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**Английский язык. Темы
для экзаменов. Уровень С1**



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Экзаменационные темы данного пособия составлены носителем английского языка. Перед ним было поставлено условие: никакой предварительной подготовки - только спонтанная речь, непрерывно, в течение трех часов, говорить по девятнадцати экзаменационным темам. В результате после специальной обработки (по методу Речевой плазмы) был получен учебный материал, который является одним из самых эффективных при подготовке к устному экзамену по английскому языку. Если вы тщательно поработаете с учебным материалом пособия, то ваш ответ на экзамене будет очень похож на речь носителя английского языка. В отличие от "Английский язык. Темы для экзаменов. Уровень B2", язык настоящего пособия более сложный. Здесь больше рассуждений психологического и философского плана, что позволяет отнести данное пособие к уровню C1.

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SCHOOLING

Thomas

Hi, my name is Thomas. I'm from Leicestershire in England, a small village near Leicester called Glenfield to be exact. I was born there and have lived there for most of my life. When I was very young, my mother always used to stay at home with me and teach me things and play with me. I never had to go to a crèche because she didn't have to work. My father always came home at about 6 o'clock at night after a long day at work, and he worked enough that my mother didn't have to. So this was great. My first real contact with other children was when my brother was born, when I was 3. And after that, at the nursery school. I only remember a few things about the nursery school because I was only 5 or 6, but I do remember a lot of bright colours, and that there were a lot of things to do. There was painting equipment, things to put on top of each other like bricks to build little houses out of, and a lot of children... I remember that we didn't have to do very much there. It wasn't like my later memories of school, when it became much more difficult and demanding.

My first impressions of primary school were very, very different to what I was used to before. I think I cried, like many children on their first day. I wasn't so happy about being without my mother for more than 2 or 3 hours. However, I soon got used to it, and found lots of interesting places to hide and play in the school playground. I remember that there were many things to climb and swing on. We learned pretty much the same as children everywhere, I suppose. We learned the basics of Maths and English, and we started to do sport.

I remember at playtime, which was at about 10 o'clock in the morning, and then at another break at dinner time at about 12 o'clock, that we used to play a lot of sport as well. But my strongest memories of it were of very rough games. I suppose that those experiences which really stay with you

are the strongest ones. I remember a few times being hit during a game of football, and I wasn't very happy about it!

I also remember being taken to the headmaster for calling another child a bad name. However, I generally got on quite well with the teachers, I was quite successful in class, and even though I found it a struggle, I don't think it was as much of a struggle for me as it was for a lot of the other children around me.

I remember a few of the teachers very well. I remember Mrs Jenkins, who taught us for the first year. Her classroom was so nice – there were models of dinosaurs and pictures of dinosaurs on the walls. This fired me up with a great enthusiasm for dinosaurs which lasted for a couple of years after that. I even remember that in the school assembly, which used to happen every morning before lessons started, one day I was called to speak about dinosaurs and to tell the other children about my interest in them. Looking back on it now, it probably would have been quite embarrassing to see myself then, but at that time I was very excited about it and very proud.

Primary school lasted for two years, after which came junior school, which I think lasted for four years. Each year we had a different teacher and that teacher would teach us all of the different subjects. For the first time, our time became divided into subjects, so every Wednesday morning we would study Mathematics, every Tuesday afternoon we would study English, and so on.

I was quite a good student really. I didn't have too many problems with the work, but I used to get into quite a lot of trouble for talking, especially when I spoke at the same time as the teacher.

We had an Indian teacher called Mr Salwan, who was a Hindu. I'd never met a Hindu before, and he was the first person I knew, who was a vegetarian. After meeting him again, a few years later, I became a

vegetarian, and have been for 10 years now. So, I suppose he made quite a strong impression on me.

My memories of playtime were that it was even rougher than at primary school. I think that a lot of the time I used to play with the girls, because playing with the boys was just too violent. Sometimes, I did enjoy playing superheroes or soldiers with the other boys. Most of the children played sports at playtime, but I remember that I never really enjoyed it, as I was never really good at them.

