

Messages

Key words

fasten, homing, illegally, instinct

Reading

1 Read the text about carrier pigeons and find out what these numbers and dates refer to.

- | | | |
|---|--------|---|
| a | 20,000 | pigeons were killed |
| b | 15-20 | years healthy pigeon's life |
| c | 1,000 | km maximum distance a healthy pigeon flies in one flight |
| d | 30 | British pigeons - they were given medals for bravery in the First World War |
| e | 5,000 | Year-old postal service |



Five thousand year-old postal service

- Pigeons have carried messages for humans for over 5,000 years. The Egyptians were probably the first to use them in 3000 BCE. Between 770 BCE and 390 BCE, the Greeks used them to carry news of the early Olympic Games. The first regular pigeon post service was in 1146 CE when the Caliph used pigeons to carry mail all over the Arab world. In the Mamluk period in Egypt, there were thousands of pigeons in the postal service. In more recent times, pigeons have been used in wartime to send military reports back to leaders when it was too dangerous or impossible to use normal postal services. During the First World War, 20,000 pigeons were killed, and 30 British pigeons were given medals for bravery. Pigeons have even been used to smuggle diamonds illegally out of South Africa.
- 10 Pigeons are unique birds. A healthy pigeon can live for 15-20 years and can travel up to 1,000 km in one flight. Most important of all, pigeons have a natural instinct to fly back to their nests or homes from wherever they are. This is why they are sometimes called 'homing pigeons'. This ability makes them perfect for carrying messages over long distances. They are trained and fed in one area, then taken to other areas where they are used
- 15 when someone wants to send a message to their 'home'. Normally messages are written on light paper and then fastened to the feet of the pigeon. When they are released they always return home. There are even 'boomerang' pigeons which are trained to deliver one message and return with another.

2 Find words with these meanings in the text. Check your answers in a dictionary or in the glossary.

Paragraph 1

- a adjective to describe soldiers and the army military
- b like a round metal coin / soldiers are given this for being brave medal
- c take things in and out of a country against the law smuggle

Paragraph 2

- d particularly remarkable, special or unusual unique
- e home where birds lay their eggs nest
- f not heavy light
- g let (someone) go / allow (someone) to be free release

Language practice

Grammar assistant

Past simple passive

- Use the past simple passive to talk about past processes and facts. Use it when the focus is on the action, not on who does it.
The first telephones were used in 1876.
- We normally make passive forms of a verb by using tenses of the auxiliary **be**. For the past simple passive **was** or **were** is used.
- You need to know the past participles for the past passive, too.
*I **wasn't invited**, but I went anyway.*

1 Rewrite the sentences about early postal services. Start with the words given and change the underlined verbs into the passive form.

The Chinese introduced a postal service in about 1200 BCE.

A postal service was introduced by the Chinese in about 1200 BCE.

- a At first, the Chinese used this service mainly for official documents.
At first, this service was used by the Chinese mainly for official documents.
- b Originally, they sent messages using fire and smoke.
Originally, messages were sent using fire and smoke.
- c The Romans organised an advanced postal system.
An advanced postal system was organised by the Romans.
- d They developed a system of post roads with many places where tired riders passed messages to other fresh riders.
A system of post roads was developed with many places ... were passed by tired riders to other fresh riders.

messages

- e The Romans sent messages 270 kilometres in 24 hours by this system.
Messages were sent by the Romans 270 kilometres in 24 hours by this system.
- f Britain introduced the first postage stamps in 1840.
The first postage stamps were introduced in Britain in 1840.
- g The Greeks used homing pigeons to deliver messages.
Homing pigeons were used by the Greeks so that messages could be delivered.

2 Rewrite the sentences about modern communication. Start with the words given and change the underlined verbs into the active form.

In the 21st century, mobile phones are used for phone calls and text messages.

In the 21st century, people use mobile phones for phone calls and text messages.

- a Phone calls are made to friends wherever they are.
People make phone calls to friends wherever they are.
- b Text messages are sent over very long distances very cheaply.
People send text messages over very long distances very cheaply.
- c These messages are written very quickly and are received by their friends a few seconds later.
People ... write these messages very quickly and their friends receive them a few seconds later.
- d E-mail is being used by more and more businesses.
More and more businesses are using e-mail.
- e In some organisations, traditional letters or memos have been replaced by e-mail.
In some organisations, e-mail has replaced traditional letters or memos.

