



# Practice Exam - Teenage Life

Cambridge IGCSE ESL 0510/0511 | Reading practice paper

## Exercise 1

Read the article about a school independence project then answer the questions.

### Learning to manage a week

A school has introduced an independence project for students in Year 10. The project lasts one week and asks students to manage several ordinary responsibilities without constant reminders from adults. Teachers say the aim is not to make students feel stressed. It is to help them notice which routines they already manage well and which ones still need support. Tutors also remind students that the project is not a test of maturity. A forgotten item becomes useful only if the student thinks about why it happened.

At the start of the week, students receive a planning sheet. They write down homework deadlines, club times, family responsibilities and one personal goal, such as preparing a healthy lunch or getting enough sleep. The sheet is not collected every day. Instead, students keep it in their bag and update it when plans change.

Parents are asked to step back slightly, but not disappear. They can answer questions and help if something serious goes wrong, but they should avoid repeated reminders about bags, books or PE kit. Some parents found this difficult because they were used to checking everything. Teachers explained that small mistakes were part of the learning process.

During the week, students keep a short reflection diary. They record one thing that went well, one thing they forgot and one strategy they tried. Common strategies included packing bags the night before, setting phone alarms and leaving notes near the front door. Students were encouraged to choose practical actions rather than vague promises to be more organised.

The project ended with a discussion, not a grade. Many students said they had underestimated how much planning adults did for them. Others felt proud because they managed more than they expected. Teachers say the project works because it treats independence as a skill to practise, not a personality trait that some teenagers simply have. Some students asked to repeat the project later in the year, before exam season made their routines more complicated.

Students first complete the project during an ordinary school week, not during holidays. This means their plans include homework, family responsibilities, travel time and activities that cannot easily be moved.

The project also asks students to notice tasks that repeat. Once they identify regular jobs, such as charging a laptop or packing sports kit, they can plan them before they become urgent.

## Exercise 1 questions

Answer the questions using information from the article. Write short answers.

1 Which year group takes part in the independence project? [1]

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2 How long does the project last? [1]

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3 What kind of goal might students set apart from getting enough sleep? [1]

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4 Where should students keep the planning sheet? [1]

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5 What should parents avoid giving repeatedly? [1]

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6 Give three parts of the independence project. [3]

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## Exercise 2

Read the article about four teenage situations (A-D). Then answer Questions 9(a)-9(i).

### A Group chat pressure

A student feels uncomfortable because a group chat continues late at night. She does not want to leave because homework reminders are shared there too. Her solution is to mute the chat after nine o'clock and ask one friend to message her directly if something urgent is posted. The student also tells the group she is muting notifications, so nobody thinks she is ignoring them personally. The student tells the group before muting notifications.

### B First solo journey

A teenager travels across town alone for the first time to attend a club. He checks the route the day before and saves a screenshot in case the internet fails. The journey goes well, but he realises he should have allowed more time to find the correct entrance. He asks a relative to meet him near the club the first time, but travels home independently afterwards. He also writes down the stop before his destination as a reminder. He saves a screenshot in case the internet fails during the journey.

### C Changing friendship group

A student starts spending time with a new group after joining a music club. She still likes her old friends, but she feels guilty when she cannot meet them every lunch break. A teacher suggests being honest rather than inventing excuses, because friendships can change without becoming arguments. The student decides to invite old friends to one music event instead of trying to keep the two groups separate. This does not solve every awkward moment, but it reduces secrecy. She invites old friends to one music event instead of keeping groups separate.

### D Part-time responsibility

A teenager helps in a relative's shop on Saturdays. He enjoys earning money, but he has to plan homework earlier in the week. He also learns that arriving five minutes late affects other people, because someone else cannot leave until he is ready to start. He writes his work hours on a family calendar so nobody expects him to be free on Saturday morning. He writes work hours on a family calendar before each weekend.

The situations are written as advice examples, not perfect solutions. Each teenager has to balance independence with responsibility, and the best choice depends on timing, confidence and other people's expectations.

## Exercise 2 questions

For each statement, write the correct letter A, B, C or D on the line. Each letter may be used more than once.

No.	Which teenage situation...	A-D
9(a)	shows that timekeeping can affect another person	.....
9(b)	involves keeping useful messages but reducing disturbance	.....
9(c)	needs honesty because social routines are changing	.....
9(d)	uses a saved image in case technology fails	.....
9(e)	requires schoolwork to be planned before the weekend	.....
9(f)	includes a mistake about finding the right entrance	.....
9(g)	deals with messages arriving late in the evening	.....
9(h)	begins because of a music club	.....
9(i)	includes earning money	.....

## Exercise 3

Read the article about managing exam-week pressure then complete the notes.

### A realistic revision week

Exam-week pressure often increases when students try to revise everything at once. A realistic plan begins with choosing the subjects and topics that need most attention. Students should not simply start with the subject they enjoy most. They need to check test dates, mark difficult topics and decide how much time is available after school.

Breaks are part of the plan. Long revision sessions can feel impressive, but concentration usually falls after a while. Short breaks help students return with more energy. Some students use a timer, while others revise in blocks linked to natural routines, such as before dinner or after a club.