High school and secondary school were a bit of a different story from the earlier schools. I think they seemed to take themselves a lot more seriously. The subjects were all examined, and at the end of the school we were given grades, which we carry with us through our lives. I came out of secondary school with quite good grades. I really did work hard for them. I remember that a lot of my studying was really last minute, though... I used to wait until two weeks before the exam, and then study all day, every day, sometimes, in the days coming up to the exams, without even sleeping. On the doorstep of the exam room, I'd be reading my revision notes. However, this technique of passing examinations worked for me. It does mean, however, that now I remember very little of what I learned at school.

The last years of secondary school were really oriented towards getting people on to university and starting them on their careers. I remember we spent a lot of time in careers training, filling in questionnaires to decide whether we could become hairdressers, or road-maintenance vehicle operators. I spent most of my time in the music department. I'd been learning the clarinet from the age of about nine, and this was a very strong interest for me. I used to manage to get out of some of my sports lessons by taking extra music practice. I liked my clarinet teacher very much. He had a strong influence on my music later on in life, as he taught me the basics of it. I didn't get on with my general music teacher so well, which is why I didn't continue music studies to "A" level.

In England, we have “O” levels at the age of 15 or 16, and “A” levels at the age of 17 or 18. If you get really good grades at “A” level, you can go on to university. But if you don’t obtain these, then you have to look out into the big wide world, and try to find somebody who will employ you, and give you a start in your career.

I was lucky to get good grades at “A” level, so I went on to university. In the end, I decided to study biology as I’d been very successful in science subjects. But when I finally got to university, I found that Sheffield (which was the city where I was studying) was a much bigger, smellier, noisier city than I was used to, and I couldn’t cope with it for more than a year. Also, I really realized that I didn’t want to be a scientist, and I couldn’t see the reason for filling my head with facts and figures, useless information, which I couldn’t relate to my practical life around me, so I spent most of my time with friends, sitting and listening to music, and discussing philosophy and life.

After failing my first-year exams at university, I moved away to Glastonbury, a small town in the south, with many artists and musicians, where I could find a lot of things to do which really did inspire me. But this was much to my family’s disapproval.

FAMILY

Thomas

Nowadays, I don't have very close contact with my family. I write occasionally to my father and mother, and I hear news from my brother. Sometimes I get a letter from my grandmother as well. Also, occasionally, we telephone each other.

I haven't felt such a close part of the family unit since my mother and father got divorced. They've been divorced about for eleven years now. I'm 25, by the way, so when they were divorced, I was 14, and from this age I started to get my independence, started to live my own life a little bit.

When I was younger, though, the family atmosphere was mostly very happy. I remember going away with my parents for trips in the country, in the park. We had a dog, who was called Badger, for the first 12 years of my life, and for a couple of years after that we had another dog, who was called Meg. We used to wake up at 6 o'clock in the morning to go to a local park to watch the sun coming up. The parks were very big in the area where I was born, which was on the edge of the city, so one side of the village went into the city and the other side of the village went into the countryside, and in the direction of the countryside there was a huge park, called Bradgate Park, where I used to go with mum and dad, and my little brother.

During my early childhood, I spent almost all of my time with my mother. She taught us things and of course cooked for us, and played with us all day, when we were at home. When we went to school, of course, things were different as well, but my first close connection was really with my mother. However, when she left, when I was 14, this changed and my relationship with my father became stronger. Things were never the same after the family broke up, really. I suppose we were quite a nuclear family in our own way before that, quite an isolated family. We

were rarely visited by friends of the family. Sometimes we would see a few people, but they weren't very sociable, really, and my father still isn't. However, I used to have friends over to stay and go out with and I stayed with my friends sometimes, and so I had a lot of contact with other children's parents when I was younger. Also, of course, I spent a lot of time with my brother in my growing years. My brother being younger than me, a lot of the time, I must admit, I saw him as a bit of an annoyance, saw him as being in the way, and we didn't get on so well a lot of the time, but, of course, we spent a lot of time together in the summer holidays and we used to play together. Sometimes, often actually, it would end up with quarrelling or fighting, but maybe that's usual for young children brought up in this kind of society.

