

G R A M M A R

Read the following text and fill in each gap with a proper verb tense, verb form, or verbal phrase. Use all the words given in brackets and put them in the correct word order. Write your answers in the spaces below the article. Spelling counts.

For me, this summer is going to be all about self-care via the stars.

It **1 ... (be)** 20 years since I first **2 ... (feel)** palpable envy at someone **3 ... (be able, navigate)** the night sky. In 2006, I was at a conference in La Jolla, California, reporting for *New Scientist*. Among the delegates was astrophysicist Neil deGrasse Tyson. One evening, as we **4 ... (all, have)** an outdoor dinner, he took out a laser pointer and gave us a tour of the visible constellations. I was mesmerised, and impressed by the ease with which Tyson wandered through the heavens. I made myself a promise: when I **5 ... (get)** home, I **6 ... (be going to, become)** a stargazer. It didn't happen. Maybe I can blame the street-lit skies of my neighbourhood, but I can also blame the fact that, even then, I was older than is ideal. A love for the night sky **7 ... (best, develop)** in childhood. Those who **8 ... (start)** young, **9 ... (guide)** by a parent or family friend, **10 ... (have, tend)** a lifelong affinity with the heavens and, crucially, better mental health.

1. _____

6. _____

2. _____

7. _____

3. _____

8. _____

4. _____

9. _____

5. _____

10. _____

Continue reading the text and decide which **ONE** word best fits each gap (11-15). Write your answers in the spaces provided below the text. Spelling counts.

The love for looking up on a dark night is known as *noctcaelador*, from the Latin **11 ...** “night”, “sky”, and “adore”. The phrase was coined in 2003 by William Kelly, a professor at George Fox University in Portland, Oregon, in a paper investigating attitudes towards stargazing. Last year, Kelly published further research showing that *noctcaelador* is related to a personality trait known as openness to experience, **12 ...** is especially achievable in childhood.

I'm a little sad that I didn't get that star-love instilled **13 ...** me as a child, but there's still time. And **14 ...** days, I don't even need clear or dark nights – good news when light (and other) pollution means most of the world's population no longer has access to a star-strewn sky. After all, **15 ...** needs clear skies when there's a growing gaggle of astronomers on TikTok (“SpaceTok”, for the initiated)?

(Source: Brooks, M. 2026. Goodheavens! *New Scientist*, 3 January 2026, p. 17.)

11. _____

14. _____

12. _____

15. _____

13. _____

Total Points/15 pts

V O C A B U L A R Y

Complete gaps 1-10 in the following passage with the most suitable answer (A-D). Circle your answers.

Predictions of the **1 ...** of letter writing are not new. The invention of the telegraph and the rise of the postcard were both seen as potential threats to a more **2 ...**, reflective form of communication. Yet by the close of the 20th century, more letters were being sent than ever, as social correspondence began to be supplemented by a boom in business mail.

From Europe's most tech-savvy society, however, comes **3 ...** news. As of next week, Denmark's state-run postal service will end all letter deliveries after doing the **4 ...** for 400 years. Around 1,500 jobs are being cut, and the country's beloved red letterboxes are being sold off. It will still be possible for Danes to send a card or a love letter to someone far away next Christmas, but only via the shops of a smaller private company or a costly home collection.

The direction of travel is unarguable: the online world has **5 ...** business transactions and offers us multiple forms of communicating with each other more or less **6 ...**. In a world of notification alerts and a blur of fingers typing on tablets and phones, the romantic image of a solitary letter writer, seated at a lamplit desk, no longer speaks to our cultural desires or reality.

The interests of the minority who continue to depend on physical post will need to be **7 ...** in coming transitions. Some of the rest of us will **8 ...** the gradual passing of a genre into history. From Samuel Johnson to Virginia Woolf and TS Eliot, the most **9 ...** exponents of the form have left us a precious patrimony, offering vivid insights into the **10 ...** reality of their times. In the hands of such authors, the art of writing letters became another branch of literature.

(Source: The Guardian view on sending letters: the writing's on the wall. 2025.

The Guardian, 22 December 2025. Available from:

<https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2025/dec/22/the-guardian-view-on-sending-letters-writings-on-the-wall>)

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|----|-------------------|------------------|------------------|----------------|
| 1 | A downfall | B collapse | C termination | D demise |
| 2 | A laid-back | B leisurely | C soothing | D sluggish |
| 3 | A sinister | B adverse | C ominous | D malign |
| 4 | A circles | B rounds | C routes | D loops |
| 5 | A tossed off | B wiped out | C shovelled down | D hoovered up |
| 6 | A instantaneously | B simultaneously | C spontaneously | D continuously |
| 7 | A monitored | B harboured | C safeguarded | D ensured |
| 8 | A mourn | B regret | C miss | D condemn |
| 9 | A generous | B prolific | C exuberant | D opulent |
| 10 | A unremarkable | B mundane | C trivial | D quotidian |

Total Points/10pts

R E A D I N G C O M P R E H E N S I O N

Read a description of a trip to Easter Island. Complete gaps (1-10) with the most suitable clause (A-M) from the list below. Three clauses will remain unused.

The sky is still dark and the windscreen wipers are working furiously. I'm being driven across Rapa Nui, otherwise known as Easter Island—a chunk of volcanic rock some 2,200 miles off the coast of mainland Chile. “Lovely weather,” says guide Tamaragi Arevalo Tuki as she turns to face me, half smiling as her **1 ...** . “Let's get out.” As if by magic, we walk only a few torchlit paces before the clouds break and it subsides.

