

# TONIGHT'S HOMEWORK IS ... **OPTIONAL!**

*The Philip Morant School in Colchester, England, is no longer giving homework to their students, aged 11–18. The story has hit the national news and many people are shocked by the decision, but the school says the change is working well.*

The Philip Morant School is using a new system, called *Prove It+*. Teachers don't set homework for their classes and they don't collect or mark students' work. Instead, there's a list of projects on the school website and students choose the projects they want to do. For example, this term some Year 8 students are visiting a gallery and taking photos of the pictures. They are then using these photos to design an advertisement for the gallery. Other students are interviewing their grandparents and doing research to create a family tree. The students decide how many projects to do and how much time to spend on them.

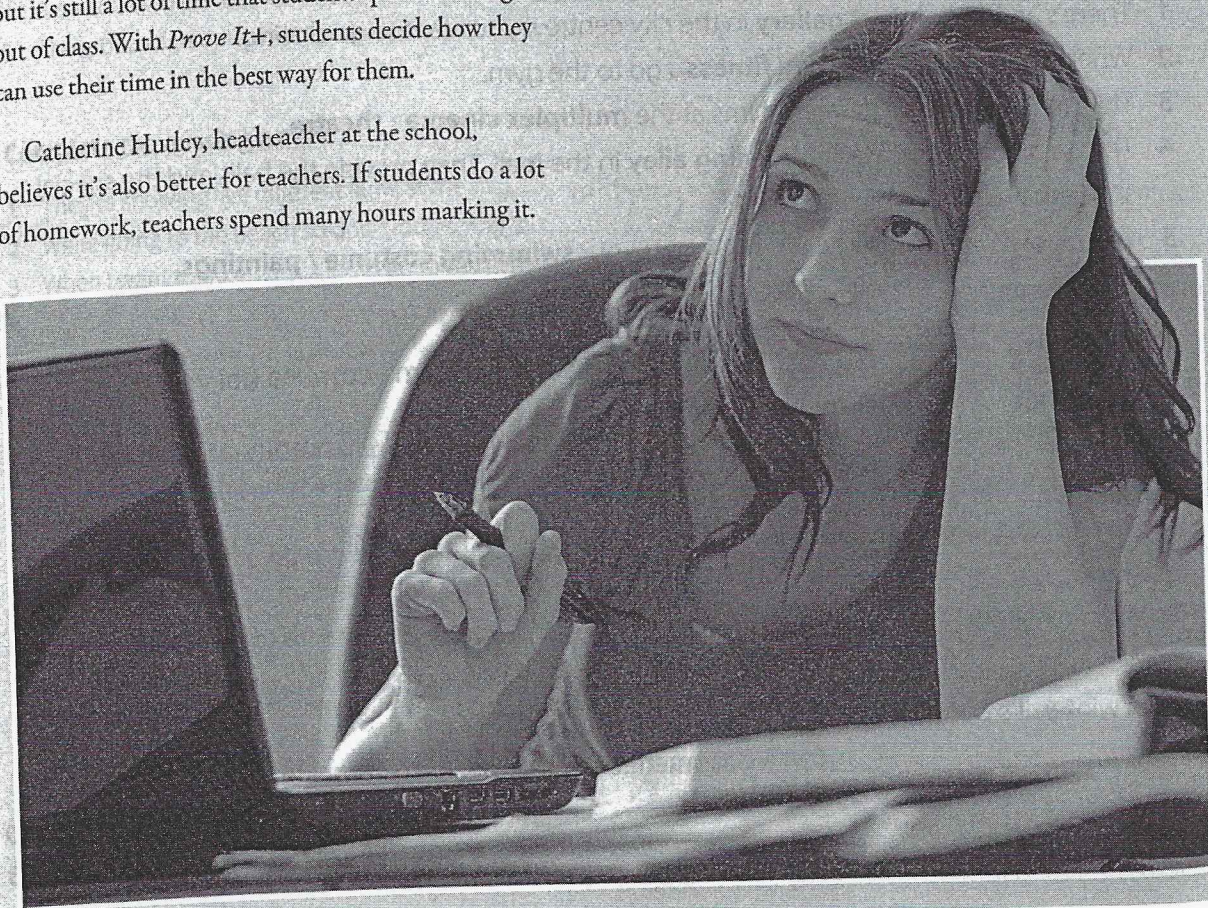
There are good reasons for introducing *Prove It+*. According to an international report, UK 15-year-olds usually do around 5 hours of homework a week. That's less than students in Italy, who do 8.7 hours every week, but it's still a lot of time that students spend working out of class. With *Prove It+*, students decide how they can use their time in the best way for them.

