

Exercise 2

Read the article about four people (A–D) who enjoy the sport of mountain biking. Then answer Questions 7(a)–(i).

Mountain biking

A Arif Khan

Since I finished school six months ago, I've been doing a boring supermarket job, but my main interest in life is competing in mountain-bike races. I'm hoping a professional team might invite me to race for them. There are lots of excellent young mountain bikers and the chances of becoming a professional are limited, but I have great belief in my ability. I was eight when I started mountain biking. My parents, who are now in their 50s, are both extremely fit road cyclists and runners, and they love nature and being outdoors. So, my choice of sport is hardly a great surprise. When I was 14, I damaged my shoulder in an accident and it was two years before I rode again. I needed time to recover, physically and psychologically, but I wish I'd re-started sooner than I did. While I wasn't riding, my rivals were improving fast and I wasn't.

B May Foo

I'm a 42-year-old mother of two young children and I work full-time as a lawyer. Too much work, tiredness and stress are often associated with the type of life I have, but I'm actually in better shape, physically and mentally, than I've ever been before. That's mostly because twice a week I ride my bike along rough tracks through the forests that cover my region. Mountain bikers like me have been using those tracks for years, and we're careful to avoid doing any harm to the soil, plants and wildlife in the area. Unfortunately, though, that's not always the case in other places where some bikers do their sport. I understand wanting to be able to cycle anywhere you feel like, without any regulations, but there have to be limits on what you do in all areas of life. In fact, that's an important lesson I've learned from mountain biking.

C Jana Hleb

I love exploring new mountain-biking routes through a beautiful national park near my home. The physical challenges and closeness to nature mean it's a whole world away from creating software security systems, which is how I make a living. I did some mountain biking as a teenager and enjoyed it. I'd been quite timid as a child, but I realised that if I could cope with mountain biking – you can only really do it if you're fit and brave enough – I needn't be afraid of anything, and that's still how I see it. But I found many people in the sport rather arrogant, which annoyed me, so I quit when I was 19. Then, three years ago, my older sister, who loves mountain biking, encouraged me to try it again, and now I actually like most people I meet – I can see that they're just very competitive.

D Keith Shaw

I was a professional mountain biker for 12 years, taking part in competitions worldwide. I loved the training and friendship with other team members. Like most riders, however, I never made much money and I had to increase my income by doing some journalism. I wrote about mountain biking, but also about deforestation and the climate crisis because these issues affect the places where we do our sport. Nowadays, I'm a full-time journalist and there are times when I can't fit mountain biking into my schedule. But it's still important to me. It's simple really: there's just me, my bike and the landscape, with no deadlines and no-one telling me where to go or what to do. At the same time, there's so much to learn from it: how to concentrate, make decisions and deal with difficult situations. They're all things I need as a journalist as well as in daily life.



Question 7

Which person ...

- (a) highlights the sense of freedom that comes with mountain biking? [1]
- (b) points out how different mountain biking is from the work they do? [1]
- (c) suggests that it was predictable they would take up mountain biking? [1]
- (d) says that mountain biking has made them more self-confident? [1]
- (e) points out the health benefits that mountain biking can bring? [1]
- (f) thinks that skills developed through mountain biking are useful in other activities? [1]
- (g) regrets a period that they spent away from mountain biking? [1]
- (h) says that their feelings about other mountain bikers have changed? [1]
- (i) expresses concern about the effect mountain biking can have on the environment? [1]

[Total: 9]