The revision method matters too. Reading notes again may feel comfortable, but it does not always show what students can remember. Practice questions, flashcards and explaining a topic aloud are more active methods. Students should also check mistakes carefully instead of only counting correct answers. Students should also leave space for unexpected tasks, because a plan that is too full can collapse after one delay.

Sleep and food are easy to ignore during exam week, but they affect concentration. Teachers advise students to prepare bags before bed, avoid late-night cramming and eat something before morning exams. The aim is not a perfect week. It is a week with enough structure to stop pressure becoming panic. The best plans are reviewed each evening, not rewritten completely, so students can adjust without feeling that the whole week has failed. Teachers encourage students to move one task, not abandon the plan.

Students are asked to include travel, meals, sleep and one free evening in the plan. This makes the timetable less impressive on paper but more likely to survive a real school week.

The plan includes shorter sessions for subjects that need regular practice, such as vocabulary or maths. Longer sessions are saved for tasks that require concentration, such as writing or science revision.

Students mark difficult subjects earlier in the day if possible. They also leave ten-minute spaces between sessions, so one late task does not immediately ruin the whole timetable.

The final timetable is copied onto one page. This helps students see the whole week at once and notice where they have planned too much.

### Exercise 3 questions

Complete the notes using information from the article. Write short words or phrases.

Notes	Write short answers
10 What students should check when planning revision	- ..... - ..... - .....
11 Active revision and exam-week habits	- ..... - ..... - ..... - .....

## Exercise 4

Read the article about saying no to a plan then answer the questions.

### The invitation I refused

My friends planned a trip to a shopping centre the weekend before two important tests. I wanted to go because everyone had been talking about it for days. At the same time, I knew I had not revised enough. I kept hoping the plan would be cancelled so I would not have to make a decision.

On Friday, my friend sent a message asking what time I could meet. I typed three different replies and deleted them all. The honest answer was that I needed to study, but I worried that would sound boring or dramatic. In the end, I wrote that I could not come because I had to catch up on revision, but I hoped they had a good time.

The reply was kinder than I expected. One friend sent a joke about me becoming responsible, and another said she probably needed to revise too. I realised I had imagined a much worse reaction than the one that actually happened. Saying no had felt like risking the friendship, but my friends did not treat it that way.

The next day was not perfect. I revised, but I also checked my phone too often and felt left out when photos appeared online. Still, I finished the topics I had planned, and by Sunday evening I felt calmer. I had missed one afternoon, not ended my social life. The writer also noticed that fear of missing out made the decision feel more dramatic than it really was.

I learned that independence is not only about doing exciting things without adults. Sometimes it is about making an ordinary choice that protects your own priorities. I still find it hard to say no, but now I know that a clear reason is usually better than a weak excuse. By Monday, the shopping trip had become only one conversation among many, while the completed revision still helped in class.

The next day was less awkward than I had imagined. One friend asked why I had not come, and when I explained calmly, the conversation moved on faster than the argument in my head.

It also helped that I suggested another plan instead of simply saying no. That showed I still wanted the friendship, just not that particular evening.

## Exercise 4 questions

For each question, choose the correct answer, A, B or C.

### 12 Why did the writer feel unsure about the shopping trip? [1]

- A He disliked the shopping centre.
- B He wanted to go but needed to revise.
- C His friends had not invited him.

### 13 Why did the writer delete several replies? [1]

- A His phone stopped working.
- B He forgot the meeting time.
- C He was worried about how his reason would sound.

### 14 What surprised the writer about his friends' replies? [1]

- A They were kinder than expected.
- B They cancelled the trip immediately.
- C They refused to speak to him.

### 15 What made Saturday difficult? [1]

- A not knowing what to revise
- B having no phone at all
- C seeing photos and feeling left out

### 16 How did the writer feel by Sunday evening? [1]

- A angrier
- B calmer
- C less prepared

### 17 What is the writer's main lesson? [1]

- A Protecting priorities can require saying no clearly.
- B Friendships end when plans are refused.
- C Weak excuses are better than honest reasons.

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## Exercise 1

1. Year 10
2. one week
3. preparing a healthy lunch
4. in their bag
5. reminders
6. students keep a short reflection diary; some students packed their bags the night before; the project ended with a discussion

## Exercise 2

9(a) D; 9(b) A; 9(c) C; 9(d) B; 9(e) D; 9(f) B; 9(g) A; 9(h) C; 9(i) D

## Exercise 3

### 10 What students should check when planning revision

- test dates
- difficult topics
- how much time is available after school

### 11 Active revision and exam-week habits

- practice questions
- flashcards
- explaining a topic aloud
- prepare bags before bed

## Exercise 4

12 B; 13 C; 14 A; 15 C; 16 B; 17 A

- 12 B - He wanted to go but knew he had not revised enough.
- 13 C - He worried the honest answer would sound boring or dramatic.
- 14 A - He says the reply was kinder than expected.
- 15 C - He checked his phone and felt left out.
- 16 B - He says he felt calmer.
- 17 A - He says a clear reason is usually better.