Catherine Hutley, headteacher at the school, believes it's also better for teachers. If students do a lot of homework, teachers spend many hours marking it.

Without homework to mark, teachers have a lot more time to prepare interesting lessons for their classes.

However, not everyone agrees. Teachers at other schools say that homework is an important life skill. If students want to go to university in the UK, for example to Oxford, they need to get good marks in exams. Homework trains students to study regularly, and this prepares them for their exam revision.

The argument continues, but in my opinion we should welcome the new ideas at the Philip Morant School. *Prove It+* is particularly good for students who don't want to study at university. Asking teenagers to choose their own projects gives them more freedom to organise their own lives. Let's hope that *Prove It+* becomes a success and that other schools try a similar programme.



**1 Read the article quickly and decide if the sentences are true (T) or false (F).**

- 1 All schools in England are stopping homework.
- 2 Students at the Philip Morant School don't do any work after school.
- 3 The students make decisions about their work.
- 4 The teachers at the school spend a lot of time marking.
- 5 There are different opinions about stopping homework.

|   |   |
|---|---|
| T | F |
| T | F |
| T | F |
| T | F |
| T | F |

**2 Find this information in the text.**

- 1 The town where the Philip Morant School is  
.....
- 2 The age of the students at the school  
.....
- 3 The name of the new system to replace homework  
.....
- 4 The amount of time Italian students spend on homework  
.....
- 5 The name of a teacher at the Philip Morant School  
.....
- 6 The name of a British university  
.....

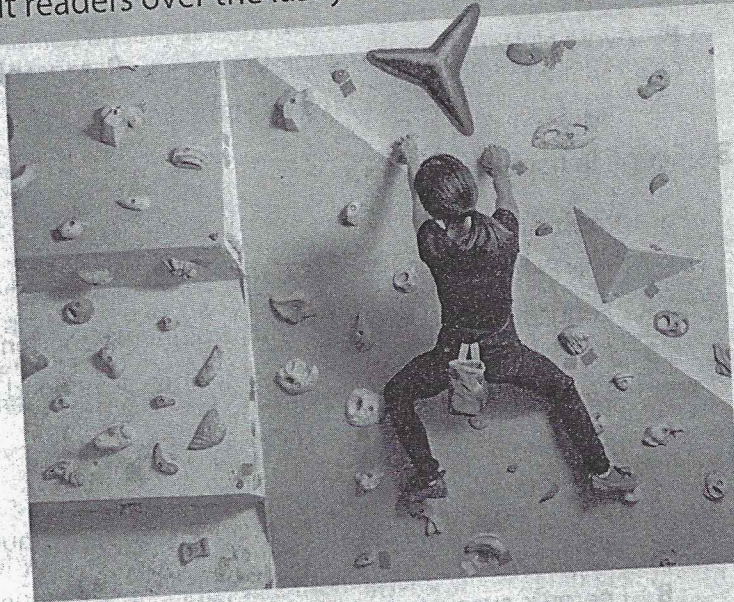
**3 Write the answers to these questions.**

- 1 How does the public feel about the idea of a school with no homework?  
.....
- 2 Where do students get ideas for their out-of-school projects?  
.....
- 3 Where are some students doing their art project?  
.....
- 4 Which family members are helping students with one of their projects?  
.....
- 5 What can teachers do if they don't give a lot of homework to their students?  
.....
- 6 What reason is there to do traditional homework?  
.....
- 7 Does the author of the article have a positive or a negative opinion about *Prove It+*?  
.....

It's the hardest time of year for both parents and teens. We've just reached the middle of the term and the holidays are still a long way in the future. If you've already run out of ideas of how to spend the weekend, here are five top tips that have inspired our readers over the last year.

### A Horse riding in Hyde Park

One of the most enjoyable experiences you can have in London is riding a horse in the centre of the town, and anyone can do it. Hyde Park Stables are open all weekend. People have ridden horses in London's Hyde Park for over 300 years. It's possible to arrange trips for riders of all abilities, including beginners, from age 5 upwards.