Every other week, or sometimes every week, we could go at the weekend to stay with my grandmother, who we called Nanna. My grandmother's really lovely. She never stops making tea. Every 15 minutes of the day, she comes into the room with a big pot of tea and says: "Would you like a nice cup of tea?" She seems to spend half of her life in the kitchen cooking things for when people come to visit her. Now, she's getting a little bit older, and I think she doesn't do as much as she did, but she is a really wonderful person. She takes care of the elderly neighbours around her, visits them frequently, and for some of them who can't really walk or get help, she goes and fetches the shopping. She always has pets, as well. Every time we went to visit her, my Nanna had a little bird in the corner of the room, in a cage, and she used to talk to it and talk to it. She's had several, and they come and go, but some of them could really talk very well – some of them not so well, which was a bit disappointing for her, but she still loved them very much, anyway. Also, I've heard that she now has a rabbit in the garden, which I haven't seen but I'd really like to. At my grandmother's, my brother and I used to read, play and watch television. My grandma used to play with us a little bit, but I think she didn't have as much idea of how to play with children as my mother did. She used to look after us very well, though. She loved us very much, in fact.

My other grandmother, who is my grandmother on my father's side (my father's mother), also had a broken marriage. She divorced my grandfather before I was born, so I never saw them together. Occasionally, we used to go and visit her. Our relationship with her was always a bit strained. Our family always used to see her as being a little bit crazy, a bit of a crackpot or something like that. Over the last few years, I've visited her a few times and I get on very well with her now, because we have something in common, which is our Christian religion. My father was never in the least religious and he used to see her as a bit of an oddball. I feel sorry for her really. I think she is very lovely.

I never met my mother's father, he died before I was born, but I knew my father's father when I was smaller. After he split up with his wife he lived together with his sister, who was my great aunt. She never married, or even had a boyfriend as far as I know. She was really an old spinster. They lived a very, very routine life. Every time we went to see them exactly the same things would happen. Every day of their life seemed to be the same. They would wake up, and then my great aunt would make the breakfast, bring it in to my grandfather, my grandfather would read the paper until a certain time, when he would listen to something on the radio, etc, etc.

My grandfather was an interesting man for me. He had a very big garden, and he used to keep bees, which was fascinating. I think, fourteen beehives, as I remember. When we were at school, one time I organized for our class to go to visit him and watch him working with his bees in the garden, which was very interesting for the other children as well. Of course, we always had supplies of fresh honey because of this.

I remember the smell in their house was a little bit old and musty. I can't put my finger on it exactly, but there was some atmosphere in their house which was like nothing had changed for thirty years. It was very strange for us, as children to go round the old rooms, looking at the pictures on the walls, pictures of old relatives. I remember my grandfather

had a big picture of Queen Victoria on his wall. Maybe nothing changed since Queen Victoria's time, I'm not sure!

My great aunt was a very good musician. She had a piano, and she was the leading second violinist in the city orchestra, which was the Leicester Philharmonic. She spent much of her time practising for concerts.

I think that my musical ability comes from that side of the family, really, because she's the only member of the older generation of our family who was really known to be musical. As I said, she was a very talented violinist. She always used to encourage me a lot with my music, and to take me to classical music concerts. I remember we went to see Handel's *Messiah*, *Scheherazade* by Rimsky-Korsakov, as well as Beethoven, Mozart, and Bach. I enjoyed it very much and I really gained a deep love of classical music from her.

I have only one aunt, who is the sister of my father. We always had a very good relationship with them (my aunt, my uncle and their children), although we rarely went to see them, only once a year, maybe at Christmas to exchange presents. I remember that they always gave us very expensive presents and made sure we had a very nice time. Whenever we went to visit them, we would be filled up with cakes and sweets, and given little presents, so we used to like to go to see them, as children.

I think my father is just not the sociable type, and it's not because he dislikes them that he doesn't keep a close relationship with his family. Maybe he is just a bit of loner, really.

My aunt and her husband have four children, who are all married now, and they have children, so my aunt and my uncle are grandparents now, which makes me a sort of uncle to a lot of little children, who I haven't met many times, and I don't even know the names of.