3 Complete the sentences with the correct form of *make* or *take*.

If you are going to the post office, could you take this letter for me?

- a Nobody makes pigeons fly home - it's a natural instinct.
- b They make special food for homing pigeons.
- c 'Oh no! Someone has taken our best pigeon.'
- d If you've missed your bus, you could take a taxi instead.
- e You look exhausted, why don't you take a five minute break.
- f I was too busy making lunch to notice the phone ringing.
- g He was made district manager after his excellent performance.

Self-assessment

4 Match the expressions to their responses. There are more responses than you need.

- a Hi, is Aisha there please? **5**
- b Could you take a message for me? **7**
- c I'll call you back in five minutes. **2**
- d I think you have the wrong number. **1**
- e I called earlier but no one answered. **4**

- 1 Sorry, isn't this 4744421?
- 2 Ok, speak to you soon.
- 3 We don't have voicemail.
- 4 Did you leave a message?
- 5 No she's not, sorry.
- 6 He can't come to the phone right now.
- 7 Sure, I'll just get a pen.

5 Read the following text messages and match them with their meanings.

- a alrite m8. do u wnt 2 meet ltr? **2**
- b sry had 2 leave. brb asap. **5**
- c on way bk from hols now. c u in Q8 **6**

- d did ne1 c my coat after football? **3**
- e g2g. bout 2 eat. **4**
- f cnt tlk now. spk soon. **1**

- 1 I'm busy and can't talk at the moment. I'll call you when I'm less busy.
- 2 Hello. Would you like to meet up later?
- 3 I think I left my coat at football practice. Has anyone seen it?
- 4 I have to leave. It's dinner time.
- 5 I'm sorry I had to leave suddenly. I'll be back as soon as possible.
- 6 I'm on my way back from holiday. I'll see you when I get to Kuwait.

6 What would you say in the following situations. Write full sentences.

- a One of your friends has just called you to cancel a prearranged study meeting. You and your other friends are already there.

Students' own answers

- b Your network provider has charged you for calls you didn't make. You are phoning their helpline.

- c A new phone you bought last week has stopped working. You are talking to a salesman in the shop you bought it from.

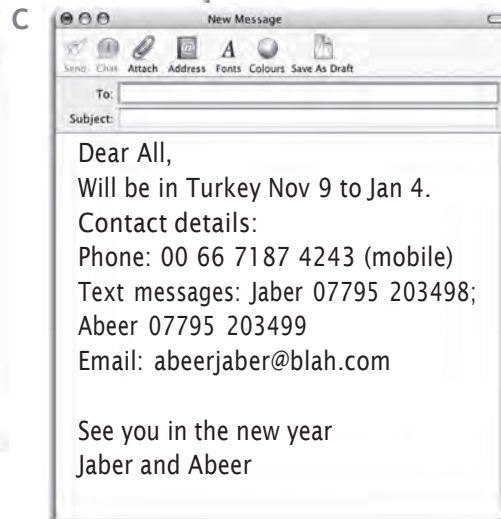
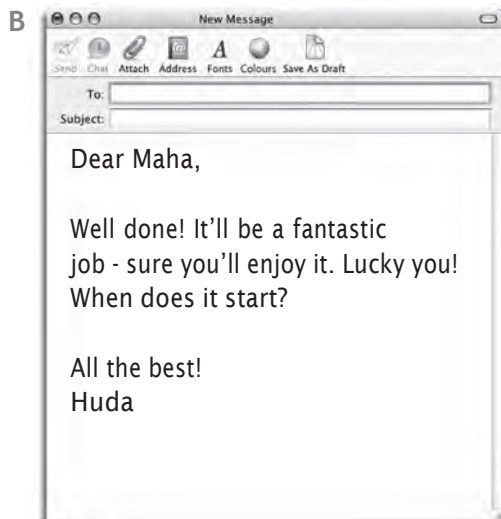
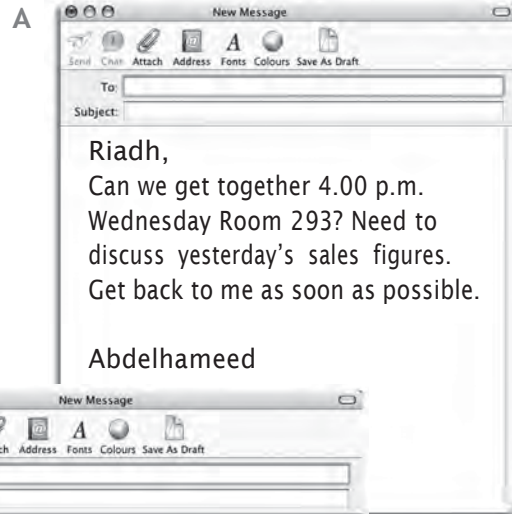
- d Your parents have decided you are using your mobile phone too much. They have decided to confiscate it from you for a few weeks. You think this is unfair.