### B DJ Drop-in

The Roundhouse Theatre provides music and drama classes, but their most popular attraction is the Thursday night DJ Drop-in. Teenagers can learn how to be a DJ from some of the most famous names in the business. Professionals show how to make great sounds and you don't have to book. Just turn up on the day. Only a few people can attend each class, so get there early to be sure that you can join the class.

### C A tour of a ghost tube station

The Tube is the oldest underground railway in the world. Passengers have travelled on the London Underground for over 150 years. Since it opened in 1863, many stations have opened and some have closed. The public have forgotten these closed stations but they are still there, and known as 'ghost stations'. Now you can visit one, Down Street, as part of a tour with the London Transport Museum. One warning – there's no lift and there are 122 steps to get down to the station.

### D Bouldering

London doesn't have any mountains, but if climbing is your thing, you'll be pleased to know that many climbing centres have appeared in the city. One of the most popular new activities is 'bouldering'. In this sport you climb walls which have small pieces of rock to support your hands and feet. It's not as dangerous as mountain climbing even though there's no rope. You climb to a fairly low height and there's a soft surface to land on if you fall.

### E Fly 360°

Have you ever dreamed of being a jet pilot? Why not check out the Science Museum where you can use the Fly 360° flight simulator? You sit in a virtual reality environment where you control a plane. This is not a passenger plane like the ones that take you on holidays. The machine simulates an extremely fast plane that does rolls and turns in the air! If you haven't been in one yet, you'll be amazed!

**1 Read the text quickly and tick (✓) the best title.**

- 1 Action holidays for young people
- 2 Weekend activities for families with teens
- 3 Cultural highlights of the big city
- 4 How to save money on holiday in London

**2 Read the descriptions of five people. Choose the activity in the text (A-E) that is most suitable for each person.**

- 1 Andy is a confident, sociable person who likes experimenting with technology.  
He's collected over a hundred videos of different bands.
- 2 Lucia is very fit and she enjoys physical exercise. She's allergic to cats, dogs and many other animals.
- 3 Julian has broken his leg but he loves adventure and travel. He's always keen to try out new experiences.
- 4 Natalie doesn't mind being indoors. She enjoys exploring unusual places and she's interested in history.
- 5 Grace isn't a city person – she prefers to be out in green spaces. She loves doing active things.

**3 Read the text again and answer the questions.**

1 Why is it a difficult time for teenagers?

.....  
.....

2 When can you go horse riding in Hyde Park?

.....  
.....

3 Where do you have to go to take part in the DJ class?

.....  
.....

4 What is a ghost station?

.....  
.....

5 How long has the London Underground been open?

.....  
.....

6 Why don't people get hurt if they fall from a bouldering wall?

.....  
.....

7 Why is Fly 360° exciting?

.....  
.....

## Reading – Part 2

### Questions 6–10

The teenagers below are all looking for weekend activities to do. There are descriptions of eight weekend activities. Decide which weekend activity would be the most suitable for the following teenagers. For questions 6–10, choose the correct letter (A–H).