Through dawn's half-light comes the sound of pounding waves—and then I see the silhouettes: Fifteen statues, their backs to the sea, their silence and size intimidating, **2 ...** out here in the middle of wind-whipped, watery nowhere.

Like many locals, Tamaragi has spent time studying on the Chilean mainland, more than a five-hour flight away. She snaps me back to reality. “Ah!” she says with delight, **3 ...** . “It's a frigatebird,” she explains. “They can fly huge distances, and sleep on the wing.”

It's a wonder even the frigatebird found Rapa Nui, out here in the Pacific wilderness. Even the truth surrounding how humans found it is slippery—estimates of its settlement by Polynesian seafarers range from 400 CE to 1200 CE. It was 5 April 1722 when it was sighted by Dutch navigator Jacob Roggeveen. The day was Easter Sunday, so he named the place Paasch-Eyland (Easter Island). Further European ships followed, then South American slavers and Catholic missionaries, before the island was annexed by Chile in 1888. Today's 7,000 or so inhabitants **4 ...** . “For us, it's always Rapa Nui,” says Tamaragi.

By the time the island appeared in Roggeveen's telescope, much of its story had already been written. At some point in the preceding centuries, close to 1,000 moai—the rock-hewn figures for which it's famed—had been carved in the Rano Raraku quarry in the island's east. Some weighed more than 85 tons and each was **5 ...** , in the hope that their mana, or life-force, might protect their descendants.

For uncertain reasons, hundreds of moai remain in the quarry itself, half-submerged by grassed-over sediment. Many more, however, were hefted by rope to now-deserted villages around the coast. All were **6 ...** , the dominant theory being they lost faith in the statues' power. The 40 or so that stand today have been re-erected in more recent decades.

In parts of Rapa Nui, the moai stand alone. Almost all of the island's inhabitants are based in the laid-back town of Hanga Roa to the south west, where cockerels crow, dogs flop in the sun, and chocolate moai are sold from corrugated-roofed shops. That afternoon, I sip island-brewed beers at a coastal bar, watching surfers ride the swell, and visit a 20th-century Catholic church where a stained-glass Jesus is depicted with tribal face-paint. But out of town, **7 ...** .

The next morning, a jog to the rim of Rano Kau, a kilometre-wide extinct volcanic crater on the island's southern tip, leaves me breathless in more ways than one. The crater's outer wall is a sheer cliff plunging into the waves. Between the decline of the moai and the arrival of Catholicism, **8 ...** which saw the island's fittest men scaling down the perilous crags and swimming in shark-infested waters.

R E A D I N G C O M P R E H E N S I O N**(continued)**

Later, with local conservationist Sebastián Yankovic-Pakarati, I spend hours hiking the cliffs of the north coast, without another person in sight. For mile after mile, we wander rubbled villages where moai lie horizontal, crawl into fern-filled caves to peer at age-old carvings, and watch birds ride the thermals.

At one point we see a small pile of balanced rocks, the kind **9** Sebastián, who wears his hair in a topknot, dismantles the stones without fuss.

“We don’t like new things,” he says quietly. When we pass another fallen moai, face down in the turf, I ask if they **10** “No,” he says with a smile, gesturing at the clifftops and the boundless panorama of sea. “Look where we are. Everything here—the bays, the ruins, the rocks—it’s all just part of our story.”

(Source: Lerwill, B. An island apart. *National Geographic Traveller*, March 2026, pp. 56-57.)

- A** find the upended statues upsetting
- B** sculpted in tribute to a deceased chief
- C** the island feels rugged and remote
- D** attention flicks back to the rain beyond the windows
- E** eye sockets are hollowed by time
- F** pointing out a fork-tailed seabird in the gloaming above
- G** a walker might construct on a whim
- H** eventually toppled by the islanders themselves
- I** reading swells and stars as ancestors once did
- J** call their home by its native name
- K** the largest standing at nine metres tall
- L** this was the site of an important annual contest
- M** shrinking to a dark fleck in the immensity of blue

Total points/10pts

L I S T E N I N G C O M P R E H E N S I O N

You will listen to a report about a Silicon Valley startup developing humanoid robots and the challenges related to it. For questions 1 to 5, circle one correct answer according to the information you hear. You will hear the text only once.

1. The text suggests that “general robotics” differs from industrial robotics because it aims to _____.
 - A. replace human labour entirely in assembly-line work
 - B. gather more varied data to improve non-humanoid robots
 - C. operate effectively when faced with unexpected circumstances
 - D. train robots to learn through cooperation with humans

2. The description of the towel-folding task is used to illustrate the point that humanoid robots _____.
 - A. depend mainly on improved electronic design
 - B. are close to reaching near-human dexterity
 - C. will need additional testing in real-life environments
 - D. still struggle with basic coordination and perception

3. The Helix neural network used in the Figure robots differs from traditional programming methods because it _____.
 - A. can improve its performance by learning from failures
 - B. requires significantly less input data for training
 - C. learns from video without manual input from engineers
 - D. separates each skill into independent trainable modules

4. The company’s design choice to make the Figure 03 lighter and smaller suggests a concern for _____.
 - A. user comfort and psychological ease
 - B. higher speed and energy efficiency
 - C. reducing manufacturing waste
 - D. usability in all types of domestic environments

5. According to Brett Adcock, success in the robotics industry depends mainly on _____.
 - A. keeping manufacturing costs low
 - B. the range of new functionality introduced
 - C. the number of robots used for data collection
 - D. offering more product models than rivals

Total points/5pts

(Source: Perrigo, B. 2025. The robot in your kitchen: Figure 03. *Time*, October 27, 2025, pp. 56-59.
Available from: <https://time.com/7324233/figure-03-robot-humanoid-reveal/>)

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