Writing

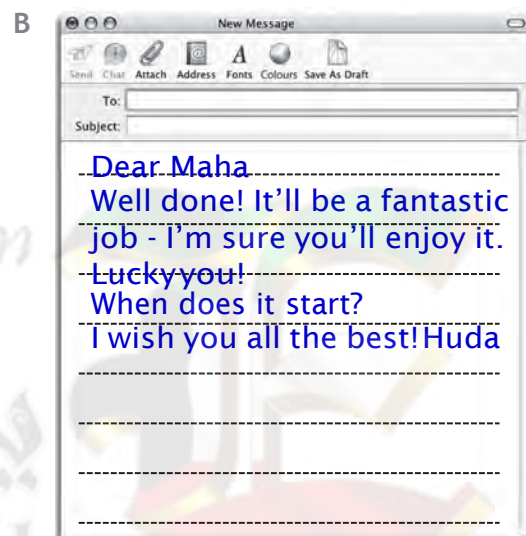
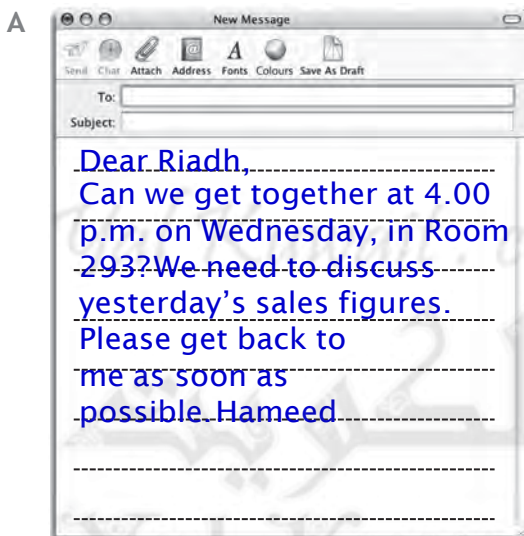
1 What are the purposes of the three e-mail messages below? Write the message letter (A-C) next to the appropriate purpose. (There are more purposes than you need.)

Purposes

- a request for information no message
- b apology no message
- c complaint no message
- d congratulations B
- e giving information C
- f request for a meeting A



2 The messages have been written in a hurry and some words have been left out. Choose two messages to rewrite from exercise 1, adding any missing words and making them sound more polite.



3 Read Nada's letter. Then, answer the following questions:

Al-Maarri Street
Kuwait City
Kuwait
16th February

Dear Salma,

This is Nada Ahmed. Remember me? We were friends in primary school. We haven't seen each other for about ten years - right?

Anyway, how are you? I got your address from Dalia. What are you doing now? Are you working? You always wanted to be a translator!

At the moment, I'm studying medicine at the university here. I think I've changed a lot over the years. I don't like history anymore - I prefer maths and science now. Do you remember Layla? She's on the same course as me, and guess what - we're best friends now!

Well, I must finish now because I've got an exam tomorrow. Write back soon and tell me all your news.

All the best,
Nada

paragraph 1: d paragraph 2: b paragraph 3: c paragraph 4: a

1 Match each paragraph with one of the following:

- | | |
|---------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| a a reason to end the letter | b questions about the other person |
| c information about Nada's life | d saying who you are |

2 Find examples of informal style:

- a contractions (e.g. *isn't*) **Students' own answers**
- b punctuation (e.g. exclamations ! and dashes -)
- c informal words and phrases (e.g. *anyway, well*)

3 Write a paragraph giving instructions on how to write a letter. Describe the following stages, and add other details. **Students' own answers**

Stage 1: deciding who to write to

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Stage 2: making notes

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Stage 3: writing the letter

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