- 6  Alissa loves reading and she's thinking about studying literature at university. She'd like to find out about how writers work, where they get their ideas from and perhaps how to make a career in writing.
- 7  Ethan is starting university in September. He has found a student flat and he will have to do his own cooking. He wants a two-day course which includes cooking lessons and information about healthy food.
- 8  Molly lives in a small village and, for her birthday, she wants to spend the day with her family in a big city. She is very interested in history and wants to see as many things as possible in a day.
- 9  Bastian is mad about painting and he's always keen to learn new techniques. He wants to learn about outdoor art. He is looking for a two-day course with accommodation.
- 10  Chloe and two friends want to go to a spa for a weekend of relaxation and well-being after their exams. They want to do some exercise, have fun and learn some relaxation techniques.
- A** Enjoy a great day out with family and friends at Emsworth Manor and Adventure Park. Special Birthday Fun – a great way to spend your special day with your friends! Visit the historic house, the home of the Dukes of Sedley, and then have fun in the adventure park. Why not make a weekend of it and stay at Alton Castle Hotel with Saturday evening dinner and Sunday breakfast included?
- B** Spend a day exploring one of Britain's most fascinating cities, York. Walk along the ancient city walls, visit the famous cathedral and the castle, then go on a guided tour of The Shambles – the medieval centre of the city. If you have time, there is also the Viking Museum, the National Railway Museum and the city art gallery.
- C** We are offering two-day breaks at Primrose Farm. Riding lessons in the morning and free time in the afternoon to relax in the garden or visit our farm. We occasionally invite local writers and artists for workshops – please check our events calendar. Excellent meals with fresh farm produce cooked in our traditional farmhouse kitchen.
- D** Kitchen Craft weekend courses – Day 1: learn all about food production, nutrition and healthy eating. Day 2: learn how to cook some quick, easy, inexpensive meals. Participants are welcome to browse around our collection of international cookery books for inspiration. Accommodation available. Spend a weekend in the country and learn something new!
- E** One- or two-day weekend courses for teens about London Street Art. You'll start with a guided bike tour of some famous examples of street art in London. The guide will explain how each work of art was produced. On the two-day course, you'll get the opportunity to create your own piece of street art in our studio – not in the street! People on the two-day course can stay in a nearby hostel.
- F** Tired and stressed? Enjoy a refreshing weekend break at 'The Retreat'. There's a wide range of activities from swimming to dance workouts, massages, mindfulness and hair and body care workshops. Or perhaps you'd rather take it easy in our beautiful gardens with a good book? Enjoy some memorable meals created by Jean-Louis, our chef.
- G** Find out how your favourite authors write and where their inspiration comes from. We organise one-day workshops for teenagers who are interested in reading and writing. Two authors of teenage fiction will answer your questions and teach you some writing techniques. It could be the first step of your writing career!
- H** Do you enjoy the great outdoors? How about walking or mountain-biking? Visit one of Britain's national parks and plan your route so that you spend one night in a youth hostel. There are hundreds of hostels across the UK that offer you a bed, a kitchen for cooking your food and a chance to meet new friends.

# Reading – Part 3

## Questions 11–15

Read the text and questions below. For each question, choose the correct letter A, B, C or D.

### Scuba Diving

*16-year-old Aaron talks about his hobby – scuba diving.*

The first time I tried scuba-diving was when I was on holiday in Florida. I was only ten but I absolutely loved it! The next summer, I went to a summer camp and I did a scuba-diving course. Then, I found a local swimming pool that did weekly dives, so I've been doing that during the winter months. It isn't the same as diving in the sea, but it's a good way to learn about the equipment and how to dive safely.

I've joined an international diving club and every year they organise trips for junior divers. It's great fun and I've made lots of new friends. I look forward to my diving trip all year! Next year, there's a diving trip to the Caribbean. I'd love to go but it's expensive. My parents have said that if I help to pay for the holiday, I can go. I've got a job delivering newspapers every morning before school and I'm saving everything I earn for the trip.

What's the attraction of diving? Well, I've always loved water ever since I was a small baby, so my mum says. I also love learning how the equipment works and all the diving skills but, for me, the best thing is discovering the undersea world.

Diving is only a hobby for now but I've started to think about my future. Working as a diving instructor would be cool. I'm quite keen to go to university so I'm looking at courses that I could combine with diving. Marine biology – studying the creatures of the ocean – is one option, but what I'd really love to do is become a marine archaeologist. Then I'd be able to explore old ships on the floor of the ocean.



- 11** What is Aaron doing in this text?
- A encouraging teenagers to start diving
  - B explaining the advantages of diving as a career
  - C describing the effect of diving on his life
  - D giving advice to young divers
- 12** Why is diving course in the pool useful?
- A It is just like diving in the sea.
  - B It is something to do in the winter.
  - C It is much safer than diving in the sea.
  - D The instructors teach you how to avoid danger.
- 13** How does Aaron feel about the diving trip to the Caribbean?
- A He is determined to go.
  - B It is too expensive.
  - C He is excited and he has already booked his ticket.
  - D It is not fair that he has to work to pay for it.
- 14** What is the main reason that Aaron enjoys diving?
- A He enjoys underwater exploration.
  - B He is very good at diving.
  - C He is interested in diving equipment.
  - D He has always been a good swimmer.
- 15** How might Aaron sum up his plans for the future?
- A It is a great hobby and I want to continue with it when I'm at university.
  - B I enjoy diving so much that I would like to find a job that involves diving.
  - C If I studied marine biology, I would find an interesting job.
  - D I'm going to specialise in diving to explore old ships at the bottom of the sea.

