather than posing a threat to humans, AI machines will work alongside them'
  - Explain why other people 'are less confident of this'

**Key terms****Graphical features/graphics**

Diagrams and other visual images which help to clarify the meaning of what has been written.

**Layout** The way writing and/or pictures are set out on a page.

## Magazine article

The passage below is taken from a magazine article and talks about expeditions in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries searching for a mythical city in South America. It contains some **graphical** and **layout** features which are sometimes found in this type of writing. When you practise reading this article, remember that the illustrations should help you to get a clear idea of the treasures Raleigh and his men hoped to find, as well as the dangers they faced. However, it's important to note that assessments may not include graphical features for you to look at.

### Exercise 5

- 1 Look at the article 'Search for the Golden City'. What can you infer from the headline, the sub-headings and the graphics?
- 2 Now skim through the whole article and give your own brief sub-headings to each paragraph, to help focus your understanding of their content.

Before you start to read the passage carefully, think about any details which seem to be unclear and try to make sense of these as you read, in order to understand the sequence of events as well as you can.

# Search for the Golden City

Sir Walter Raleigh (1553–1618) was one of the most famous figures of the Elizabethan Age in English history and a man of many talents – statesman, soldier, poet and explorer. Raleigh led one of the earliest attempts to set up a settlement in the 'New World' of North America and in the course of his adventures overseas became intrigued by the legend of El Dorado,

a fabled city of immense wealth with buildings of gold, located in what is now Venezuela.

## The dream

During his exploration of the New World, Raleigh first heard rumours of El Dorado in 1586 from a Spanish conquistador\* named Don Pedro Sarmiento de Gamboa, who had been captured by Raleigh's crew after a skirmish with a Spanish ship on their return from America. Sarmiento had spent thirty years in the Americas and knew the area well.

He told Raleigh that many years before, the conquistadors had discovered the remains of the great Incan and Aztec empires. With two such sites being known, it seemed fully credible for Raleigh to assume that there were more such rich discoveries to be made.

He was determined to find El Dorado and to claim its wealth in the name of England. He managed to raise a huge sum equivalent in today's money to £15 million pounds (US\$19 million) to finance his expedition. He planned to set out from Plymouth with a fleet of eight ships but, being impatient, he eventually set sail with four ships and about 250 men on 6 February 1595.

By 22 March, Raleigh's fleet had reached Trinidad. Two weeks later, they attacked the Spanish stronghold in the island's capital of San José. This was necessary for Raleigh to ensure his ships could safely go upriver and not be at the mercy of the Spanish enemy. But there



The scene depicted in this ancient artwork, on display at the Gold Museum in Bogota, Colombia, shows the origin of the El Dorado myth. Legend tells of a Muisca king who would cover himself in gold dust during festivals, then dive from a raft into Lake Guatavita in Colombia.

was another reason, as Raleigh had found out that Don Antonio de Berrio, a Spanish explorer who claimed he had previously visited El Dorado, was in San José and he wanted to talk with him. 'I gathered from him as much of Guiana as he knew,' Raleigh wrote. He also learned from Berrio of another Spaniard, Juan Martínez, who had lived in Manoa for seven months and who gave this city its Spanish name, El Dorado. Raleigh must have felt the prize was within his reach.

### Further on up the Orinoco

When he finally returned to England, Raleigh wrote *The Discovery of the Empire of Guiana*, which appealed to a large readership and was translated into Dutch, German and Latin. It is a fascinating account of what happened on the expedition, although some of the details are adapted to present Raleigh and his crew in the best light.

In reality, the expedition was not a great success. The explorers went up the Orinoco river with enough rations for only one month and travelled in small, open-topped boats. The conditions were terrible, with consistently heavy rain and overwhelming heat and humidity. Morale among the crew was at a very low ebb, made worse by no one being sure where they were heading and what lay before them. As Raleigh described it, they lay upon the hard boards of the boats with no respite from the burning sun. They ate mainly fish; they were crammed together in close quarters and their clothes were soaked from the rain. In Raleigh's own words, 'there was never any prison in England that could be found more unsavoury and loathsome'. It is a tribute to Raleigh's leadership qualities that they all eventually returned alive to the coast.

They finally abandoned their upriver journey after about 250 miles, when the Orinoco joined another river, the Caroni, at a spot which is now the site of Ciudad Guayana. The river stretched 500 metres wide, with a current so strong that they were unable to move their boats forward against it; even if they had been able to do so, they would have soon been confronted by a fearsome series of waterfalls, the Salto la Llovizna, which were impossible to navigate. They had no option but to turn back.

On the return journey, at a settlement called Morequito, Raleigh met Topiawari, a tribal chief, 'the proudest and wisest of his people ... a man of gravity and



Part of the fearsome series of waterfalls, the Salto la Llovizna

judgement'. Topiawari intimated that they were four days' journey from the outskirts of El Dorado, but if he ever returned, Raleigh would need more men, all armed. It was the nearest the Englishman would ever come to achieving his dream.

It was now halfway through June and they had been travelling for a month. Because of the strength of the river's current, the journey back to the coast took a mere four days. On the way, Raleigh heard from another chieftain of a hill full of gold in the vicinity, but it was beyond their reach and they remained empty-handed.

### Only a dream remained

Raleigh continued to dream of El Dorado for the rest of his life. Over 20 years later in 1617, he organised another expedition but was unable to lead the exploring party as he fell ill on arriving in South America. Without his presence, things went seriously wrong. The failure of the expedition angered King James I, and on his return Raleigh was accused of attempting to incite war between England and Spain and was executed on 29 October 1618, aged 65.

After over 400 years of further exploration, we now know that El Dorado never existed and was simply a powerful myth; perhaps equally as powerful, however, in the annals of exploration are the exploits of Raleigh and the dream that dominated his life.

*\*Conquistador: a leader in the Spanish conquest of America and especially of Mexico and Peru in the sixteenth century.*



### Exercise 6

- 1 From the section 'The dream', explain **using your own words** the reasons why Raleigh decided to undertake an expedition to discover El Dorado.
- 2 **Using your own words**, explain what the text means by:
  - a 'it seemed fully credible for Raleigh to assume' (paragraph 3)
  - b 'some of the details are adapted to present Raleigh and his crew in the best light' (paragraph 6)
  - c 'in the annals of exploration are the exploits of Raleigh and the dream that dominated his life' (paragraph 12)
- 3 Re-read the second paragraph of the section headed 'Further on up the Orinoco' and identify **three** words or phrases that convey the extreme hardships that Raleigh and his men underwent during their expedition. Give reasons for your choices.
- 4 Re-read paragraphs 2–5 of the section 'Further on up the Orinoco'. State **two** reasons why Raleigh and his men had to abandon their journey and **two** reasons why that would have added to his feelings of disappointment.
- 5 From your reading of the whole article and **using your own words**, explain what you learn about the behaviour, character and life of Sir Walter Raleigh. You should refer to the passage in support of your comments.

### Unit summary

In this unit, you have reviewed the following objectives:

- ✓ demonstrate understanding of explicit meanings
- ✓ demonstrate understanding of implicit meanings and attitudes
- ✓ select and use information for specific purposes.
- ✓ organise and structure facts, ideas and opinions for deliberate effect
- ✓ use a range of vocabulary and sentence structures appropriate to context
- ✓ make accurate use of spelling, punctuation and grammar.

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