## Reading – Part 4

### Questions 16–20

You are going to read an article about a youth festival. Five sentences have been removed from the article. Choose from sentences A–H the one which fills each gap (16–20). There are three extra sentences which you do not need to use.

### International Youth Arts Festival

The International Youth Arts Festival (IYAF) has been held annually since 2009. **(16)** ..... It provides an opportunity for national and international talents to meet up and to perform and share their skills. The festival is a celebration of culture and art and more than 25,000 young people from 5 to 26 years old have taken part in the festival so far.

The festival has grown each year and it is now one of the most important international youth events on the calendar, with about a quarter of performers coming from abroad. **(17)** ..... Anyone can take part with any type of performance in the categories of: theatre, comedy, children's entertainment, family shows, music and circus.

**(18)** ..... It also provides real-life experience for young people who are interested in jobs in the entertainment industry, such as theatre management, technical support, journalism, marketing and production.

Every year IYAF takes place in the first half of July in south-west London. **(19)** ..... The festival includes: theatre, dance, music, visual art, the spoken word and comedy. Groups of young artists perform in theatres and also in the streets. Last year a production of *Alice in Wonderland* was held in a nearby botanical garden among the plants and flowers. **(20)** ..... The excitement of the festival inspires everyone from young children to grandparents.

- A There are over 200 performances in 20 different sites over a ten-day period.
- B However, more than fifty schools are involved in a variety of projects.
- C The town comes alive with the energy and enthusiasm of the young performers.
- D The main aim of the festival is to help young people develop their skills in the arts.
- E If your group is interested in taking part in IYAF, you should check the festival website.
- F During the Festival there are workshops in circus skills, comedy and film-making.
- G The event is open to all young artists, except professional performers.
- H The IYAF does not only help young performers with their careers.

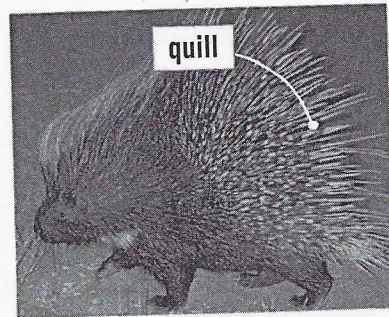
## Reading – Part 5

### Questions 21–26

Read the text below and choose the correct word for each space. For each question, mark the letter next to the correct word A, B, C or D.

### PORCUPINES

Porcupines are rodents, which means they are related to rats and mice. (21) ..... we think of a porcupine, the first things we imagine are its quills. Porcupines have quills on their backs, sides and tails. An adult animal has about thirty thousand quills which usually lie (22) ..... on its back. However, when a porcupine meets an enemy, it (23) ..... to frighten it by shaking its quills, stamping its feet and (24) ..... a hissing noise. If that doesn't work, it shoots its long, sharp quills at the attacker. Porcupines live in grass and woodland. They (25) ..... found in north and south America, southern Asia and parts of the Mediterranean, including Italy. You are (26) ..... to see a porcupine during the day as they are creatures that are active at night.



21 A Unless

B Because

C Until

D When

22 A rough

B flat

C low

D quickly

23 A tries

B proves

C attacks

D makes

24 A saying

B having

C making

D doing

25 A were

B can

C are

D did

26 A unlikely

B impossible

C not

D never

## Reading – Part 6

### Questions 27–32

For questions 27–32, read the text below and think of the word which best fits each gap. Use only one word in each gap. There is an example at the beginning (0).

Example:

|   |   |   |   |   |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|---|---|---|---|---|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|
| 0 | M | O | S | T |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|---|---|---|---|---|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|

### The Statue of Liberty

The Statue of Liberty is one of the (0) ..... famous statues in the world and it means the USA to most people. (27) ..... stands on Liberty Island at the entrance to New York Harbour. (28) ..... I went to New York, I was lucky enough to visit the statue and I climbed up the stairs to the top. It was a fantastic experience that I will (29) ..... forget! I learnt a lot (30) ..... the statue on my visit. For example, I didn't know that it was a gift to the USA from the people of France in 1886. I was also interested to discover that it was the first thing people saw when they arrived on ships from Europe (31) ..... start a new life in America. This made me think of the people in my family (32) ..... made the journey. When they saw New York and that amazing statue, I'm sure they felt positive about the future!